

**Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010-15  
Undergraduate Education  
Spring 2010**

Undergraduate Education (UE) is a large organization within the University community, encompassing twelve administrative sub-units and seven programs. Given the Unit's critical role within the University, its diversity strategic plan, including how UE implements the plan, could have an impact on the overall diversity goals of the University. The review team suggests that the plan be strengthened by more detail on how its objectives will be implemented and assessed. The team also suggests that UE describe in greater detail how initiatives from the previous *Framework* cycle connect or align with the current plan to enhance the continuity between the plans. A statement on details of ongoing activities might facilitate this process. The development of a Unit-wide statement of diversity is commended, but it is not clear how UE will promote this statement in its programming and events. **RESPONSE:**

***--In developing the UE plan, we sought a balance between concise reporting and enough detail to communicate goals, objectives, and actions. Initiatives to address most of the objectives already are underway and therefore implementation is not described in length.***

***--As indicated in the plan, many of the objectives and actions continue efforts from the previous Framework cycle. However, in implementing the new plan, we will intentionally call attention to how programs and initiatives relate back to the previous Framework.***

***--The UE statement on diversity is included on the program for every event offered by the diversity team and has been used to guide programming content. The statement has been posted on the UE Web site; it will also be given to new employees in their orientation to UE.***

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

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

- UE provides an excellent outline of strategies to help develop a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity. This approach is an effective way to demonstrate UE efforts. UE's use of program evaluations is positive, but developing outcome thresholds that define success and measuring results against these thresholds would take this initiative a step further. **RESPONSE: We will have a dialogue in UE Council and in the UE Diversity Team regarding appropriate targets for feedback thresholds for diversity program evaluations.**

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

- The use of the 2008 Faculty/Staff Survey to enhance Unit climate is positive, as is the creation of a resource handout.
- UE is encouraged to explore broader-based diversity collaborations, including working with the LGBTA Student Resource Center and the equity commissions.

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

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

- UE's plan to expand recruiting efforts is thoughtful and will hopefully produce excellent results.
- Further details on metrics used to assess specific program initiatives would be helpful.
- Details on planning during the next cycle are unclear for the Summer Transition Programs for Change-of-Campus Students (STEP) initiative which, as reported in the 2004-09 final update, will be implemented in the College of Engineering in summer 2010. How will the program be assessed, and what will happen after the program is implemented in Engineering? Much the same can be said of other similar programs. **RESPONSE:**

***--A fall 2010 Achievers Weekend will focus on Hispanic student recruitment.***

***--The University Committee on Instructional Facilities includes a focus on classroom access for students with disabilities.***

*--Bill Welch was added to the On-line Coordinating Committee to help address disability issues related to eLearning including the use of assistive technologies.*

*--We are monitoring minority participation in LinkU.P. All participants were surveyed after the program.*

*--There will be appropriate follow up of STEP participants after fall semester to assess the extent to which program goals were met.*

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

- The identification and implementation of retention strategies in support of staff from underrepresented/underserved groups are laudable. Further explanation on the processes planned to identify individuals for these efforts would be helpful. **RESPONSE: We worked hard this year to address salary equity issues; focused on minority employees.**
- UE is commended on its ongoing strategy to employ a diverse workforce in sub-units that use part-time and temporary employees.
- In Objective 4.2, the plan states, "consider development of a mentoring program," which is unclear. More details on this program would strengthen the plan. **RESPONSE: We plan to implement an "Introduction to UE" for all new employees to better connect them with our units and staff and to lay the groundwork for exploring the need for and elements of a mentoring program.**

#### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- UE is commended on its important goal to stimulate teaching and learning experiences that contribute to the development of intercultural and international competencies.
- It is constructive to continue to support diversity initiatives within the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, thereby providing faculty with development opportunities and teaching resources that address diversity issues and concerns.

#### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- Providing leadership development opportunities for members of diverse groups is noteworthy.
- UE seeks qualified diverse candidates for leadership positions. How will UE implement this initiative, e.g., what search/advertisement processes will be implemented to support this objective?
- UE is encouraged also to implement strategies to diversify its upper administration beyond gender diversity. **RESPONSE: Search processes reach out to appropriate professional groups through advertising and communities of practice (networks). Search committees will be encouraged to look beyond conventional qualifications as a means of diversifying candidate pools.**

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

- UE is commended for providing funding for programs and activities that foster diversity at Penn State, such as the Achievement Conference and Philadelphia Honors Convocation. These initiatives have been quite productive and will hopefully remain so in the upcoming planning period.
- The goal of continued collaboration with units throughout the University to advance UE's diversity goals is commendable, though, as indicated above, still unclear is UE's degree of collaboration to support LGBT individuals, people with disabilities, etc. **RESPONSE: The Diversity Team will be asked to explore programs on persons with disabilities and LGBT issues.**