

**Feedback on Progress Implementing**  
**A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09**  
**Penn State Delaware County**  
**Mid-Term Progress Report**  
**Spring 2007**

The review team acknowledges that, following the University reorganization in summer 2005, Penn State Delaware County's (DELCO) update is their first *Framework* report as an individual strategic planning unit. Nevertheless, DELCO is clearly headed in a positive direction and is commended for a variety of innovative approaches, particularly those taken to recruit and retain a diverse student body. Also, the "campus-wide read" provides a unique and enriching experience shared among the entire community.

While it is commendable that responsibility for diversity is widely shared among campus administrators and staff, accountability for monitoring outcomes of specific programs needs to be designated. The team found little data demonstrating that specific programs had measurable results that contributed to attaining stated goals. One role of the Social Equity Committee might be to assess selected diversity initiatives using concrete performance indicators that link program activities with tangible outcomes. This type of approach would significantly strengthen the final progress report. Finally, the extent of faculty involvement in international activity is impressive, but their responsibility for a broader implementation of diversity seems vague.

### **Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ Defining diversity as moving beyond tolerance to acceptance and respect is commendable.
- ❖ Emphasizing the diversity component in the staff review process (SRDP) seems to be a good tool for staff. The approach taken with faculty appears to be more passive.
- ❖ The Social Equity Committee should be convened soon with clearly defined goals and responsibilities.  
*RESPONSE: The Social Equity Committee met twice in Spring 2007. During these meetings, the committee discussed its charge and brainstormed ideas. The following ideas will be followed up during the 2007-08 academic year: 1) revision of the definition of diversity and to provide a framework for faculty and staff to understand that diversity is a social structure that empowers some and disempowers others. A mechanism to educate on diversity will be planned. 2) The diversity survey is four years old and the committee would like to see one conducted more frequently. 3) Development of a listing by faculty of courses that have a diversity component. 4) Increase the number of 'allies' for diverse groups on campus.*
- ❖ The climate survey results were discussed at a "town meeting," but otherwise, no follow-up has occurred. The team hopes that with new leadership now in place this shortcoming will be rectified.
- ❖ The team would have liked to have seen the results of the 2004 staff and student satisfaction surveys. In future updates, any such results should be reported.  
*RESPONSE: The Social Equity Committee has been tasked with supporting this initiative.*
- ❖ Potential best practice: the "campus-wide read"; details about how the "read" is incorporated in courses or colloquia would be useful.  
*RESPONSE: See attached document from First Year Seminar Coordinator, Ms. Patricia Hillen. (One Campus, One Book).*

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

- ❖ The "unofficial" and "informal" networks mentioned in the update should have clear articulations to formal mechanisms so that incidents that come to light can be resolved appropriately (either formally or informally) and tracked to identify problem areas and solutions. Formal mechanisms should also be highly visible for those who wish to immediately pursue these options.  
*RESPONSE: Student and Enrollment Services staff have been trained to report incidents both internally to security and DSES but also through the university-wide Report Hate website. Efforts will be made to expand this to the academic side of the campus as well as to make more visible efforts on the website.*

- ❖ The team would like to see a more detailed explanation of mechanisms to monitor climate. The response provided is difficult to assess.  
*RESPONSE: The Social Equity Committee has noted this as well.*
- ❖ DELCO has a strong international focus with the involvement of faculty. DELCO's leadership and community should consider approaches to leverage the positive impact of this focus on the campus climate.
- ❖ The display of pictures of individuals in the campus community is a good strategy, particularly if the pictures reflect group activities and interactions.
- ❖ The update cites diverse demographics as a measure of success for this Challenge, but increased diversity is not, by itself, a good indicator of a positive climate.  
*RESPONSE: Although not an indicator by itself, a strong demographic indicates that students, faculty and staff find the campus to be welcoming.*
- ❖ It is important to address gender, gender identity, and LGBT topics – especially on a campus with a significant racial/ethnic diversity – as multiple identities can conflate issues and make self-identities more complex.
- ❖ The collaboration among administrative officers in developing the First Year Committee indicates a substantial commitment to the success of this group. The initiatives of the committee, including the use of peer mentors and first year seminars, appear promising.  
*RESPONSE: All orientation leaders and first year peer mentors received diversity training including cross-cultural communication, LGBT issues, and disability issues.*

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

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

- ❖ Close collaboration with community agencies and efforts to bring prospective students from disadvantaged areas (especially bus tours) are notable. Any yield data for these students should be reported.
- ❖ The update indicates that diverse staff in various units (e.g., Admissions and Student Life) is a successful recruitment and retention practice. More specifics on the characteristics of these staff would be useful.  
*RESPONSE: The Student and Enrollment Services staff include two bi-lingual (Spanish-English) Latino staff, one member of the LGBT community, one African American, one Native American, 9 women (including one at the director level) and 5 men.*
- ❖ The array of academic and cultural enrichment experiences for disadvantaged students, among both high school (e.g., Philadelphia Futures) and DELCO students (EOP), is impressive.
- ❖ The special attention given to the needs and success of veterans is commendable, as is employing bilingual staff in Financial Aid and Admissions.
- ❖ The merger of the career and advising functions and reported improvement it has had on the retention of multicultural students should be explored further. The improvement may be due to other factors.
- ❖ More details on “intensive interventions” would be welcome.
- ❖ The link on the DELCO homepage to the LGBT Support Network is noteworthy (though the link appears to not be present there now).  
*RESPONSE: The campus plan is to provide links for <http://www.equity.psu.edu/Zero/resources.asp> on both student and faculty and staff site to allow access to all.*
- ❖ Potential best practices: the various retention programs (e.g., PREP, SOAR, and “Tracking”), which help disadvantaged students to be better prepared to succeed; more details and data to substantiate efforts are needed.

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

- ❖ Efforts to recruit using resources tailored to diverse candidates (e.g., “minority databases”) are laudable, though more proactive measures could still be employed.
- ❖ Providing two mentors for each faculty member is a strong commitment to faculty retention. The update acknowledges a deficiency in similar initiatives for staff, and remedies should be pursued vigorously.

- ❖ The substantial decrease of women in the assistant professor rank and concomitant increase in fixed-term positions from 2003 to 2005 is cause for concern, especially since no increases occurred in the associate and full professor ranks. The team urges a thorough examination to uncover any systemic problems that might be present and hopes this apparent trend will soon be reversed.

***RESPONSE: Three female faculty members have recently been promoted to Associate Professor level: Dr. Elizabeth Dudkin, Dr. Laura Guretin, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt.***

- ❖ The loss of an African American faculty member in the tenure line and an increase of one in the fixed-term ranks should similarly be addressed.

***RESPONSE: The tenure clock for one African American female faculty member has been extended.***

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ DELCO's offerings of minors related to diversity are commendable.
- ❖ The American Studies Cluster is an important support for students whose native language is not English.
- ❖ Potential best practice: the short-term study abroad program, which provides international educational experiences to students who otherwise might not be able to afford it.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ The participation of campus administrators in diversity-related activities and service is commendable. The team encourages appropriate publicizing of these endeavors to promote the involvement of others.
- ❖ Using diversity as a criterion for staff searches, including at least one question to candidates that relates to diversity during interviews, demonstrates a strong commitment.
- ❖ Identification and support for faculty and staff with administrative potential is encouraged.

***RESPONSE: We will share the comments with the Diversity Committee and plan to put mechanisms in place.***

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

- ❖ Including diversity as a criterion in SRDPs is commendable. A similar vehicle for encouraging more faculty to undertake diversity initiatives is warranted. Reporting examples of how SRDPs account for diversity accomplishment would help the team assess the endeavor and provide useful feedback.
- ❖ Diversity on the Advisory Board is important. Board demographics should be summarized in the update.
- ❖ The update notes the increasingly important role of outreach by faculty, staff, and students in fostering diversity. More details on activities that advance this point in the final report will be welcome.

***Document from First Year Seminar Coordinator, Ms. Patricia Hillen (One Campus, One Book) (See RESPONSE under Challenge One, bullet six)***

### **Penn State University, Delaware County Short History and Analysis of the Campus-Wide Read**

During the academic year 2003-2004 a small initiative began which involved our campus community, mostly students, reading one book. An ad-hoc committee chose James McBride's book, *The Color of Water*, and a small number of First-Year Seminar classes, mostly English 15 classes, did adopt this text into their curriculum. *The Color of Water* was also the One Book, One Philadelphia for that year, and James McBride did make an appearance on our campus, doing an engaging reading and a Q and A discussion for approximately 100 students, followed by a well-attended book signing. During the next academic year, our campus followed suit, choosing another One Book, One Philadelphia, this time using Lorene Cary's *The Price of a Child*. Ms. Cary did come to the Abington campus, and, I know of at least one class that went to Abington to hear her speak.

It wasn't until Fall 2005 that our campus-wide read really made a name for itself as it was funded by International Grant monies provided by Barnes and Noble. During the previous summer, a large contingency of faculty and staff met at the DAA's house for dinner and decided on *The Bone Woman* by Clea Koff. Although the decision was made to integrate the read among the First-Year Seminar classes, 25 classes in the Fall and 5 in the Spring semester participated in the read. Many upper-level students also participated, those in such classes as American Studies, Women Studies, and Anthropology, and some of our staff were also reading. The campus held a screening of *Hotel Rwanda* with a structured discussion that followed which was led by a Communication faculty member. This also marked the inclusion of the first Research Guide for students, created by our library staff. The highlight of that year's campus-wide reading program was having Clea Koff come to speak on campus. Over two hundred students, faculty, and staff attended this event, which was one of the highlights of the year. This was followed by an extensive book signing.

This past year's read, *The Tortilla Curtain* by TC Boyle, involved a total of 32 classes' participation, again, mostly first-year seminar classes, but also Honors English, Education, Intro to Arts, and Theatre. Co-curricular events included an Honors trip to Ellis Island, a Forum On Immigration: *Students' Journeys to America* where students shared their stories in front of almost 100 students, staff and faculty. The American Studies club sponsored "Immigration Policy, Venture Capital and Godlewski Enterprise" a talk by Paul Godlewski, CEO of Godlewski Enterprises. Additionally a Faculty Forum and a Faculty and Staff Immigration Symposium - "Confusions with American Culture" were held on campus, the latter attended by well over 100 students, staff and faculty. The reaction to this book choice, also picked by faculty and staff, was mixed. Although we felt that the topic of immigration was timely, and the library staff put together another comprehensive research guide, the involvement seemed to diminish as the year progressed.

A committee, the One Campus, One Book committee was recently charged by our DAA so to organize the upcoming academic year's campus-wide read. The committee, which has met about once a month since last Fall, chose the theme "Global Climate Change" with two books, *Field Notes From a Catastrophe* by Elizabeth Kolbert and *The Weathermakers* by Tim Flannery for consideration by faculty and staff. The third research guide provided by the library staff is already up and running. Many co-curricular events are also planned. These include a year long "Green Film-fest," four keynote speakers (two each semester and all four from outside the campus) and two faculty driven forums – a Science Forum in the Fall and a Humanities Forum in the Spring. An elaborate Earth Day celebration is also taking shape. At this time, 11 classes are participating, and we expect more as the semester gets underway.

Although prior to this year the book program was motivated by the First-year seminar experience, this year the committee is focusing more on a detailed program so to capture both the scientific and political agendas across disciplines that speak to this global condition. Again, we expect a diverse audience of faculty, staff and students. We also expect, as in the past, to open these events to the community.

**Submitted by**  
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