

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

In its 2010–15 *Framework* unit strategic plan, the College of Medicine demonstrated an obvious commitment to diversity with specific goals, action items, projected outcomes, and strategic indicators for each of the seven *Framework* Challenges. However, metrics and evaluative tools were lacking, and the 2010 *Framework* Feedback Report advised that they be included in the next planning cycle using a matrix to mark progress towards strategic goals. The matrix that comprises the college’s 2014–19 strategic plan appears to be a solid project management tool. The college is commended for explicitly stating its goals with accompanying method identifiers, tactics, metrics, targets, timeframes, and parties responsible for each “Imperative” in its 2014–19 strategic plan. Regrettably, the review team finds that diversity is almost entirely missing from the plan.

The plan is replete with standards, goals, and performance metrics related specifically to quality. Presumably, these quality indicators will be applied across the college’s stakeholders equitably, though tactics to serve diverse populations in particular are not noted. No data spell out the current demographic makeup of the college’s administrators, faculty, staff, or students. No thresholds of success or related strategies are present that might reveal a commitment to increase the diversity of the college’s student body or workforce or increase cross-cultural competencies. Additionally, and unfortunately, the current plan does not seem to build upon the college’s 2010–15 *Framework* diversity strategic plan, which included some promising initiatives, such as restructuring the Dean’s Council on Diversity and the newly created associate dean-level diversity position.

Lastly, the plan fails to follow the formal diversity strategic planning guidelines. Specific diversity initiatives in support of the *Framework* Challenges for the 2010–15 and 2014–19 planning cycles are not reported. Indeed, the Challenges are not mentioned. As a result, the review team found it difficult to identify and assess progress made and efforts planned regarding each of the Challenges. It is strongly suggested that the college’s 2010–15 efforts in support of diversity, equity and inclusion—as well as its plans for the same during the 2014–15 through 18–19 planning cycle—be distinctly articulated and embedded in this plan.

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

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

- The plan does not make it evident how the college intends to develop a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity given that none of the imperatives provide details or strategies related to diversity.

#### ***RESPONSE:***

- ***The Office for Diversity and Inclusion has made the message around diversity consistent across the campus, including the College of Medicine and the Hershey Medical Center.***
- ***With the Director of Diversity and Inclusion now located within the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, messaging including key goals and imperatives, has been aligned across the campus.***
- ***All areas of the campus are invited to give input into the conversation about what diversity and inclusion means to them. The question was included in the engagement survey in a limited fashion (see below).***
- ***Each of the major diversity committees and initiatives has either the Associate Dean or the Director or both as members in order to ensure a consistent message and priorities.***
- ***Membership of the key diversity and inclusion committees and groups is now open to or includes students from all of the different schools on campus (COM, PA, MPH, nursing) as well as the post-graduates and faculty.***
- ***Strong utilization of different media formats including a blog, social media, newsletter, web-based instruction, information monitors, video and didactic lectures have been achieved only with careful orchestration of a consistent message. Data supports their increased utilization.***

- Establishment of an “Associate Dean-level office to lead the diversity effort” was listed as a goal in the 2010–15 plan. It will be very important to clearly document all of the initiatives that were developed and implemented by this office in the last five years to illuminate efforts undertaken to develop a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity, as well as 2014–19 planned efforts.

**RESPONSE:**

- *The projects initiated and sustained by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion are well catalogued and can be provided as needed.*

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

- Imperative #2 mentions that an employee/physician survey will be conducted and that “hot spots” will be identified. It would be useful to explicitly indicate how (or if) the survey will address diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how (or if) the results of the survey will be used to help create a welcoming campus climate.

**RESPONSE:**

- *The message of Diversity and Inclusion has traditionally been the purview of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion. In the past 5 years, the Penn State Hershey Campus has moved from pre-competence to competent. Within the past 12 months, that message has been integrated into some parts of the campus, independent of the Office, indicating the campus is working towards cultural proficiency (Georgetown Center for Child and Human Development model).*
- *Although cultural competence was not incorporated into the latest employee engagement survey, a question was included around the respondents’ impression of diversity efforts. 50% of the employee responses and 60% of the physician responses (by group) indicated that they strongly agree the institution is making efforts to become more inclusive. The remainder of the data, including free text responses, is currently being analyzed.*
- *The Office recently brought together the Faith and Traditions committee, including again, members from all parts of the campus including students and residents. The charge of the committee is to better understand the interconnectedness of faith and traditional celebrations and prescribe an organic way to integrate those celebrations into the campus climate.*
- Presumably, the associate dean-level office for diversity has a critical role in support of the college’s efforts to create a welcoming campus climate. The lack of reporting on this office’s actions to date in support of this Challenge as well as its strategies for the next planning cycle, is a serious omission.

**RESPONSE:**

- *The Office for Diversity and Inclusion, including the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, plays a central role in creating a welcoming campus climate for all those of diverse backgrounds. These efforts are described throughout the response passages included in blue. The efforts have been pervasive, consistent and well-received throughout the Penn State Hershey campus.*

**Representation (Access and Success)**

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

- No data are provided on the demographic make up of the current student body nor are any plans to increase the diversity of the student body reported.

**RESPONSE:**

- *The breakdown of the Under Represented In Medicine (URM) applicants, interviewees, accepted students and matriculants has been well tracked by the Office of Student Admissions. Overall, the College of Medicine has had ~15% of the students identifying as URM. The number of URM applicants has almost doubled in the last 5 years to over 1000 applicants in a total pool of ~6,600. Completed secondary applications have increased from ~375 in 2007 to 632 for this cycle. Acceptances have held steady at ~45 per year. This year’s final numbers, likely higher,*

*have not been tallied. Traditionally, the Penn State College of Medicine has been above the national average for the ratio of males to females with many of the recent classes well over 50% female.*

- *Increasing the financial aid for underrepresented and underserved populations remains a top priority for leadership here at Penn State Hershey.*
- *As a means to continue the legacy of Dr. Alphonse Leure-duPree, a society is being created that aims to foster longitudinal networking opportunities, including involvement of high school, college, post-graduate, resident and faculty members. This mentoring mechanism should hopefully foster a connection to the Penn State University system and could help with development efforts. This effort is also supported by the Student National Medical Association membership.*
- *A robust connection to the Milton Hershey School is continually reinforced and supported. Through the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, the Spartan Academic Medical Experience (SAME) program encourages students to consider entering the Allied Health professions. Several other programs connect the two campuses, outside the Office for Diversity and Inclusion.*
- *An expanding program with the Franklin and Marshall Posse Program holds a great deal of promise. The interface between the Posse program and Penn State Hershey continues to expand. Originally a career day program, this year will see a Career Day program for the incoming freshman, a Problem Based Learning (PBL) visit for the rising sophomores, a career shadowing program for rising juniors and a full summer research experience, possible through the Leure-duPree research scholarship program, for rising seniors. If this program, of a smaller scale, is successful, it can likely then be applied to other larger programs (Commonwealth Scholars Program).*
- *Increased visibility at recruitment fairs is a goal for the Office for Diversity and Inclusion this year. For the Latino Medical Student Association and the National Hispanic Medical Association, Hispanic students are present and are encouraged to be the direct connection to the students. Looking to the upcoming academic year, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) meeting, which holds a large recruitment fair in the host city, is in Baltimore this year. Such a locoregional meeting will have a large presence from the Office for Diversity and Inclusion.*
- *Data is available for the Commonwealth Scholars program and the pathways the students have taken since the program began. 40% have gone on to either the PS COM or another COM and 60% have gone on to a COM or a medical-science related field. This program was expanded last year, recognizing the success of the program to date.*

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

- Imperative #2 delineates the college’s strong overall commitment to “Educate and Invest in our People for Personal and Professional Success.” This effort is exemplary, and the review team recommends that a specific goal be included to address the diversity of the college’s workforce as a critical component of personal and professional success.
- Sourcing candidates “with a particular focus on outreach in diversity venues” is a positive tactic as stated in Imperative #2.
- Data on the current demographic composition of the college’s workforce, disaggregated by diversity indicators, are not provided.

#### **RESPONSE:**

- *A major project this year for the Office for Diversity and Inclusion was the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Recruitment Toolbox. A collaboration of the Director and Associate Dean, the toolbox has already been used at the department level. It will be included in the new Faculty Recruitment process being implemented by Human Resources.*
- *Faculty Recruitment service was developed with the input from Diversity and Inclusion and the process will include this office moving forward.*

- *In conjunction with the Office for Professional Development, a template for the HR40 review process was constructed that includes a section on the faculty's participation in a diversity activity that can be specifically recognized at the faculty member's annual review.*
- *The Junior Faculty development program remains strong. Enrollment by women and minorities has been encouraging and will be monitored for progress.*
- *Current data on current demographic data of the College's workforce is not readily available. The last data analysis of Penn State Hershey faculty last year by this office indicates an increase in the number of URM faculty from 3.4% in 2010 to 5.9% in 2014. This includes an increase to 6.6% on the clinical side but little movement in the demographic data on the basic science side, a pattern noted nationally in research institutions.*

## **Education and Scholarship**

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

- It is not apparent in the plan if the college addresses diversity in the curriculum, and if so, in which courses and in what ways?
- In Imperative #5, the college expresses a commitment to “Develop and Differentiate our Regional Integrated Academic Health Care System.” The team urges a discussion of how diversity, equity, and inclusion might play a role in the realization of this goal.
- The college is applauded for its goal of developing an educational program at the Regional Medical Campus to support the growth of primary and rural care medicine. This effort should reach rural communities in a direct way and is a potential best practice.

#### **RESPONSE:**

- *Diversity Grand Rounds, now in its 5th year, has been a well-regarded teaching exercise on the Penn State Hershey campus. Topics have included a very wide range of topics, from Native American medicine beliefs to Safe Zones for LGBT individuals. Additionally, the office supports activities by the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg (WACH), the World Culture Club of Central PA, the Association of Indians in Hershey, the Student National Medical Association and the Latino Medical Student Association. As noted previously, the campus continues to move towards cultural proficiency. A medical student recently self-initiated a Grand Rounds, focusing on the Bahai faith, the first of its kind on campus.*
- *The workshop on Unconscious Bias and MicroInequities has now been incorporated into the College of Medicine orientation curriculum, the Physician Assistant orientation curriculum and the Graduate Medical Education curriculum. It has also been delivered to a clinical department in the hospital as well as the Junior Faculty Development Program.*
- *Healthcare inequity discussions have been incorporated into the College of Medicine navigator program, the Physician Assistant introductory curriculum and the Masters of Public Health program.*
- *With encouragement from our office, the Standardized Patient program has been incorporating an increased number of diverse standardized patients that are not stereotypes or cliches. For example, the gay man who is seen in clinic is not HIV+ but is there for hypertension. It requires the student to accept the history, focus on the presenting problem but also inquire about the patient's LGBT health.*
- *In the College of Medicine, there is a newly implemented Science of Health Systems course in year 1, that really helps the students understand issues around access to healthcare and population based healthcare. The course recently had a poster project presentation with the goals listed as:*

1. *Identify categories of the healthcare system that are “in need”*
  2. *Elaborate on ways in which the Affordable Care Act (ACA) addresses these areas*
  3. *Propose potential health systems improvements to address these areas “in need”*
- *The development of a robust curriculum at the Regional Medical Campus ties in well with the very successful Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) program, started at the Penn State College of Medicine in 2002 by the Department of Family and Community Medicine.*

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- This Challenge is not addressed. The College of Medicine is encouraged to clearly state how they will approach creating a diversified leadership and management team. Baseline data illustrating the current diversity makeup of the college’s leadership team would be useful.

#### **RESPONSE:**

- *Search committees are specifically charged to continuously evaluate the diversity of the applicant pool and the final candidates by the Dean as each search begins.*
- *The Junior Faculty Development Program offers early career faculty guidance and mentoring. This, along with the more newly created Leadership Academy for mid-level faculty both promise to continue moving faculty careers forward.*
- *The Penn State Hershey has an administrative fellows program that is not directly aimed at women and minority personnel but may be an appropriate vehicle for mentoring and career progression.*
- *The Office for Diversity and Inclusion has an administrative fellows program that now has its second fellow in place. The fellow participates in all the different activities of the Office, both on the hospital side as well as the College of Medicine side. The experience is a work in progress. The first fellow indicated that the experience was very useful to see the spectrum of Diversity and Inclusion related activities.*
- *The Office also supports the Affinity groups on campus. These are mechanisms for mentoring and guidance for different groups on campus such as the LGBT Affinity group and the Organization for the Advancement of Women (OAW).*
- *Diversification is supported in the curriculum put forward by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion. As an example, the Leadership workshop and the Practicum each had a session entitled “Women in Leadership and Mentoring for Success”.*

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

- Imperative #5 states that the college intends to complete the goals of the three-year Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Including a diversity component in this assessment, particularly the demographic makeup of the patient community, will be important.
- The College of Medicine’s 2014–19 plan articulates very laudable quality goals with multiple benchmarks. It is not well-defined, however, how the college coordinates organizational change to support its diversity goals.

#### **RESPONSE:**

- *Organizational change can only be achieved if the senior leadership and mid-level management are all aware of the key and current concepts in Diversity and Inclusion. This has been accomplished by a series of Senior Leadership Diversity Workshops and from those, Diversity Practicums for mid-level management. The topics, covered in a broad construct in the Senior Leadership workshops are then delivered in a more practical, granular fashion in the Practicum, informing and encouraging leadership to embrace diversity concepts and raise awareness. Attendance year to year has increased in both of these educational opportunities.*

- *The same key concepts are transmitted in the other venues for instruction including the lectures and workshops produced by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion.*
- *The Dean's continued and high profile support for the efforts of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion indicates to campus members at all levels of the importance of diversity to our campus climate.*