

**Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan**  
*A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009*  
**The College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center**

The College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center (COM/HMC) offer an ambitious description of their planned diversity activities over the next five years. Both organizations have been faced with significant organizational changes over the past several years and this, in fact, is their first diversity strategic plan.

The commitment to diversity is unquestioned. The College of Medicine outlines some innovative ways to diversify the curriculum, and the Medical Center is interested in diversifying its client base. Given that this plan must address the challenges faced by both a clinical enterprise as well as an academic unit, the quality of thinking is impressive. Additional emphasis on Challenges 6 and 7 is encouraged. While the activities and ideas included in this plan clearly point in the right directions, more specificity on implementation is needed. The plan would benefit from indicating timeframes, assessment measures, and accountability mechanisms.

*Response: Based upon the feedback stated below, the Framework to Foster Diversity 2004-2009 has been revised. All of the changes are included on the revised draft in blue font. You will receive a separate file containing the document.*

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

***Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- ❖ The goal of having organization-wide awareness of the importance of and commitment to diversity is laudable. It would be helpful to know the current extent to which members of the Hershey community are aware of the definition and specific actions for achieving this goal.
- ❖ It is unclear how annual and long-term diversity goals will be developed.
- ❖ Having a diversity committee labeled as the Dean's Council on Diversity demonstrates leadership commitment.

***Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

- ❖ Incorporating interactive programs on diversity and cultural awareness into orientation is positive and sends a clear message about Hershey's commitment.
- ❖ The goal of increasing diversity in the patient population is innovative.
- ❖ The plan to develop an EEO/AA office located at Hershey will help with recruiting and retaining women and members of underrepresented groups. It will be critical for that office to maintain clear and constant communication with the University Park office.
- ❖ It is positive that the Dean's council is exploring more formal mechanisms for monitoring climate. In addition to the student and faculty ombudspersons discussed in the 98-03 report, the COM/HMC may consider having an ombudsperson for staff.
- ❖ Continuing to conduct gender equity salary studies is positive, and Hershey serves as a model for the rest of the University in this regard.
- ❖ Making resources available for regular climate surveys is positive. More information on how surveys will be developed, conducted, and analyzed as well as how follow-up studies and appropriate initiatives will be implemented would be helpful.

### **Representation (Access and Success)**

#### ***Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

- ❖ Information on both the current recruitment practices and the composition of the student population would be helpful.
- ❖ COM/HMC are encouraged to create the multicultural coordinator position(s) under consideration. Plans for the position(s) indicate an inclusive and integrated approach that should not diminish the responsibility of others in COM/HMC to pay attention to diversity issues.
- ❖ Benchmarking curricula at other medical schools and graduate programs is a good step in identifying competencies related to diversity and culture.
- ❖ It is not clear what retention strategies are in place nor is there information about the student retention rate.

#### ***Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

- ❖ It would be helpful to know the current faculty and staff profile and information about retention rates for women and members of underrepresented groups in comparison to that of men and Caucasians.
- ❖ Utilizing diverse search committees and search committee chair training in regard to diversity issues are useful approaches.
- ❖ The unit may consider developing specific mechanisms to approach this Challenge that are appropriate to the culture and needs of COM/HMC.
- ❖ COM/HMC may consider acknowledging and appropriately valuing the contributions to diversity within the tenure and promotion process for faculty, as well as in staff reviews.

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ Reevaluation of the current curriculum to determine how intercultural topics can be incorporated is a positive goal.
- ❖ Developing service learning opportunities for students is also positive.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

#### ***Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management***

- ❖ Clear strategies for addressing this Challenge are not apparent.
- ❖ A demographic profile of the leadership would be helpful.
- ❖ COM/HMC is encouraged to consider benchmarking against other medical and graduate schools to assist in the development of diversity goals.

#### ***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***

- ❖ More information is needed to help in the understanding of the relationship of diversity goals with general strategic goals and the mechanisms utilized to assess and change the organization.