

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

The process of composing the Penn State Worthington Scranton's Final Update appears quite robust, with information gathered from several campus and university surveys and regional demographic data. Feedback on the documents was also obtained from the campus community after posting drafts via several outlets, including online. It is unclear how extensive the received feedback was, and to what extent staff and students were involved in providing feedback and in writing the documents. ***RESPONSE: Faculty, staff and students were given ample opportunity to respond at various points throughout the process. The "Framework" initiative was widely discussed, widely announced and widely distributed. It is hard to imagine that anyone could have missed an opportunity for input and feedback.***

Celebrating diversity efforts is an important source of pride for Worthington Scranton, which can be extended far beyond the pages of a report. The update portrays high levels of success for the vast majority of actions but only infrequently provides supporting information for the statements. A recurring shortfall is the lack of data from the evaluation documents referred to in the update. If relevant measures are not available for effective program assessment, developing or updating appropriate evaluation documents would be helpful. Also, the Campus clearly has data available that could speak to progress – including climate surveys, faculty/staff surveys, faculty activity reports, staff reviews, development plans, student satisfaction surveys, outcomes assessment analysis, and continuous quality improvement techniques developed following the Middle States review. Drawing out related measures of achievement from these documents would provide validation to the statements in the report.

RESPONSE: In the 2004-2009 period, our largest challenge was "Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate". This challenge was derived from publicly distributed summaries of Faculty/Staff surveys, student satisfaction surveys and climate surveys, as well as from confidential procedures, conversations and consultations. For the latter case, even public discussion can be too revealing, but it is essential to utilize this information and to be committed to resolve the challenges presented in these reviews.

By developing a clear set of guiding principles, the campus improved understanding of elements of the desired, welcoming climate in three ways:

- Created a sense of Campus Community , based on Ernest Boyer's principles***
- Built a Leadership Team***
- Gain an understanding of a Student-Centered Environment***

Our campus Strategic Plan provides the strongest evidence regarding our commitment to face our challenges and opportunities. The path we are pursuing is clearly described in our Campus Strategic Plan and not copied into our Framework, since all Strategic Plans are readily available. The campus then utilizes detailed plans derived from the Strategic Plan, such as the Enrollment Management Plan, Marketing Plan, Facilities Management Plan, "For the Future" Campaign documents, and numerous implementation plans from Student and Faculty/Staff surveys, in addition to the "Framework to Foster Diversity" plans. A summary of these planning documents were provided in our diversity plans.

In each of these plans, there are performance indicators and a requirement for annual reporting through ongoing updates, written plans, presentations and Town Hall-style meetings, which form the basics of our Communication Plan. Of recent particular importance has been the comparison of the Faculty/Staff 2004 Survey with that from 2008. While we saw clear improvements in our climate, we still found challenges similar to those across Penn State.

To engage each individual employee, we are in complete compliance with Penn State processes through confidential SRDP and FAR performance reviews, so that each individual is provided with many years of direction and feedback, including elements of diversity.

We respectfully submit that Penn State requires documents such as First Year Engagement plans, P-3 proposals for academic programs and proposals for academic minors and other planning documents, which are all reviewed, approved and catalogued centrally. With that said, perhaps, central review is a better approach to determine best practices and ongoing commitment to diversity. In a similar manner, HRDC programs can be a central resource to assure delivery of diverse programs to all campuses.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ An explanation of what diversity-related elements are included in the First-Year Engagement Plan would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** *Our First Year Engagement Plan is approved centrally and includes prescribed diversity elements. We recommend central review of these plans and sharing of “best practices”.*
- ❖ How the programs for a professional workforce and student body relate to diversity and multicultural workshops, seminars and extra-curricular activities should be clarified. **RESPONSE:** *See SAF Report of funds spent and Diversity Components. This is reported annually -HRDC – programs – list; Billie Willits – 100% all hours of development reported through SRDP’s.*

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The HRDC multicultural awareness and intergroup sensitivity seminars that are planned to be offered in response to the needs identified in the 2008 Faculty/Staff Survey should be identified. **RESPONSE:** *These are addressed in the report of the Faculty/Staff Survey 2008.*
- ❖ Staff and students are full partners in diversity efforts and should be well represented on the Diversity Response Team. **RESPONSE:** *They are.*

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The statement regarding ESL students is an item that pertains more to future planning and implementation. Obviously, the growing numbers of ESL students is a current reality, but the update implies that, thus far, the Campus has not really done anything substantive with these students. The review team recommends robust efforts to address these needs within the 2010-15 *Framework* cycle.
- ❖ Having Admissions tables being set up at the weekend multicultural open house and other weekend events and producing Admissions and Financial Aid brochures in Spanish are positive strategies for recruiting diverse students. More information about how these weekend events impact the diverse recruitment would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** *Increased our enrollment of diverse students from 3% to 8% of our student body.*
- ❖ Creating a column in the newspaper for the students is laudable. However, it’s unclear whether it’s created for students of color. The review team had a hard time distinguishing whether this column had already been initiated or if it was still in the planning stages.
- ❖ The very detailed explanation of campus involvement to attract and retain regional business is tangential unless a better connection can be established between regional business development and diversity. This connection may seem obvious and, in fact, may be a reality, but evidence of such a connection must be clear and convincing. **RESPONSE:** *Penn State Worthington Scranton is working with all of these organizations, utilizing our Principles and Mission. It is important to maintain high visibility in commitment to diversity for economic impact, enrollment management and to obtain a diverse Advisory Board.*

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Working with local diverse groups and developing local contacts with the growing Hispanic population to seek applicants are valuable strategies. Retention is indeed a challenge. Maintaining these robust recruitment efforts as well as emphasizing retention strategies will be helpful. **RESPONSE:** *See Challenge No. 3, Bullet No. 4, above.*

- ❖ Social events that foster a sense of community are important, but as described in the update, they do not seem to have any multicultural emphases. How these celebrations highlight the cultural expressions of diverse groups should be identified.
- ❖ Participation of Chancellor's Cabinet members in regional diversity events and training are laudable.
- ❖ More information on how diversity funding from the provost has been used to impact hiring would have been helpful.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ Developing non-credit diversity-focused offerings is a positive strategy.
- ❖ The new program coordinator position for International Programs is an important step in developing a curriculum to foster international competencies.
- ❖ How the Chancellor's Cabinet and Faculty Senate Diversity Committee utilize the Newspaper Readership Program should be clarified.
- ❖ If "A greater variety of discussion continues" means that the "Best Practices in Classroom Diversity Luncheon" no longer exists, clarification of what constitutes "a greater variety" should be helpful.
RESPONSE: The "Best Practices" luncheons were too infrequent; not inclusive. Now we have a greater variety of discussions, such as research seminars, pedagogical engagement, Undergraduate Research Fair, Library readings and displays, bookstore involvement, SAF sponsored events and our Leadership development program and career training for students through the Student Success Center, which all contain elements of diversity.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The efforts to recruit people from diverse groups for the advisory board are laudable.
- ❖ To diversify the Chancellor's Cabinet, program leaders must reach beyond gender to include people from a range of additional diverse groups, such as racial/ethnic groups, those with disabilities, and LGBT individuals. *RESPONSE: The Cabinet consists of professionals who are committed to "Penn State principles". All are experienced in hiring and adhere to Penn State hiring practices. We respectfully request guidance regarding legal implications of "outing" membership.*
- ❖ Addressing the "Us vs. Them" mind frame is very important. More information about diversity-related activities focused on remedying this problem is needed. *RESPONSE: Fully developed in the Campus Strategic Plan.*
- ❖ The focus on diversity as an essential element of leadership programs is commendable.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The leadership of the Chancellor's Cabinet in taking responsibility for coordinating organizational change within Worthington Scranton is laudable.
- ❖ An explanation of how the redesign of Academic Affairs "has brought accountability and responsibility for diverse initiatives" is recommended. *RESPONSE: Essentially create faculty communities with the ability to discuss curricular, diversity and social issues within its discipline. Develop a diverse leadership team.*
- ❖ Explanation of the outcome related to the action to "Pursue funding to create an endowment to recognize, reward campus diversity effort" would be helpful. *RESPONSE: We are in a Campaign: "For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students". A comprehensive series of campaign documents (with timeline) and implementation plans approved by Penn State University (See Appendix A) are available.*