

**A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2010-2015**  
**Undergraduate Education Plan**  
**December 2009**

The Undergraduate Education (UE) plan for the next five years of Penn State's *Framework to Foster Diversity* reflects the union of Enrollment Management and Undergraduate Education offices. The resulting diverse mix of functions and programs that serve prospective and current students, work with faculty, and collaborate with other areas of the University involved in undergraduate education, creates new opportunities and new synergies for advancing Penn State's diversity goals.

These opportunities and synergies are underscored throughout the 2008-13 Undergraduate Education Strategic Plan, beginning with our mission and becoming more focused through identified strategic priorities pertaining to access and success for a diverse student body and preparing students for global citizenship. The integral importance of diversity concerns to the work of Undergraduate Education is further expressed in a statement of shared understanding developed with broad input from UE staff.

***The mission of Undergraduate Education is to:***

- ◆ Recruit, enroll, and retain students across all Penn State undergraduate campuses
- ◆ Engage students in learning through quality academic advising and curricular and co-curricular academic opportunities
- ◆ Promote innovation, integrity, and excellence in undergraduate teaching and learning
- ◆ Ensure a vibrant and diverse community of learners, reflective of our multicultural and globally-influenced educational environment

***Undergraduate Education Statement on Diversity Fall 2009***

Diversity is a fundamental value informing and guiding the work of Undergraduate Education. In drawing strength and vitality from the richness of cultures, identities, talents, perspectives, and experiences that students and staff bring to our offices and the Penn State community, Undergraduate Education is committed to:

- ◆ Providing a welcoming, inclusive, respectful, and nurturing environment that affirms the dignity of all individuals and challenges prejudice and stereotypes
- ◆ Encouraging understanding of identity, culture, and worldviews in support of individual differences such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability, and veteran status, among others
- ◆ Promoting a culture of excellence, creativity, synergy, and active engagement to enrich the quality and outcomes of our collective contributions
- ◆ Engaging in dialogue and collaboration between and among units to serve the needs of students and the University community
- ◆ Preparing our students to be effective local and global citizens
- ◆ Providing professional development opportunities that promote and support the role of staff in fostering diversity

Within this broad context of strategic planning and shared understanding, the 2010-15 Undergraduate Education Diversity Plan is responsive to specific demographic, economic, and educational changes and trends that intersect with challenges identified in Penn State's *Framework to Foster Diversity*. These include:

- ◆ A projected continuing decline through 2018 in the number of Pennsylvania high school graduates at the same time the University seeks to increase the enrollment of academically talented students from underrepresented groups.
- ◆ Growing immigrant, Latino, and Asian shares of the Pennsylvania population. In 2007, foreign-born Pennsylvanians rose to 5.4 percent of the state's population, and nearly 7 percent were Latino or Asian. Many colleges and universities within the Commonwealth are targeting these groups with special recruiting programs and financial incentives.
- ◆ Rapid growth in the number of international undergraduate applications to Penn State. With 75 percent of the international undergraduate population currently coming from Asia, continuing growth is dependent on greater representation from around the world.
- ◆ From 2001 to 2008, a decline of 4 percent in students from the lowest income range and 9 percent in the middle income range, accompanied by an increase of 33 percent in students from families in higher income ranges. Affordability concerns for low and moderate income families cut across a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds.
- ◆ Retention and graduation rates for minority students and students who begin their studies at many of the campuses that lag behind those for majority students and students at University Park. At the same time, the Graduation Success Rate for student athletes is a record-tying 89 percent.

- ◆ Increasing emphasis by employers on students' ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings and understanding of global issues and developments and their implications for the future.

Overlapping priorities and objectives in the Undergraduate Education strategic plan and diversity plan address these developments through their emphasis on student access and success. This work on behalf of and with Penn State students makes it imperative for Undergraduate Education to embrace practices and embody a profile that reflect and reinforce our educational mission and goals. The 2010-15 Undergraduate Education *Framework* plan also seeks to sustain and enhance the shared understanding of and welcoming climate for diversity within Undergraduate Education and to increase diversity of our workforce. Collaboration with other offices and units across Penn State continues to undergird many of the elements in the UE diversity plan.

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

There is evidence of a broad-based commitment to diversity throughout Undergraduate Education, with 87 percent of staff who responded to the most recent Faculty/Staff Survey indicating that a shared and inclusive understanding is promoted within the unit. Efforts to reinforce this collective vision and value are ongoing. ***Our goal is to engage staff in a range of diversity topics to promote continual learning and enhanced understanding.***

#### **Objectives/Actions:**

##### **1.1 Keep the value of diversity for Undergraduate Education visible.**

- ◆ Continue to share the fall 2009 Undergraduate Education Statement on Diversity widely among staff

- ◆ Continue to support an active Undergraduate Diversity Team
- ◆ Develop specific mechanisms to communicate information on diversity issues and resources to staff

### **1.2 Provide diversity-related professional development opportunities for staff.**

- ◆ Offer 2-3 diversity programs annually for UE staff
- ◆ Support staff participation in Penn State and other diversity programs and activities

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ Maintain/improve percent of Faculty/Staff Survey respondents indicating a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity is promoted within UE
- ◆ UE Diversity Program Evaluation results

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

In the most recent Faculty/Staff Survey, 88 percent of UE respondents agreed that the workplace climate is welcoming for employees from underrepresented groups and nearly three-quarters believed there is visible leadership to foster diversity. Undergraduate Education remains committed to proactive efforts to create and maintain a supportive climate including welcoming contacts with new employees, and support for staff participation in diversity initiatives, as well as to actively pursue positive resolution when climate issues and concerns arise. ***Our goal is to provide a supportive work environment for all UE staff and to contribute to a positive learning environment for Penn State students.***

#### **Objectives/Actions:**

### **2.1 Monitor the climate for diversity within Undergraduate Education.**

- ◆ Use the UE Faculty/Staff Survey results to identify climate issues
- ◆ Pursue follow up assessments and actions as needed within units

### **2.2 Address climate issues and concerns promptly when they arise.**

- ◆ Encourage employees to bring concerns forward to their directors or other administrators
- ◆ Develop an employee resources handout including information on Human Resources, the Affirmative Action Office, the Employee Assistance Program, and other on- and off-campus avenues of support, and disseminate to staff
- ◆ As appropriate, use Faculty/Staff Survey climate item results to inform programs planned by the UE Diversity Team

### **2.3 Support events and activities that celebrate diversity at Penn State.**

- ◆ Continue to sponsor and support events such as the annual Achievement Conference, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner, and the Commission for Women luncheon and provide opportunities for staff to attend

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ Maintain/improve UE Faculty/Staff Survey climate item results

### ***Challenge 3: Recruiting and retaining a diverse student body***

Among the challenges created by the demographic and economic changes noted at the beginning of this plan are affordability of a Penn State education, attracting and serving new populations of students, and helping all Penn State students who start their studies at any of the campuses to flourish and succeed. While these are University-wide issues, they are special concerns for Undergraduate Education, by virtue of our enrollment management function and the programs and services we provide to students and faculty. The Undergraduate Education strategic plan addresses student access in concert with success, with particular attention given to helping students succeed in the many transitions that college entails. These transitions, including the first-year experience,

change of campus, and entrance to major, are especially challenging for students-at-risk. ***Our goal is to enhance recruitment, retention, and achievement of well-defined learning outcomes for a diverse population of students.***

### **Objectives/Actions:**

#### **3.1 Strategically expand recruitment efforts to enroll a more diverse and inclusive population, specifically multicultural and international students, Pennsylvania and out-of-state students, adult learners, and current and returning military personnel.**

- ◆ Implement initiatives targeted to Hispanic recruitment including stronger partnerships with schools and school counselors and appointment of a new staff member responsible for Latino student recruitment primarily throughout eastern Pennsylvania
- ◆ Significantly increase the number of international undergraduate students at Penn State over the next five years through targeted recruiting initiatives
- ◆ Strengthen the Community Recruitment Centers in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in strategic outreach and partnerships with underrepresented populations
- ◆ Continue targeted recruitment events at University Park and other campuses to bring students and parents to visit campus, explore academic programs, and interact with current students
- ◆ Continue support for the Philadelphia Honors Convocation
- ◆ Address academic policy and procedural issues to facilitate a smooth return to Penn State for veterans and returning adult students

#### **3.2 Assist low and moderate income students and families in meeting the costs of a Penn State education.**

- ◆ Increase need-based student aid through special programs such as Academic Competitive and SMART grants and pursuit/stewardship of private scholarship support

- ◆ Provide loan debt counseling and financial literacy programs for low and moderate income families
- ◆ Expand and enhance student aid data reporting to central administration and to colleges and campuses
- ◆ Finalize plans for a shared position between Student Aid and Educational Equity to provide easier access to financial aid advising to students served by academic advancement programs

#### **3.3 Enhance programs for students-in-transition.**

- ◆ Develop a cohesive approach to first-year programs including FTCAP, LEAP, Penn State Learning, and others
- ◆ Implement summer transition programs for change-of-campus students (STEP) and new international students (iLEAP)
- ◆ Hold new University Park open house for future change-of-campus students
- ◆ Oversee assessment of First-Year Engagement Plans from the colleges and campuses as specified in April 2008 University Faculty Senate legislation
- ◆ Re-engineer the entrance to major process to improve the student experience

#### **3.4 Help students build academic success throughout their time at Penn State.**

- ◆ Refine the Online Student Progress Report to enhance mid-semester evaluation and timely interventions for students at risk
- ◆ Provide academic support for students through Penn State Learning
- ◆ Ensure appropriate support for student-athletes through the Morgan Academic Support Center and the University Faculty Senate Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics

### **Unit Indicators:**

- ◆ Continuing increase in undergraduate minority and international applications and first-year enrollments

- ◆ Improved retention of at-risk students participating in first-year and change-of-campus transition programs
- ◆ Increased availability of need-based financial aid including \$17 million in new endowments for Trustee Scholarships raised through the Campaign for Penn State Students
- ◆ Assessments of specific program initiatives

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

Undergraduate Education has realized some success with regard to racial and ethnic diversity of the workforce, with minority representation at about 9 percent of total employees and 12 percent of staff in the Enrollment Management units. Approximately 13 percent of all Undergraduate Education staff exempt employees are minorities. However, there has been little change in this profile over the last ten years and it lags behind growth in minority student enrollments. ***Our goal is to increase participation of underrepresented groups in the Undergraduate Education workforce.***

#### **Objectives/Actions:**

##### **4.1 Increase the number of qualified diverse applicants for Undergraduate Education positions.**

- ◆ Benchmark with other areas of Penn State to identify best practices for bringing diversity into staff searches at all levels
- ◆ Continue to emphasize and implement search procedures that seek to locate and recruit staff from underrepresented groups

##### **4.2 Identify and implement retention strategies in support of staff from underrepresented groups.**

- ◆ Consider development of a mentoring program

##### **4.3 Continue to employ a diverse workforce in units that use part-time or temporary employees to staff programs, including student tutors and FTCAP advisers.**

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ Number of minority hires
- ◆ UE staff profile by gender and race/ethnicity

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

Undergraduate Education plays a supporting role in curriculum that fosters intercultural and international competencies. As appropriate to their missions, units collaborate actively with faculty, students, and academic units to provide educational experiences that prepare students for life in a multicultural, global society. ***Our goal is to stimulate teaching and learning experiences that contribute to the development of intercultural and international competencies.***

#### **Objectives/actions:**

##### **5.1 Provide applied learning experiences that help to develop and reinforce global citizenship skills.**

- ◆ Continue development of the Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy and expand participation in the intercollege Civic and Community Engagement minor
- ◆ Collaborate with Global Programs to increase access to curricular offerings with embedded international experiences

##### **5.2 Promote inclusivity in teaching.**

- ◆ Through the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, continue to provide faculty development opportunities and teaching resources that address diversity issues and concerns

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ Number of students participating in Public Scholarship programs and the Civic and Community Engagement minor
- ◆ Number of participants in Schreyer Institute programs addressing diversity issues
- ◆ Schreyer Institute grant dollars awarded to diversity-related projects

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

The advancement of women in leadership positions within Undergraduate Education has been substantial in recent years; however, administrative leadership can be furthered diversified on other dimensions to be more reflective of the public Penn State serves. ***Our goal is to include the contributions of diverse individuals in the leadership of Undergraduate Education to broaden perspectives brought to our work.***

#### **Objectives/Actions:**

##### **6.1 Provide leadership development opportunities for members of diverse groups.**

- ◆ Ensure that committee and team assignments are inclusive
- ◆ Continue to support the Administrative Fellows program, both as a participating mentor and through the participation of UE staff as fellows

##### **6.2 Seek qualified diverse candidates for leadership positions.**

- ◆ Ensure inclusive search procedures
- ◆ Communicate UE's commitment to diversity to candidates

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ UE leadership profile by gender and race/ethnicity

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

The common ground shared by Undergraduate Education's most recent strategic plan and this *Framework* plan underscores that fostering diversity at Penn State is fundamental to our success as an academic support unit. Undergraduate recruiting initiatives, transition programs that help students-at-risk, and development priorities that focus on increasing need-based student aid require continuing

investment from Undergraduate Education and its units.

However, much of our work to enhance student access and success is done in collaboration with other areas of Penn State, including the colleges and campuses, the University Faculty Senate, Student Affairs, Outreach, and Educational Equity, among others. This collaboration, which crosses organizational boundaries within the institution, impacts policy and practice and pools resources, both human and financial. ***Our goal is continued collaboration within Penn State to advance the University's diversity goals.***

#### **Objectives/Actions:**

##### **7.1 Contribute to University-wide leadership in support of diverse student populations.**

- ◆ Continue to co-sponsor and participate in the Commission for Adult Learners, the On-Line Early Progress Report System Design Team, the International Enrollment at Campuses Policy Task Force, and other groups created to address the needs of diverse student populations
- ◆ Address diversity issues through the Central Enrollment Management Group
- ◆ Continue collaborative meetings of top level administrative staff of Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs to advance efforts to promote student success

##### **7.2 Provide financial support for programs and activities that foster diversity at Penn State.**

- ◆ Continue to sponsor programs such as the annual Achievement Conference and the Philadelphia Honors Convocation

##### **7.3 Work with academic units and the University Faculty Senate to enhance curricular and co-curricular experiences that foster diversity.**

- ◆ Include diversity items, as appropriate, for discussion by the Administrative Council for Undergraduate Education

- ◆ As called upon, support diversity-related University Faculty Senate initiatives

#### **7.4 Assess UE diversity plan progress annually and adjust actions accordingly.**

- ◆ Prepare annual UE diversity update
- ◆ Review progress with UE Council

#### **Unit indicators:**

- ◆ Collaborative initiatives in support of a diverse student population
- ◆ Financial support for programs and activities

#### **Summary**

Undergraduate Education's *Framework to Foster Diversity* plan for 2010-2015 continues ongoing efforts to enhance understanding of diversity and provide a welcoming work and learning environment for UE staff and the students they serve. Our greatest challenges within the *Framework* over the next five years will be recruitment and retention of both an increasingly diverse student population and recruitment and retention of staff who reflect the diverse society Penn State serves. Major emphases, therefore, in the UE diversity plan are minority and international undergraduate student recruitment and special efforts in support of these populations within UE's broader focus on students in transition. Both areas are also priorities in the Undergraduate Education strategic plan. A third area of emphasis in the diversity plan is creating a more inclusive UE workforce, with special attention given to bringing more diverse candidates into search pools. Continuing collaboration with other areas at Penn State remains essential to achieving our diversity goals.