

# A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State University Libraries' Diversity Strategic Plan 2010-2015

## Introduction

Diversity is at the root of Penn State's historical mission to provide equitable access to education regardless of background, and support for diversity contributes to the breadth of intellectual inquiry at the University. The *University Libraries Strategic Plan for 2008/09 – 2013/14* states as one of five goals: "We will embrace diversity in thought and culture to promote the free expression of ideas among all members of the Penn State community." Our collections, spaces, and personal services demonstrate our commitment to these principles in support of teaching and learning. Our strategies and tactics outlined in the *Strategic Plan* support that goal, and are reflected in this *University Libraries' Strategic Plan for Diversity*, which provides more detail on how the Libraries will support the *Framework to Foster Diversity* and continue work towards promoting diversity into the Penn State Community. Following guidance provided in the University's most recent *Framework to Foster Diversity*, we have adopted University-wide strategic indicators where appropriate, and formulated our own where necessary, to better assess our activities.

The University Libraries have made clear and considerable strides in fostering diversity. Since the early 1990s, we have conducted internal climate surveys seeking to identify ways to increase our understanding of diversity, create a welcoming environment, recruit and retain a diverse workforce, and build collections reflective of different viewpoints. The *University Libraries' Equity and Community Assessment* (Spring 2007) shows significant acceptance of the University's and the Libraries' diversity initiatives. In the most recent University Faculty/Staff Surveys (2004 and 2008), the Libraries were perceived as having a welcoming climate and strong diversity initiatives. Concerns were identified, however, with discourteous treatment attributed to differences in rank and employee status. Libraries' administration takes these concerns very seriously, and has focused on the problem of "Civility" between employees. A Civility Team has now been charged by the Libraries' deans to develop a shared definition of civility, and to promote programming to further improve the climate within the Libraries. The Civility Team's mission and efforts are directly related to our diversity initiatives and are reflected throughout this strategic plan.

In the next five years, we will continue to make progress in our diversity efforts. The demographics of our students, faculty, and colleagues continue to shift towards a more pluralistic society, requiring a greater understanding of the importance of diversity. Our efforts will maintain an open and welcoming climate for our users and for our staff. We will emphasize how diversity promotes the values of higher education and defines a community of civility, respect, and trust.

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

The University Libraries have prominently displayed a definition of diversity on its Diversity Committee’s webpage for many years and has used it as a guiding statement for the Libraries’ activities. The Committee will update this definition to further integrate with the *Framework to Foster Diversity 2010-2015* and will use innovative methods to bring people together in a place of mutual understanding.

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Encourage Dialog on the Meaning of Diversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-sponsor programming with other academic units to attract a broader array of attendance and encourage discussion from other perspectives.</li> <li>Continue programming that promotes diversity dialog, e.g., the existing “Religion and Culture” speaker series, to promote the understanding of a shared human experience.</li> <li>Update the University Libraries’ definition of diversity to align with the <i>Framework to Foster Diversity 2010-2015</i>.</li> <li>Encourage diversity-focused tactics in subunit tactical plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of empathy by way of hearing human stories from people from diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>Accountability at the subunit level for fostering diversity.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	“Religion and Culture Series” speakers from various cultural and religious backgrounds to speak on experiences and offer insights. [Underway and garnering much interest.]
<i>Utilize Multiple Communication Avenues to Distribute Diversity Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Diversity Committee will continue to use social networking tools, in addition to our traditional website, to make visible specific diversity initiatives, programming, and dialog. Examples include: the Diversity Committee’s presence on Facebook, the blog “Diversions,” and a “Delicious” site (<a href="http://delicious.com/uldiversity">http://delicious.com/uldiversity</a>), to share helpful diversity-related information.</li> <li>Continue Dean’s Diversity Forum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate barriers to access; improve information dissemination.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	An outreach subcommittee from the Diversity Committee will soon begin to work to open multiple lines of communication, including social networking.

### Strategic Indicators

- Evidence of adoption of, or interaction with, diversity-related social networking tools across the Libraries.
- Increased awareness of diversity initiatives related to topics beyond race/ethnicity and gender.
- Evidence of collaborative engagement in support of diversity between the Libraries and other academic units.

## Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

The University Libraries have demonstrated its acceptance of all people through services that include outreach, exhibits, guest speakers, and programs. We implement information and communications services with sensitivity to the visually and hearing impaired. These services increase Libraries' staff awareness of many cultures and points of view. The Libraries are committed to creating spaces that will enable students to customize their learning environments and allow us to easily modify our physical spaces to support emerging technologies, manage changing student expectations, and engage students in new and innovative ways. The *2008/09-2013/14 Libraries' Strategic Plan* addresses this challenge in Strategy 4.1: "We will enhance and maintain a welcoming climate that promotes equitable access to information, and demonstrate civility and respect for all members of the Penn State community."

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Foster a Climate of Civility and Respect</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an institutional statement and policy on civility.</li> <li>• Develop programming for faculty and staff to defuse "classism/rankism" throughout the Libraries.</li> <li>• Develop leadership among Libraries' faculty and staff to enable ongoing awareness of classism found in the organization.</li> <li>• Conduct periodic surveys to monitor the workplace civility and climate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved climate within the University Libraries.</li> <li>• Effectively enable employees to deal with civility-related issues through education.</li> </ul>	Dates for achieving civility statement, as well as other activities, will be coordinated with the Civility Team.	Civility Team was formed and charged in Spring 2009.
<i>Create a Knowledge Commons for the Penn State Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement a Knowledge Commons service area in Pattee and Paterno Library, and similar service concepts across all campuses that ensure universal access and enhance visibility of services for distinct populations, e.g., services to students with different learning needs.</li> <li>• Partner with leadership in ITS and the University Office for Disability Services to create welcoming spaces to support barrier-free access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve accessibility and visibility of services to students with different learning needs and physical accessibility to library services.</li> </ul>	At University Park, the project is to be completed in seven phases, pending private funding.	Phase One of Knowledge Commons completed. Phase Two and Three underway.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Projected Outcomes</b>	<b>Planned Completion Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Create a Positive Climate for Diversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint diversity liaisons at each campus library to assist the Committee with collecting data for diversity reporting purposes.</li> <li>• Develop or co-sponsor events with a diversity theme with international student groups and other student organizations.</li> <li>• Continue to develop and market diversity-related exhibits that promote important collections and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved communication for and participation in diversity efforts across all Libraries' locations in the Commonwealth.</li> <li>• Sustainability of a welcoming environment for the University Libraries' patrons and the Penn State community.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	There are significant ongoing efforts to educate and raise awareness on disability and accessibility issues and to provide accessible resources to people with disabilities.

### **Strategic Indicators**

- Periodic climate surveys to reveal positive employee perceptions of workplace climate for civility, classism, and diversity, and to identify areas for improvements. (see *UL Strategic Plan, Goal 4*)
- Increased awareness and usage of Libraries' Office of Disability Services.
- Evidence of collaborative engagement in support of diversity across all Libraries' locations.

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

As an academic support unit within Penn State, the Libraries are not actively involved in the recruitment of Penn State students. However, we interact with students in a variety of ways that are supportive of student success and retention. We also believe that the work we do to maintain a welcoming campus climate will support student retention.

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Collaborate with Penn State Community to Aid Student Recruitment and Retention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the Libraries' diversity efforts to schools, colleges, and departments throughout the University.</li> <li>• Engagement with programs such as Fast-Start, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math and Science.</li> <li>• Expand existing programs and resources for returning adult students and international students to increase student participation in, and create similar programs for other groups of diverse students (e.g., LGBT community, etc.).</li> <li>• Recruit students from historically underrepresented groups for assistantships, internships, and work-study positions.</li> <li>• Incorporate diversity-related programming into annual Libraries' Open House.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive interaction with and support to diverse student groups.</li> <li>• Increased visibility of the Libraries in University-wide support for diversity.</li> <li>• Provision of services to meet needs of diverse populations of learners.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	

#### Strategic Indicators

- Demographic data for historically underrepresented groups in assistantships, internships, and work-study positions.
- Positive student and faculty perceptions of the Libraries as welcoming, supportive for different populations and communities.

## Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Retaining librarians from underrepresented ethnic groups has been challenging. Frequently their experience here provides a strong foundation that prepares them for growth opportunities that take them to other institutions. In addition, the demographics of the Library and Information Sciences professions do not reflect those of the general population, increasing our competition for highly skilled librarians from underrepresented groups. When recruiting for librarian positions, a variety of websites and listservs are utilized to post faculty vacancies, many of which are targeted to underrepresented groups (example: the Black Information Professionals' Network). The majority of staff and wage openings are filled through the Penn State job posting system, and these positions are largely filled from a pool of candidates in the local area. Looking forward, we will continue to utilize those tactics that have been effective and seek new ones. We must ensure that all Libraries' employees participating in the hiring process are equipped to recruit and review a diverse candidate pool. Our commitment here is summarized in Strategy 4.3 from the *2008/09-2013/14 Libraries' Strategic Plan*: "We will strengthen and sustain processes that encourage the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse library workforce at all levels."

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Recruit, Develop, and Retain Talented and Diverse Faculty and Staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the expertise and skills needed by the Libraries and revise positions, recruitment methods, training programs, and reward systems accordingly.</li> <li>Create/formalize a mentoring program for Libraries' staff.</li> <li>Revise the Libraries' New Hire Orientation Program to include a strong emphasis on embracing diversity, with additional emphasis on work/life balance and Penn State's programs and policies related to work/life.</li> <li>Make "Hire Power" training available to all faculty/staff serving on search committees or otherwise involved in the hiring process.</li> <li>Collaborate, as appropriate, with other academic units on unique hiring opportunities, e.g., the President's Opportunity Fund. (This action is cited in the <i>UL Strategic Plan</i>, Goal 4.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiring of personnel committed to diversity.</li> <li>Reduced voluntary turnover due to work/life balance issues.</li> <li>Enhanced awareness beginning early in each faculty/staff member's employment as to the importance of diversity in the Libraries and the Libraries' expectations of all employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing (Each faculty search involves review of requirement and recruitment procedures.)</li> <li>Libraries' New Hire Orientation to be revised by December 2010.</li> <li>"Hire Power" training availability will be explored in 2010/11.</li> </ul>	Continuous improvement is necessary to maintain our effectiveness.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Projected Outcomes</b>	<b>Planned Completion Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<i>Promote Library-Related Career Paths</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market library/information services' careers to underrepresented communities, e.g., through promotion of existing Libraries' scholarships for undergraduates considering librarianship as a career.</li> <li>• Mentor work-study employees to inform them about career opportunities in librarianship and encourage them to continue in the field.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse applicants to library and information sciences programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing of scholarships is reviewed and revised annually.</li> <li>• Mentoring is ongoing with each student.</li> </ul>	

### **Strategic Indicators**

- Demographic analysis of Libraries' workforce, retention, and recruitment pools to identify trends among underrepresented populations.

## Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies

The primary responsibility of the Libraries is to support the curriculum and research at Penn State through our collections and services as well as through a program of extensive course-related, subject-specific, and general information literacy instruction in every college and at every campus. A number of these sessions support General Education courses identified by the University as fulfilling the United States Cultures and International Cultures requirement. The Libraries continue to designate funds specifically for the purchase of diverse materials in addition to the acquisition of diversity-related materials already undertaken by selectors at the University Libraries.

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Foster Liaison Relationships with Academic Units</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and revamp core competencies and expectations of subject specialists to ensure closer, more collaborative relationships with academic programs to focus on curriculum issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved relationships with academic programs will enable us to better support the curriculum.</li> </ul>	2010/11	A task force to undertake this work has already been appointed and will make recommendations by the start of FY 2010/11.
<i>Publicize Specialized Diversity Collections and Services to the Penn State Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use newly redesigned Libraries' website to promote specific collections and services, e.g., guides on diversity-related topics highlighting collections and resources throughout the Libraries.</li> <li>Expand classroom teaching to support and promote the Libraries' diversity-related collections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved instructional support of curriculum and diversity.</li> </ul>	Web redesign to be completed by Fall 2010.	The Collections Subcommittee of the Diversity Committee works to promote collections.
<i>Evaluate and Strengthen Collections and Services to Support Needs of the Penn State Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the needs of General Education courses with a United States Culture or International Culture requirement and market services directly to instructors.</li> <li>Develop instructional materials and training programs for the Libraries' instructors to ensure that they accommodate diverse learning styles.</li> <li>Create guides and brochures in languages other than English, e.g. Chinese, Japanese or Spanish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve instructional methods and services that support the University's diversity agenda and the United States Cultures and International Cultures course requirement.</li> </ul>	Each semester; new guides will begin to be developed after Libraries' web redesign.	Library Learning Services and the Diversity Committee have provided training in instructional methods to Libraries' instructors to integrate diversity into their teaching.

### Strategic Indicators

- Instruction and outreach sessions in support of diversity-related curriculum.
- Annual resource commitments in dollars and time for diversity efforts.



## Challenge 6: Diversifying University Libraries' Leadership and Management

It is vital that we take steps to prepare our current employees from underrepresented groups so that they are ready to be considered when leadership and management opportunities arise. In addition, leadership must embrace and value diversity in order to effectively mentor, develop, and engage individuals from diverse backgrounds as they strive to fill leadership roles. The Libraries must continue to recruit broadly from the profession to diversify our leadership, and we must continue to be active among organizations and programs that support librarians from underrepresented groups. Our commitment to this effort is reflected in Strategy 4.4 from the *2008/09-2013/14 Libraries' Strategic Plan*: "We will enhance professional development opportunities for all employees, enabling them to assume leadership roles and develop expertise required to serve a diverse community."

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Provide Diversity Training for Leadership Positions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage wider administrative participation in diversity and civility programming.</li> <li>Based on activities in Challenge 2, incorporate Civility concepts into the Upward Feedback process for supervisory employees.</li> <li>Continue to require all new supervisors to participate in "Mastering SuperVision," a supervisory skills training program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership that is knowledgeable and fully engaged in promoting all aspects of diversity.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Upward Feedback in process is revised annually.</p>	<p>Civility Team is charged with providing training opportunities focused on promoting civil behavior and reducing the occurrence of rankism.</p>
<i>Mentor Personnel from Under-represented Groups for Leadership Opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Libraries' leadership will mentor Libraries' and University personnel from diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>Build diverse recruitment pools through administrative and Libraries' faculty participation in national leadership and mentoring programs for underrepresented groups, e.g., ALA Spectra Scholars and the ARL Leadership and Career Development Program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment from and participation of personnel from diverse backgrounds in Libraries' management activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Libraries' leadership, including Dean, is currently mentoring personnel and participating in national mentoring programs.</p>

### Strategic Indicators

- Demonstrated awareness of faculty/leadership commitment to diversity and civility in the workplace.
- Demographics of leadership positions and recruitment pools.

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

The Libraries are the central academic service unit to the University, acting as a conduit of information to the Penn State community, and often leading the way in efforts of inclusion and outreach. The *University Libraries' Strategic Plan 2008/2009-2012/2013* demonstrates our commitment to “embracing diversity in thought and culture to promote the free expression of ideas among all members of the Penn State Community.” We also have adopted as a strategic goal to be “an agile organization that proactively addresses the changing needs of our patrons and employees.” We will focus our attention on improving our processes and simplifying efforts to improve the quality of all of our services. This commitment to improve will enable us to better target our diversity efforts to areas that need the most attention in the coming five years, and adjust our actions as needed.

Goals	Action Items	Projected Outcomes	Planned Completion Date	Status
<i>Grow Partnerships with the Penn State Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify joint projects with the Multicultural Resource Center, Student Support Services, Office for Disability Services, University Office of Global Programs, and others.</li> <li>Increase collaboration with units to communicate and contribute to diversity-related events and programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality programming for the Penn State community by reallocating resources and collaborating.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	This is ongoing; however, the appointment of diversity liaisons (see Challenge 2) will better support this effort.
<i>Assess our Diversity Efforts to Ensure their Effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and modify as needed the charge and membership structure of the Diversity Committee to ensure its effectiveness.</li> <li>Review our processes for gathering and reporting data pertaining to diversity initiatives.</li> <li>Explicitly incorporate review of diversity efforts into annual planning cycles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better data for decision making and assessment of our diversity efforts.</li> <li>Clarified role and responsibilities to ensure that we achieve our goals.</li> </ul>	Academic year 2010/11, then ongoing	Libraries' Assessment Council is reviewing all needs for metrics. Other reviews can begin in annual planning, but will likely not begin in earnest start of 2010/11 academic year.

### Strategic Indicators

- Clear progress on activities under all challenges.
- Improved resource allocation to support diversity efforts.

**APPENDIX: Goal 4 from the *University Libraries' Strategic Plan 2008/2009 – 2012/2013***  
*[Taken from the "Areas of Strategic Focus"]*

**Area 4: Diversity**

Goal 4:

*We will embrace diversity in thought and culture to promote the free expression of ideas among all members of the Penn State community.*

Strategies

- 4.1 We will enhance and maintain a welcoming climate that promotes equitable access to information, and have civility and respect for all members of the Penn State community.
- 4.2 We will seek out and create opportunities for all library employees to advance a shared, inclusive understanding of the value of diversity to our culture and workplace.
- 4.3 We will strengthen and sustain processes that encourage the recruitment, hiring, and retention of a diverse library workforce at all levels.
- 4.4 We will enhance professional development opportunities for all employees, enabling them to assume leadership roles and develop expertise required to serve a diverse community.
- 4.5 Our collections and services will reflect the University's diversity and recognize Penn State's global mission.

High Level Tactics:

- Conduct periodic surveys to monitor the workplace civility and climate.
- Promote research on diversity-related issues in library and information services.
- Collaborate as appropriate with other academic units on unique hiring opportunities, e.g., the President's Opportunity Fund.

Strategic Indicators:

- Study employee perceptions of workplace climate of civility, classism, and diversity for improvements.
- Analyze employee demographics for recruitment and retention.
- Gather and review resource commitments for diversity efforts.