Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
Penn State Shenango
Spring 2010

Since the dissolution of the Commonwealth College, Penn State Shenango has needed to adjust from relying on the Commonwealth College's repository of data to constructing its own repository. Building on a traditionally diverse campus community, Shenango has achieved progress in several of the Challenges, notably Challenges 2, 3, and 4. Challenges 1, 5, 6, and 7, by contrast, need to be richer in content. Specifically, some of the elements reported in these Challenges would have benefitted from more contextualization. Spelling out acronyms on first use would provide more information as to the role that specific programs or groups play in Shenango's attempt to meet its diversity objectives. For the upcoming reporting cycle, Shenango is encouraged to cultivate a much more robust culture of evidence, offering data and more examples to provide context to its goals and objectives.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
❖ In keeping with the regional campus mission of Shenango, it may prove more fruitful to construct a definition of diversity addressing the Campus's specific local circumstances. This definition can provide the groundwork for a meaningful Campus-specific characterization of diversity at Shenango. Then, if and when the University establishes a common definition, that definition can be incorporated into existing efforts.
❖ It was unclear how the Campus has communicated its understanding of diversity. Clarification of how the value of diversity is communicated in faculty and staff meetings would also be helpful.
❖ The review team commends the effort that Shenango has invested in establishing the Diversity Committee. A list of the membership composition would be a good addition.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
❖ The review team applauds Shenango's use of diversity-focused workshops, student clubs, and campus events as approaches to improving climate concerns. Succession planning is encouraged to provide institutional support to such efforts to help ameliorate occasions when student leadership or interest wanes.
❖ Hiring a professional counselor to ensure that students who self-identify with disabilities get the accommodations they seek and making help available for three one-on-one sessions with students in need of psychological support is notable.
❖ It was unclear when conclusive data regarding the MAP-works project will be available and what kind of disaggregation or other analyses will be conducted.

Representation (Access and Success)
Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
❖ Specific examples of the mini-lectures and diversity workshops, and a much more substantive explanation of the diversity training presented to first-year students during orientation would be helpful.
❖ Student Services are applauded for expanding their hours of operation to accommodate adult learners, Disability Services for revising its procedures and guidelines, and the Campus at large for ensuring that community groups feel welcomed at campus cultural events.
❖ Alternative spring break programming strongly connects to Challenge 5 (where it is also mentioned), but it is less clear how the programming contributes to recruiting and retaining a diverse student body.
❖ The designation of a unisex bathroom on campus for transgender student use is a potential best practice.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
❖ Shenango's hiring of an international faculty member as part of its minor program in Human Development and Family Studies is praiseworthy. The review team recommends retention plans to ensure continued success in this area. Additionally, benchmarking with other campus locations for additional information and support could be a helpful resource.

❖ Hiring an African-American staff member outside of the technical services area is also noted, but the implied causal connection between her hiring and the potential future hiring of minorities is unclear.

❖ More specificity regarding the strategies gleaned from the Academic Leadership Forum for recruiting women would be helpful.

❖ In the 2007 Mid-term Update, there was mention of adding a teaching fellows program. This program seemed to have excellent potential, yet it was not mentioned in the 2009 update. Information as to why it has not been continued would be helpful. The review team recommends revisiting the program, if possible, as the implementation of this program could be a best practice with supportive data outcomes.

Education and Scholarship
Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies

❖ Shenango's Director of Academic Affairs is applauded for establishing a Campus-wide Globalization Committee.

❖ Promotion of the Diversity Certificate program is also noteworthy.

Institutional Viability and Vitality
Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

❖ Shenango's mindfulness of gender diversity in leadership and management positions is commendable. Indication of the overall profile of gender representation and also racial/ethnic representation of Shenango's leadership positions would be helpful.

❖ The midpoint update indicated that the Campus was investigating the possibility of establishing a local version of the University's Administrative Fellows program. The results of those efforts were not reported here. Such programs would assist the Campus in identifying leadership talent, especially in light of anticipated retirements.

❖ Specific plans to systematically recruit leadership and management to reflect Shenango's diversity goals are recommended.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

❖ The two statements offered under this section are somewhat conflicting. The first asserts that the Diversity Committee will facilitate organizational change, while the second notes that the committee has no formal organizational structure to support it in its efforts to do so.

❖ The review team encourages Shenango to clarify how the Diversity Committee will facilitate organizational change and how the lack of organizational structure will be remedied.