
**Fall 2014**

**Undergraduate Education**

Undergraduate Education (UE) is a complex academic administrative unit within Penn State that encompasses 12 sub-units and seven programs. Since UE has such a wide range of functions and programs to provide leadership, coordination and services in support of undergraduate education, the Diversity Plan has the potential to impact the overall diversity goals and implementation for the entire University. UE recognizes the importance of enhancing student learning experiences incorporating professional development for staff, advocacy for student policies, and faculty development. Notably, one area of the threefold mission focuses explicitly on the recruitment, enrollment, support, and retention of a diverse student body across all undergraduate campuses.

For the 2014–2019 plan, UE connects updates related to the previous diversity plan with the newly proposed Strategic Plan following the planning guidelines from Provost Pangborn. Additionally, the plan reviews the activities to date, outlines the new and ongoing efforts for 2014–19, suggests performance indicators for ongoing assessment, and links the activities to the seven Framework to Foster Diversity Challenges. While the diversity plan is a stand-alone document, UE has very thoughtfully and clearly mapped the diversity Challenges, and integrated diversity and inclusion within their strategic priorities. Attention to continuity and connections is a major strength of the plan. **RESPONSE: The “stand-alone” diversity plan presented by Undergraduate Education is a compilation of all the items in the Undergraduate Education Strategic Plan related to the Framework. We pulled out these items for clarity and note that all are integral to our strategic plan.**

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

**Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity**
- The New Student Orientation Program, as well as transitional programs including the Learning Edge Academic Program (LEAP) and a similar version designed for international students (ILEAP) are positive initiatives to enhance diversity and inclusivity in UE.
- Evidence based, data driven approach to programming, decisions, and implementation is a best practice.

**Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate**
- Notable improvements in retention and graduation rates are attributed to a variety of new student and transition programs which contribute to fostering community and enhancing the understanding of diversity.
- The plan states that a number of initiatives including orientation programs and TRIO, among others, will be expanded and enhanced. More information related to expansion and enhancement would be beneficial. **RESPONSE: Undergraduate Education does not have any TRIO programs. Our full strategic plan provides more detail about orientation programs.**
- Undergraduate Education is applauded for working closely with The Office of the Vice-Provost for Educational Equity along with other Colleges and Penn State Campuses to help counter the decline in admission rates for minority and low-income students observed last year. Unfortunately, low income and minority recruiting strategies are noted together. However, low income and minority status should be considered two separate circumstances that may each require remediation, although they are often interrelated.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

**Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body**
- In the spirit of collaboration, UE is applauded for adding a need based component to the Provost Award to reach minority and low-income applicants in efforts to counter last year’s decline in admission rates.
Undergraduate Education
Feedback on the 2010–15 Framework Diversity Strategic Plan and 2014–19 Strategic Plan

- UE is commended for monitoring appropriate metrics and identifying intergroup disparities which indicate the need to increase retention and completion rates for African-American and Hispanic students. UE’s focus on completion, in addition to access, for diverse students is laudable.
- Noteworthy efforts originating in the Undergraduate Admissions Office have helped to increase minority enrollment in the entering class through utilization of centers in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, a Spanish microsite, and programs and communications directed toward diverse populations. Constructive programs and support include increased scholarship support, tutorial videos on the Student Aid website, financial literacy programs, low cost summer programs, and analytical tools to assist in student support services.
- Acknowledging the unique academic contributions of international students, adult learners and veterans is positive. Updating the re-enrollment policy and creating a Director of Prior Learning Assessment position are two proposals that speak directly to the needs of these “non-traditional” students.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- Beneficial activities outlined for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce include professional development for staff, advocacy for student policies, and faculty development, as well as establishing clear objectives for staff development. UE is commended for viewing this Challenge with an eye for collaboration and seeking opportunities to reach out beyond the immediate population when openings become available.
- Impressive efforts to increase in minority representation among staff, particularly administrative, managerial, and professional, and plans to increase diversity within support staff are noted. Additionally, UE is congratulated for monitoring this metric with data. Metrics and data related to support staff would be beneficial in the quest to diversify the workforce. RESPONSE: In the full UE Strategic Plan we note that 8% of non-exempt staff are minorities.
- Currently, there is no process in place to gauge the climate in UE. However, three initiatives are underway. Information from these proposed activities should be utilized to improve recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce by identifying climate issues and informing professional development programming.
- UE is commended for directing attention to diversity within the student employees which is important for programs such as LEAP and New Student Orientation, reflecting the diversity of the student body to incoming students.

Education and Scholarship

Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies

- The intent to expand programming for change of campus and transfer students, with attention to diverse students, is praiseworthy.
- “Penn State Reads,” a newly instituted common book reading program addressing issues of diversity and identity, has been a popular addition to the freshman experience and is noteworthy for encouraging such conversations across the University.
- Serving diverse students and creating broader understandings of diversity across all student participants is encouraging. As the initiative develops, emphasis on including underrepresented/underserved students and connecting them with faculty to enhance their college success will be valuable. Metrics to gauge success of the program in relation to diversity and inclusion will also be important.
Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management
- Over half of all administrative and managerial positions are held by women, demonstrating the importance UE places on diversity and inclusion in management and leadership. However, it was difficult to determine similar proportions for the racial/ethnic population. **RESPONSE: 10% of UE Executive, Administrative and Managerial staff are minorities; as are 16% of professional staff.**

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals
- Overall, UE is successfully leveraging diversity and inclusion to further the unit’s organizational goals and mission.
- UE is applauded for developing a strategic goal focusing on organizational effectiveness which speaks specifically to diversifying staff.