

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

Penn State Abington demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity in this 2010-15 plan. The core value, mission, and vision statements provide excellent direction for the Abington College community.

While many of the Challenge responses are very strong, more development to flesh out the plan would be useful. Particular areas where more information would be helpful include: interrelationships and synergies across goals and action items, especially in relation to implementation; implementation plans for the “action plan” goals; baseline and longitudinal data for the strategic indicators (as appropriate), both qualitative and quantitative; and resources allocated and/or pending.

As noted in the update feedback, the Diversity Strategic Planning Update Committee’s self-assessment review was insightful. Many of the recommendations were addressed in this 2010-15 plan. The review team noted that many more seemed to have the potential to be incorporated to build upon the 2004-09 plan and further strengthen 2010-15 implementation, but no information was given as to why some recommendations were taken and others were not. **RESPONSE: Some recommendations were not taken as we wanted to create a DSP that was focused, achievable and honed in on our strategic priorities. A DSP that is too diffuse and unwieldy achieves less meaningful results.**

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- Developing a comprehensive diversity presence on the Web site to enhance awareness of diversity on campus is commendable.
- Creating a Diversity Handbook as a resource on guidelines and procedures for scheduling and effectively advertising and coordinating diversity-related events is a good idea.
- Goals presented in this Challenge seem particularly interrelated. Abington might consider combining or linking related goals to encourage more effective implementation and possible resource efficiencies. **RESPONSE: The Abington DSP Committee concurs that the goals are inter-related and could have been consolidated. The committee will consider this suggestion as they develop the priorities for each year of the plan.**

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

- Adding a tutorial on diversity to the New Faculty Orientation is a positive strategy. More information about this proposed tutorial would be helpful. **RESPONSE: A section on diversity and diversity training for the New Faculty Orientation in August is currently being added to the program by the academic Division Heads. Additionally, a special diversity training session is being adapted by the Coordinator of Intercultural Affairs to be taught at a monthly (February 2011) informational meeting for all new tenure-line faculty.**
- Conducting regular Diversity Climate Surveys is a good way to monitor the implementation of diversity related plans. **RESPONSE: A Diversity Climate Survey is scheduled to be conducted in the fall of 2010 in a new and improved electronic format and with reconfigured questions that hopes to pinpoint critical issues.**
- Encouraging all employees to participate in the diversity training resources that Penn State Abington provides, and increasing the number of available trainers are positive processes that should be continued. The goal to increase the participation of faculty members, administrators, and males, as proposed by the update committee, is laudable. **RESPONSE: Announcements and promotion of Diversity Training Workshops at the Fall Opening Meeting and Divisional Meetings are planned, as well as a posting of the dates of the training sessions on the Campus intranet. The Business Services unit administrator has requested diversity training for the maintenance and other staff.**

- Timelines listed in the Challenge need to be more specific. **RESPONSE: The DSP Committee will review the time lines at the beginning of each academic year and determine priorities for the year.**

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

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

- Expanding summer programs for pre-college minority students and creating more scholarship opportunities for qualified minority students are worthy endeavors.
- Establishing new connections with the diversity-based community organizations to attract new and growing underrepresented groups on campus is thoughtful. Identifying the diversity-based community organizations would be helpful. **RESPONSE: The DSP Committee will develop a list of these organizations for the next plan feedback report.**
- Establishing both a Minority Mentoring Program for peer mentoring and a Minority Alumni Interest Group to serve as mentors are strong ideas and should be continued. **RESPONSE: Achieved with funding for Bond of Brothers EOPC pilot grant. We are grateful for the support.**

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

- Providing funding to division heads and search committee members to travel to regional diversity conferences and academic conferences to network with and interview minority candidates is a clear demonstration of support for recruiting diverse employees.
- Including the questions on attitudes towards working in a diverse workplace environment in the faculty and staff interviews is praiseworthy.
- Creating Annual Reports from each Academic Division which include a diversity plan and focus on Action Plans for the development of new tenure-line faculty positions will help to build a diverse workforce. **RESPONSE: The Predoctoral Multicultural Fellows Program again is proving to be a highly successful model for identifying promising minority PhD candidates and potential faculty members. Currently an African American female is working for the Division of Arts and Humanities, teaching English Literature and Women's Studies courses while completing her dissertation. Because of the proven success of this program, the DSP Committee hopes to eventually have a Multicultural Fellow on campus in each of the three academic divisions.**

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- Creating a Diversity Collection Development Plan to increase the library collection of diversity-related resources is commendable. **RESPONSE: The effort to build the diversity collection is already underway.**
- Encouraging full usage by the faculty of the Intercultural Awareness Fund to support pedagogical efforts to incorporate diversity/intercultural awareness issues across the curriculum is laudable. **RESPONSE: There was increased use of the Intercultural Awareness Fund this past year as well as an elevation in the baseline level of funding for this initiative.**
- Considering the feasibility of offering new minors which reflect the diversity of the student population and offering Asian language courses is positive. **RESPONSE: The Arts and Humanities Division Head has submitted a proposal to offer an Asian Studies minor at Abington.**
- Adding diversity-related minors and languages to the curriculum shows the support for fostering multicultural competencies. **RESPONSE: The DSP Committee sees it as priority to offer Chinese language courses in the near future. Increased courses in Latino Studies are being offered in the upcoming academic year, which hopes to lay the groundwork for a Latino Studies minor.**

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- Enhancing the job shadowing opportunities for staff to prepare them for increasing levels of responsibility is a positive strategy to diversifying the University management. **RESPONSE: The job shadowing program was rejuvenated this spring when a Business/Bursars Office staff member**

***shadowed an Academic Affairs staff member to learn more about the operations of academic affairs.***

- Monitoring the number of women and minority administrators on the management team, faculty members in the academic leadership programs and in off-campus leadership development activities, and participants in staff leadership development activities and Staff Advisory Committee is helpful. More information on how these data will be gathered would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: The Abington Chancellor this past year developed an innovative leadership training program called ABLE (Abington Leadership Excellence) where the first class of four participants were all females, and one a minority (African-American). The DSP Committee would like to consider the development of a visiting administrative fellows program (analogous model to the Multicultural Fellows) stressing diversity other than gender and race/ethnicity that could be recruited to leadership team, or possibly an administrator swap program with other PSU colleges to promote idea exchange and on-site learning. Lastly, membership on the Staff Advisory Committee (SAC) has been opened to all interested members which resulted in four new employees joining SAC this past spring.***

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

- Continuing to fund diversity initiatives as the College's priority is laudable.
- Continuing to improve minority representation on all Campus advisory boards is a positive strategy to support the diversity goals.
- The plan to create a faculty senate committee that works solely on diversity-related issues and partners with the Office of Intercultural Affairs, the Multicultural Climate Committee, the Curricular Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate Council is a positive strategy. ***RESPONSE: In the upcoming fall, some DSP Committee members will work with the Faculty Senate leadership to explore the development of a senate committee that focus on diversity issues.***