

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

Penn State Berks (PSB) has thoughtfully integrated its 2010 *Framework* diversity plan into the Campus' general strategic plan, aligning *Framework* Challenges with the strategic plan's goals, initiatives, and action steps, and the six diversity priorities identified by its Diversity Committee. PSB then imports the action steps from the general strategic plan into the *Framework* plan and outlines strategic indicators for each Challenge with an accompanying list of outcomes. This integration signals that diversity planning is being given high priority in Berks' overall strategic planning. This general approach to integrate planning efforts is admirable. On the other hand, the format proved challenging to understand because many action items were not organized by the relevant diversity *Framework* Challenges. For example, improving access, retention, and graduation rates, providing resources for parents of multicultural students, and hiring a bilingual admissions counselor are listed under Challenge 1, while they seem more relevant to Challenge 3. And listed under Challenge 3 are infusing diversity in the curriculum and promoting programs like Global Studies, which are more closely tied to Challenge 5. The review team recommends reducing the number of action steps to those that are critical to the particular Challenge. **RESPONSE: Because the Framework was imbedded into our Strategic Plan, we are not inclined to reduce the number of action items. They are critical to the college as we move forward. We strongly believe that the Framework should be integrated into how we do business, including making financial decisions and those are based upon the Strategic Plan.** While much data are provided in the appendices, interpretation and analysis of these data would be useful. **RESPONSE: A cursory examination of the data clearly indicates that we have increased the numbers of minority students along with other students whom we consider to represent diversity have increased.** The question is, what conclusions does PSB draw from the data? And would such conclusions inform decision making? **RESPONSE: We continue to improve our diverse mix of students and we are retaining students, which means we are doing something very well.**

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- Results of the NSSE are an excellent tool for gauging student perceptions and awareness of diversity. How will PSB determine whether all Campus constituents are aware of and share the Campus' inclusive understanding of diversity? **RESPONSE: The most important measure of understanding is demonstrated behavior. We see an increase in openness to the diversity exhibited on the campus.**
- A number of excellent strategies for promoting a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity, such as diversity programming, increasing awareness of multicultural events, and multicultural collaborations, are identified.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- Indicators and outcomes are needed to show that the Campus climate is welcoming of all constituents. The 2012 Faculty/Staff survey could be an important source of information concerning faculty and staff perceptions of Campus climate. **RESPONSE: We do have baseline data on climate and will be administering another climate survey in fall 2010.**
- Appropriate outcomes for commuters' and students' awareness of diversity issues are identified.
- Increasing faculty-student interaction outside class, mentoring networks, diversity programs, and developing an enhanced environment for adult learners and commuters are excellent strategies for creating a welcoming campus climate.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- Improvements in pedagogy and developing learning-centered state-of-the-art facilities are excellent strategies for student recruitment and retention. However, it is not clear how these strategies will specifically target underrepresented students, nor how this impact might be assessed. **RESPONSE: A good number of our initiatives are targeted to all students. The impact on underrepresented**

students can be seen in the data on p. 40-60. See the attached score cards that are used each year to determine if we have met the expectations of a particular initiative.

- A number of excellent strategic indicators are identified, including retention rates, the amount of faculty-student engagement outside class, the number of student scholarships, and the number of enrollments of high school students. Although dual enrollment students increase diversity based on age, further analysis of that population will shed light on other ways in which they enrich diversity.
- Identifying 46 action steps to help recruit and retain a diverse student body is laudable.
- Creating brochures and Web resources for community groups and parents of bilingual students, and training minority student ambassadors to assist in recruitment efforts are potential best practices.0

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- PSB indicates that promoting research, funding research facilities, and establishing a Center for Excellence will attract more diverse faculty. More information about why these strategies will be effective would be helpful. **RESPONSE: Courses that are modified by work with CLT are assessed for retention and success rates of the students.**
- Questions remain as to how the outcomes and strategic indicators identified will help in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. Are faculty who consult with the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) and use active learning pedagogies expected to have better student and peer teaching evaluations, greater success in personnel reviews, and therefore higher retention rates? **RESPONSE: Yes.** If so, how could this be shown? **RESPONSE: SRTE.** Also, is it expected that positive industry satisfaction surveys will result in successful recruitment of diverse faculty and staff and adult learners? **RESPONSE: A significant number of our students are focused on getting a job upon graduation. Employers who are satisfied with the graduates they hire tend to hire more.**
- The action steps appear to be primarily focused on faculty. More focus on staff is strongly recommended. PSB might consider extending mentoring opportunities to staff. **RESPONSE: We do.**
- Identifying outcomes and strategic indicators that show progress in hiring faculty and staff from underrepresented groups would be valuable, as would be the determination of faculty and staff views of PSB as a welcoming place. One approach would be to use the Faculty/Staff Survey results to establish longitudinal trends. **RESPONSE: We have those data.**
- PSB identifies an impressive array of action steps to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Education and Scholarship

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

- The link between many of the action steps and the curriculum is not explicitly stated. How will increased use of the CLT aid infusion of the curriculum with diversity and global issues? **RESPONSE: Each course modified by CLT goes through pre and post testing.** Will undergraduate research be in the form of using research courses (194, 294, etc.) to engage students in research on multicultural and global issues? **RESPONSE: Students become involved with undergraduate research both through courses and through relationships with faculty.** Will new academic programs deal with multiculturalism? **RESPONSE: We have a Globalization committee that is looking at how we can expand our global outreach.** How will strategies relating to tutoring, supplemental education, and faculty research interest groups, advance the development of a curriculum fostering diversity? **RESPONSE: Some intrusive counseling helps to target at risk students and thus improve retention.**
- Infusing the curriculum with diversity and global issues is an excellent way to foster U.S. and international competencies. How does PSB plan to assess the impact of these courses? **RESPONSE: The assessment strategies are being developed.**
- Tracking growth in embedded study abroad programs, the number of students who travel abroad, and the amount of financial support for international study would be useful measures of progress.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- What combination of strategies, outcomes, and measures will help PSB achieve the University's intent in the *Framework* that "Penn State's commitment to diversity must be visible in its most public face, that of the senior managers and leaders of the University?" **RESPONSE: *The high involvement of all managers in the Diversity committee and Diversity issues has always been a hallmark of Penn State Berks. We practice what we preach.***
- Penn State has stated in the *Framework* that promoting diverse leadership teams at all levels is a targeted area for improvement. The relationship of regional partnerships to progress on this Challenge is not clear.
- Using professional development to advance faculty and staff into leadership positions is appropriate, although it is unclear how the corresponding action steps will accomplish this. **RESPONSE: *Because we have a very stable workforce there is little movement through the ranks, but when opportunities open up, we do promote from within wherever possible.***

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- It is recommended that PSB articulate how the organizational changes (and strategic indicators and outcomes) it has identified in relation to program reviews and research will support its diversity goals.
- PSB identifies a number of action steps that may represent changes in organizational culture, thinking, or ways of doing business (*i.e.*, emphasizing College status, increasing institutional aid, new marketing strategies, and dedicating a position to minority student recruitment) that should also facilitate its diversity goals. **RESPONSE: *There is not a change in organizational culture, we have, for the past 10 years been the model of how to do things right with respect to diversity. That having been said, we are always taking the pulse of our college to be sure that we are attuned to the needs of our student, faculty and staff as well as the community. The fact that underrepresented students continue to select Penn State Berks as their first choice location speaks volumes about how we do business and how we value the individual.***

2008-2013 Strategic Plan: Progress Report of Year 1 Action Plans

GOAL 1: Student Learning & Educational Excellence		GOAL 2: Enrollment Management		GOAL 3: Diversity & Sense of Community		GOAL 4: Community Outreach		GOAL 5: Research & Scholarship	
Action Plan	Progress*	Action Plan	Progress*	Action Plan	Progress*	Action Plan	Progress*	Action Plan	Progress*
Align student learning outcomes with core University-wide learning outcomes. (1.1)	2	Expand efforts to identify and address factors (negative/positive) that improve student retention/graduation rates. (1.2)	2	Promote Global Studies, American Studies, Elementary Education & Kindergarten programs and associated multi-cultural activities. (1.3)	3	Improve internal communication and coordination of outreach activities among University campuses. (1.2)	3	Provide faculty development opportunities that will attract, recruit, and maintain excellent and exceptionally talented faculty. (1.1)	3
Establish assessment plan cycle for general education. Use results to improve student learning outcomes. (1.2)	1	Increase awareness of college-wide programs that are designed to improve student success. (1.3)	3	Increase faculty awareness and participation in multi-cultural and global events and activities. (1.4)	3	Participate in local and regional economic development initiatives (e.g. Keystone Innovation Zone [KIZ], Wall Street West.) (1.3)	2	Establish a research mentor network of faculty to share external funding expertise and experience. (1.4)	1
Review existing baccalaureate and associate program assessments. Develop assessment plans for new programs. Implement program assessment cycle. (1.3)	1	Provide institutional financial aid such as need-based and merit scholarships and grants to attract and retain qualified students. (1.4)	2	Improve the campus experience of commuter students. (2.2)	3	Align Penn State Berks' competitive advantage with industry clusters (PA Labor & Industry) to offer programs on a public and contract basis. (3.1)	2	Promote faculty research expertise and student research projects internally and externally (e.g. web pages, database, intranet capability). (2.5)	3
Establish a College Assessment Committee to facilitate and promote institutional, program, co-curricular, and general education assessment. (1.4)	2	Increase financial aid staff support. (1.5)	2	Continue public transportation so that students can get to campus from surrounding areas (e.g. shuttle service, bus from downtown Reading, MARTA bus stop.) (2.3)	3	Develop and offer non-credit programs that are aligned with community needs, Penn State Berks' academic strengths, and University delivery capabilities. (3.3)	2	Provide resources to increase undergraduate research to students in all majors. (3.1)	2
Increase level of faculty-student engagement outside of class. (3.2)	1	Develop initiatives to increase interaction between students and their faculty advisors. (1.6)	1	Create student lounge areas for formal and informal study opportunities. (2.4)	2	Offer credit courses leading to a degree or certification at job-site (e.g. onsite credit programs). (2.5)	2		
Increase mentoring networks: student-to-student and professional-to-student. (3.3)	3	Explore feasibility of collaborating with local organizations to offer child-care. (1.7)	3	Hire an admissions representative to work with underserved populations. (3.2)	3	Expand efforts to improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in the community. (4.1)	3		
Further promote the adoption of pedagogically appropriate technology including various types of e-learning. (4.2)	3	Develop definition of a "viable" program. (2.1)	2			Collaborate with the Reading School District to improve science education. (4.2)	3		
		Establish Marketing Advisory Council. (3.1)	2			Develop a model for improving science education training in urban school districts. (4.3)	3		
		Collaborate with other Penn State campuses to ensure adequate resources for recruitment and marketing efforts that consolidate the Penn State brand. (3.3)	2			Increase science and technology youth camp offerings for middle and high school students. (4.4)	2		
						Increase the number of dual-enrollment partnerships with local school districts. (4.5)	2		
Icon/Value	Percent of Goal	Icon/Value	Percent of Goal	Icon/Value	Percent of Goal	Icon/Value	Percent of Goal	Icon/Value	Percent of Goal
0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
1	42.9%	1	11.1%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	25.0%
2	28.6%	2	66.7%	2	16.7%	2	60.0%	2	25.0%
3	28.6%	3	22.2%	3	83.3%	3	40.0%	3	50.0%

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1	In Progress- Started but not finished. Some action in area but does NOT meet "How do we know..."	13.9%
2	Completed- Completed.	44.4%
3	Completed & Ongoing - Completed based on "How do we know..." but Berks will continue action step.	41.7%

* to see notes on status, click on "light" icon

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