

**Feedback on A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010–15 and  
2014–15 through 2018–19 Diversity Initiatives**  
Fall 2014  
**University Libraries**

“Equity of Access” and “Diversity and Inclusion” are two of the University Libraries’ five “Foundational Values,” which is commendable. The vision statement mentions being “welcoming and inclusive” and the “Empathy” section references “understanding of the unique characteristics of all people.” The update on the *Framework Challenges* is provided by a “Working Group on Diversity” and is contained in the plan’s Appendix III. The Appendix, however, seems to be a “stand alone” document, and is not fully integrated into the larger plan. The Working Group recommended that six items be included in the current plan: climate; recruiting diverse faculty and staff; increasing collaboration with other units; building diverse collections and increasing discoverability; serving international and non-traditional students; and addressing accessibility. Only two of these items are clearly addressed in the Libraries’ plan: discoverability and increased partnership and collaboration.

The balance of the Appendix focuses on the status of action items for each of the seven Challenges in the previous plan, and consists primarily of lists of events and recommendations for possible future activities. There are few measures or indicators of progress made since the last planning cycle. Overall, there is a predominance of counting and listing, which in itself is not strategic. Little quantitative or qualitative data is provided throughout the document. As a result, the review team found it difficult to identify, and thus assess, information describing the progress made and efforts planned regarding each of the seven Challenges, as was requested in the strategic planning guidelines. Strategic collection and analysis of data regarding the effectiveness of the Libraries’ programming is an essential step in guiding future plans.

### **Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

#### ***Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- The Appendix includes an extensive list of diversity-related programs offered within the Libraries, programming with other units, and external publications and presentations by Libraries staff. It is clear that a great deal of programming is going on, but there is no accompanying data to illustrate how or if these efforts are making a measurable impact.
- There is some ambiguity about what populations were invited to particular programs (for example, the World in Conversation dialogues), which programs were open to the entire University, and which were offered exclusively to Libraries staff. Clarification would make this section more meaningful.
- The plan indicates that the Libraries’ definition of diversity was updated, but the definition is not provided. Knowing exactly how the Libraries defines diversity would provide some helpful context.
- The “Dean’s Diversity Forum” was reestablished in 2012, and a second forum was held in February 2014. While the concept of a Dean’s Diversity Forum is commendable, no discussion of content, format, or effectiveness is provided. Measureable outcomes are needed.
- Plans to develop a “Diversity Pamphlet” to be distributed during New Employee Orientation are welcome, but metrics to measure its effectiveness would strengthen reporting.
- The review team notes that the number of programs offered is impressive, but quantity alone does not equate to best practices. Which are most effective? What evidence of positive impact exists? Identification (via measureable outcomes) of high quality programs may lead to best practices.

#### ***Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

- Distribution of the Libraries civility statement is a best practice; including rankism and bullying is notable.
- More information about the Knowledge Commons, especially within the context of diversity, is needed.
- It is troubling that the idea of establishing diversity liaisons at each of the campus libraries was abandoned and no alternate method of gathering diversity data at the campuses was developed.
- The Civility Pulse Survey was conducted in January 2012, and a Climate and Diversity Survey was launched in February 2014, but no data is reported from either of these assessment tools.

### **Representation (Access and Success)**

#### ***Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

- The Libraries has provided orientations and library instruction for several underrepresented groups. With reporting of measureable outcomes, a potential best practice could be the instruction provided by Library Learning Services to groups such as Upward Bound and College Assistance Migrant Program.
- Bednar interns are mentioned within the context of the Libraries' Diversity Committee, but their role and purpose vis-à-vis diversity is unclear. More information would be helpful.
- Proposed surveys to assess the needs of international and non-traditional students, as well as expanded programming for these groups, are promising.

#### ***Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

- The Libraries plans to revise its New Employee Orientation program to include a strong emphasis on diversity. Development of a staff mentoring program is mentioned, but there is no indication of the intended audience. Will diverse employees be specifically targeted?
- No data is provided to show the current demographic composition of the Libraries' faculty and staff, thus it is impossible to ascertain what specific efforts are needed to improve the diversity of the Libraries' workforce. A suggested "assessment idea" is to determine the number of underrepresented/underserved employees hired and lost since 2010. Follow-up on this idea is strongly encouraged.
- The list of suggestions for future activities related to this Challenge is particularly lengthy. Some of the suggestions are pointed and measureable, while others are vague. Specificity is needed throughout.

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- Programming has complemented the new diversity-related guidelines which were included in the description of core competencies for librarians. This is a potential best practice.
- It is somewhat puzzling that, although the three items listed as "outdated or partially completed" seem promising, they have apparently been abandoned, and there is no explanation given as to why.
- As is the case throughout the Libraries' plan, measures identified as strategic indicators are essentially counts of the number of times certain resources are used, but they do not demonstrate evidence of impact. As a result, it is not clear how (or if) data is driving decision-making within this Challenge.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

#### ***Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management***

- Civility and diversity language have been included as part of the evaluation of Libraries staff, but it is unclear to whom the "Upward Feedback" is directed and whom it is intended to assess.
- Various mentoring programs are in use, but their success (or lack thereof) is not evident, since numbers of underrepresented/underserved individuals in leadership positions are not reported.
- Librarians from underrepresented groups are sponsored in various professional development programs, but the data provided is anecdotal, which suggests a process that is neither systematic nor sustainable.

#### ***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***

- The Libraries is commended for its collaboration on diversity efforts with a number of other units.
- An action item listed as outdated or partially accomplished is to "incorporate review of diversity efforts into planning cycles." Of particular concern to the review team is that the authors of Appendix III are "unsure if this is happening."

***Response: See Attached***

# The University Libraries

## Strategic Plan, 2014–2019

### Foreword

The University Libraries want this strategic plan to resonate with all library employees, regardless of department or location, and with all its stakeholders. The plan is broad enough to offer administrative guidance, but specific enough to show individuals how they fit into the organization and how they contribute to the overall success of the Libraries.

Both practical and inspirational, this plan is a continuation of the Libraries' impressive history as well as indicative of bold aspirations for the future.

### Mission

The University Libraries:

- inspire intellectual discovery and learning,
- offer robust information resources and academic collaborations in teaching and research, and
- connect the Penn State community and residents of Pennsylvania to the world of knowledge and new ideas.

### Vision

The University Libraries will be:

- a world-class research library with a global reach;
- **a welcoming and inclusive environment for learning, collaboration, and knowledge creation;**
- a partner in research and education;
- a leader in delivery and preservation of library collections; and
- a place that uses technology and rewards innovation.

### Foundational Values

To guide our conduct, demonstrate our expectations, and chart priorities and resource allocation, the Libraries commit to:

- **Equity of Access** to promote the freedom, discovery, openness, and sustained affordability of information. We will:
  - maintain accessible web pages, research guides, learning objects, and other materials;
  - select print and electronic materials in accessible formats;
  - **advocate for accessible databases;** and
  - facilitate and promote open access to the Libraries' unique resources.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** to embrace differences with acceptance and respect. We will:
  - **create an environment of respect and inclusion for faculty, staff, students, and residents of Pennsylvania;**
  - **provide collections and programs that reflect the diversity of our community and raise cultural awareness;**
  - **ensure equitable access to our facilities, resources, and services;**
  - **work to improve our workforce by attracting and developing talented faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds through active recruitment and a sustained diversity program; and**
  - **actively support Penn State's Commissions through participation and program sponsorship.**
- **Ethics and Integrity** for a strong foundation of ethical principles and professional integrity. We will:
  - foster free and open inquiry, provide equity of access, respect intellectual property rights, and protect the privacy of our users;

- embrace our role in the stewardship of information for present and future generations; and
- endeavor to ensure that ethics and integrity are at the forefront of our mission to select, organize, preserve, and disseminate knowledge.
- **Sustainability** to support the pursuit of human health, happiness, environmental quality, and economic well being for current and future generations. We will:
  - provide and preserve information and support learning and research and
  - create a model for sustainable stewardship of the scholarly record that promotes literacy, solutions, and leadership.
- **Empathy** to understand and meet the needs of others. We will:
  - value an understanding of the unique characteristics of all people,
  - strive for insight into what others are thinking and feeling as we work with them, and
  - attempt to understand how users engage in our services.

### Programmatic Areas

- **Discovery, Access, and Preservation**

The Libraries collect, organize, and ensure long-term, durable access to information in all forms.

Goal 1: Simplify finding and access to collections and other information sources.

- Describe and digitize unique collections and at-risk formats such as audio and video.
- **Improve user experience on all devices, with special attention to those with disabilities.**

Goal 2: Improve access for future generations through stewardship of collections and resources.

- Develop and implement a program of preservation and curation of digital resources.
- Coordinate collection development, preservation, and management to support increasingly diverse and decentralized collections.

- **Teaching and Learning**

The Libraries provide leadership in the promotion of critical thinking that supports curricular and lifelong learning and teach students, faculty, staff, and community members how to discover, evaluate, use, organize, and create information.

Goal 1: Expand our role as a **partner** in online and resident education to support engaged, critical, and informed learners.

- Strengthen partnerships with teaching faculty, instructional designers, and others to integrate library instruction and critical thinking competencies into the curriculum.
- Collaborate across library units for efficient and effective delivery of online instruction.
- Support excellence in teaching through professional development for library instructors.

Goal 2: Develop active and immersive learning environments that support and facilitate learning in all disciplines.

- Explore emerging educational technologies to enhance learning.

- Partner with academic departments to develop physical and virtual spaces related to curricular and research needs.

- Advance accessibility in facilities and the library's virtual presences.

- **Advancing University Research**

As researchers and partners in creating and sharing new knowledge worldwide, the Libraries provide strong academic research collections in all formats and invest in new collaborations to keep pace with changes in scholarly communications.

**Goal 1:** Provide scholarly collections and services needed for cross-disciplinary research by undergraduate, graduate, and faculty researchers.

- Create a research services model that crosses organizational boundaries and provides support for interdisciplinary research and emerging researcher needs.

- Promote awareness of University priorities and strategic directions, including expansion of services for STEM fields by developing a multi-campus service approach.

- Enable undergraduates, graduates, and faculty to publish in a variety of forms appropriate for their work, through collaborations with the Penn State Press and academic programs.

- Increase Penn State Press titles reflecting ethnic and global diversity.

**Goal 2:** Maximize the array of research materials available to the Penn State community by broadening the concept of what constitutes “collecting” and by promoting new forms of scholarly communication.

- Foster the use of digital repositories where researchers may search for the products of scholarship as well as contribute their own work.

- Work toward coordination of collection strengths with peer institutions to create a sustainable set of information resources for the country.

- Develop a shared technology infrastructure with peer institutions to support research dissemination and re-use at home and abroad.

Office of the Dean  
University Libraries  
The Pennsylvania State University  
510 Paterno Library  
University Park, PA 16802-1812  
814-865-0401  
[www.libraries.psu.edu](http://www.libraries.psu.edu)

View the detailed plan at:

<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/admin/stratplan2014.html>

