
Fall 2014
Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus

Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, has produced a robust and workable strategic plan with diversity and inclusion strategically integrated into the vision, mission, and values statement. Well-developed goals and objectives support its innovative approach throughout. The review team especially appreciates Appendix A: Diversity Strategic Indicators and Outcomes, which summarizes the results of planning based on A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010–15. The new plan reflects lessons learned from the previous unit 2010–15 diversity strategic plan, and campus follow-up activities throughout the 2010–15 cycle have made an exceptional impact overall on the current strategic plan. The impressive, innovative, and thoughtful curricular and co-curricular diversity events as currently adopted could be expanded to other types of programs and resources, and incorporating out-of-classroom diversity actions into specific courses is a model worth emulating.

One continuing challenge is to develop innovative ways to use existing resources to execute diversity initiatives. Toward this end, the metrics report on each of the seven Framework Challenges contains goals, action items, projected outcomes, planned completion dates, status, actual outcomes, and strategic indicators. This outstanding structure reinforces the current plan and illuminates those outcomes that are driving change. As Penn State Fayette continues to collect, assess, and review data, an opportunity exists for the campus to be creative in identifying deeper relationships between extrapolated metrics and diversity outcomes.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- Efforts to coordinate and enhance the visibility of the Coalition for Equity (CFE) are laudable.
- Potential best practice: integration of diversity throughout the Vision, Mission, and Statement of Values as well as the Strategic Goals.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
- Taking the lead for gathering print, media, and other materials in sponsoring a vibrant cultural environment is outstanding.
- Increasing the visibility of diversity and disability statements on syllabi and signs across campus are promising endeavors.
- For sustainability activities, such as Green Roof, the campus might want to include provisions for fostering diverse participation as an organized STEM research and outreach activity, which might bridge classroom- and college-level goals while integrating diversity.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
- The plan signals encouraging changes in diversifying the student population, with students from diverse racial/ethnic groups and international students comprising 11 percent of the enrollment in spring 2014.
- Underrepresented/underserved student retention and graduation rates are not included in the plan. The review team recommends retention programs be considered for all students along with breakdowns that clearly reflect assessment metrics for underrepresented/underserved groups.

RESPONSE:
- The PSFE strategic plan has been updated to include the PSFE pilot participation in the Enhanced Pathway Program (PaSSS – Summer Bridge) for underrepresented/underserved students with the intent to increase retention and graduation rates. [Goal 4, section A]
- Assessment metrics for underrepresented/underserved groups have been added to Appendix A: Diversity Strategic Indicators and Outcomes. [Challenge 3]
Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- Including diversity advocates for each hiring committee is commendable.
- Providing a mentor for each new hire from diverse racial/ethnic groups is a good start; however, program specifics are unclear.
- Attention to “strategic hiring” appears to have generated some noteworthy results.
- Retention programs with metrics would be helpful.

Education and Scholarship

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

- The campus began with diversity inclusion in syllabi; next, it enhanced the curriculum by developing course units that integrate discussions of difference; and now it makes a conscious effort to include diversity in pedagogical practices, creating a co-curricular model of educational excellence.
- It is exemplary that members of the community are invited to learn from, not just view, enriching diversity experiences.
- Potential best practice: the co-curricular model currently being expanded that relies on collaboration between faculty, Student Affairs, the Coalition for Equity, and the International Intercultural Programs Office. Metrics supporting the impact of linking diversity events to specific courses could make this superb initiative a best practice.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- Increasing the number of appointments of employees of color and women in leadership and management is impressive.
- Consider identifying prominent student leaders to foster positive relationships for a potential future leadership pipeline. Identifying and cultivating diverse leadership in the next generation workforce can coincide with objectives in Challenges 3 and 4.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- The Cultural Center could be further leveraged as a high-impact locus for diversity activities to advance domestic diversity and global awareness through, among other pedagogies, teaching with technology to support an intellectual culture that prepares students, faculty, and staff for the demographic challenges and multicultural world of tomorrow.
- Penn State Fayette is encouraged to explore how existing University-wide resources can be better utilized to promote diversity enhancement, for example the presidents’ equity commissions.
- The campus’ student participation in organizational change is remarkable; the development of the Diversified Student Association is one such example.