

**Penn State Great Valley  
School of Graduate Professional Studies**

**Diversity Strategic Plan**

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**2004-2009**

*Diversity Action Council  
February 19, 2004*

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## **Introduction**

This document describes Penn State Great Valley's Diversity Strategic Plan for the years 2004-2009. Our commitment to diversity grows out of our special mission as a graduate campus dedicated to educating the regional workforce in the areas of business, education, engineering, and information science.

The following statement describes the School's overall commitment to the diversity process during the upcoming strategic planning cycle:

### *Penn State Great Valley Diversity Mission Statement*

We, the faculty, staff, and students of the Penn State Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, are committed to being an example for the active exploration of, respect for, and support of the many dimensions of human differences and similarities. We will achieve this through the measurable quality of our diversity initiatives, the expertise and contributions of our increasingly diverse faculty, staff, and students, and our personal and professional growth and achievement.

In an effort to continue the development and implementation of our diversity initiatives for the next five years, we have outlined a strategic process which follows the University guidelines described in *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09*. Our overall process and a number of specific activities are discussed in the remainder of this document.

## **A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State Great Valley: 2004-09**

The four areas outlined by the university diversity framework include: (A) campus climate and intergroup relationships, (B) representation (access and success), (C) education and scholarship, and (D) institutional viability and vitality. Each of these areas and their individual challenges are described below with reference to the specific challenges and proposed activities at Penn State Great Valley.

### ***A. CAMPUS CLIMATE AND INTERGROUP RELATIONSHIPS***

#### **Challenges 1 and 2. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity and Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate**

The Great Valley Diversity Action Council (DAC) defines diversity by breaking it into several parts including the spectrum of diversity, a definition of diversity, a diversity mission statement, our beliefs about diversity, and diversity-related values. From our perspective, the spectrum of diversity includes similarities and differences in: academic credentials; age; alternative lifestyles; citizenship; English as a second language; ethnicity; family structures (single parent, adoptive parent); gender; learning impairment; multiple intelligences; organizational tenure; physical challenges; race; religious practices; sensory impairment; sexual orientation; socio/economic background; and urban vs. rural vs. suburban geographic location. Diversity is the multiplicity of people and things that contribute to the richness and variety of life. In practice, diversity refers to the many dimensions within which people share similarities and differences.

Over the next five years, the Diversity Action Council, as appointed and supported by the CEO, will remain a highly visible, well-funded, and integral force within the campus community, acting as the primary advisory group for all diversity-related activities on the campus. In essence, the DAC serves in place of the multicultural coordinator for Penn State Great Valley until the campus reaches a size that supports a full-time person in this capacity. (During 2002-03, the campus supported a part-time Special Assistant to the CEO for Multicultural Education and Outreach that also provided service in these areas.) In its diversity roles, the DAC sponsors a variety of educational programs in addition to providing resources and consulting on the broader issues of campus climate.

#### *Targeted areas for improvement:*

- The Diversity Action Council Web site (included as part of the main Penn State Great Valley Web presence) will be further developed to more effectively communicate the council's mission and provide resources to all members of the Penn State Great Valley community (faculty, staff, and students) as well as prospective students and other nearby residents.

- The Diversity Action Council will develop mechanisms for assessing various campus climate issues related to diversity and inclusion. In addition to an assessment previously conducted with alumni, future focus groups will be conducted with current students, faculty, and staff during the upcoming strategic planning cycle. An instrument designed to assess organizational climate factors will also be administered to faculty and staff.
- The Diversity Action Council will also continue to support the need and the campus commitment to again fund the position of Special Assistant to the CEO for Multicultural Education and Outreach.

## ***B. REPRESENTATION (ACCESS AND SUCCESS)***

### **Challenges 3 and 4. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body and Workforce**

Penn State Great Valley has begun to implement a number of strategies to recruit and retain more diverse student, faculty, and administrative staff from within our regional service area. For example, during the past year we have developed a partnership with INROADS (a national organization committed to identifying, assisting, and educating underrepresented students) in order to increase the diversity of our student body and potentially bring summer interns to our campus.

We have also begun to explore collaborations with two HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) in the Philadelphia region (Lincoln and Cheyney Universities). Along these lines, we are working toward partnering with these universities with respect to cultural and academic activities and hope eventually to motivate a number of their graduates to consider Penn State Great Valley's academic programs. In a meeting with Cheyney University, these initiatives, as well as faculty exchanges, were discussed and will continue to be explored. We are hoping to foster a similar relationship with Lincoln University and will work toward that goal in the coming years.

Other campus efforts that have and will continue to focus directly on recruiting graduate students from underrepresented groups include: continued support for a Bunton-Waller Graduate Scholar; attendance at the annual Temple University graduate fair; attendance at Chakka Fatah's Annual Philadelphia Graduate Fair for Minority Students; advertisement campaigns in specific minority media; recruitment at various college and other job fairs; and other events attracting diverse audiences. Advertisements are also often featured on a local minority radio station (WDAS) and in The Black Suburban Journal. In addition, mailing lists of minority professionals are purchased for direct mail campaigns (e.g., minority business owners, women entrepreneurs, etc.).

#### *Targeted areas for improvement:*

- The School is planning new outreach initiatives in order to provide information to students, executives, and educators regarding various diversity issues. These initiatives will focus on partnerships with local corporations, institutions of higher education, and neighboring school districts.
- The School will work on strengthening its existing relationship with INROADS (the diversity-focused organization described above) to hopefully include the hiring of one or more interns, with the campus also serving as a site for INROADS workshops and seminars. Plans are also underway for Penn State Great Valley faculty and staff to act as facilitators at various INROADS events.

- Penn State Great Valley is committed to strengthening its recruitment initiatives with nearby Penn State campuses (Delaware County and Abington College), particularly since both schools have relatively large numbers of students from underrepresented populations.
- Several academic divisions are working on the delivery of their programs on-site to nearby companies (e.g., Wyeth, Wachovia, and Lockheed Martin) who employ relatively diverse workforces.

## ***C. EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP***

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

The Diversity Action Council will continue to commit a portion of its annual budget to support faculty and staff travel to diversity-related conferences and workshops where these personnel can present papers and/or participate in other significant ways. This support is ongoing and promotes diversity within the campus community after the return of these seminar participants. Faculty members are particularly encouraged to use this funding to help enhance their individual course and overall curriculum efforts related to diversity and multiculturalism.

Penn State Great Valley faculty are also committed to offering courses in their respective disciplines that address a variety of diversity-related subjects. These offerings have included (but are not limited to): IB 500 - International Business; MKTG 518 - Global Marketing; SYSEN 550 - Creativity, Innovation, and Change; SYSEN 555 - Invention and Innovative Design; EDTHP 411 - Ethics, Minorities, and Schools in the United States; SPLED 402 - Human Rights: Historical and Current Issues in Special Education; SPLED 409 - Curriculum for Students with Special Needs; SPLED 411 - Intervention for Students with Severe Disabilities; SPLED 497 - Special Topics: Autism/Pervasive Development Disorder - An Educational Perspective; SPLED 510 - Problems in the Education of the Mentally Retarded; SPLED 530 - Problems in the Education of the Learning Disabled; SPLED 570 - Problems in the Education of the Emotionally Disturbed; and SPLED 573 - Problems of Research with Handicapped Groups.

#### *Targeted areas for improvement:*

- The faculty at Penn State Great Valley will continue to offer individual courses that relate to the diversity and multicultural goals described within this strategic plan. Other courses will include diversity-related topics and discussions related to the individual content of each course offering.
- The Penn State Great Valley Academic Division Heads and their respective faculty will continue to work closely with local companies and school districts to identify the competencies required by today's workforce where employees must function in ever-increasing multicultural environments. Whenever possible, these skills will be incorporated within the appropriate curriculum.
- The Diversity Action Council will continue to offer Travel Authorization Grants to Great Valley faculty to support their research and the dissemination of diversity-related information in their classes.

#### ***D. INSTITUTIONAL VIABILITY AND VITALITY***

##### **Challenges 6 and 7. Diversifying University Leadership and Management and Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals**

Our perspective on developing leadership and management skills among faculty and staff is a holistic approach where each individual is encouraged to develop a unique leadership and management style. It is our intent to continue to support the development of these critical qualities to ensure the growth of a healthy and successful workplace. We will accomplish these goals by encouraging all faculty and staff to attend various Penn State development programs including: PSU Leader, Mastering SuperVision, and the Management Institute, among others, in addition to various local Penn State Great Valley programs.

In terms of faculty and staff recruitment, Diversity Action Council members have served on campus search committees and will continue to do so in the coming years. These committee memberships (as well as understanding and following appropriate search processes as outlined by the University) help to create an awareness of various diversity-related issues in the recruitment and selection process.

##### *Targeted areas for improvement:*

- The School will continue to develop and implement campus strategies to identify and recruit qualified administrators from underrepresented groups.
- The School will encourage campus administrators to include members of underrepresented groups in various strategic and other planning efforts across the campus.
- Penn State Great Valley will continue to investigate various opportunities for hiring and promoting faculty and staff from underrepresented groups to campus leadership positions.
- The School will develop and host the *Delaware Valley Diversity Leadership Academy: A Community Leaders Fellowship Program*, focused on educating regional executives in appropriate diversity leadership activities. This program is currently scheduled for implementation in Fall 2004 at the campus.
- Penn State Great Valley will continue the exploration of various academic and cultural initiatives with Lincoln and Cheyney Universities to encourage graduating students from these Universities to consider various graduate programs at Penn State Great Valley.

- The Diversity Action Council will continue to support the initiatives of the Governor's Commission on Latino Affairs through our relationship with the current Secretary of the Commonwealth, Pedro Cortes.
- The School will continue to support the Philadelphia Center at 46th and Market Streets in its outreach efforts in the Greater Philadelphia region.
- The School will continue to preserve the strength and commitment of the Diversity Action Council, a standing campus committee with a representative membership from all Penn State Great Valley stakeholders.

## Conclusion

Penn State Great Valley has made tremendous strides in cultivating an inclusive environment for all members of our campus community, with the Diversity Action Council playing an enormous role in increasing the breadth and depth of various campus activities and initiatives. As an institution of higher learning, we feel committed and obligated to perform outreach and service to our community, and to offer positive, comprehensive educational programs which extend diversity awareness to our stakeholder groups.

Over the next five years, Penn State Great Valley will strengthen our commitment to the four dimensions of diversity by striving to meet the challenges outlined in the *Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State (2004-09)*. Through the activities described herein, the School will maintain its standing and reputation for providing high-quality educational programming in the Philadelphia region, including a strong focus on diversity in all of its many aspects.