

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

Penn State DuBois (PSD) puts forth a well organized thoughtful plan that incorporates more outcome measures than its previous plan. However, there is still progress to be made in this regard. Assessment of programs, services, and initiatives to determine their impact will be important to affecting continuous improvements in order to achieve diversity goals. The restructured Multicultural/International Coordinator position to include assessment should aid in achieving this. Data obtained from the Faculty/Staff Survey, the Student Satisfaction Survey, personal Interviews, and the results of goals for recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and administrators from underrepresented groups should be utilized to gauge the effectiveness of new and existing initiatives. As PSD moves forward in their efforts to measure the impact of their diversity initiatives, they are encouraged to go beyond attendance figures and develop meaningful metrics. ***RESPONSE: The campus will be taking action to enhance the assessment of all diversity initiatives in order to guide future improvements.***

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- Establishing measures for diversity programming, including for the diversity components of the FYE, will be an important means to evaluate their impact on campus climate.
- Monitoring inquiries to the PSD Web site is suggested to determine the level of community involvement with multicultural events on the Campus.
- The Diversity Committee will provide monthly diversity programming in collaboration with other offices and use the campus Web site to publicize events. This is a promising approach.

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

- The plan to administer a campus climate survey in 2012 and set goals accordingly is solid. PSD may also want to use the results of the 2010 Student Satisfaction Survey to assess climate issues. In addition, PSD might consider conducting interviews with multicultural students to supplement these data.
- Using the diversity component of the Faculty/Staff Survey would be an excellent way to continue to gauge employee perceptions of campus climate. Results from 2008 could serve as a baseline and help to inform during the first phase of the plan.
- PSD should clarify what mechanisms are in place for reporting climate incidents.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

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

- With respect to recruitment of students from underrepresented groups, PSD is encouraged to report specific strategies and set measurable goals beyond tracking five-year averages. In addition, PSD might consider establishing specific retention and graduation goals for underrepresented groups.
- The plan mentions increasing resources for the peer mentor program; however, the 2009 update indicated that this program was being discontinued. Clarification of the status of the program is needed.
- The Peer Tutoring Program was discontinued due to the nonrenewal of the Perkins Grant, which funded the Program. It has been replaced with an Embedded Tutor Program funded by the Chancellor through Academic Affairs. The Program assigns a tutor to specific classes. The tutor attends classes and then holds volunteer study sessions for students.
- Increasing scholarship opportunities for underrepresented and first-generation students is an excellent strategy for recruitment and retention.
- It is noteworthy that PSD puts a strong emphasis on providing a support system for students from underrepresented/underserved groups.

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

- PSD outlines excellent strategies for increasing the diversity of candidate pools with a view to hiring more women and members of underrepresented groups into faculty, staff, and technical service positions. Supporting employee professional development is important to retention. Evaluating campus professional development programming would provide information regarding its effectiveness.
- PSD may consider utilizing exit interviews of women and other underrepresented groups to determine why they leave and to develop improved strategies for retention.
- PSD already has an active faculty mentoring program. The plan to develop a comparable staff mentoring program has considerable potential, and could be a best practice.
- The assessment of diversity activities as part of annual performance reviews is a noteworthy commitment to accountability.

#### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- PSD's plans to add an international studies minor, increase U.S. and IL course offerings, and adopt an annual interdisciplinary international theme will build on its already solid record of developing a curriculum that fosters international and intercultural competencies. Tools for program evaluation are important.
- Consistently offering winter break, spring break, and summer study abroad programs will greatly strengthen the extent to which PSD fosters students' international competencies. Surveying participants to determine the impact of these programs will yield valuable information. It is not entirely clear whether the trips will be embedded in courses. **RESPONSE: Plans call for the majority of the international travel programs to be embedded courses.**
- Recognizing the role of co-curricular programming in fostering intercultural and international competencies is to be commended. Assessing the impact of these programs, beyond tracking numbers, is important. **RESPONSE: As the faculty develops course assessment plans, they will include appropriate diversity measures in their plans that will address the comments above and the strategic indicators identified for this Challenge.**

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

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

- In addition to identifying internal talent for leadership positions, it is recommended that PSD develop processes to diversify candidate pools in national searches in order to identify viable candidates from underrepresented groups.
- PSD has done an excellent job of hiring women for leadership positions. Data presented in the 2004-09 update showed that 50% of leadership and management positions were held by women and 10% from underrepresented groups. PSD should continue its successful efforts on recruiting leaders and managers from underrepresented groups.

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

- Adding the Faculty Congress Chair and SGA President to the Diversity Committee will further highlight the importance of diversity at PSD.
- Making the Multicultural/International Coordinator position full time and expanding responsibility for assessment will boost organizational change in support of diversity. Specific information regarding the revised responsibilities, whether the position is indeed full-time or part-time, and the timetable for expanding the position would be informative. **RESPONSE: The Multicultural/International Coordinator position is scheduled to become a full-time position in the Fall 2010.**