

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

The Abington College's Committee for the Diversity Plan carefully reviewed the feedback below regarding the Abington's draft 2004-2009 Strategic Plan for Diversity and decided to incorporate Abington's responses to the feedback commentary into its 2004-09 Strategic Plan for Diversity. The Diversity Plan Committee's revisions to the 2004-09 draft are contained in both the black and italicized bolded blue print.

Abington College integrates diversity into its mission statement and College climate is one of the College's four strategic goals. While the overall action steps outlined in the College's Diversity Plan for 2004-2009 are positive, further elaboration and development are needed. The plan lacks detail and could benefit from specific implementation strategies for achieving the goals. For example, more information is needed about timeframes, responsible parties, resources needed, and accountability. As noted in the 1998-2003 report, the College currently offers an array of positive strategies, including several best practices. Discussion of on-going activities (including assessment and rationale for continuation decisions) would help to strengthen this document. It is positive that strategic indicators are included in the document. More information on how the indicators are related to the specific actions would also be helpful in measuring future success. Abington's commitment to diversity rests on its conviction that all members of the college community are capable of excellence.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The diversity Web link to provide information about diversity topics including ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, international contexts, disabilities and veterans, as well as resources, events, and research, is positive.
- ❖ Providing opportunities for service learning and public scholarship in diverse contexts is positive.
- ❖ More information about the Intercultural and Multicultural Committee, such as its composition, charge, proposed activities, and anticipated timelines, would strengthen this action step.
- ❖ The College might consider presenting mechanisms for actively distributing information and fostering discussions of the College's and University's diversity goals and initiatives within this Challenge.
- ❖ The College is encouraged to strive for balance between addressing international and U.S. diversity. Additional attention to populations such as LGBT, disabilities, and veterans may also be considered.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ More information on how the College plans to "promote divisional diversity training" would be helpful.
- ❖ The action step to "increase diversity workshop offerings to faculty and staff" is positive. Measurable goals such as the number of additional workshops and information about content areas for workshops would help to effectively assess progress on this item.
- ❖ The College might consider presenting its mechanisms for identifying and responding to climate issues within this Challenge.

Representation (Access and Success)

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Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ It is positive that surveys and other assessment strategies will be used to identify areas where support services for retention can be strengthened or expanded. There are likely resource implications if services are strengthened or expanded. Information about the College strategy for supporting additional services would be useful.
- ❖ It does not appear that there are any specific actions that focus on recruiting a diverse student body.
- ❖ It would be helpful to have more information about the composition of the retention task force.
- ❖ Having more information about how the kinds of exchange programs that Abington wishes to develop with international institutions would be useful.
- ❖ The College might consider developing mechanisms to identify and address intragroup disparities in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Several positive actions are noted under this Challenge, particularly in regard to recruitment. Actions related to retention of faculty and staff would complement these recruitment efforts. A strategic indicator related to staff retention may be helpful. More information on assessment measures and data collection strategies would also be helpful.
- ❖ As the College develops relationships with multicultural professional associations and organizations for recruiting purposes, it may wish to consider establishing linkages with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribal Colleges.
- ❖ The College may wish to consider acknowledging and appropriately valuing contributions to diversity in the context of service within the tenure and promotion process as well as in staff reviews.
- ❖ The majority of the action steps are focused on recruitment, with few that address retention. Additional steps related to retention are recommended.
- ❖ The proposed visiting lecturer program for minority scholars is a best practice and offers potential for recruiting.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College notes an array of positive actions to address this Challenge including efforts to understand and incorporate international and intercultural competency into the curriculum, speakers who focus on strategies for curricular integration, and development of guidelines for assessing outcomes of intercultural initiatives. More information about implementation and measures of success would be helpful.
- ❖ The College might consider developing initiatives that address the relationship between faculty research and curricular integration.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Several positive actions are offered to address this Challenge. The College may wish to consult with the University Senior Faculty Mentor for advice on restructuring its New Faculty procedures and mentoring activities.
- ❖ The administrative mentoring program in Challenge 4 would seem to be a good strategy for building leadership capacity as would the development of an administrative fellows program noted in this Challenge.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ Diversity is identified as a strategic strength, a stance that is backed by a commendable continuing funding commitment.