

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

The College of Engineering has submitted a thoughtful, thorough, and data-rich update demonstrating excellent progress toward the goals set in the 2004-09 Plan. The College has increased the representation of minority and women faculty and staff, achieved greater diversity in the College leadership, and put specific programs in place to enhance student recruitment. Efforts to improve the overall climate in the College have been successful. COE has incorporated structural changes in its senior administration by developing an Office of Engineering Diversity headed by an assistant dean. This office oversees the Women in Engineering and Multicultural Engineering Program, along with other recruitment, retention and training programs. The College of Engineering has developed a strong vision of “The World Class Engineer,” which incorporates multicultural awareness and offers extensive courses and programs to equip students with the necessary skills to compete in a global workplace. As the College recognizes, it would be beneficial to extend its successes with regard to women and underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students to include veterans, adult learners, students with disabilities, and so on. The midpoint review called attention to the need for an effort directed to LGBT students, yet the final report did not address this issue. The College is encouraged to publicize the good work they are already doing and to continue efforts to extend support to all groups.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ The College goes above and beyond local resources to benchmark nationally. Using NSSE and PACE assessments of student engagement is laudable, providing a systematic approach to evaluate student experience. While students are generally satisfied with their experiences, it may be useful to utilize focus groups to help better understand those areas where student response could be stronger (*i.e.*, why the average student response to “feeling a part of the community” is 3.5 out of 5). ***RESPONSE: This suggestion will be forwarded to the Challenge 2 Task Team because of the alignment with the Action Items in Goal 2.1 and the inclusion of this survey item as a strategic indicator for the 2010-2015 Plan.***
- ❖ Ongoing support for student groups supporting a wider definition of diversity is positive.

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

- ❖ The College’s Web site could better reflect the diversity of students, staff and faculty.
- ❖ The revised structure for the College’s Diversity Committee, which is now organized around each Challenge, is promising and may become a best practice.
- ❖ The Council of Senior Faculty Women contributes to the favorable climate and is a best practice.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

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

- ❖ It is encouraging to see that the recruitment of women and underrepresented minority students has increased.
- ❖ The College’s orientation, bridge, and Academic Summer Enhancement programs and the Graduate Program director position, with its emphasis on graduate recruitment, are laudable initiatives for the retention of students. It will be helpful in future updates to see data linking these programs to improved retention.
- ❖ Continued support for WEPO and the initiation of Multicultural Engineering Program Orientation (MEPO) sends a strong message of support. These initiatives are best practices.

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

- ❖ The addition of employee development workshops is positive.
- ❖ It is highly commendable that the College continues to place above national averages for both women and underrepresented minority faculty. Attention to women in leadership roles is strong and well documented throughout the update.

- ❖ The College's participation in the Peer Review of Exceptional Performance (PREP) to recognize staff for promotion is commendable. It would be helpful to know how many staff from underrepresented populations participated and were rewarded through promotion.

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ The College offers a wide range of courses that include service learning and/or provide international and intercultural opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on students participating in an international experience. The increased endowments to support student access to these experiences are noted. It might be useful to determine if factors other than finances prevent some students from participating.
- ❖ The new I-LEAP program planned for international first-year students is a potential best practice.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ COE is to be commended for its efforts to provide broader access to the Executive Committee. The review team encourages COE to continue their efforts to ensure diverse leadership and looks forward to their success in this area.
- ❖ Ongoing support for faculty and staff to acquire leadership skills is provided through programs such as Engineering Administrative Fellows program. Information about the success of such programs will be important for future updates.

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

- ❖ The integration of diversity goals into COE publications and activities is notable.
- ❖ Plans for integrating diversity planning into the strategic planning goals for COE are excellent. College-wide efforts to support strategic planning reflect a strong internal process involving many stakeholders.
- ❖ Establishing the Office of Engineering Diversity demonstrates the College's commitment to fostering a welcoming environment and establishes diversity as a top administrative priority. Placing MEP and WEP under the direction of the Office of Diversity and locating their offices near the Academic Excellence Center, Advising and Career Resources offices is a best practice in its integration of important components related to student success.
- ❖ Partnering with University Development to assure the resources to support and sustain diversity-related programs is a best practice.