

**Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
College of Communications
Spring 2010**

The College of Communications has demonstrated its commitment to diversity through strategic planning initiatives and measureable outcomes. A broadened definition of diversity, including individuals and groups not traditionally viewed as diverse, has strengthened the College's commitment to diversity. Positioning the assistant dean for multicultural affairs in the leadership circle, as a key member of the Dean's executive committee, helps to ensure coordination of diversity initiatives among offices, departments, and constituencies and sends a strong message about the priority the College places on diversity. Similarly, rewarding student, faculty, and staff achievements in diversity research and service signals how highly the College values diversity. It should be noted, however, that while reward and recognition of faculty is evident throughout the update, staff do not enjoy the same level of commitment.

An increased focus on attracting underrepresented/underserved graduate students to the College is commendable. Initiating Bunton-Waller assistantships, building a recruitment network with HBCUs, and developing a new relationship with Lincoln University are particularly noteworthy efforts. Data support the value of these relationships. Recruiting and retaining a diverse population of faculty, staff, and students is a challenge if diversity is defined narrowly. The College is encouraged to apply its broader definition of diversity in its recruitment efforts. The update appears to place emphasis on the recruitment and retention of students from diverse racial/ethnic groups; attention to gender and other underrepresented groups is lacking. Additionally, the update is somewhat repetitive in its presentation of information; the College may benefit from more streamlined reporting in the future. The use of statistics in the introductory "By the Numbers" section, however, is very effective and provides a strong context for the remainder of the document.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College is commended for its broadened definition of diversity to include individuals with disabilities, low SES, dependent-care responsibilities, veterans, first-generation students, and adult learners. Infusion of this new, broader, definition into all initiatives and programs is encouraged.
- ❖ The distribution of diversity information through the multicultural newsletter, student newspaper, and multicultural journalism workshop newspaper are noteworthy efforts. Is readership measured in any way? Are similar efforts in place for the distribution of diversity information to faculty and staff?
- ❖ It is positive that the College's diversity Web page is linked directly to the main college Web page. The review team recommends data collection to determine the level of traffic on the diversity site.
- ❖ The review team appreciates that data is included from college breakouts of the University's faculty/staff survey; however, the percentages reported would be more meaningful if the total number of respondents for each item was included.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The staff annual diversity day celebration, cultural heritage recognition events, and monthly diversity strategy meetings are all meaningful ways of contributing to a welcoming campus climate. How is the effectiveness of these programs assessed?
- ❖ The College's diversity awards for staff, faculty, and students are high profile means of demonstrating the College's commitment to diversity.
- ❖ The promotion of the College's multicultural coordinator to assistant dean for multicultural affairs, the relocation of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, as well as the frequency and extent of diversity programming offered by the College all combine for a model of intentionality for other colleges.
- ❖ Potential best practices: Webcasts of THON, the Veterans' History Project, and the 5K Dog Jog, if outcomes demonstrate measurable progress.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The engagement of the assistant dean for multicultural affairs in summer programs and myriad recruitment and orientation activities—as well as mentoring, advising, tutoring, academic intervention, and placement activities—is commendable.
- ❖ Undergraduate and graduate diversity student awards and scholarships are impressive, yet only narrowly reflect the College's definition of diversity. The College is encouraged to expand these awards and scholarships to more accurately reflect its new, broadened understanding of diversity.
- ❖ The update makes good use of data for enrollment and retention of underrepresented/underserved students; the College is commended on its multicultural student graduation rate.
- ❖ Best Practice: The collaboration between the assistant dean for multicultural affairs and the associate dean for graduate studies and research in building a network of faculty and administrators at other institutions to enhance recruitment of top students of color. To make a good practice even better, can diverse alumni be tapped more systematically?
- ❖ Best Practice: The student peer-mentoring program, shown to positively impact retention.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The College is encouraged to use its broadened definition of diversity to guide recruitment and retention of faculty and staff. The use of multiple, innovative strategies to enhance the pools of underrepresented candidates during faculty and staff searches is commended.
- ❖ The update lacks data showing satisfaction of diverse faculty and staff; disaggregation of data is critical.
- ❖ The College's extensive use of retention enhancement activities such as orientation and mentoring, multi-year research initiation grants, enhanced travel funding, lab start-up support, support of diversity-related research, faculty colloquia, and promotion and tenure workshops merits special acknowledgement.
- ❖ The review team appreciates the extensive use of data to measure success in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- ❖ Best Practice: Including the assistant dean for multicultural affairs in all searches for diverse candidates.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College is commended for its wide array of diversity courses and diversity/international modules.
- ❖ It is evident that the College enjoys widespread buy-in of diversity in the curriculum among its faculty and students; how was this level of commitment achieved?
- ❖ Potential best practice: Prioritizing diversity-related research when searching for new faculty hires and supporting graduate students who do the same.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The College is commended for charging all associate and assistant deans with responsibility for some component of its diversity strategic plan.
- ❖ The College leadership is visibly committed to diversity, including the dean.
- ❖ There are no female department heads in the College. The team appreciates the racial/ethnic representation in leadership positions. Are plans in place to make similar strides in gender representation?

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The College's efforts to raise funds to support diversity goals, such as increasing expenditures for diversity scholarships, are commendable.
- ❖ The review team notes the positive impact of effective partnerships among the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the associate dean for graduate studies, the assistant dean for career placement and internships, and the Office of Academic Services.