

Feedback on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
College of Education
Mid-Term Progress Report
Spring 2007

The College has prepared an excellent and comprehensive update that outlines its diversity efforts over the past few years. The description of the College's programming includes the efforts of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni in a manner that is integrated throughout the functions of the College. The update also made good use of data to illumine the College's progress toward its overall goals and provide evidence of the efficacy of specific initiatives.

Although it is evident that the College is fully invested in the University's diversity mission, the update did not explicitly address the individual questions posed under each of the *Framework* Challenges, nor did it correlate the many programs and activities mentioned to specific items in the College's diversity strategic plan. Within its narrative, many if not most *Framework* questions are, in fact, taken up in one way or the other, and additional information is available for many items in the College's diversity strategic plan. However, due to the approach taken, some *Framework* questions are left unanswered (e.g., Challenge 1, questions 5 and 6), and it is unclear from the update itself which specific endeavors advance the College's diversity strategic plan. For the final report, the team urges compliance with the protocols of the diversity strategic planning and reporting process to enhance the overall quality and utility of the report.

RESPONSE: We have found the narrative approach to work best for the different audiences we address with our report. We believe we have addressed the Framework questions in the narrative and will be attentive to this issue in our next report.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The Pennsylvania State Educational Partnership Program (PEPP) and the Summer College Opportunity Program in Education (SCOPE) are two excellent programs that encourage urban youth to pursue post-secondary education and consider careers in education.
- ❖ The College's conception of diversity is broad, though some gaps are present. The team notes that no specific mention is made of low-income or first-generation students, though some programs in the update address the needs of these students. The College is encouraged to articulate specific goals for these students and to supplement the urban youth initiatives with projects directed towards low-income, first-generation rural youth. More attention could also be given to the needs of the LGBT community.
RESPONSE: Our outreach/early intervention programs are designed to enhance the academic preparedness as well as increase the self-esteem and social development of low income/first generation students. PEPP provides academic and social programs for K-12 low income, first generation, underrepresented and/or at-risk students and their families. SCOPE selection criteria indicate that "Preference is given to first generation and economically disadvantage candidates." Our retention programs place emphasis in the development of academic and social support systems for first generation, economically disadvantage students. We maintain collaborations with all TRIO programs as well as with several federally funded equity programs. The majority of our scholarships are need based assisting primarily low income students. Most of our Centers & Institutes provide outreach services to disadvantage communities. The Center on Rural Education & Communities (<http://www.ed.psu.edu/crec/home.htm>) and The Goodling Institute for Family Literacy (<http://www.ed.psu.edu/goodlinginstitute/>) are remarkable examples of our efforts.
- ❖ Professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students are offered on a regular basis and utilize the expertise of several College, University, and external faculty and staff. The initiatives reflect a thoughtful and targeted approach to training across a range of diversity topics.

- ❖ The continued investment and growth in the Office of Multicultural Student Services (MSS) is very positive, including the move into new facilities, which augments the effectiveness and visibility of the office. The update would have been strengthened by a better delineation of the role of the multicultural coordinator.

RESPONSE: The Director's position is currently under evaluation for re-classification.

- ❖ The College Diversity and Community Enhancement Committee is an established group that maintains an active home page on the College's Web site and produces an annual report posted on the site. It is very positive that the large group works from a charge that is periodically reviewed and updated.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ A Futures Committee of the Diversity Committee has been established to focus on student recruitment, retention, and graduation for doctoral programs.
- ❖ The Web site that serves as a resource for resolving climate concerns is an excellent concept, especially the idea of "one-stop shopping."
- ❖ The College has taken numerous positive steps towards expanding its links with organizations in the urban areas of Pennsylvania in order that its student population will have exposure to a diverse mix of students and colleagues as they prepare for future employment.
- ❖ Specific climate-related language now incorporated into promotion and tenure guidelines and committees created within each of the five academic departments that are focused on diversity and related climate issues are potential best practices.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The inclusion of data indicating enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for undergraduate and graduate students provides useful information in reviewing trends over the past few years.
- ❖ The appointment of a contact person for the International Future Education Association provides an opportunity to advance leadership development in that position and clearly serves to increase the visibility of the College and give it access to more than forty-two high schools.
- ❖ The development of the Multicultural Advancement Alumni Council has resulted in an organized method for engaging alumni of color in College initiatives, employing Eluminate Software.
- ❖ The decision to reorganize the mechanism employed to allocate scholarship dollars so that it now includes the MSS director reflects the College's commitment to integrate attention to diversity issues across administrative functions and actions.
- ❖ The collaborative efforts among MSS, College leadership, faculty, staff, and students suggest that the goal to integrate diversity practices throughout the College has been very successful.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The College now participates in the Institute for Teaching and Mentoring; this is a positive move.
- ❖ The College was selected to participate in the Compact for Faculty Diversity's "Faculty and Graduate Recruitment Fair." The College is encouraged to continue active participation in this event.
- ❖ Comments were made with respect to recruitment and retention trends. However, there is no evidence of a specific recruitment plan for faculty and staff. This needs to be addressed.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The review team is happy to note that faculty are developing new courses which focus on diversity related issues and that existing courses have been revised to be more responsive to existing and emerging topics in the field.

- ❖ It is noteworthy that the College continues to seek ways to strengthen its presence in urban communities in the Commonwealth and has presented strong examples of its success in doing so. On-going efforts to increase field placements in diverse settings include Penn State campuses and the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez and reflect a willingness to explore alternatives.
- ❖ Potential best practice: additional support for instructors interested in strengthening the diversity content of their courses provided through the inclusion of a curriculum resource center in the MSS office. This center supports the commitment to advance diversity content across the curriculum as expressed throughout this update. The team urges data gathering to support the efficacy of this endeavor.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The College has undertaken a number of management initiatives that provide leadership opportunities for women and people from diverse racial/ethnic groups. The review team urges the development of a comprehensive plan to recruit, train, and retain a diverse management team.
- ❖ Professional development opportunities for all staff are not sufficiently articulated, and attention should be given to this important area.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The review team commends the College for identifying new and enlarged space for the MSS office. The College should consider elevating the status of the director of MSS to reflect greater academic and management authority.
RESPONSE: The Director's position is currently under evaluation for re-classification/ promotion.
- ❖ The College is encouraged to seek greater diversification of recruits to the College through expanded use of coordinated personal visits, HBCUs, and on-site networking.