

THE SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DIVERSITY PLAN

2004-2009

February 16, 2004

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction..... 1

II. The Challenges

 Challenge 1 – Understanding 4

 Challenge 2 – Welcoming Climate..... 4

 Challenge 3 – Recruitment 5

 Challenge 4 – Workforce 6

 Challenge 5 – Curriculum 6

 Challenge 6 – Leadership..... 7

III. Strategic Indicators..... 8

IV. References 8

V. Appendices

 Appendix A - Chart of the SHC Framework to Foster Diversity
 at Penn State, 2004-2009..... 10

 Appendix B - Summary of the SHC Diversity Plan, 2004-2009 14

 Appendix C - SHC Organizational Chart 15

List of Figures

Figure 1. SHC 2004 Diversity Committee 2

Figure 2. SHC Official Vision, Mission and Goals Statement 3

Schreyer Honors College

Diversity Plan 2004-2009

A Framework to Foster Diversity

I. Introduction

This plan was put together with the input from our Faculty Advisory Committee, Student Advisory Committee, and Dean's Council with oversight by the Schreyer Honors College Diversity Committee (see Figure 1).

The Schreyer Honors College developed the 2004-2009 Diversity Plan based on the principles embedded in the Vision for the Pennsylvania State University:

To lead the nation in the integration of teaching, research, and service

as well as the Schreyer Honors College's Vision, Mission and Goal Statement (see Figure 2), its definition of diversity, and its past experience over the last six years. The SHC's definition for diversity is as follows:

The Schreyer Honors College (SHC) defines diversity broadly to include population differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, abilities/disabilities, veteran status, international status, language, political persuasion, and regional or geographic origins, as well as different talents, interests, ideas and creativity.

Taken together, our mission and vision statement along with our definition for diversity continue to support our strategic plan, that is, to specifically:

1. enhance academic excellence through greater support of high-quality teaching, scholarship and research
2. enhance the educational experience of all Penn State students
3. build a more considerate and civil community, and
4. serve the people of the Commonwealth.

The plan is framed by the Challenges developed by the Office for Educational Equity and Penn State's Diversity Plan for the university. More specifically, the plan outlines actions and accountability for those actions as charted in Appendix A and summarized in Appendix B. Please note that the plan must be viewed as an "organism in the process of growth and development" because the SHC is committed to continually update, improve, and add to the plan as new opportunities and/or resources become available. The college is also committed to "failing forward" (Maxwell, 2000). That is, if a program, concept, or initiative does not produce the desired results, the SHC will learn, adjust, and press on anew, gaining from past experience and enhancing its planning and implementation in the future.

Figure 1. SHC 2004 Diversity Committee

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Figure 2. Schreyer Honors College Official Vision, Mission and Goals Statement

VISION:

- To educate men and women who will make important differences in the world, affecting academic, professional, civic, social, and business outcomes.
- To improve educational practice and to be recognized as a leading force in honors education nationwide.

MISSION:

To promote academic excellence in all fields of study, internationalization, leadership, and social and civic responsibility in our student body and across the Penn State community.

GOALS:

- To provide academically talented and highly motivated students with meaningful learning experiences that will prepare them to continuously learn, apply, and create new knowledge throughout their lifetimes.
- To provide our students with meaningful opportunities that will challenge them to reach their full potential as thoughtful, creative, responsible, caring, and productive persons.
- To provide university-wide leadership in developing, testing, and modeling outstanding educational practices and community involvement in both in-class and out-of-class settings.

Approved in 1999 by:

*External Advisory Board
Faculty Advisory Committee
SHC Student Council
Scholars' Assistants
University Provost's Office*

II. The Challenges

Challenge 1. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

A driving force of the SHC mission is to build and sustain an integrated community of active, caring people, regardless of where they come from, what they look like, or what brings them to the college and to celebrate the rich community that develops when a diverse group of people meet this goal.

Therefore, the SHC views diversity experiences in classroom pedagogy, in the curriculum and in the community as central to the College's mission and essential to a quality undergraduate education. Achieving academic excellence, building an international perspective, and creating opportunities for leadership and civic engagement are impossible without understanding and valuing diversity. The SHC's record for the past five years amply illustrates its commitment in concrete terms to its definition of diversity with measurable outcomes in terms of courses offered; sites visited; numbers of students, staff, and faculty engaged; and communities involved both domestically and internationally.

In the next five years, the SHC will expand diversity training for all staff to fully reflect the complete definition of diversity with the SHC. It shall also continue to incorporate a diversity focus in a full range of publications, both in print and electronically.

Challenge 2. Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

The SHC visibly demonstrates its support for diversity through sponsorship and co-sponsorship of diversity programming both within the SHC and university-wide. The SHC also publicizes diversity programs sponsored by other units on its twice-weekly student general information listserv. Diversity programming highlights and notes about the importance of diversity are also a regular part of the monthly SHC newsletter, *Update*, included in the dean's message on the front page, and the *Keeping In Touch* (KIT) staff newsletter. At least one book on the Schreyer Scholar summer reading list addresses issues of diversity.

The SHC also strongly encourages colleges and departments around the university to offer credit honors courses with a focus on diverse people and issues. Special care is also taken to integrate diversity into the curriculum taught by SHC faculty. For example, a new course offered spring semester 2004, entitled HIST 297A/HIST 497H "Struggle for Freedom: A Journey South through the Black Civil Rights Movement" course is offered for the first time with cooperation and support from Robyn Spencer (African and African American Studies & History), Nan Woodruff (History), Cary Fraser (African and African American Studies & History), and Keith Wilson (Department of Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology, and Rehabilitation Services) along with

Cathy Lyons (Agriculture) and Thomas Poole (Office for Educational Equity) as advisors. This course is designed according to an SHC signature course model that includes an academic introduction to the material, an experiential learning component (in this case a bus trip that roughly follows the Freedom Trail), and a service learning component. It is hoped that this particular model will be picked up and supported by a variety of academic and campus colleges in the future. Ideally, a variety of "Struggle for Freedom" courses will be offered in the future as well, addressing additional diversity issues such as women's suffrage, apartheid, the Native American movement, and emerging democracies in Eastern Europe among other possibilities.

In the next five years, the SHC will expand upon its efforts of creating a welcoming campus climate by periodic formal assessments of the climate using surveys and focus groups and by systematically gathering feedback from underrepresented scholars on their admissions decisions (trade-offs, appeals, and barriers). Programming will be refined, with a minimum of 2-3 events/semester with at least 2-3 partners per semester, focusing on quality (vs. quantity alone).

Challenge 3. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

The SHC helps to recruit undergraduate students from underrepresented groups by: (a) purchasing the names, addresses and SAT scores for students of color for the entire U.S.; (b) by proactively sending letters to those students identified; (c) by weekly monitoring applications to Penn State from students of color and inviting academically qualified students to apply to the SHC; (d) by sponsoring recruitment sessions for high achievers in urban cities to introduce students of color to the SHC during their junior year of high school; and (e) by having the dean, members of the SHC External Advisory Board, (including Mr. Schreyer), and current SHC students of color make phone calls to students of color who have been offered admission to the SHC.

The SHC also collaborates with the Office of Admissions and the multicultural coordinators in the academic colleges to locate and recruit undergraduate students from underrepresented groups.

In the next five years, the SHC will hold receptions in major cities for talented students in underrepresented groups in Bethesda, Maryland, New York City, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh on an annual basis, focusing primarily on juniors in high school to educate them about the opportunities available to them at the SHC and Penn State. In addition, alumni collaborations in each of these cities will be sought to assist with recruitment. Finally, additional efforts will be made to identify faculty of color and to publicize for scholars lists of honors faculty who teach courses with a diversity focus, as well as those who teach or conduct research outside the U.S.

Challenge 4. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

The SHC has a very small staff composed of only 13 FTE. Whenever a full-time staff position is open, the SHC has posted the opening to the Women of Color Listserv and the CORED Listserv. The Administrative Fellows network has also been used as a resource for seeking suitable candidates university wide and to solicit the application of former fellows to suitable positions in the SHC. Ironically, of the 13 FTE, the college currently has only two male staff members, though over the 1998-2003 time period four different men have worked in the college, in three different staff positions. So, while we may pat ourselves on the back for recruiting so many women, the SHC has been very conscious of men as being a locally-underrepresented population in search and hiring considerations, as well.

At this point, it is also appropriate to broaden the definition of “staff” for the purposes of contemplating this challenge. Along with the 13 FTE employees, several individuals work actively with the college in high visibility positions. These include the Scholar Assistants (students) and work-study employees (students). Posting work-study job openings in the *Collegian* has helped us successfully recruit work-study students from underrepresented groups.

In the next five years, the SHC will add focus groups to determine additional methods for recruiting a more diverse staff. It is also worth noting that the SHC does not have its own faculty, so “recruitment” for honors instructors and honors advisors is not a result of SHC hiring practices. Nor is the SHC able to directly control which faculty are selected for these roles. However, as mentioned above, the SHC will conduct appropriate institutional research to identify faculty and their teaching and research interests to increase the diversity of honors advisors and instructors as well as to identify those faculty who teach diversity-focused courses, participate in research abroad, and/or who are otherwise engaged in what may be described as intercultural or international activities.

Challenge 5. Developing a Curriculum that Fosters International and Intercultural Competencies

The SHC has collaborated with numerous academic partners to support multicultural curriculum efforts and has initiated several new honors courses with a multicultural domestic focus as well as those with an international component or focus. We will continue to showcase these courses (eg, “The Reinvention of Urban Poverty” in the Geography department that includes a two week action research component in West Philadelphia) to the Schreyer Scholars and the university as a whole.

Our new “Struggle for Freedom” signature course series was offered in spring 2004. An intercollege honors faculty team designed and planned the pioneer course experience, “A Journey South through the Black Civil Rights Movement”

scheduled as a pair of courses HIST 297A/HIST 497H in spring 2004. It is hoped that this course series will expand in the future to international as well as domestic sites, e.g., Poland and South Africa.

Many SHC courses help students acquire an international perspective as part of helping achieve the college's overall mission; these courses focus on multiculturalism in both a national and international context e.g., HOINA, Education in Indian Orphanages. At least 5-6 courses of this type will be developed and promoted by the SHC annually.

The SHC also partners with the Hubert Humphrey Fellows program to give Penn State undergraduates the opportunity to interact with mid-career professionals from developing countries around topics of mutual interest such as the digital divide. The SHC will encourage more faculty to engage the Humphrey Fellows as well, both in class and in co-curricular events. Even more importantly, over 200 Schreyer Scholars study, conduct research or perform service abroad each year. The SHC will continue financial support in this area and strongly encourage students to participate in this opportunity.

Challenge 6. Diversifying University Leadership and Management

A culture of staff development and cross-training permeates the college. Set aside funds are allocated each year to support individual staff development. Each individual staff member and administrator is required to set goals and objectives for the year, including personal development and diversity awareness. These are taken into account during the annual review and assignment of merit increases.

Staff members are encouraged to participate in the university's Administrative Fellow program, the Commission on Women's mentoring program, and to take university and HRDC courses. Currently, out of a total of 13 FTE, three full-time staff members are pursuing undergraduate degrees and one full-time staff member is pursuing a graduate degree. In addition, SHC staff members are encouraged to attend Penn State Forum lectures, and administrators are encouraged to participate in the Academic Leadership Forum, both of which often address issues of diversity.

In addition, staff members are encouraged to participate in the various course initiatives that the SHC participates in, traveling when appropriate with students. For example, one staff member will accompany students on the bus ride with the "Struggle for Freedom" class during the spring break of 2004; another will travel to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation with a class; other staff members will be encouraged to travel abroad.

In the next five years, the SHC will set as a high priority and actively try to diversify the Faculty Advisory Committee as well as its External Advisory Board.

Challenge 7. Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

The Schreyer Honors College will continue to develop partnerships university-wide to sponsor or co-sponsor co-curricular programming as well as new courses that support the university's diversity goals. The College will continue to support the Faculty Senate's efforts to engage faculty on diversity issues and will work with curricular affairs committees to obtain permanent course numbers for more of the SHC signature courses. Diversity training and related issues will also be forwarded in the Leadership Roundtable, sponsored by the SHC for staff and faculty teaching leadership to undergraduates across the university.

III. Strategic Indicators

The chart in Appendix A specifies targets and the person/position accountable for each action step proposed by the SHC in this diversity plan. An organizational chart (Appendix C) is also included to further clarify which people or positions in the Honors College are responsible for what functions. Some of the indicators are as follows:

- The number of seed grants and new courses developed with SHC assistance that focus on diversity-related issues
- The number of SHC signature courses that gain Faculty Senate approval and a permanent course number
- The number of honors students who enroll in diversity-focused courses
- The diversity (or changes in diversity) of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the External Advisory Board
- Number of students who participate in study abroad and/or international research or service experiences
- Results and follow up actions on focus groups and surveys of climate in the SHC
- Number of under-represented students given offers to the SHC
- Acceptance rate of under-represented students given offers to the SHC
- Number of active partnerships the SHC has with other units to sponsor diversity-focused events within the College and university-wide

IV. References

Maxwell, John C. *Failing Forward*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, March, 2000.

Schreyer Honors College. Final Assessment for Implementing A Framework to Foster Diversity 1998-2003. Final Report. Submitted to: Office of Educational Equity, February 16, 2004.

V. Appendices