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

IST has a comprehensive diversity strategic plan with a strong focus on creating and maintaining a welcoming climate. IST is commended for broadening its definition of diversity to focus on "intellectual diversity" in addition to demographic diversity. This measure ensures that "minority" critical perspectives will not be penalized either in the achieving of tenure, post-tenure promotion, or salary increases. IST introduced a new aspect of the College's philosophy of diversity: that it is each "individual's responsibility and commitment" to make the community respectful of diversity in all its forms. Though sensitive to the challenges posed by lack of turnover, the review team expressed concern that the College appears to be frozen on leadership; that is, persons in executive positions are exclusively white males. Planning to develop metrics during the remainder of the *Framework* period is strongly encouraged.

RESPONSE: We agree. Metrics were noticeably absent in the document. We have set a strategic goal to move from ~13% women and minority students in the IST/SRA undergraduate population to 30% in the next five years and ~40% in the seven years. This is a stretch goal, but it is one that we can organize around and for which we can create measures.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- ❖ IST has made significant progress in increasing the visibility of its Diversity Committee. The review team noted favorably that the committee has direct access to the dean, as well as its own budget.
- ❖ The Assistant Dean for Equity and Diversity speaks about diversity at all student orientation activities. The College is commended for acknowledging a need to reinforce student understanding of the definition of diversity and related expectations for behavior, and is encouraged to follow-up on this issue.
- ❖ The Diversity Committee has presented numerous programs, and the College hopes to develop diversity conferences and other formal mechanisms for discussing diversity initiatives with faculty and staff, such as increased attention to diversity in faculty/staff orientation programs. This is a positive initiative which IST should be encouraged to formulate as strategy.
- ❖ It is positive that the Assistant Dean for Equity and Diversity is part of the College's leadership structure.
- ❖ Potential best practice: The College diversity plan includes "intellectual" diversity, an excellent addition that insures the acceptance of "minority" critical opinions.
    Response: With the retirement of the Assistant Dean for Equity and Diversity, we have taken three new actions out of the Dean's Office. First, I have constituted an ad-hoc committee (June 2007) led by Professor Eileen Trauth to examine issues in and around the fact that we have so few women and minorities in the undergraduate population. Everything is on the table to be considered from recruiting to outreach to pedagogy. They will report back to me with recommendations at the end of the fall semester (Dec. 2007). Second, we have reorganized the office of Equity and Diversity and moved it to the Dean's suite. The new office will be Diversity, Outreach and International Engagement. In the past duties that should have been clearly and distinctly in the realm of the HR office were intermingled with Diversity and Equity this caused confusion and lowered effectiveness of both entities. Third, I have named Professor Trauth as the Interim Associate Dean. She brings to this position an international reputation as a scholar in gender issues within the IT industry and exceptional credentials in outreach. In the spring she will enhance her international standing even further when she travels around the globe as a Fulbright Fellow. We also have diversified the College's Administrative Council with John Yen as Associate Dean for Research, Brian Smith as the Director of the Solutions Institute and Irene Petrick as the Director of the Enterprise Informatics and Integration initiative.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

❖ It is unclear how LGBT issues and ageism are being addressed or further investigated. Increased attention to these populations is strongly suggested given that climate surveys of faculty, staff and students show that climate is perceived as less comfortable for the LGBT community and persons over 50.
Response: The atmosphere report made it clear that we have had and continue to have issues in a around the LGBT equity and civility. In the IST interest house last academic year we had issues related to threatening behavior toward at least one gay student. Professor Trauth is and has been a thought leader on civility and equity as it relates to LGBT issues. In her new role we expect her to help us make progress along this axis with measurable results. Dr. Trauth also teaches IST 341, a course that specifically deals with human diversity including LBGT issues.

❖ A definition of the College's "zero tolerance" policy for "disrespectful, aggressive, and threatening" behavior would be helpful, as well as specifics regarding procedures of due process and how persons violating the policy are held accountable.
Response: Actions speak louder than words – although by now a trite saying – it is nonetheless true. Last summer a highly rated staff member was fired for cause related to inappropriate behaviors that we created a sexually charged and hostile workplace. The college HR representative has been empowered to be on the alert for any such problems and to take immediate action as they arise. We also held multiple sexual harassment and hostile workplace training session for all faculty, staff and graduate students in IST last spring. The faculty and staff have been encouraged to pursue aggressive civility which includes immediate responses to behaviors that are not conducive to our values, that disrupt the workplace or are otherwise at odds with the equity goals of the university. We have also bought and handed out copies of the "No Asshole Rule" a highly acclaimed book first published as an article in the Harvard Business Review from a well known author at Stanford to reinforce our intention to increase civility and to decrease disrespect. As a part of the post tenure review of senior faculty done every five years – we have included a 360 or pentagonal review that includes input from other senior faculty, junior faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduate students.

❖ Potential best practice: A committee has been designated to define each diversity "value" as well as provide recommendations on how each can be enhanced.
Response: As a part of the faculty-staff retreat in summer 2006 we established six core values for the college. During the year a committee was established to consider each value, what it means in the college context and to grade the college from 1-5 on each of them. We then did a college wide survey to find out anecdotally and quantitatively what people felt about each value and how we were dong by way of a grade. This year at the summer faculty staff retreat we shared all the results, discussed them and agreed to include new ideas for enhancing our values as a part of the year-long strategic planning process. We will now be ale to use these values and our grading along each of them as metrics to see how we are progressing as a college.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

❖ Female enrollment in all technical areas exceeds national averages. The College wishes to surpass their own and the national enrollment rate for female students and the 88% graduation rate for underrepresented groups. The College is to be commended for its 95% overall job placement rate, which is consistent across race and gender.

❖ The College coined the phrase "aggressive civility" to describe "discourse around difficult and controversial issues" in which individuals who "do not act in civil and respectful ways" are challenged. The report would be strengthened by a definition of "keeping individuals in check."
Response: Aggressive civility is the process of not letting things go that should be nipped in the bud when and where they happen. If someone is disrespectful to a staff member, they are now empowered to say how they feel and why then and here. They are also empowered to share the incident with the HR manager and with me. This is a new and very different policy and approach, so it wil take time for people to trust it, to do it and to make it a part of our college culture.

❖ Recognizing the challenge of recruiting women and underrepresented groups, IST has offered various, programs designed for women students from 7th grade through high school to introduce them to IST. Data to gauge the success of recruiting male members of underrepresented groups would be appropriate.
   Response: This is underway and we expect to refocus our efforts on students closer to the entry point of IST and Penn State. We have set strategic stretch goals and Professor Trauth is empowered to make changes to what we have done as she sees fit to help stem this tide away from IST.
❖ Potential best practice: IST's outreach efforts to middle and high school girls, if proven effective.
   Response: Although our programs for middle school girls is admirable, we do not have the budget to do that and to do work with high school women and minorities as well. Therefore in the absence of a grant to do this work or an endowment/gift, we will refocus on high school students who are female and from underrepresented ethnic groups.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
❖ It is positive that contributions by faculty and staff to diversity and community are discussed during the annual review process and are tied to salary recommendations. It is appropriate that faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in formal diversity training.
❖ It is positive that candidates from underrepresented groups are scheduled to meet with members of their group during the campus interview process.
❖ The College leadership is strongly encouraged to aggressively follow through with their plan to strengthen the partnership with the Senior Faculty Mentor. Details regarding the plan would be welcome.
❖ IST shows substantial positive change in the proportion of male to female faculty members. The College is encouraged to develop, implement, and monitor strategies for diversifying their faculty and staff across race, ethnicity, and gender.
❖ There is little descriptive information or data presented regarding retention strategies. Clarification of retention efforts and corresponding data should be provided.
   Response: we have a committee looking at all aspects of what we do and I expect to have a strategy in place by the end of the year.
❖ Among staff, the College has slightly improved numbers of underrepresented staff and greatly increased the number of female hires. However, "minority" refers largely to Asian persons, and "females" refers overwhelmingly to white females. The College is encouraged to further diversity its staff.

Education and Scholarship
Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Foster Intercultural and International Competencies
   Response: The new dean of Diversity, Outreach and International Engagement will do exactly this.
❖ IST requires students to take foreign language and culture courses and encourages student projects that address diversity issues. Partnerships are being developed with schools in Singapore and Mumbai, India. The College encourages international internships as well as those in minority-owned companies.
❖ The number of IST students studying abroad is quite low; the college is encouraged to increase opportunities for students to study abroad, and develop learning outcomes for its study abroad programs.
❖ Various IST courses include diversity or globalization elements, and some faculty members engage in research on diversity or global issues. The review team notes, however, that the incorporation of diversity content into course outlines is an "instructor-specific" goal. While the plan identifies the content of its diversity courses, assessment is needed to determine the effectiveness of this approach.
   Response: IST 341 a course on human diversity has been taught for three years and diversity is explicit in the syllabus.
❖ The problem-based team approach required in undergraduate classes whereby students must learn to work together to be successful should be considered a Best Practice in cases where problem-based learning projects are focused on diversity issues. This is an area of opportunity for IST and could be further encouraged and developed.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Positive actions include IST's use of Affirmative Action principles to ensure representative candidate pools, the composition of committees with as many "voices" as possible, and the requirement for candidates to describe their commitment to diversity and how they integrate it into their work.

- ❖ IST is encouraged to actively pursue the development of the Technology Fellows program and ensure that its focus be on underrepresented groups.

- ❖ Unfortunately, the leadership of the College of IST is not very diverse, consisting of 11 white persons and one Asian. The gender distribution is 10 males to 2 females. It is positive, however, that all leaders are expected to advocate for diversity and attend diversity workshops.

  Response: True but the new management team as gone from all white male to a mix viz.

	2006	*2007*
Associate Dean for Research	*White Male*	*Asian Male*
Associate Dean for Diversity	*White Female*	*White Female*
Director of Bus. Car. Solns.	*White Male*	*------------------*
Director of Car. Solns.		*Asian American Female*
Director of Ent. Int. Inf.		*White Female*
Director of Solutions Institute	*White Male*	*African American Male*

  Avenues for further progress will be afforded by expected promotions of junior faculty and via recruiting.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ Diversity efforts have continued with corporate partners, and development activities have resulted in contributions to those efforts. IST is urged to make these efforts a priority.

- ❖ IST has continued to advance the message that "diversity and civil engagement" are important, and has not hesitated to adjust salary increases accordingly in instances of faculty/staff intolerance.