

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

It is positive that the College of Health and Human Development has made assessment a priority for the second half of this *Framework* cycle. The presentation and structure of the update was clear, and the strategic actions provide an outline for follow-up. More supporting documentation is necessary throughout. Specification of which groups are considered to be underrepresented or minority in relation to the initiatives of each Challenge should be given. At times, the focus seems to be more generally on women although they do not appear to be underrepresented in the College as a whole; an explanation would be helpful. Also, the update concentrates almost exclusively on students; attention to employees should be noted as appropriate in each Challenge. In its conclusion, the College notes the need to develop measures to gauge outcomes; the review team concurs that this effort is of critical importance. An incoming dean who shares the College's commitment and recognition that diversity is integrally bound with the scholarship of the disciplines will find much good to work with.

RESPONSE: The College appreciates the thoughtful feedback received from reviewers. We have provided select additional documentation concerning critical aspects of our progress. As noted, we would agree that the focus of our report did not give adequate attention to staff, but would disagree that there was a general focus on women. We are committed to crafting a future report which is illustrative of our diversity plan and initiatives.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Critical analysis of an initiative that was not successful, the Diversity is All of Us poster campaign, is appreciated as an example of the learning and growth process of the *Framework*.
- ❖ There are many good actions addressing this Challenge, particularly articles in the various communications (Strategic Action #4) and the array of presentations listed in Table 1, which indicate a broad range of topics and quality speakers. However, the audiences are not identified nor are responses or expected outcomes clear.

RESPONSE: The College will give special attention to information about audience participation and expected outcomes in future reporting.

- ❖ Continuation of the Diversity Achievement Award is positive.
- ❖ Including diversity in FYS is positive. Involving the Race Relations project and the New Student Survival Skills represents good use of existing resources; this initiative should be considered for expansion.
- ❖ The departmental activities listed demonstrate local commitment to diversity. Shared vision at the College level is less obvious. The tiered diversity committee and work plans may foster greater cohesiveness.

RESPONSE: The development and enhancement of a shared vision is an ongoing process to which the College is fully committed.

- ❖ "Ruminations with Ray" might provide a model for future use if more consistently focused on diversity.
- ❖ Potential best practice: incorporating diversity related presentations (Table 1) into a College-wide approach that makes use of the presentations across the College and the University.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ To better foster a welcoming climate and encourage opportunities to celebrate and learn from differences, the College is encouraged to approach developing a welcoming campus environment *because of* rather than *regardless of* the various factors (Strategic Action #6).
- ❖ Although the sample size of the focus groups of underrepresented graduate students was too small for significant generalization, some indication of the results and how they were used would be helpful.
- ❖ The "Diversity is All of Us" event seems to be a positive experience; however, the measures do not capture the impact. The nature and audience of the event are also unclear (is it a student oriented event or aimed at faculty and staff as well?). For subsequent events, more substantive feedback should be reported.

- ❖ The network of environments to which climate concerns may be reported is positive. More information on resources and support provided if a climate concern does arise should be reported.
RESPONSE: In the 2004-09 Mid-Term Progress Report section addressing Challenge #2 we provided illustrations of some departmental initiatives. Though the efforts of every academic unit were not provided, every unit in the College is engaged in activities which demonstrate its commitments.
- ❖ Activities signifying leadership commitment are noted for four departments. Shared vision at the College level and for the remaining departments should also be reported.
- ❖ Summary results of the 2003 student survey could be reported. The College might consider conducting a brief student survey on a more frequent basis to supplement the climate assessment on a longer timetable.
RESPONSE: The College reported the 2003 student survey results in the 1998-2003 Progress Report Final Report and did not repeat the results in the current mid-term document. The College has made a major commitment to a comprehensive, college-wide (all administrators, faculty, staff and students) climate assessment, which is in its final stage of development and will be implemented in Fall '07. The results of this assessment are considered critical to our ongoing efforts to monitoring the climate for diversity in the College.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Data to address goals and progress toward recruiting and retaining a student body are necessary. For example, what, if any, are the disparities within the College of HHD with respect to enrollment, retention and graduation rates among the diverse students? Are men underrepresented in some majors?
- ❖ It is positive that several departments have recruitment efforts with partner schools. Data documenting the effectiveness of this strategy, including numbers over time and retention, should be reported. The College's collaboration with the NIMH COR program is positive; however, it was unclear whether it was specific to one department or extended across the College. Additional collaborations are also positive.
- ❖ Participation in SROP and support for student organizations are noteworthy.
- ❖ The graduate recruiting plan is not clear; specifically, whether women are underrepresented at that level.
RESPONSE: The transition in leadership in the College and the informative feedback received from the Mid-Term Progress Report, provides an excellent opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review of our current graduate recruiting practices. We wish to clarify the inquiry regarding whether women are underrepresented at the grad level. In Fall 2006, female graduate students represented 60% of the total enrolled graduate student population.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ More information on the effectiveness of allowing underrepresented faculty to "buy-out" teaching time to focus on research, including whether other tenure-track faculty are afforded similar opportunity, would be helpful. Hiring faculty with similar or related research interests may also be a positive approach, as is mentoring. It is unclear whether collaborative research and mentoring are formalized efforts.
- ❖ Data regarding faculty and staff demographics and changes should be reported.
- ❖ Approaches to recruiting and retaining underrepresented staff should be specified more clearly.
- ❖ It is positive that the College identified the potential drawback of over-utilizing a limited group of people by ensuring diverse search committees.
- ❖ The College is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts to recruit and hire diverse faculty and also to focus on diverse representation beyond members of diverse racial/ethnic groups.
RESPONSE: The College has updated the strategic plan and subsequent descriptions of faculty recruitment initiatives so that it appropriately reflects the broad recruiting objectives held by all academic and research units of the College.
- ❖ The review team acknowledges that diversity-related scholarship and curriculum are deeply imbedded within the discipline; however, given the College's response to the feedback on the 2004 plan more information about how diversity is valued in tenure and promotion and the SRDP would be appropriate.

- ❖ Potential best practice: Proactively seeking and courting potential faculty prior to position availability and maintaining that contact; distribution of guidelines for diverse faculty recruitment on search committees.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College is commended on the diverse and interesting array of courses offered. Information such as how these courses were advertised, enrollment and attrition rates, and brief description of the end-of-semester course evaluations would be beneficial.
- ❖ Good use of the Race Relations Project as a resource in courses such as FYS.
- ❖ There seems to be limited activity in the area of international curriculum or educational opportunities, with the exception of Nursing.

RESPONSE: The College has a number of departments which are fully engaged in international initiatives and coursework. Among the initiatives that could be noted are those conducted by the Biobehavioral Health and Human Development and Family Studies departments. These units are engaged in research in Africa, France, Germany, and Sweden. Their research projects and collaborations have included opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to study abroad. Additionally, the School of Hospitality Management is developing a "Spanish in Hospitality" series of courses with the Spanish Department, followed by an internship experience in Puerto Rico.

- ❖ The list of diversity-related faculty research demonstrates commitment to creation of knowledge and understanding of diversity issues. Diversity is cast in very broad terms in this section.
- ❖ Potential best practice: The Urban Community Partnership; measures should be developed.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Required attendance at the Affirmative Action briefing is commended. More information on specific efforts to ensure diverse applicant pools for administrative positions would be helpful.
- ❖ It was unclear how the College identifies and encourages interested diverse faculty to seek leadership development efforts and if there are mechanisms in place regarding staff.

RESPONSE: The efforts to increase leadership opportunities has been an ongoing commitment strongly encouraged and modeled by the Dean and Executive leadership of the College. Specific efforts by the administrative units, academic departments and human resource office for all employees of the College will be highlighted in the next reporting period.

- ❖ Progress has been made to increase diversity in the leadership of the College.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ Establishing three College-wide goals supported by the nine departments demonstrates leadership commitment and fosters accountability.
- ❖ It is positive that the Director of Diversity Enhancement Programs is on the College executive committee.
- ❖ Potential best practice: Creation of the tiered diversity committee structure. In the 2009 report, it will be important to demonstrate the **impact** of the committee work, programs, etc.