

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

The Eberly College of Science (ECoS) reflects an ambitious commitment to the *Framework*; commendable diversity programs and initiatives are integrated throughout ECoS. However, the overall lack of measureable outcomes limits a realistic assessment of progress. Similar concerns were raised in the 2007 progress report. Many initiatives are meritorious and historical data are included, but minimal new information or metrics are provided. The review team recommends an assessment of existing programs and possible elimination of programs/activities measuring minimal success, and focusing resources on select areas that indicate greater potential for success.

ECoS is applauded for increasing the number of women and underrepresented employees in leadership positions. Challenges continue to be: increasing the numbers of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff; reversing the trend for student withdrawals from the graduate programs; and creating a welcoming climate for all. ECoS is commended for completing a 2008 climate survey. The review team suggests initiating focus groups, open to all stakeholders (particularly students) and perhaps facilitated by the Executive Assistant to the Dean to further evaluate climate, gather ideas, and inform improvement strategies. Continued efforts to increase the interview pool from historically marginalized groups for open positions in both faculty and staff sectors are warranted. Benchmarking against other successful programs may assist with recruitment and retention practices.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The ECoS strongly supports the University's non-discrimination policy.
- ❖ Climate and Diversity Committee programs support LGBTQ, faculty, parents, students, and other groups. No mention is made of programs for the disabled or veterans.
- ❖ It is laudable that the College requires all First Year Seminars to participate in the Race Relations Project. It was unclear whether program data have been updated since the 2006 update.
- ❖ A College Climate and Diversity Committee exists in each department with representation from faculty, students, staff, and administrators. It was unclear how the effectiveness of these committees is assessed.
- ❖ The College lists qualitative and anecdotal data as a measure of effectiveness for this Challenge; quantitative data were not provided for this or the 2006 report.
- ❖ Potential best practice: The Dean provides every employee with an annual mailing of the climate and diversity brochure which includes a list of the members of the Climate and Diversity Committees.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Accomplishments include: 2008 ECoS climate survey results led to goals addressing improvement; creation of a course on supervision which includes diversity issues and topics, which is delivered to all ECoS supervisors; and, particularly laudable, creation of the Dean's Climate and Diversity Awards.
- ❖ It is unclear what initiatives exist in support of persons with disabilities to date.
- ❖ Current training initiatives could be enhanced with input by stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students).
- ❖ Potential best practice: Joint meetings of the College and Department Climate and Diversity Committees to share information and best practices and to develop synergistic strategies and actions to foster diversity.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Recruitment and retention efforts are led by the Executive Assistant to the Dean. This is auspicious.
- ❖ Challenges remain for increasing the enrollment of underrepresented students. "We need to do a better job..." is a phrase used throughout the report, but not defined in measureable outcomes.
- ❖ Student academic performance thrives for participants in the Alcoa Pennypacker program.
- ❖ The Bunton-Waller Fellows Program, which provides merit based awards, has met with success.

- ❖ The list of recruitment and retention programs is extensive. The College will benefit from program evaluations to determine which are realizing the most success and for effective allocation of resources.
- ❖ Graduation rates continue to decline for underrepresented minorities – 17% withdrew. A follow-up study to identify reasons for attrition will inform future practice and identify strategies to mitigate.
- ❖ Potential best practice: Trustee Matching Scholarships and other merit based awards.
- ❖ Best practice: Bunton-Waller Fellows Program and First Year in Science and Engineering House (FISE).

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Biology and Biochemistry have had noteworthy success in hiring underrepresented populations.
- ❖ ECoS could consider utilizing exit interviews and focus groups to determine causes/reasons for the decline in female chemistry faculty reported for 2007-09.
- ❖ Diversifying the P&T committee composition (currently all male) could help achieve ECoS's ambitious five year goal of reaching 25% female representation in tenured and tenure track faculty ranks.
- ❖ Strengthening ties with diverse communities outside of the State College area via inter-departmental relations with OHR to locate potential underrepresented candidates for employment is praiseworthy.
- ❖ ECoS notes its inefficiency to create a sense of community among faculty of color, but without solutions.
- ❖ Networking and engagement of potential faculty early in their graduate training is a positive strategy; extending employment offers prior to graduation could be a potential best practice. No new information is provided about the effectiveness of these strategies which were initially posed in the 2006 progress report.
- ❖ Creating a family friendly environment for faculty/staff, i.e. suggested family leave following a birth or adoption of a child; however no mention is made of the extension of benefits to same-sex parents.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College is commended for investigating several options to support intercultural and international competency requirements; tools for program evaluation are not mentioned.
- ❖ It is praiseworthy that student participants (70 %) in the Race Relations Program recommend the program to other students.
- ❖ Collaboration among several University offices to offer a week long program celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. is commendable. No measures of success were reported.
- ❖ It is noteworthy that nearly 100 science students participated in the 2009 Education Abroad Program.
- ❖ The College realized a goal to have the Education Abroad Records Manager have international study abroad courses added to the Penn State transcript.
- ❖ An update on the merits of the program with Peking University is warranted.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ ECoS is commended for selecting members to attend the University's Leadership and Management Development Initiatives. Projecting a definitive number would be a measurable goal.
- ❖ Potential best practices include: attendance at the Academic Leadership Forum's (STRIDE) workshop; and encouraging participation in the Administrative Fellows program.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ Meritorious actions include: the Associate Deans and Executive Assistant to the Dean work collaboratively with others in support of diversity initiatives; emphasis placed on identifying a Diversity Recruitment Coordinator for each department to focus on graduate recruitment; and linkage with the ECoS strategic plan (although measures were not clearly articulated).
- ❖ Potential best practice: Established partnerships with HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions have the potential to increase underrepresented graduate students and research faculty.