

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

The review team was pleased to note the positive and progressive results described in Penn State Harrisburg's update. The dramatic increase in the percentage of first-year students from diverse racial/ethnic groups is commendable, as are the extensive examples of diversity scholarship from the faculty. Additionally, the team was very impressed with the approach used for reporting progress toward implementing the College's diversity strategic plan. Under the last question of each Challenge, which asked about the measures of success used to gauge progress and requested supporting data, the update listed items from the College's diversity strategic plan and presented subsequent outcomes. Concrete performance indicators with reasonable thresholds of success were compared to actual results. The review team considers this approach to be a useful model that other colleges and academic support units may wish to adopt or build upon for their own reporting needs.

As might be expected, a few lapses occurred in the implementation of this approach (see below, Challenge 1, second bullet, and Challenge 7, third bullet, for examples). Measures of success are not always adequately addressed and outcomes are presented unevenly, sometimes with limited data. Also, the College would be well served by responding to some of the assessment questions more thoroughly.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College is commended for the increase in the number of community attendees in cultural and arts programming and for follow-up initiatives based on climate assessments. More details on these initiatives would be helpful.

RESPONSE: Increased attendance at cultural arts and programming coincided with increased publicity regarding events on campus. Programs that were well-attended by the community included:

Martin Luther King Day drama, King's Dream presentation; Estimated community attendance: 200

International film festival; Estimated community attendance: 80

Rwandan speaker Paul Rusesabagina; Estimated community attendance: 300

Lecture on tolerance by member of the Amish community; Estimated community attendance:100

Jewish Literature Lecture Series; Estimated community attendance:100

Presentation by Holocaust survivor Kurt Moses; Estimated community attendance:100

- ❖ The College's diversity Web site is readily accessible (one-click off the home page), easily navigable, and contains many valuable resources for the campus community. The diversity strategic plan calls for a 10% increase in the number of "hits" to the site (from 1,800 to 2,000 per year), but the update only provides information on how the site was improved, not on how any changes may have increased hits to the site.
RESPONSE: The changes to the web site have not resulted in an increase in the number of hits to the web site, however we have seen a high percentage of new visitors to the site—from 85%-95% new visitors per month.
- ❖ The Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) sponsors an impressive roster of programming and special events. Data on participation and other indicators of program effectiveness would be helpful.
RESPONSE: See data above

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The commitment to continuous climate assessment (the first survey occurred in spring 2003 with a follow up survey in spring 2006) is noteworthy. The update indicates that goals were developed based on 2003 survey findings and will be modified or reaffirmed based on the 2006 survey; however, the team could find no specifics on even the original 2003 goals. The Web report on 2003 survey results is helpful, though it might have been better to also include some summary information in the body of the update.
RESPONSE: Below is a summary of the results from the 2003 climate assessment:

Overview of Major Findings from the Student Survey

The findings from the student survey indicate that students perceive Capital College as a teaching and learning environment that promotes civility and respect for all individuals.

- ***Approximately 90% of students believe Capital College is accepting of diversity and that College personnel, faculty, and students on campus respect and accept diverse cultural traditions and practices.***
- ***Over three-quarters (87%) of the students surveyed believe that Capital College provides equal opportunities for students regardless of their diverse backgrounds, that Capital College is a caring community (83%) characterized by encouraging service and a focus on the well-being of all individuals, and that the College promotes the development of interpersonal relationships (83%).***
- ***Students further perceive that on their campus, intolerance is not tolerated (87%) and that they are provided with mentors/advisers that represent their particular race/ethnic background (86%).***

Some statistically significant differences in the responses of various student subgroups were found, including race/ethnicity, age, gender, enrollment status, resident/commuter, and campus location.

Overview of Major Findings from the Faculty and Staff Survey

Capital College faculty and staff report positive perceptions overall regarding campus climate.

- ***The faculty (98%) and staff (99%) strongly agree that a learning institution must have an environment that includes the ideas of individuals from diverse backgrounds.***
- ***Eighty-two percent of faculty and 92% of staff agree that the campus currently exhibits a climate that is accepting of people who have diverse backgrounds.***
- ***Eighty percent of the faculty and staff agree the College offers the same opportunities for individuals who come from diverse groups as for those who do not.***
- ***Seventy-one percent of faculty agree the College promotes equal opportunities for promotion and tenure of its faculty.***

Overview of Major Findings from the Faculty and Staff Survey (cont'd)

- *Seventy-eight percent of faculty and 91% of staff would recommend the College as a good place to work.*
- *Sixty-eight percent of faculty and 83% of staff agree the College offers an environment that allows for the development of interpersonal relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds.*
- *Regarding perceptions of frequency of observed remarks about members of diverse groups, 88% of faculty and 72% of staff have “never/not very often” heard racist comments by others, 67% of faculty and 70% of staff have “never/not very often” heard sexist comments, and 80% of faculty and 79% of staff have “never/not very often” heard negative comments regarding sexual orientation.*
- *Eighty-nine percent of faculty and 86% of staff have never/once felt singled out in a social setting on campus in a way that made [them] feel uncomfortable.*
- *Sixty-four percent of faculty and 81% of staff have “never/once” witnessed or experienced an act of intolerance during their affiliation with Capital College.*
- *Sixty-one percent of staff agree they are treated with the same amount of respect as are faculty.*

Summary

The findings from the Capital College Climate Assessment – 2003 revealed that students, faculty, and staff hold positive attitudes across the various dimensions of climate about which they were asked.

When significant differences were found within demographic groups related to either their more general attitudes toward diversity or their perceptions of issues directly related to the campus, those attitudes and perceptions remain overwhelmingly positive even when each group was examined separated out from the whole.

The results of the study will serve as a baseline for comparison with subsequent surveys. The survey results have been widely distributed and a series of discussions were developed and scheduled called “Egg Shell” Issues programs. Meetings facilitated by the DEEC co-chair convened faculty, staff and students to discuss issues not normally nor easily discussed in our culture. Two meetings have occurred to date – issues related to immigration, and issues related to race and hate. Both were well attended—nearly 100 faculty, staff, and students attended each session.

Additionally, the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) is developing an action plan to address areas of concern identified in the 2006 survey. Using a process similar to the strategic planning process, the DEEC and the administration will identify individuals/departments to serve as the lead person/group to address the issue. The assigned individual/group will develop and implement an action plan, and a summary report, including actions taken and results.

- ❖ Potential best practices include the collaboration among Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Research and Graduate Studies in planning and delivering program offerings; the Community Assessment and Response Team; and diversity awards for faculty and staff. Data on these initiatives, such as the number of attendees and participants' evaluations of specific programs, would assist the College in assessing their effectiveness.

RESPONSE: The College will develop a standardized form or adapt an existing form for use at College-wide diversity focused events that will systematically provide information on the number of external and internal participants, and program evaluations.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ It is striking that nearly one-third of the College's entering first-year students in fall 2006 are from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Also, an overall two-year retention rate of 71 percent among these groups admitted in fall 2004 is impressive.
- ❖ The update identifies the Multicultural Academic Excellence Program (MAEP) and the co-advising program with the Harrisburg Area Community College as best practices. However, without additional data it is difficult to assess the actual impact of these programs. For example, the 71 percent retention rate mentioned above suggests a positive impact for MAEP, but without retention outcomes for students who actively participate in MAEP compared to students who don't and also have similar academic and demographic profiles, firm conclusions are hard to draw. Additional details like this are needed throughout this section.

RESPONSE: MAEP programming focuses on three transitional areas—academic integration, social integration and cultural exploration. The first program focus, academic integration, was evaluated by obtaining semester to semester persistence rates for MAEP participants. During the fall 2006 semester 116 students participated in MAEP. Of the 116 students that participated, 108 returned for spring semester, 4 students graduated, 2 transferred, and 2 dropped out, which translates to a 93% retention rate and a 95% persistence rate from semester to semester.

While there is no control group established for the program, a performance indicator measuring persistence rates was established, with the goal of achieving persistence rates (retention and graduation) for MAEP participants equal to or greater than persistence rates for the total undergraduate student population. As a comparison, the overall semester to semester retention rate for this time period is 82% with a persistence rate of 91%. MAEP met and exceeded its goal for academic integration.

The second effort, social integration was evaluated through measures of student involvement and attendance at MAEP meetings. The results indicate there is a strong correlation between attendance at MAEP meetings and involvement in other campus activities. During the 2006-2007 academic year attendance at MAEP meetings was as follows:

*25 students attended 1-3 MAEP sessions
43 students attended 4-7 MAEP sessions
57 students attended 8-10 MAEP sessions quantify*

Students who attended 8-10 meetings were highly involved in other organizations and activities. Twenty of these students served in leadership positions for Student Government, Black Student Union, and International Affairs Association, as well as discipline specific clubs and organizations.

The final effort, cultural exploration, included the following programming:

- *Polish/Italian/Hispanic American Traditions Dinner: 83 in attendance*
- *Multicultural History Bowl : 75 in attendance*
- *Presentation on Turkey : 70 in attendance*
- *International Holiday Gathering : 110 in attendance*
- *Celebration of Argentina, and Issues Affecting the Latino Community: 250 in attendance*

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The College is commended for receiving an NSF ADVANCE Leadership award, two EOPC grants, and partial funding from the President's Opportunity Fund for six new faculty hires. This funding has the potential to make a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty.
- ❖ The team is pleased to see that the campus has attained its goal of increased participation of women and staff from a diverse racial/ethnic group in CORED and leadership programs.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The update describes several efforts that have contributed to the support of a multicultural curriculum. The increase in the availability of US/IL courses, the implementation of the new ESL certificate program, and the International minor are good examples.
- ❖ The College has an impressive record of faculty publications and presentations on diversity topics. Further information, including material on course development, teaching innovation, and outreach is documented in the "Annual Faculty Activity Report"; however, it would have been useful if specifics from the report were provided in the update.

RESPONSE: In this reporting period, 18.5% of our faculty participated in diversity-focused research. The diversity-focused scholarly activities of the college's faculty members range from articles in refereed journals, to presentations at conferences, to books. Article topics included using African proverbs as tools for teaching in urban U.S. schools, and strategies for forging multilingual school-based communities. Among the conference topics were sexual identity issues for pre-service teachers, global e-commerce, and British working-class women writers. Books ranged from an investigation of European perspectives in marketing, to race and criminal justice issues, to an encyclopedia of American folklife.

- ❖ The review team found the placement of select diversity courses on the University's E-Learning Cooperative a positive and promising accomplishment.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The support for DEEC by the College administration is very positive; however the update would be significantly strengthened by providing more specifics (e.g., what is the annual budget of DEEC?).

RESPONSE: Annual Budget Allotted from the Office of the Provost - \$20,000

2006-2007 Expenditures

<i>\$3,500.00</i>	<i>Voices of Africa</i>
<i>\$3,500.00</i>	<i>Martin Luther King Dramatic Presentation – "Mr. Dr. Lehar, Friend"</i>
<i>\$3,325.00</i>	<i>Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome – Dr. Joy Leary</i>
<i>\$3,000.00</i>	<i>Pennsylvania National Association for Multicultural Education Conference</i>
<i>\$2,000.00</i>	<i>Awake Historical Presentation</i>
<i>\$ 718.50</i>	<i>LGBTQ</i>
<i>\$ 600.81</i>	<i>DEEC Gatherings</i>
<i>\$ 591.20</i>	<i>Martin Luther King Commemoration</i>

\$ 543.01	<i>Martin Luther King Buttons</i>
\$ 500.00	<i>Diversity Faculty Award</i>
\$ 500.00	<i>Diversity Staff Award</i>
\$ 240.00	<i>Unity Posters</i>
\$19,108.52	<i>Total Expense.</i>

The DEEC also co-sponsored a number of events including:

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Event</i>
\$1,250.00	<i>Latin Dance Lessons</i>
\$1,200.00	<i>Calle Sur</i>
\$650.00	<i>What I love about being Latino</i>
\$4,167.50	<i>Gwendolyn Lentz</i>
\$3,850.00	<i>Brother Moses</i>
\$1,500.00	<i>Barynya</i>
\$1,550.00	<i>Calvin Earl - Storyteller</i>
\$1,400.00	<i>E-baby</i>
\$2,627.00	<i>Sankofa</i>
\$1,350.00	<i>Latin Dance Lessons</i>
\$1,000.00	<i>Chinese New Year</i>
\$2,350.00	<i>African-American History Bowl</i>
\$1,050.00	<i>Le Count Holmes</i>
\$2,083.00	<i>Hispanic GALA</i>
\$2,002.00	<i>Habiba Dance Ensemble</i>
\$1,250.00	<i>Anndrena Belcher - Storyteller</i>
\$360.00	<i>Movie, Ironed Jawed Angels</i>
\$1,000.00	<i>Harry O'Donoghue</i>
\$2,000.00	<i>Tai Yim's Lion Dance</i>
\$519.48	<i>Quay Hanna</i>
\$1,750.00	<i>Alexandria Kleztet</i>
\$34,908.98	<i>Total Expense</i>

Through DEEC programming, and co-sponsored programming, the College supported over \$54,000 in diversity programming.

- ❖ Enhanced participation of employees from diverse groups on the College Advisory Board is a good step.
- ❖ Potential best practice: the College aggressively seeks out external funds to advance career paths and leadership development for women and staff from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Again, the team urges data gathering to substantiate positive outcomes for externally-funded initiatives, such as more information about career mobility among participants, along with more details in general about the College's endeavors for this Challenge.

RESPONSE: We will develop a process that measures career mobility in terms of skill enhancement, additional job responsibilities, and leadership positions outside regular duties.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ It is noteworthy that the Student Affairs Division has reorganized and expanded in order to broaden diversity programming for various groups of students. One noticeable absence on the list was the LGBT community.

RESPONSE: The Offices of Student Affairs, Student Activities and Diversity and Educational Equity offered the following programs for the LGBTQ community during this evaluation period: 1) Development of LBGTQ Library and Resource Center (Housed in the Office of Student Activities), which contains 15 books, videos, which will be increased annually, and a link to materials at University

Park; 2) Gay, Straight Alliance club established at the end of spring semester—twelve students have expressed interest for the fall; 3) Lecture: Safe Zone – Show Your Colors- open to all faculty, staff and students (35 people in attendance)

- ❖ The limited responses to the questions under this Challenge made it difficult for the team to assess progress to date.

RESPONSE: College administrative leadership supports the DEEC with both financial and human resources, and funds an ongoing series of multicultural lectures, music, arts and social programs, and events sponsored by the DEEC. We have seen a 25% increase in attendance at these events in the two years.

*The College presents a Faculty Diversity Award and a Staff Diversity Award, which are presented during the annual faculty and staff awards ceremony. This annual presentation ceremony is attended by over 400 faculty and staff. Recipient names are also published in the College magazine, *Currents*, which has a distribution list of over 30,000. Finally, recipient names are listed on the web site.*

One of the College's most successful partnerships is as co-sponsor of the Race Against Racism with the Harrisburg YWCA, with over 500 participants.

The dedication of the Schwab Family Holocaust Memorial Reading Room brought 100 members of the Jewish community to the event.

*Penn State Harrisburg and the University libraries received a gift of significant photographs and memorabilia given by a private donor and civil rights scholar. Penn State Harrisburg hosted the inaugural exhibit opening, accompanied by a lecture and the publication *Forever Free*, a guide and annotation to the collection, which brought over 300 individuals to the library.*

- ❖ A minor discrepancy exists between the update and the College's diversity strategic plan regarding the first performance indicator for this Challenge. The diversity strategic plan indicates that "13 diversity initiatives, supported by 21 objectives and 58 action items" would be completed in the strategic planning database while the update simply states, "Complete the diversity initiatives," with no mention of the database and followed by the statement, "Work is underway . . ." The review team is disappointed that, apparently, no progress has been made on these initiatives and significant details are omitted in the update.

RESPONSE: The overall strategic plan initiatives have been completed, including all related objectives and action items. The following initiatives remain priority issues year to year, and include:

Continue campus community involvement in programming opportunities with the aim of increasing participation across diverse groups of stakeholders.

Continue to administer the Noel/Levitz Center's Student Satisfaction Inventory annually to measure the satisfaction levels of various student populations and maintain higher satisfaction levels than national average for part-time students, evening students, adult returning students, underrepresented students, commuters, and students with disabilities.

Continue to use The Capital College Climate Assessment results to assist in planning diversity-focused programming and initiatives.

Continue to increase the number of Harrisburg area minority students that attend Penn State, while maintaining an ongoing monitoring system for adjustment and transition of minority students to Penn State Harrisburg.

Continue the diversification of tenure-track faculty. This fall, among the 25 new faculty hires, 40% are minorities.

Continue progress toward goal in all staff employment categories where the availability and goals are unmet.

Continue to improve minority and women retention of faculty and staff.

Continue to increase opportunities for international travel.

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

Continue efforts to diversify Executive/Administrative/Managerial ranks.

Continue to increase representation of women and minorities on campus advisory boards.

- ❖ The update describes several collaborations with internal and external units (the School of Humanities, Harrisburg YWCA, African American Ministerial Alliance, and members of the Harrisburg Jewish community), which are examples of potential best practices in advancing University diversity goals.