

**A Framework to Foster Diversity**

**At Penn State**

**2004-09**

**February 2004**

The Berks Lehigh Valley College is in the process of implementing its third Diversity Strategic Plan, the first a plan from each of the campuses submitted for 1994-98 and the combined 1998-2003 plan. Each plan involved all units of the college working together in establishing goals and objectives and then initiating the actions to obtain the goals and objectives. The Dean of the College has provided the leadership in directing the efforts with input from the college community via the administration and the diversity committee. During the last eight years we have conducted two climate surveys that have provided critical information along with other recommendations in promoting diversity.

The college has made great strides in making the community a welcoming environment that is understanding and respectful of the different cultures and ways of today's society. Minority student enrollments have shown a steady increase for the past several years. The student-run Rainbow Alliance, GLBT group, has introduced many initiatives and activities of awareness to the community and Academic Affairs has created two staff positions, a disability specialist and ESL specialist to service an underrepresented population of the college. Continuing Education provides several initiatives on campus and in the Berks and Lehigh Valley community for both youth and adults for minority group populations.

### **Vision Statement on Diversity**

The vision is for a Berks-Lehigh Valley College in which each faculty, staff, and student community member has been introduced to the people and traditions of a culture other than their own. The culture could be in this country, surrounding communities adjacent to the College, and/or in some other part of the world. The introduction to another culture and the ability to compare with one's own stimulates analytical thinking and learning at both a cognitive and affective level. The "experience" of another culture is a critically important dimension of education for global citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Understanding and respecting the diverse characteristics of human beings allows us to add a new dimension to learning.

The operational definition of diversity, agreed upon and utilized throughout the Diversity Strategic Plan, is based on the Penn State non-discrimination statement and focuses on the multitudinal components listed below.

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|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| -Adult/Returning students | -Handicapped disabled   |
| -Veterans                 | -International students |
| -Learning impairment      | -English as a second    |
| language                  |                         |
| -Sensory impairment       | -Socio-economic         |
| background                |                         |

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| -Physically challenged                                 | -Race               |
| -Religious practices                                   | -Sexual orientation |
| -Family structures (single parent,<br>adoptive parent) | -Gender             |
| -Urban vs. Rural vs. Suburban<br>geographic location   | -Citizenship        |
| -Composition of college faculty and staff              | -Ethnicity          |
|  | -Age                |

### **Penn State Policy AD42 Statement on Nondiscrimination and Harassment**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

Berks-Lehigh Valley College will continue to strive to:

- Recognize individual differences and contributions to every member of the college community.
- Commit ourselves to establishing a just community where the dignity of the college community members is affirmed and valued.
- Commit ourselves to enhancing the diversity of the College.
- Commit ourselves to valuing and serving a diverse population in the nation and the world.

#### **I. Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

Develop internal and external partnerships with other colleges, businesses and community agencies to improve diversity initiatives.

The College will further disseminate and encourage discussion of the Diversity Committee's Report on the 2002 Diversity Climate Survey, which has already been shared with key constituencies: The Dean and her Administrative Council, the Student Government Associations on both Campuses, and the College Senate.

- The College will develop a plan for responding to the 2002 Diversity Climate Survey, which indicated that understandings of diversity vary widely among students.
- The College's Diversity Committee will be charged with developing a "Diversity Statement" that faculty will be encouraged to include in their syllabi.
- The College will seek to ensure that consistent definitions of diversity are communicated to students in the courses designated "Intercultural and International Competence."

- Each academic division will be charged with developing a Diversity Committee, modeled on the one established in the Division of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS).
- Each academic division will be charged with establishing a diversity link on its home page.
- Faculty search committees will be encouraged to include diversity as a criterion in search processes.
- The College will seek funding to endow an annual student writing competition on diversity and multiculturalism.
- Following the model established by HASS, each academic division will be urged to determine whether our minority students at the College feel welcomed in their classes and to develop an action plan in response to those findings.
- The College will encourage and support faculty sponsorship of academic conferences focusing on diversity.

Enhance the Multi-cultural/international student counselor position to be viewed as the college leadership position on diversity issues and needs.

Encourage and support in whatever way possible the creation of a functioning Diversity Committee for the Lehigh Valley Campus.

Assist in creating a regular process by which students, faculty and staff are engaged in discussions related to diversity and the college such as a Diversity Forum Series.

Define how we monitor and measure success of diversity initiatives within the Student Affairs Division.

Enhance the number of underrepresented staff working within the division

## II. Representation (Access and Success)

- The College will actively pursue international student and faculty exchanges with universities abroad, aiming at 50 students a year by 2009. External funding opportunities to support these exchanges will also be explored.
- The College will highlight its commitment to diversity in marketing and recruiting initiatives.
- In all college-wide committees where the Dean appoints membership, every consideration will be given to promote diversity. That means that the committees will have women, persons of color, persons of different sexual orientation, persons with limitations and different age groups represented.
- The College will intensify its commitment to the recruitment of a diverse faculty, including senior appointments if possible.
- The College will appoint a mentor for minority faculty who complements the support of individual faculty mentors.
- The College will integrate a focus on diversity in the charge of the Retention Council.

- The College will ensure that international and multicultural research is encouraged, supported, recognized, and rewarded.
  - The College will propose that scholarship focusing on diversity be explicitly encouraged in the College's Promotion and Tenure Policy.
  - THE CONTINUING EDUCATION DIVISION PLANS TO BECOME A SITE FOR PROGRAMMING FOR TEACHER PROFESSION DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE US DEPT OF STATE. THE GRANTS INVOLVE INTERNATIONAL TEACHER EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AT THE BERKS CAMPUS.
  - THE COLLEGE IS SELECTED TO RECEIVE THE YOUTH CHALLENGE GRANT TO SUPPORT YEAR ROUND EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND YOUTH IN THE ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT.
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- A. Establish an admissions position specifically related to outreach efforts in support of diversity.
  - B. Establish specific retention goals for underrepresented student groups in consultation with the Retention Council.
  - C. Increase the number and percentage of underrepresented students enrolled in the college from the base 2003-2004 academic year.
  - D. Develop a college publication and web pages that specifically address current and potential student interest in diversity needs, issues and opportunities.
  - E. Define an early outreach admissions effort, in collaboration with MACA, PEPP and CE, to identify and work with underrepresented potential students in grades 8-11 to enhance college awareness, preparedness and progression to college.
  - F. To acquire the names of all potential underrepresented students within the service area in collaboration with MACA for inclusion within our prospect pool and subsequent contact.
  - G. Enhance collaboration between the multi-cultural coordinators and initiatives of the area colleges and universities, community resources and for profit businesses to expand opportunities for student involvement, programming and connections to community resources.
  - H. Seek external funding sources to support outreach initiatives and programming opportunities for currently enrolled students.
  - I. Refine the academic tracking system for underrepresented students

- J. Support the design of new, on-campus housing options to reflect the interests and needs of non-traditional students.
- K. Identify increased opportunities (leadership, resident assistants, staffing) for Asian-American students.
- L. Encourage the development of student organizations that support Hispanic students and those of Middle Eastern descent.
- M. Ensure diversity programming and training is a part of staff training and development with the Student Affairs Division.

### III. Education and Scholarship

- The College will organize a teaching colloquium to showcase examples of “Teaching Diversity” across the disciplines.
- The College will organize a faculty retreat focusing on strategies for “Promoting Diversity.”
- The College will include “Diversity and Community-Building” as a required component in all first-year seminars.
- The College will promote and support service learning opportunities for students to apply academic lessons in multicultural settings.
- The College will provide resources and opportunities for faculty to pursue scholarship on diversity.
- The College will propose that diversity initiatives in teaching and scholarship be explicitly encouraged and valued in tenure and promotion decisions.

Assist academic colleagues with educational programming related to diversity and offer such programming to FYS and other general education classes.

- A. Examine the potential for BKLV scholarships that consider enhancement of diversity as a criterion.

### IV. Institutional Viability and Vitality

- The College will encourage and support the participation of minority faculty and staff in leadership development programs.
- The College will encourage faculty and staff from underrepresented groups to apply for administrative internships.

- A. Ensure that all search committees within the division are representative of the diversity found within the college.

B. Encourage and support staff members interested in participating in diversity related workshops, conferences and programming.

- Academic administrators will regularly include issues of diversity on the agenda of its weekly meetings.

The Administrative Council will regularly review progress on diversity initiatives throughout the College