

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

The Smeal College of Business continues to engage in strategic efforts to incorporate diversity into the fabric of the College. The review team especially notes the many programs that are designed to create a welcoming climate for diverse populations, as well as the inclusion of alumni in these efforts. The limited increase in underrepresented students, faculty and staff, however, suggests that alternate strategies may be required to achieve the desired outcomes. Increased efforts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, in particular, are warranted. More focused attention on underrepresented faculty and staff is also needed. The College's attention to honor/integrity is commendable; for the purposes of *Framework* reporting, more explanation of the relationship to diversity and how these essential values "go hand-in-hand in determining the organizational culture and direction of the community" is necessary. ***RESPONSE: The inclusion of Honor and Integrity was never meant to supplant Diversity. It represents the dynamic process within the College in terms of the importance of ideas impacting our culture. This is intended to be an enhancement of our efforts to establish key values and a supportive culture in an ethically challenging business environment. The promotion of honor and integrity is not only meant to impact academic assignments, but to also influence our professional and social behavior. (To treat each other with honor and respect).*** Additionally, the review team questions the use of "mainstream" and "diversity" as terminology used to qualify populations, e.g. "mainstream males" and "diversity females." The team appreciates the candor with which the College shares its failures to meet established goals, but no information is given to indicate how these shortcomings will be addressed. Many lists of activities and initiatives are provided, but no corresponding outcomes are assessed or reported. Attendance appears to be a standard metric throughout the update, but attendance alone is not a measure of success.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College is commended for its broad definition of diversity; more information on how diversity of ideas fits in relation to underrepresented/underserved populations would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: The College encourages the consideration of a variety of ideas that seek to solve business and management problems. We also welcome new ideas and approaches that help to enhance the climate and diversity of our community. We are not monolithic or homogenous in identity or expression of thought. As an example, not all LGBT members of our community share the same idea about how they would like to be identified. We can respect this difference of opinion among members of one of our own underrepresented groups, while we seek out their ideas for improving the climate at Smeal.***
- ❖ The Smeal Alumni Diversity Award and Smeal Student Diversity Award serve as strong public statements about the value of diversity to the College.
- ❖ Potential best practice: The existence of two positions devoted to diversity—the undergraduate diversity enhancement program director and the associate dean for diversity and community—shows a strong commitment on the part of College administration to the improvement of infrastructure vis-à-vis diversity.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ A variety of student programs are designed to create a welcoming environment for diverse groups of students. Future reports would be strengthened by the inclusion of assessment data for these programs.
- ❖ Although the expansion of the Allies Network is a good start, the review team recommends increased efforts and activities directed toward creating a welcoming climate for LGBT students.
- ❖ A college diversity climate survey, with the ability to disaggregate results, is strongly recommended.
- ❖ Several initiatives targeted at the entire college population are reported as being geared toward creating a welcoming campus climate. Please clarify how these efforts benefit underrepresented populations. ***RESPONSE: The College offers a range of initiatives. Many are specifically targeted for underrepresented groups, and others are for the community as a whole. This is consistent with our definition of diversity as stated above. These underrepresented groups do not exist in isolation. We hope that through these holistic initiatives, they will be able to interact in a positive learning***

environment. We are trying to bring diversity to all students, which includes opening the minds of mainstream students and developing a climate that enhances and supports everyone.

- ❖ While the number of focus group attendees was low, the qualitative data provided by the students are rich. Documentation of the strategies developed to address the concerns expressed by students, especially regarding perceived homophobia, should be included in the College's 2010-2015 diversity strategic plan.
- ❖ Focus group results from the "Out in Business and IST" organization indicate a strong perception of homophobia on the part of the College. Has this finding been addressed?
- ❖ Potential best practice: Conducting focus groups with "mainstream males," "diversity males," and "diversity females" and surveying student organizations to gain an understanding of the current climate regarding diversity. The apparent difficulty in attracting enough Caucasian females to conduct a focus group was unclear; what obstacles contributed to this outcome?

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The College is commended for the creation of, and financial support provided to, a variety of student organizations that appeal to diverse students. The team notes, however, that race/ethnicity is the main focus of these organizations. What is being planned for other underrepresented/underserved groups? Outcomes are not reported for existing programs. Additional information is needed.
- ❖ While a number of efforts are specifically aimed at attracting underrepresented students to the College, it is noted that the percentage of undergraduate multicultural student enrollments has decreased between 2005 (16.0%) and 2008 (14.7%). Similarly, the percentage of undergraduate females has decreased from 36.8% in 2005 to 35.2% in 2008. What efforts are in place to address these declines? Conversely, the increase in the percentage of underrepresented MBA students between 2005 and 2008 is noted.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Hiring a recruitment firm to identify candidates of color for a professorship is a laudable strategy for building a diverse workforce. ***RESPONSE: The supply of doctorates in Business is very small, while the demand is extremely great. The College continues to aggressively recruit faculty from diverse backgrounds through referrals, professional conferences and annual attendance at the PhD Project. In addition the College has successfully defended its minority faculty from predatory raids from other universities.***
- ❖ The "informal mentoring program within academic departments" is a positive step. The review team recommends formalizing the program, and extending it to staff as well.
- ❖ A number of retention strategies have been implemented to retain and promote the success of faculty and/or staff; however, few are specifically designed to address underrepresented faculty and staff. Targeted attention to underrepresented faculty and staff is recommended.
- ❖ Data show marked gender imbalance among faculty, particularly at the rank of full professor. What steps are being taken to address this imbalance?

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College's Undergraduate Research Symposium and variety of courses related to international/global business are commendable; more information regarding focus on U.S. cultures would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: Many of the research topics selected by the students had international content or focus, which required them to become familiar with key cultural differences. The international business curriculum addresses culture in terms of different management styles, different marketing approaches, different negotiating techniques, different cultural/religious values and their impact on legal systems, different perceptions and behaviors about gender, age, social status, religion, work ethic, consumerism, etc. As mentioned earlier the annual Start Conference addresses different aspects of culture in the USA.***
- ❖ Strengthening the academic expectations for undergraduate students who study abroad is a laudable goal. The update indicates that the College has enjoyed a 71% increase in the number of students who studied

abroad in recent years. The great majority of these students (86%) studied in Europe. An increase in the percentage of students who study in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America should be a goal for future years. The number of underrepresented students who studied abroad is not reported. Please provide these disaggregated data. **RESPONSE: This is a good suggestion that we will try to implement in the future. Many students cannot afford to take the 6 week program in Korea and South America. It is also important for students to go where they feel comfortable and where their parents consider to be safe.**

- ❖ Potential best practice: The mandatory global immersion program for MBA students.
- ❖ Best practice: Inclusion of the Race Relations module in a mandatory sophomore course. Please provide the numerical data corresponding to the graphs provided in Appendix 5.2.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The dean as chair of the Diversity Advisory Committee, two multicultural positions, the reorganization of the Office of Diversity Enhancement as part of the dean's office, and the associate dean for diversity and community as part of the College Management Committee all convey a strong commitment to diversity on the part of the College administration.
- ❖ It is encouraging that the dean makes diversity a key element in the annual review of all unit heads. How is this accomplished? What elements are assessed, and how does the dean use the information gathered?
- ❖ The review team recommends that the practice of including diversity as an important part of annual reviews be extended beyond unit heads to include all faculty and staff.
- ❖ Data show that all department chairs within the College are white males, and all but six directors are white. The College is strongly urged to continue to increase the number of underrepresented persons within its leadership and management ranks. **RESPONSE: The review committee needs to take into consideration that this is merely a snapshot within the reporting period. Positions of leadership change over time. In the past 10 years, females have held positions of department head and dean. The College is on the right track as we have had changes/improvement since the submission of this report. The College has appointed an Asian female as the PhD Director for the entire College and has several women serving as Ph.D. directors in their departments. In addition, an Asian male has been appointed as the new chair of the Marketing Department.**

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The inclusion of diversity as an integral part of the College's general strategic plan helps to ensure that diversity is considered an important goal for all college constituents.