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

Penn State Mont Alto's update is well written, well organized, and comprehensive; the update's structure has greatly aided the review team's ability to provide a careful evaluation. The response matrix and narrative provide extensive detail and data for many initiatives; however, it was not always clear how outcomes are measured.

Although the Campus offers a limited set of initiatives, all the programs have been discussed under each of the applicable Challenges, allowing a perspective of the many ways its programs have impacted diversity goals.

Mont Alto has realized great strides in its diversity goals through extensive and effective strategies for recruitment and retention of students in spite of challenging demographics that face many Pennsylvania counties. Initiatives to recruit and retain faculty, staff and administrators from underrepresented groups continue to be a challenge.

RESPONSE: "The faculty and staff at the Mont Alto campus welcome the feedback. The review committee has identified a number of areas that the campus will address over the next few years. In fact, as the campus develops the 2008-2013 strategic plan the issues will be addressed including outcome measurement."

<u>**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**</u>
Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- ❖ The Campus' definition for diversity promotes "respect, value, and a celebration for differences in all their forms" and the update does, in fact, address all areas of diversity. There are many programming initiatives directed toward underrepresented/underserved students and faculty. Identifying comparable programs for staff will strengthen this area.
- ❖ The Campus promotes diversity programs and activities through many forms of communication (e.g., listservs, e-mails, posters, flyers, diversity calendar, newsletters, information sessions, and advising). Assessing the effectiveness of these various methods would be helpful.
- ❖ In presenting the climate survey results, the Campus received recommendations during a Town Hall meeting and student focus groups; information about follow-up would be helpful.
  RESPONSE: "The campus responds to each of the recommendations that surface during a town hall meeting either via email or individually depending on the nature of the recommendations. The majority of recommendations have already been implemented."
- ❖ It is noteworthy that the Campus experienced increased student participation in their nearly 70 multicultural and diversity programs since 2005.
- ❖ The update describes faculty, staff, and student involvement at a number of levels: curricular, co-curricular, one-on-one, small groups and large groups.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
- ❖ Through the strategic plan, the Campus charged the climate committee with "implementation of programs and processes to respond to elements identified by the [spring 2005 satisfaction] survey," but results of any new initiatives to address climate are not evident in the update.
- ❖ Other than physical access issues, there appears to be little programming focusing on persons with disabilities.
  RESPONSE: "The campus has been proactive in addressing the needs of students with learning disabilities. We have procured technology to assist students such as Kurzweil, CCTV and large screen monitors (for the sight-impaired), and Deafnet. The campus library has access to a variety of service through University Libraries. The Director of the Learning Center conducts orientation sessions for students with disabilities at the beginning of the year. Additional programming will be addressed during the 2007-08 year."

❖ The climate survey and the faculty/staff satisfaction survey denote the need to build morale campus-wide. The chancellor is commended for taking steps to acknowledge faculty and staff contributions.

❖ It is impressive that 40 percent of student organizations are identified as promoting diversity.

❖ Potential best practices: addressing the transportation needs of residential students, which represents "out of the box" diversity planning; future programming of the "Diversity Coalition," which may have far reaching effects for improving the diversity climate on the Campus and in the region.

Representation (Access and Success)
Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

❖ Collaborations with local businesses, schools, churches, colleges, technology centers, and health organizations are notable and serve to validate the Campus' commitment to diversity.

❖ Student Affairs is commended for teaming with six area colleges to co-sponsor a conference on "Creating Leaders for a Diverse World."

❖ It is very positive that 57 percent of students serving in student government are from underrepresented/ underserved populations; information about how this was accomplished would be helpful.

❖ Several programs positively impact student retention (e.g., Start Smart, the Learning Center, Student Success Committee, and First Year Steering Team) and others positively impact recruitment (e.g., Leadership U, Dual Enrollment, migrant student program, partnering with Franklin County Tech Center, referrals from other residential campuses, and a 51 percent increase in scholarship money).

❖ Potential best practices: Start Smart, a program for first generation students, experienced a 90 percent retention rate; Enrollment Management successfully recruits in urban areas.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

❖ Women faculty make up 57 percent of the total, and the Campus has also experienced an increase in international faculty, but recruitment of other underrepresented/underserved groups remains a challenge.

❖ The update reveals that there are no staff employees from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The Campus is encouraged to explore the best practices of other campuses to remedy this situation.
   RESPONSE: "This is a major challenge for the campus. The fastest growing ethnic group in our service area is the Hispanic community. The campus will work with the local Hispanic Center to advertise job openings including translating selected position announcements into Spanish."

❖ The use of a diverse search committee, diversity advocates, and the steps taken to diversify the candidacy pool are all excellent approaches; it is not evident why these initiatives lack effectiveness. The Campus is again encouraged to explore best practices of other campuses to remedy this situation.

❖ The Campus is commended for attempts to enhance recruitment by connecting new faculty with community resources to assist their integration into the local community.

Education and Scholarship
Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Foster Intercultural and International Competencies

❖ The Campus has increased study abroad opportunities, U.S. and International cultures (US/IL) courses, and cross-disciplinary courses. The Campus generates sufficient enrollment in these courses to justify multiple sections, an impressive offering for a small campus. Adding additional new courses is encouraged.

❖ Diversity focused research conducted by Mont Alto faculty is commendable.

Institutional Viability and Vitality
Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

❖ Staff participation in the Strategic Planning for Diversity program sponsored by Penn State is a positive first step.

❖ The Campus supports staff participation in development programs (e.g., Penn State Leader, Mastering Supervision, Management Institute, Hendrickson Best Practices Conference for Adult Learners, and others). Information regarding the demographic breakdown of staff participants would be helpful.

❖ Demographics of the campus leadership team show ample representation of women, but strategies for identification and promotion of staff from other diverse groups to serve in leadership capacities are needed.
RESPONSE: "This is a valid point; the campus is committed to increasing diversity throughout the organization."

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

❖ Collaborations with outside agencies, groups, and academia are strong.
❖ The strategic plan contains input from across the Campus, with accountability built-in by assigning specific individuals, groups, and committees responsibility for implementing the activities and requiring regular reports of progress.
❖ Potential best practice: diversity goals that are articulated in the Campus strategic plan, the Master Plan, and the Ten-Year Program Statement.