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

Penn State Shenango's 2014–19 strategic plan builds upon the diversity planning efforts initially started in the 2010–15 diversity strategic plan. The review team notes strategies and actions listed for Challenges 1, 2, 3, and 5; however, the lack of performance indicators presents a significant obstacle in assessing the campus' success. As noted in the previous feedback report, the plan would be stronger with the inclusion of more data. The review team found it difficult to identify, and thus assess, information describing the progress made and strategies planned regarding each of the seven Challenges, as was requested in the planning guidelines.

Initiatives not mentioned in this plan probably exist that could be considered best practices. For example, the review team understands that Penn State Shenango has seen a notable increase in female faculty and international staff over the previous planning cycle. It would be helpful to see what actions led to this success.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- Penn State Shenango is commended for including diversity in its values and vision statements as well as throughout the strategic goals. The campus refers to the *Framework* in its Role and Principles.
- The review team commends the campus for offering diversity training opportunities to faculty, staff, and students and for including open discussions of diversity in the new student orientation.
- The annual diversity series and the recognition of student participants are evidence of a shared understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- The campus is encouraged to measure the success of the diversity and international studies certificate beyond counting numbers of participants; it is also encouraged to communicate the learning outcomes. ***Response: There are no current metrics beyond numbers for this initiative. However, in this academic year, the faculty will be charged to establish new metrics that may include the following examples:***
    1. ***Student engagement in community events and community service projects that are target to address the needs of diverse populations***
    2. ***Integration of diversity relevant to the international studies seen in course assignments, aspects of student research assignments or capstone projects or internships***
- The prior feedback report had suggested placing a highly visible link to the diversity page on the Penn State Shenango website. While the current homepage of the site does not appear to include such a link, the *Diversity at Penn State Shenango* webpage does include links to diversity resources. ***Response: A year ago a need was identified that the Shenango website needed support of an individual with more web design skills. Since that time, the campus has partnered with the Beaver campus web master to revise, update and improve the website. Clearly there are still gaps that are being worked on by the staff. We will incorporate this suggestion into the improvements that are planned for our web site.***
- More information about the inclusion of a diversity statement in syllabi would be useful. Some metrics, (e.g., other ways the diversity statement has been communicated; or the percentage of syllabi with the statement) could provide measurable indicators. ***Response: A number of recent retirements have resulted in the need to hire several new faculty. Upon reviewing syllabi there is not consistency with utilization of the diversity statement that was corrected. However, an opportunity presents itself to act on these suggestions for improvement determining metrics and examples of how faculty communicate and integrated within their course. Examples might include – diversity as an aspect of a course assignment or course project. Others may include taking a course project that integrates diversity and sharing that with the campus community or involving in an aspect of the project; identifying collaboration among faculty of different disciplines on a student assignment, activity or project that addresses diversity. The academic affairs of the faculty senate have established several goals this upcoming year to improve consistency, quality and rigor of instruction that include syllabus review. The***

above examples and recommendations will be shared with the Academic affairs committee to identify and establish additional metrics as recommended.

- A number of cultural programs promote opportunities for increasing the awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusivity. The campus will want to track the outcomes and measurable benefits from such events. *Response: To address this recommendation, collaboration with both faculty and staff is needed. Our students do engage in cultural activities like the recent trip to Belize in March 2014. What may not be as explicit is what students are required to do before and after this trip. Prior assessment of cultural awareness along with preparation for understanding and respecting the culture of the country they are visiting is provided. When students return, they must do a presentation of their experience to the campus community. They also provide a presentation to the campus Advisory Board. These presentations generate several pieces of evidence on the impact of this experience on their awareness and understanding of cultural diversity. Moving forward, an opportunity does arise to use some aspects of what is done for the international trip to assess outcomes and benefits of other cultural programs that both students and staff attend at the campus. Both administration, faculty and student affairs staff will meet in this upcoming academic year to identify ways to measure and monitor progress in this area.*

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
- Penn State Shenango's programmatic initiatives related to diversity create a welcoming campus climate.
- The campus provides opportunities for inclusion through student trips, community service-learning, and "best practices" sessions on diversity by faculty.
- There is a need to update all of the performance indicators for the programs listed. Some possible metrics to consider might include the percentage decrease of acts of intolerance and any outcomes or feedback from the re-establishment of the "Get to Know Your Fellow Employee" program. *Response: As indicated above, a task force will be established to address this recommendation to improve our assessment of performance indicators related to diversity.*

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
- Penn State Shenango faces increasing competition and changing demographics due to the fact that a majority of the campus' students are adults. The review team commends the ongoing efforts to recruit and retain this critical population through targeted marketing and specialized advising and student services.
- There is a need to include the measures of success with the number or percentage increase in students (traditional and non-traditional) from underrepresented/underserved groups, veterans, and adult learners with dependent children. It could also be fruitful to track the sources of funding/grants applied for and received. *Response: We do have data on our mix of traditional and non-traditional students. Recently we started to track student persistence to graduation by the above noted student categories but did not include sources funding a variable. Based on this recommendation, we will add this to our student success monitoring.*
- It is a potential best practice to create specialized student advising and support services for adult students and veterans. With supporting data outcomes, these endeavors might become best practices. *Response: We have only two advisors in our advising center and given the predominant number of adult students and veterans, we have designed our services to address any unique needs. We have established a veteran's club on campus and obtain feedback regularly from our students on their needs related to times to provide services and other support needed.*
We annually hold a "come to work with your parent day" on President's day. This event allows students with children to bring them to campus on a day when schools are not in session. In addition, adult students with children are permitted to bring their children to student events where appropriate, i.e.

Welcome back picnic, Pre-exam jam activities and the holiday events. Student in the drama club annually provide a Holiday play that is designed for children. We do acknowledge the needs of our adult students who have families. We have also modified our course scheduling and provide adults priority registration so that they can schedule classes at times that do not interfere with their family responsibilities.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- Given that the 2014–19 strategic plan continues to identify this Challenge as a weakness, the review team would have appreciated an update on the status of programs implemented in 2009 as well as any revisions to these efforts. For example, the previous plan indicated that the campus would post faculty vacancies in publications that would attract submissions from underrepresented/underserved applicants. Did that occur and, if so, what were the results? *Response: Working with the OVPCC we have followed the plan for advertising to diverse populations for faculty vacancies. While we have had candidates from diverse populations for faculty positions that included Asian and African American races, and a members of the LGBT population. We were able to recruit two faculty that are members of the (LGBT) population and one Asian professor that unfortunately left in 2014. Our mix of male and female faculty represents a slight higher population of female than males. With recent retirements in staff and department head positions we were able to hire two African Americans – one in a staff support position and the other as our Director for Business services.*

Education and Scholarship

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

- There is a need to report measures of success beyond the numbers or percentages of students participating in study abroad, alternative spring break, service learning, and the use of technology for projects/discussions with students in different countries. For example, what demonstrable impact have these opportunities had on learning outcomes? *Response: As described in our response to Challenge 1, we have utilized these experiences as an opportunity to have students reflect on the meaning of what they learned and how this impacts their views on culture and diversity. Both with self-awareness by reflection assignments, presentations to class and other groups, we can see the impact of these experiences beyond the mere fact of attending. What we haven't done is assess how this is carried on with students beyond the immediate post activity assessment.*
- In addition to the presentation by the Penn State laureate, the campus might consider partnering with other units and/or colleges at the University e.g., the University Office of Global Programs, visiting scholars, the Humphrey Fellowship Program, etc., to deliver diversity education that addresses US as well as international cultural competencies. *Response: We have not done this in the past but acknowledge this recommendation and will pursue opportunities as suggested.*

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- The plan does not provide much information on efforts to diversify campus leadership and management. *Response: In 2014 we hired our Director of Business Services that is an African American male. In January 2014 I was appointed the Campus Director and Chief Academic Officer for the Shenango Campus. I am the first female administrator at this senior level for the campus. Our leadership team is somewhat diversified with a proportion of 45 percent female/ 55 male in leadership positions. However, only one male is African American and the remaining members are Caucasian. We do have one department director who is a member of the LGBT sector. However we acknowledge the need to expand diversity of our leadership as opportunities arise. Whenever any position becomes vacant we do*

advertise utilizing the University support to select advertising sectors that may attract diverse candidates.

- The 2010–2015 *Feedback* report response mentioned a "potential multi-campus Administrative Fellowship Plan" was being considered; information on the status of this would be useful. *Response: As noted above, last July we were able to hire an African American male as our Director of Business services. In addition, we made a concerted effort to diversify the campus Advisory Board and were able to add three women to the board of which one is an African American.*
I am not aware of any progress on the multi-campus Administrative Fellowship Plan. However, I will determine if this initiative still exists and if so, examine how our campus may participate.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals
- Strategic planning indicators are listed within the plan as related to Clery Security Authority, mandated reporters, red flags, FERPA, JRW updates, and compliance and ethics training sessions. The connection between these indicators and organizational change in support of diversity goals is not clear. *Response: Incorporated in compliance and ethics training, the aspect of cultural sensitivity and respect for diverse populations is addressed. In addition, we recently completed JRW reviews for all staff and department directors during the implementation of the evaluation system YOU@PSU. During that time there was attention made to assess equity in position and salary that did not discriminate against gender, or other personal and cultural characteristics. While there was no evidence of discrimination based on diversity, adjustments were made in seven positions so that they aligned appropriately with the required duties that were being performed. Compensation was also adjusted to levels that were equitable across others in these job categories within the University.*
- The review team would have appreciated an update on the campus' Diversity Committee, as promised in the previous *Framework* feedback report. *Response: At the launch of the diversity plan in 2010 a Diversity Committee was formed. This committed developed a credit certificate in diversity for students, conducted diversity training and had a schedule of events that occurred for about three years. However, in the past two years the committee has not been active primarily due to a large number of committee members that have retired or resigned. As a result, our librarian a former member of the committee has volunteered to chair the campus Diversity Committee and recruit new membership that is representative of all campus constituents. The charge to the committee will be to review the responses to these recommendations, identify goals and action plans, and be responsible for executing these plans with leadership support and engagement.*