

**Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan**  
**A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009**  
**Capital College**

Capital College's strategic plan for diversity for 2004-2009 provides ample evidence of the College's commitment to Penn State's diversity goals. Several data tables throughout the plan explicate substantial diversity accomplishments and provide an excellent baseline for measuring future progress. The plan demonstrates that the College is well positioned for future success based on a solid performance record.

Although the plan provides extensive detail on the College's diversity initiatives, its capacity to serve as a roadmap for future diversity endeavors appears to be hindered for two primary reasons. First, the plan is written more as a report on past activities than a plan for improvement and new directions. The past diversity efforts are impressive, but detailed reporting on these accomplishments should have been limited to the *1998-2003 Report* and not repeated in the *2004-2009 Plan*. Second, the plan is organized under the assessment questions for the mid-point and final evaluation of the 2004-2009 *Framework* planning period. The use of this approach seems to guide the document toward reporting and away from planning. The College gives *some* indication of future goals, mainly under the "Targeted Areas for Improvement Include" sections. However, these sections are quite short and lacking in detail compared to the material describing past activities. Additionally, little was found in the plan that was specific to LGBT equity.

To ensure consistency in the evaluation of strategic plans across units, the review team's feedback to the College addresses only the material under the "Targeted Areas of Improvement" sections of the plan. The College would be well served by taking these sections as a starting point for creating a new, more detailed plan, one that would develop concrete goals and utilize effective performance indicators. Perhaps the overall College strategic plan could serve as a model for the new diversity plan, or the diversity components that are already in the overall plan could be expanded upon and organized in such a way to function as an effective diversity plan. Given that the overall College plan is in database format, applying this type of format to the diversity plan could serve as a best practice and model for other Penn State colleges and academic support units.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ The College notes that the results of the climate survey function as a baseline and will be reviewed and disseminated to the College community. In addition, the College notes that goals will be developed for continuous climate improvement based on survey results. What are the goals that have emerged from this baseline? For example, according to the survey results, 62% of the student sample believe that "minority recruitment and retention programs facilitate academic success." Would an appropriate goal for the end of the planning period be 65%, 70%, or 75% (or higher)?

***RESPONSE: The data generated by the Climate Assessment were reduced and results disseminated as recently as spring 2004. This established a baseline for subsequent comparative purposes. The results will enable the College to set appropriate goals and to measure progress toward these goals within this planning period. The Climate Assessment Committee of the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) will have principal responsibility for leading this effort in consultation with the College Faculty Senate's Human Resources and Business Committee and the Office of the Provost and Dean.***

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

- ❖ The College indicates that a climate survey will be conducted every three years. Some consideration should be given to improving the survey process (e.g., Web-based survey and determining whether or not the survey sample is representative of the population). Also, utilizing the results to develop programs aimed at improving the climate and communicating the results to the College community will be critical.
- RESPONSE: Capital College Climate Assessment – 2003 utilized a web-based methodology and Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM). This approach to survey research calls for multiple contacts with prospective respondents to increase the response rate. Following Dillman's TDM, three attempts, via e-mail from the PI, were made at approximately one-week intervals to encourage***

*participation. Additional e-mail announcements in advance of the survey were sent by the Provost and Dean to faculty and staff and the lead PI to students.*

*A link was embedded into each e-mail message sent to individuals. This URL took respondents to the implied consent form and ultimately to the questionnaire itself. Directions for completing the questionnaire and submitting it to the research team were included at the top of the questionnaire. Also included was contact information should individuals experience technical problems with completing and submitting the questionnaire. Contact information for the PI for the study was also included should respondents have any questions about the study in general. Additional contact information for Penn State's Office of Research Protections was included should respondents have questions about their rights as a participant in a research project.*

*Five hundred thirteen students completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 16%. The response rate for the faculty survey was 43% (91 completed surveys) and for staff, 33% (88 completed surveys), respectively.*

*The DEEC Climate Assessment Committee will identify programming opportunities and strategies for improving the learning, teaching, and working climate for the College based on findings from The Capital College Climate Assessment - 2003.*

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

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

- ❖ The College outlines several points under "Targeted Areas for Improvement" for Challenge 3, but few specific strategies are indicated. For example, the formation of the First-Year Student Task Force is noteworthy, and the review of programs and services to prepare for first-year students is a good start. But what goals and action plans, if any, has the task force established to help first-year students from diverse groups feel welcome when they come to Harrisburg this fall? Has Harrisburg established any goals on the representation of diverse students for this fall? A retention plan also needs to be articulated.

#### ***RESPONSE:***

*Targeted areas for improvement and related performance indicators to meet this challenge are as follows:*

*Increase the number of Harrisburg area minority students that attend Penn State.*

*Beginning fall 2004, Penn State Harrisburg will be admitting first-year, first-time undergraduate students to the Capital College and, for the first time in its history, will be a full participant in the University's recruitment and admissions processes. Faculty and staff are developing relationships with high schools within the campus's new service area. Representing the University to prospective students in a major urban center, i.e., greater Harrisburg, Penn State Harrisburg expects to play an important role in enhancing the number of minority students choosing a Penn State education.*

*Penn State Capital College and the Minority Admissions and Community Affairs unit of the central University Admissions Office agreed to merge the Community Recruitment Center (CRC) and the Penn State Harrisburg Office of Enrollment Services. Effective late fall 2003, the merger has strengthened the support for minority student recruitment and early outreach to assure a successful transition from high school to the University. Combining the CRC and the Office of Enrollment Services into a single enrollment management unit enhances the College's overall ability to serve the greater Harrisburg region and accommodate first-year, first-time students with a broad array of programs and services.*

### *Performance Indicators*

- *Using fall 2003 data as a baseline, increase the percentage of minority undergraduate students (currently 12% of total undergraduate enrollments) in the current planning period at or above the University Park percentage (13%), as reported in the University Fact Book. Penn State Harrisburg exceeds the University Park percentage of minority graduate students (9% and 8.2%, respectively), as reported in the 2003 University Fact Book. In the current planning cycle, Penn State Harrisburg will sustain the percentage of minority graduate students.*
- *Using three-year retention data from 2004 (the year the campus began admitting first-year students), achieve a retention rate for under-represented minorities at or above the University's average minority retention rate. Four- and five-year graduation rates will also be measured with the expectation that graduation rates for under-represented student cohorts will be at or exceed overall student graduation rates for the College and University Park.*
- *Increase the percentage of minority undergraduate students being retained or transferring to upper-division programs in the current planning period. For example, in fall 2003 17% of those students transferring from HACC were from under-represented groups. Using fall 2003 HACC transfer rates as a benchmark, Penn State Harrisburg will increase the percentage of minority undergraduate students retained or transferring to upper-division in the current planning period to 20%.*
- *Implement a minimum of one summer outreach program for minority high school students to facilitate the transition from high school to college. For example, during summer 2004 the College hosted 20 participants from the Camp Curtin YMCA Black Achievers program and 135 participants (the entire rising senior class) from the Milton S. Hershey School for summer programming featuring college life and expectations.*

*Establish an ongoing monitoring system for adjustment and transition to Penn State Schuylkill.*

*Penn State Schuylkill has a diverse student population. Minority students make up 20% of the campus's total enrollment and 69% of the campus's residential population. The diversity the campus enjoys is in direct contrast to the otherwise limited diversity of Schuylkill County (3.4% ethnicity).*

*To assure continued success in recruiting and retaining under-represented students, Penn State Schuylkill is conducting a series of focus group discussions scheduled for spring and fall 2004. Data from focus groups, especially the collective responses from out-of-region and out-of-state minority students, will enable the campus to monitor students' adjustment/transition to Penn State Schuylkill and to identify immediate problems for resolution.*

### *Performance Indicators*

- *Using fall 2003 data as a baseline, maintain the percentage of minority students (currently 20% of enrollment), as reported in the University Fact Book.*
- *Using three-year retention data from 2000, achieve a retention rate for under-represented minorities in the current planning period at or above the University average (65.5%).*
- *Increase the percentage of minority undergraduate students being retained or transferring to upper-division programs with dual admission/dual advisement articulation agreements in the*

*current planning period. Penn State Schuylkill will use fall 2003 HACCC to Penn State Harrisburg minority student transfers (17%) as a benchmark. (In spring 2004, agreements to articulate Penn State Schuylkill's six baccalaureate programs with Lehigh Carbon Community College [LCCC] were finalized and will yield initial transfer rates in 2006.)*

- ❖ The "lion scouts" recruiting program at Schuylkill appears promising. Does the program include training sessions to help "lion scouts" students become more effective recruiters?  
*RESPONSE: The campus is considering the feasibility of creating a corps of "lion scouts" to involve students in recruiting in their home communities/schools. Focus group data will indicate the campus's readiness for implementing such a program. If the data gathered indicate good potential for creating a corps of "lion scouts," selection criteria and a formalized training program will be developed in 2004-2005 for implementation in 2005-2006.*

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

- ❖ The College articulates plans for continued success in diversifying tenure-track positions; in maintaining diversity in executive, administrative, and managerial positions; and in making progress towards goals for technical service positions. Ostensibly, past practices will guide these future endeavors. However, it is unclear whether or not evaluation has occurred to determine effective and ineffective practices. Plans for improvement need to be based on assessing outcomes against metrics that define the success of specific initiatives, determining best practices, and implementing these best practices against a new set of goals.  
*RESPONSE: Targeted areas for improvement include:*

##### *Continued diversification of tenure-track faculty.*

*To maintain and increase the diversity of tenure-track appointments, the Office of Human Resources will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of programs targeted to increase the number of minority applicants for faculty and staff positions. Evaluation criteria will include the number of applicants from each source, the number of finalists each source produces, and number of hires each source generates. In this planning cycle, the College will continue to set goals and measure progress according to national availability and goals data generated in consultation with the University's Office of Affirmative Action (2002).*

##### *Performance Indicators*

- *Meet minority availability and goals for tenure-track faculty positions in the School of Behavioral Sciences and Education (from 15.6% to 15.9%) and the Library (from 16.6% to 23.4%).*
- *Meet women availability and goals for tenure-track faculty positions in the School of Humanities (from 39.2% to 48.6%), the Library (from 16.6% to 74%), the School of Public Affairs (from 38.8% to 42.9%), and the School of Science, Engineering, and Technology (from 21.6% to 29.6%).*

*Progress toward goal in all staff employment categories where the availability and goals are unmet.*

*For each employment category where availability goals have not been met, the College Office of Human Resources will evaluate the effectiveness of existing recruitment strategies. Evaluative criteria include the number of minority and women applicants. In this planning cycle, the College will continue to set goals and measure progress according to availability and goals data generated in consultation with the University's Office of Affirmative Action (2002).*

#### *Performance Indicators*

- *Meet minority availability and goals for (04) Secretarial/Clerical (from 3% to 10%), and (06) Skilled Crafts (from 5.2% to 5.9%) at the Harrisburg campus.*
- *Meet women availability and goals for (05) Technical/Paraprofessional (from 8.3% to 30.1%), (06) Skilled Crafts (from 0% to 8.9%), and (07) Service/Maintenance (from 36.3% to 66.1%) at the Harrisburg campus.*
- *Meet minority availability and goals for (01) Executive/Admin/Managerial (from 0% to 11.1%), (03) Professional Non-Faculty (from 5% to 9.3%), (05) Technical/Paraprofessional (from 0% to 1.4%), (06) Skilled Crafts (from 0% to .7%), and (07) Service/Maintenance (from 0% to 1.3%) at the Schuylkill campus.*
- *Meet women availability and goals for (06) Skilled Crafts (from 0% to 7.8%) and (07) Service/Maintenance (from 11% to 68%) at the Schuylkill campus.*

*Improve minority and women retention of faculty and staff.*

*The College has developed a portfolio of retention programs designed to promote the success of faculty and/or staff from under-represented groups. To quantify the success of these programs, the retention rates for women and minority faculty and staff will be generated to create a baseline for the College.*

#### *Performance Indicators*

- *Meet or exceed overall University retention rates among women and minority faculty and staff. The College will use cohort retention rates reported from the Offices of the Provost (55% retention for faculty achieving tenure) and Human Resources as benchmarks.*
- *Increase participation in the Penn State Leader and Mastering SuperVision programs by 10% among women and minority staff.*
- *In the current planning cycle, the College will have at least one representative participating on every University-level diversity-related commission/council (e.g. CORED, etc.).*

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ All three goals under the "Targeted Areas for Improvement" section of this Challenge have potential, but without more details, further comment is difficult.

*RESPONSE: To meet this challenge, targeted areas for improvement and related performance indicators were revised as follows:*

*Increase opportunities for international travel.*

*In the past year the College has made significant progress in this area. Capital College students are actively involved in College- and University-sponsored Study Abroad and International Study Tours.*

*In 2002-2003, 52 students participated in international study programs including University Park semester abroad, Capital College Summer Abroad, and International Study Tours. An estimated 70 students will participate in these programs in 2003-2004.*

*Performance Indicators*

- *During the current planning cycle, the College will maintain or exceed the 2002-2003 number of students (52) participating in study abroad programs.*
- *The College will increase the number of programs available for students. Each academic school will offer a minimum of one study abroad program annually.*

*Continue to increase the number of undergraduate international/intercultural focused courses offered each semester.*

*The College's alignment with the broader University's General Education curriculum has resulted in the successful incorporation of these requirements into every undergraduate major offered at Penn State Harrisburg. To coincide with the increase in the number of courses available, the College will also set as a goal an increase in the percentage of undergraduate courses offered each semester with an international/intercultural component.*

*Performance Indicator*

- *Meet or exceed University averages for the percentage of international/intercultural courses offered each semester using fall 2004 as a baseline (University-wide 6%, Harrisburg 6%, Schuylkill 3.5%).*

*Sustain the level of scholarly contributions in the scholarship of diversity.*

*The College will continue to support faculty development to sustain the quality and level of scholarly contributions to the study of diversity. Faculty accomplishments in the scholarship of diversity are valued in recognizing and rewarding such accomplishments in the tenure, promotion, and annual review processes.*

*Performance Indicators*

- *Publish an annual report of scholarly contributions in the study of diversity.*
- *Using 2003/2004 as a baseline, maintain the percentage of faculty engaged in scholarly contributions in the study of diversity (20%).*
- *Place select diversity courses from the College on the University's E-Learning Cooperative.*

## **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ Additional work is needed on this Challenge. The College's two-item plan to "retain women and minority" leadership and "continue efforts" to diversify leadership simply reiterates the overall intent of the Challenge without developing any concrete implementation goals.

***RESPONSE: To meet this challenge, targeted areas for improvement and performance indicators have been revised as follows:***

***Continue efforts to diversify Executive/Administrative/Managerial ranks at both campuses.***

***Currently the Harrisburg and Schuylkill campuses meet the availability and goals for women administrators and professional staff. While the Harrisburg campus meets the availability for minority representation, the Schuylkill campus does not meet goals based on the Office of Affirmative Action national availability data. The Office of Human Resources will perform an analysis of recent searches to identify impediments to recruiting a diverse pool.***

#### ***Performance Indicator***

- ***Increase minority representation at the Schuylkill campus to availability and goals data, from zero percent to 11 percent.***

***Increase representation of women and minorities on campus advisory boards.***

***While the College has had modest success in diversifying advisory boards, the College will develop a database of women and minority community and business leaders for use in identifying candidates for future board openings.***

#### ***Performance Indicators***

- ***Develop a database of women and minority community leaders;***
- ***Increase the percentage of women and minorities on College advisory boards by five percent in the current planning cycle. Currently women and minorities account for 25% of total board membership (20% women, 5% minorities).***

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

- ❖ The plan to continue to identify strategies for full subscription to the College strategic planning database, which already has numerous diversity initiatives embedded within it, holds great potential for not only the College but the entire University. Again, more details would have given the review team a better idea how the College plans to implement this innovation. For example, what strategies are currently in place? What still needs to occur to bring about "full subscription."

***RESPONSE: To assure full subscription to the strategic planning database, the College will assign persons/units responsible for completing each diversity initiative and will include representatives from the DEEC on the College's Strategic Planning Steering Committee who will provide periodic updates. The database provides a mechanism for the College to monitor and report progress of its strategic commitments; DEEC participation in the activities of the College's Strategic Planning Steering Committee further elevates the visibility and integrates the work of the group into the core activities of the College.***

*Performance Indicators*

- *Complete the 13 diversity initiatives, supported by 21 objectives and 58 action items in the database. Currently the College has achieved 80% of its diversity planning.*
  - *Present/distribute periodic updates of diversity planning and progress at faculty forums, strategic planning steering group meetings (open to the broader college community), and the DEEC.*
- ❖ The College has identified strategies for the systematic collection of data to update performance indicators that measure the achievements of diversity-related initiatives. This plan seems encouraging, but again, more details would be useful.
- RESPONSE: Thirteen diversity-related initiatives (listed in Appendix E of the 2004-2009 Plan), each with objectives, action strategies, and performance indicators, were identified in the 2002-2005 Strategic Plan. A strategic planning database, established to monitor and report the status of each initiative, is periodically reviewed by the Strategic Planning Steering Group and the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC). Members of the Strategic Planning Steering Group presented the database model used by the College at the spring 2003 Quality Advocates Planners Network.*