

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

Addressing a vast array of programmatic, research, and curricular initiatives across multiple disciplines, the College of the Liberal Arts has demonstrated that diversity is an integral part of its mission. Building on this, the College has achieved progress in several of the Challenges outlined in this document, specifically Challenges 1, 3, 5, and 6. Challenges 2, 4, and 7, however, require more attention in the next cycle. The review team was pleased to see longitudinal data presented disaggregated by racial and ethnic categories.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ The College's definition of diversity addresses the many faces that diversity can take, noting for example the ways in which diversity can be defined through number of women hired or number of men hired, depending on a department's current gender demographics. The review team praises this understanding and the level to which the College's dean supports this message.
- ❖ The College Climate Committee is a positive step but may be made even more inclusive through a greater mix of constituents, as students appear to be missing from the composition of this committee.
- ❖ Utilizing the Multicultural Equity Coordinator to raise awareness of diversity at First-Year Testing, Consulting, and Advising Program (FTCAP), convocations, and various events throughout the academic year is noteworthy. However, the College is cautioned to be cognizant that imposing too many responsibilities on one person may impact the effectiveness of this position.
- ❖ The use of the LA Times and the expanded Penn State Newswire with internal and external distributions rises to the level of a best practice.

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

- ❖ The College appears to have addressed concerns about being too narrowly focused on diversity as solely a matter of race and ethnicity by becoming more aware of issues related to the LGBT community and persons with disabilities.
- ❖ The leadership and sexual harassment contacts take considerable responsibility for monitoring climate. Additionally, it is hoped that that the message is translated to all faculty, staff, and administration because of the importance.
- ❖ Providing faculty, staff, and teaching assistants with a lecture series encompassing climate and diversity topics is commendable.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

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

- ❖ Earmarking annual funding for recruiting graduate underrepresented/underserved students is laudable.
- ❖ Development of the "Cultivating Underrepresented Students in Philosophy," a program that brings students from underrepresented/underserved groups to campus while they are still undergraduates, rises to the level of a potential best practice.
- ❖ The College's breadth of programs and partnerships is laudable. In particular, the textbook assistance program, professional advising program, and summer scholarships for graduate students are potential best practices.
- ❖ The Paterno Liberal Arts Undergraduate Fellows Program, a cooperative effort with the Schreyer Honors College serving as a vehicle to advance underrepresented/underserved students, is praiseworthy and a potential best practice. This initiative represents a best practice when data to support this program's success are provided.

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

- ❖ The College's data from 1994 through 2009 present a good picture of the progress made in this Challenge. However, when one examines the period from 2004 through 2009, the period covered by the

current update, the numbers of female assistant professors are down and the numbers of faculty members of color are not as impressive.

- ❖ The use of search teams, short lists, and behavioral interviewing appear to be good approaches to improving staff diversity.
- ❖ Efforts to hire and retain diverse faculty including “maintaining communication” with potential faculty hires and “peer mentoring” for faculty are commendable.
- ❖ Being a cooperating unit with the “Opportunity Network for Employment” (ONE) program in trying to match employees with disabilities to positions in the College is positive.

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ The African and African American Studies, Disability Studies minor, Sexuality and Gender Studies minor, Asia Studies Program and “less commonly taught language initiatives,” all at the undergraduate level, complement the College’s already vast array of diverse curricular offerings and enrich the entire University community.
- ❖ The “Race Relations Project” rises to the level of a potential best practice. Use of peer facilitators in carrying out this Project is worth noting. This initiative represents a best practice when data beyond that of participant satisfaction level are provided to support this program’s success.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ The review team cautions the College in its implication that a positive climate is a diverse climate. Data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and additional diversity demographics (LGBT, disability, etc), would be more valuable in determining the climate.
- ❖ The increase in the number of women leaders in the College is admirable.
- ❖ The College’s ongoing work with the Office of Affirmative Action, such as an annual workshop on best practices for searches and information provided specific to diversity, is admirable.
- ❖ The Administrative Assistants Mentoring Program, created to develop the leadership and management skills of staff within the College is commendable; it is not clear how this program contributes to diversity, as women are most likely to fill administrative assistant positions. Please clarify.
- ❖ The Leadership Workshop, designed to identify faculty members with administrative leadership potential, with special emphasis on faculty from underrepresented/underserved population, rises to the level of a best practice.

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

- ❖ Reorganization of staff and undergraduate advising services in Psychology, English and Sociology via staff reviews appears to be addressing efficiency needs of the College and is noteworthy. It was not clear how these increased efficiencies support the College’s diversity goals.
- ❖ The numerous partnerships in which the College is engaged in advancement of its diversity goals are applauded.
- ❖ The dean’s strong leadership for diversity is laudable.
- ❖ The work of the Africana Research Center, with its mission “reflected through a range of initiatives that represent the development of Africana scholarship across age range, academic level, and Diaspora,” is praiseworthy.