

Date: December 11, 2006

From: Lynda Goldstein

To: Dr. Charles Davis for submission to W. Terrell Jones, Vice Provost for Educational Equity 314 Old Main

Re: Wilkes-Barre Mid-Term Report for Progress Assessment of *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09*

In response to an invitation from the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, a small group of faculty and staff (Lynda Goldstein, Walteen Grady, and Sue Wysocki) attended two sessions of “Best Practices in Diversity Strategic Planning” on October 14, 2005 and April 4, 2006. With Bill Bachman, this group reviewed the current Wilkes-Barre Strategic Plan for *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09*. We found it severely lacking in substantive actions and meaningful measures of assessment. Further, we found that very little effort had been made to disseminate the plan, assign actions for implementation, or track meaningful data for purposes of assessment.

The original Strategic Plan was written under the auspices of the Commonwealth College, dismantled in Spring 2005. Nearly simultaneously with the dissolution of this administrative structure, there were changes in the administration at the Wilkes-Barre campus. The CEO/Chancellor left in Summer 2005 and the Director of Academic Affairs resigned in May 2005. Interim appointments from the Wilkes-Barre faculty were appointed in Summer 2005, with permanent appointments for the Chancellor in mid-Spring 2006 and Director of Academic Affairs in Fall 2006. Considering these changes, Wilkes-Barre has an opportunity to revise its Strategic Plan for the *Framework to Foster Diversity* to incorporate meaningful goals, actions, and indicators. The attached plan incorporates preliminary revisions noted in *italics*. Further revisions to the plan should become part of the campus’s larger efforts at Strategic Planning.

These efforts at planning—particularly for diversity—necessarily take time under new leadership in order to build consensus. This is particularly the case for a campus that has had significant issues with and negative assessments of its leadership. Responses to the 2004 Faculty/Staff Survey overwhelmingly indicated issues with leadership style, communication, and morale, as well as a variety of employment (fairness of reward structure and supervisory input, pay and benefits, access to professional development and faculty support) and budgetary (staffing levels, allocations) concerns. Even those related to “parking and transportation” were frequently related to broader issues of leadership—the contentiousness of snow removal and/or the requirement of staff to hazard ill-plowed rural roads to campus (often when faculty individually might have chosen to cancel classes despite the campus remaining open) were attributed to poor leadership.

Comments related to some of these non-diversity issues are likely to see some improvement over time. For example, parking is free on campus, but access to lots with the greatest proximity to buildings is limited and is perceived as “unfair” by some. A

newly reconstructed (Summer 2005) main parking lot with increased spaces for faculty/staff, improved lighting, safer landscaping/pedestrian access, and improved patrolling for illegally parked vehicles may lead to fewer negative responses in subsequent surveys. Transportation may remain an issue for those who would prefer not to drive (there is no public transportation to the campus) or who have concerns about driving in inclement weather since the local access roads are inconsistently plowed in winter. That these kinds of concerns are also tied to issues of “respect” for some faculty and staff needs to be taken into consideration as the campus revises its Strategic Plan(s).

Further, changes to administrative structure and personnel may yield more positive responses specific to issues of leadership, communication, morale, employment, and budget. However, it is sometimes unclear which level of leadership prompted the most negative comments. For example, “responses concerning “participation in decision-making” (1.8%), “improve cooperation and collaboration” (1.1%), and “too top down” (1.0%) may refer to issues related to the administration of the former Commonwealth College or the campus, or a combination of both. These responses may also concern relations between campus and University Park as there was a general comment note of “dissatisfaction at the perceived neglect of the campuses by the central administration at University Park”. However, Dr. Spanier was singled out for praise in his leadership.

Teasing out responses to issues of diversity is less easy than one might wish. While those responses to questions that specify “diversity” or a diversity-related category, such as “disability,” are more readily available, there may be diversity-related issues embedded in other responses, depending upon the number and kind of diverse personnel who may be involved. For example, a specific comment in relation to “benefits” was to “extend domestic partner benefits,” which the University has subsequently done. Responses related to “fair treatment” specifically indicated perceptions of gender discrimination while comments related to “respect,” “family friendliness,” and a “faculty/staff” divide (“faculty [treat] staff like second class citizens”) *may* indicate gender discrimination. On this campus, women overwhelmingly fill non-union staff positions while men overwhelmingly fill full-time faculty positions, so issues of respect and a faculty/staff divide are not un-related to gender.

Responses to diversity-specific issues indicated a statistically insignificant split between those who desired less diversity focus (1.8%) and those who desired an improvement to diversity (1.7%). Comments concerning “diversity” are characterized as follows:

DIVERSITY: “Many employees stated that they enjoyed meeting people from all over the world in the course of their job duties. Also included here are the comments in support of Penn State’s efforts to improve diversity within the university.” Specifically, the campus was characterized as “open-minded as far as diversity and acceptance are concerned.”

IMPROVE DIVERSITY: “Respondents who want Penn State to strengthen efforts to have the University community be more representative of the general population and to improve understanding and acceptance of people from underrepresented groups.”

More specifically, respondents indicated concerns that “Penn State talks about sensitivity to diversity issues, but does not always walk the talk” and that too little attention is paid to “minority” religious holidays when scheduling meetings or “when the campus is heavily decorated with Christmas trees and wreaths.”

LESS DIVERSITY FOCUS: “These comments came from employees who said they were tired of having diversity “rammed down their throats” and requested that Penn State pay less attention to the diversity issue. Some of these respondents complained about reverse discrimination against white males at Penn State.” Also included here are comments about the University being “too liberal” or “disrespect[ful of] conservative beliefs/employees.” Specific comments indicate concern with “WAY TOO MUCH POLITICAL CORRECTNESS” (caps in original), “pander[ing] to woman (sic) and protected minorities,” and a claim that affirmative action and equal opportunity are incompatible.

That some employees perceive DIVERSITY as an integral benefit of their employment is very positive, but others note that improved sensitivity (to Jews and Muslims, for example) needs to be put into action at the most basic levels of scheduling work activities such as meetings and decorating for holiday events. While it is unclear whether the “general population” referred to in the IMPROVE DIVERSITY comments refer to a national or local demographic, those in the LESS DIVERSITY FOCUS group exhibit levels of anger and perceptions of discrimination and disrespect that need to be addressed with care. The extent to which these feelings and perceptions may be exacerbated by more generalized feelings of disenfranchisement (from University Park, budgetary decisions, fair employment practices, professional resources, or decision-making procedures) is not easily discernible from this survey instrument.

Thus, the review group of the Campus’s Strategic Plan for *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09* strongly advocates for

- further refining the attached plan in terms of actions and *measurable* outcomes
- including more stakeholders in the process of refining and implementing the plan (faculty and staff are virtually absent)
- taking the time during this first year of a new administration (both Chancellor and DAA) to rebuild campus members’ morale, respect for others, and confidence in its leadership as fundamental tenets to achieving a campus commitment to “diversity.”

The Mid-term report is not a glowing one for the Wilkes-Barre campus. But this year of rebuilding can and should lead to a final report (in 2009) of which we can be proud.

Thank you in advance, for your willingness to accept this interim assessment of the Diversity issues at Penn State Wilkes-Barre.

**Penn State Wilkes-Barre
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
Revised Response Matrix Due December 15, 2006**
Preliminary revisions to 2004 plan are noted in italics

CHALLENGE 1

Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Maintain visibility and credibility of CET	<i>Chancellor</i>	CET	Program costs	Enhanced programming and participation	On-going
<i>Implement at least one experiential program annually</i> <i>Fall 2005 program on disabilities</i> <i>Fall 2006 program on poverty/hunger</i>	CET			<i>CET survey of # of participants yearly</i> <i>Published responses of participants—via campus listserve and/or News/Events article on WB homepage</i>	<i>Fall</i>
<i>Integration of planning and assessment for diversity into all unit strategies and processes</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>Directors</i>		<i>Regular review of all strategies and processes for inclusion of initiating, sustaining or participating in diversity enhancement activities</i>	<i>On-going</i>

Maintain membership in NEPDEC and Intercollegiate Leadership to insure broad diversity programming <i>Membership in NEPDEC stopped Sp 05 Intercollegiate Leadership ongoing</i>	<i>Chancellor, DSES</i>	<i>DSES, Coordinator of Student Activities</i>	\$4500 membership costs <i>Program costs for 7 students</i>	Broad diversity programming <i>Diversity component of Intercollegiate Leadership requires assessment</i>	On-going <i>April, end of IL program</i>
Reinforce Campus commitment to diversity agenda	<i>Chancellor</i>	Directors		Regular communications supporting diversity initiatives and recognizing those who support it <i>Director reports on diversity-related communications to supervisees</i>	<i>quarterly</i>
Nominate CET for University & College Awards <i>Recognition of any faculty/staff/students for diversity initiatives</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>Chancellor, Staff to gather data</i>		University provides campus recognition of outstanding work of CET as a "Best Practice" <i>Yearly campus award</i>	2004 <i>Spring</i>
Post Diversity Statement and PSU Principles in every building & in Student Handbook and Orientation materials	Directors	Coordinator of Student Activities, DBS <i>DBS</i>	Framing <i>No cost</i>	Greater visibility to statements of diversity <i>Assessment of every bulletin board to de-clutter and re-foreground diversity materials</i>	2004 <i>Monthly</i>
Expand Campus and CET Website to include more instances of diversity on campus <i>Include diversity focus on/in all campus publications, including those directed to faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni,</i>	<i>Chancellor, Directors</i>	CET, Webmaster <i>Directors, PR</i>		Greater visibility of diversity initiatives <i>Webmaster report on diversity-related postings to web</i> <i>Director reports on diversity related focus in publications</i>	On-going <i>quarterly</i>

<i>donors, advisory board members, etc.</i>					
<i>Revise the WB Strategic Plan for A Framework to Foster Diversity to incorporate substantive actions, broader involvement in implementation, and specific, measurable indicators of success with real costs and time frames</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>Stakeholders identified by Chancellor</i>		<i>A Campus plan to which all stakeholders have had an opportunity to contribute</i>	<i>2006-07</i>

**Other than employee salaries*

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CHALLENGE 2
Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Implement findings of Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey (conducted in Spring, 2004) <i>Identify major issues of concern</i> <i>Identify concerns related to diversity</i>	<i>Chancellor</i>	<i>Directors</i>	Not yet determined	Campus will address survey findings for improvement of workplace <i>Widely disseminate findings of the Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey and Incorporate appropriate issues into revised Strategic Plan for action</i>	2004-2005 <i>Fall 2006-09</i>

<p>Implement findings of Campus Climate Survey (conducted in Spring, 2003)</p> <p><i>Address issues of intellectual diversity</i> <i>Increase access to international study programs</i> <i>Improve disability access</i> <i>Identify concerns with previous programs related to “diversity” and expectations of participation</i></p>	<p>Chancellor, Directors</p>	<p>CET</p> <p>Chancellor, DAA DAA DBS</p>	<p>Not yet determined</p>	<p>Campus climate will be improved in identified areas</p> <p><i>Assess faculty and student attitudes related to intellectual diversity</i> <i>Promote and measure student participation in study abroad</i> <i>Retrofit buildings and landscape for access meeting ADA requirements</i></p>	<p>2004-2005</p> <p>2006-09</p> <p>2006-09</p> <p>2004-09</p>
<p>Continue NEPDEC and CET programming</p> <p><i>Membership in NEPDEC discontinued in spring 2005 for financial reasons</i></p> <p><i>Encourage and make possible through scheduling faculty/staff participation in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and programming, some of which may be diversity-focused</i></p>	<p>CET, Liaison to NEPDEC</p> <p>Chancellor</p>	<p>CET sub-committees</p> <p>Directors</p>	<p>To be determined</p> <p>Commit to a real budget for CET</p>	<p>Frequent opportunities for participation in diversity programs</p> <p><i>Track attendance and interest at events; make acknowledgement of participation part of annual evaluation</i></p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>Insure handicapped access to all buildings as far as possible</p> <p><i>Insure all signage is friendly and welcoming, rather than restrictive</i></p>	<p>Chancellor</p>	<p>DBS</p>	<p>To be determined</p>	<p>Those buildings will have access for persons with disabilities</p> <p><i>Signage will be assessed and replaced, as needed</i></p>	<p>On-going projects</p>

Expand current mentoring programs for new faculty and staff to insure adequate assistance for those with non-traditional experiences	Directors	DBS (HR), DAA		New employees will find a welcome and chance to be successful on campus	
<i>Implement a campus/regional mentoring program</i>				<i>Establishment of mentoring program and/or dedicated funding to programs on other campuses and acknowledgement of participation in yearly reviews</i>	2007-09
<i>Pro-actively recruit under-represented groups to Advisory Boards of degree programs and campus or invite as speakers or mentors to students</i>	Chancellor, Directors			<i>Increased diversity of community member involvement in campus activities</i>	2007-09

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CHALLENGE 3
Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Expand recruitment partnerships with high schools and community colleges <i>--particularly to high schools with minority populations</i>	DSES	Admissions Office	Travel	Increased enrollment of a diverse student body <i>Project 720 agreements—track # of underrepresented students who participate</i>	On-going <i>Fall 2005</i>

Further implement recommendations of Adult Recruitment and Retention Task Force <i>Identify the recommendations</i>	DAA, DCE, DSES	Admissions, Office, Advising Office	Publicity	Increased adult enrollments <i>Track results from recommendations--# of adults</i>	On-going
Insure adequate academic support services for special student populations	DAA	Coordinator of Center for Academic Success	Tutors and note-takers (\$6.50/hr.)	Tracking of these students will reveal success in their courses <i>Annual reporting to DAA</i>	On-going
Strengthen relationship with Philadelphia Recruiting Center and other minority outreach organizations	DSES	Admissions Office	Travel, food for Open Houses	Increased enrollments <i>Track # of students who enroll as a direct result</i>	On-going
<i>Promote Destiny Scholarships and Enrichment Awards to donors</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Development</i>		<i># discussions, # donors interested, #scholarships</i>	<i>On-going</i>

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CHALLENGE 4
Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Insure adequate supervisory training for effective SRDP process <i>Tie annual review of directors and supervisors to demonstrated effectiveness</i>	Directors	Supervisors	Training	Fair treatment of all employees in SRDP process and greater enforcement of requirement to contribute to diversity efforts <i>Require reporting of contributions to diversity and acknowledgement of these in annual review letters</i>	Yearly, 2007-09

<i>Ensure that search committees are charged with being pro-active about recruiting a diverse workforce and are given the time and financial resources to do so</i>	Chancellor	Chancellor, Directors	TBD	Documentation of diversity recruitment efforts to Chancellor	At end of every search
Insure successful progress of those hired in the P & T process through mentoring	DAA	Faculty mentors	Travel to professional conferences	Successful progress toward tenure and promotion <i>Acknowledgement of mentoring as a University service in annual evaluations</i>	On-going
Advertise for staff positions in outlets read by a diverse population	Directors	Search committee	Publicity	Some new staff will come from underrepresented groups <i>Document actions taken to insure a diverse search from advertisement to interview stage</i>	On-going
Insure successful continuance of employment for staff hires	Directors	Supervisors, mentors	Professional development programs	These employees will be retained if performance is satisfactory <i>SRDP reports of professional development activities</i>	On-going
<i>Provide a 'welcome' package to all new hires that include materials related to diversity</i>	Chancellor, Directors	Administrative Staff			

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CHALLENGE 5

Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Review FYS syllabi to insure diversity issues are covered	DAA	Coordinator of FYS program <i>WB Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee</i>		Students in FYS will be aware of diversity issues	2004 2006-09

Explore opportunities for students to travel abroad <i>Actively encourage students to travel abroad</i>	DAA	Selected faculty		Some PSWB students will participate in CWC travel study courses <i>Assess number of students who participate and publicize their (positive) comments to others Acknowledge faculty efforts in annual review letters</i>	2006-09
Continue to offer campus programming with international and intercultural focus <i>Encourage faculty to incorporate attendance at programs in their syllabi</i>	DAA	CET	Food, travel	Faculty will consider incorporating attendance at these programs into syllabi where appropriate <i>Track numbers of students who attend and report yearly Acknowledge faculty incorporation of programming into syllabi in their annual review letters</i>	On-going 2006-09
Sponsor faculty workshops on how to incorporate international and intercultural competencies into their courses	DAA	Academic Affairs Committee of Wilkes-Barre Senate	Food, materials, possible honoraria & travel for presenters	Some faculty will revise syllabi to incorporate these elements <i># of workshops available DAA will report on # of faculty who participate and/or incorporate int'l competencies and acknowledge in annual reviews</i>	2005 2007-09
Continue Service Learning Option	DAA	Service Learning Coordinator		More faculty will incorporate service learning into courses <i>Report # of faculty who incorporate service learning Document # of students who participate Acknowledge faculty contributions in annual reviews</i>	2007-09

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CHALLENGE 6
Diversifying University Leadership and Management

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Complete search for Director of Enrollment and Student Services	<i>Chancellor</i>	Search committee	Travel	Insure representative pool and diversity review; hire best candidate <i>Committee chair report on diversity efforts</i>	2004

Recommend nominee for University's Administrative Fellowship	<i>Chancellor</i>	Directors		Successful appointment to fellowship <i>Not successful</i>	2004
Review campus committees to insure appropriate representation	<i>Chancellor</i>	Directors		Campus committee will have broad representation	On-going
Strengthen search process to insure questions about managing diversity	<i>Chancellor, Directors</i>	Search committees		Chosen candidates will have demonstrated commitment to diversity	On-going

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CHALLENGE 7

Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

ACTIONS	Person(s)/Office(s) Responsible for Accountability	Person(s)/ Office(s) Involved in Implementation	Cost*	Outcome assessment	Time frame
Partner with regional PSU campuses to promote diversity programming and opportunities	<i>Chancellor</i>	Campus diversity teams	Travel	Regional approach to achieving diversity goals	2004-2005 N/A

Reward outstanding performance of faculty and staff in support of diversity initiatives	<i>Chancellor</i>	CET	Cost of award & reception	Campus community will know who are the outstanding performers <i>Annual awards to faculty/staff</i>	On-going <i>April/May</i>
Insure Strategic Planning goals related to diversity initiatives are well publicized and implemented	<i>Chancellor</i>	Strategic Planning Committee		Campus community will commit to implementing Strategic Planning goals related to diversity	On-going
<i>Reinstitute a commitment to professional development for both faculty and staff that encourages/rewards membership on University-level committees and commissions</i>					
<i>Reinstitute a commitment to professional development for both faculty and staff that encourages/rewards leadership roles in professional organizations</i>					

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