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

Penn State Lehigh Valley has undergone many structural and organizational changes over the past few years. It is commendable to see the Campus grow and plan for additional opportunities related to diversity based on this growth. The goals that are listed in the 2010-15 diversity strategic plan are for the most part directly tied to the campus strategic plan for the period 2008-13.

While the effort to maintain a sense of continuity between the documents is commendable, it made identifying the action items related to the diversity goals more difficult. It appears that the majority of the goals and action items require financial support, which calls into question the feasibility of accomplishing these goals. Further, the timeline designated as "ongoing" for these items suggests good intentions, but lacks evidence of accountability. It would be helpful to see goals with predetermined deadlines to demonstrate the level of commitment required to accomplish the plan as written. The performance indicators listed as "diversity indicators" require clarification, for example, which part of the diversity indicators measure performance as pertained to specific goals? ***RESPONSE: In the resubmitted plan, we have described each performance indicator and listed a specific target where appropriate.*** Additionally, there is no reference in the plan to the Faculty/Staff Survey. Were the results of this survey shared and/or used? If so, how? ***RESPONSE: The survey has not yet been conducted. We have contacted the Office of Human Resources to discuss the design and implementation of this survey. Once the survey is conducted, compiled data will be used to inform campus administration in regards to faculty and staff satisfaction and will be used to assess the progress of diversity strategic initiatives.***

Given the above observations, the review team respectfully suggests that Penn State Lehigh Valley revise and re-submit its 2010-15 plan. Seeking a mentor, or mentors, to help with the process is advised. At a minimum, the Campus should contact its Educational Equity Liaison for guidance. The review team appreciates the many variables related to the campus move and reorganization, which undoubtedly contributed to the lack of goals and metrics in the plan. The plan as submitted, however, is lacking. Timelines, where provided, are ambiguous. Accountability is absent. Performance measures are lacking. Programs are described, but their effectiveness is not. Assessment is missing. ***RESPONSE: The campus Diversity Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 has been revised, updated, and reformatted. Timelines are now included, necessary resources have been added, specific performance measures accompany each goal and action plan, and an Assessment Overview was designed to articulate the measures by which the Plan's effectiveness will be assessed.***

## Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
*Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity*
- Promoting the Diversity Committee with a published schedule of meetings is praiseworthy.
- The diversity web page could be improved with the inclusion of links directed specifically to diversity events. Information outlining the process for serving on the diversity committee would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: Goal 1.1.B and Goal 2.2.A describe the plans for providing links on the Diversity web page and for tracking the use of these links. Information about the Diversity Committee will be present on the website. All faculty and staff are invited to join at the beginning of each semester and are encouraged to serve for at least one year. The committee is chaired by the Coordinator of Student Activities. She provides supports for multicultural programming and diversity awareness on campus. The Coordinator is responsible for ensuring equal representation of faculty, staff, students, and of underrepresented groups on the Committee.***
- Attention to enhancing knowledge of global perspective is impressive.

*Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate*
- The plan's attention to collaborations and partnerships among constituents to promote campus diversity goals is a noteworthy model; details clarifying how these partnerships are intended to work, or how opportunities will be identified, would provide indicators for assessment of progress.

***RESPONSE: Goal 2.2 describes ways in which the campus will increase accessibility to diversity resources and promote diversity on campus, including the Diversity website, promoting diversity liaisons, and encouraging faculty/staff open door policies. Performance measures are included for all action plans within this goal.***

- Specific information regarding how the Campus plans to increase professional development and opportunities for students is needed. Will this be done incrementally? What is the ultimate goal? ***RESPONSE: Goals 2.1 and 2.3 focus on diversity programming for students. The plan is to offer one diversity session or event each month, along with "hot topic" talks twice a semester. These programs will be designed or arranged by the Office of Student Affairs. The ultimate goal of these programs is to provide opportunities to increase dialogue and to improve awareness and understanding of diversity issues.***

- The ombudsperson position, originally slated to be in place by 2007, has not been established. What is the reason for the delay? ***RESPONSE: The administration has decided to move in a different direction based on strategic planning and feedback from the Diversity Committee. A Diversity Response Team will be implemented to handle diversity-related concerns and incidents. The team will consist of the campus counselor, a safety and security officer, a faculty representative, and representatives from Student Affairs.***

- Will program reviews focus on diversity issues? None are specified. ***RESPONSE: Goal 2.2.D describes this new initiative. Program reviews are currently being conducted under the supervision of the Director of Academic Affairs. These reviews will incorporate linkages to diversity initiatives, including global connections, study abroad opportunities, and curricular partnerships with the external campus community.***

- Acquiring additional space for art and cultural events will not intrinsically create a more welcoming climate; what are the specific plans for this space? ***RESPONSE: Goal 2.1.A addresses the acquisition of additional space for diversity programming. The target is to offer at least one diversity-related program each month, marketed by University Relations and Student Affairs. Goal 1.1.C also addresses the opening of an on-campus Art Gallery to showcase art work related to diversity issues and under-represented groups (LGBTA, Hispanic Heritage, Black History Month, etc.)***

## Representation (Access and Success)
### *Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body*
- It is important for the Campus to acknowledge areas requiring additional work, particularly financial aid as it relates to retention.
- Focusing on scholarships is commendable.
- As a commuter campus charged with serving a good sized non-traditional student population, Lehigh Valley has identified those populations that particularly need additional support.
- Specific information regarding how goals pertaining to recruitment and retention of diverse students will be addressed and how each responsible party will act to achieve these goals is lacking. ***RESPONSE: Goal 3.1 addresses plans for recruiting a diverse student body (including the hiring of a Recruitment Coordinator, utilizing the new Penn State Center for Technology to provide pathways for inner-city students to Penn State, and partnering with local high schools); Goals 3.2 and 3.3 deal exclusively with the recruitment and retention of adult students; and Goal 3.4 focuses on retaining diverse students (through ESL and learning support services, mentoring programs, and scholarships/financial aid). Each goal contains specific action plans and performance indicators to assess effectiveness.***
- What is the Campus' target for diversity? Is it a numeric quantity or is it based on climate feedback? ***RESPONSE: The campus' target for diversity is to maintain or increase the population of diverse students based on gender, age, and minority status (target is 22% minority and 20% adult students). The campus currently stands as a leader within the Penn State system for its enrollment of minority students (22.9%). Diversity is also measured by the Student Satisfaction Survey (particularly feedback from Question 4: Sense of Belonging and Question 5: Safety and***

*Security). Feedback from the Faculty/Staff climate survey will also help to define diversity on campus.*

## Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
- It is notable that retention of both faculty and staff is addressed specifically in the document.
- The identification of intellectual and cultural diversity as a key component in a diverse workforce is commendable. Please provide the Campus' definition for intellectual diversity. *RESPONSE: As indicated in Goal 4.1.B, the campus defines intellectual diversity as having "a range of academic and cultural interests and experiences."*
- Faculty mentoring is a potential best practice. Will mentors receive training? How will effective mentoring be assessed? Mentoring for staff would be a positive step as well. *RESPONSE: Goal 4.2.B focuses on the implementation of a new faculty and staff mentoring program and provides performance indicators to assess its effectiveness.*
- What is meant by a "quality workforce?" *RESPONSE: The rather ambiguous phrase "quality workforce" has been removed from the plan. Instead, Goals 4.1 and 4.2 focus on the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff based on diverse academic backgrounds, a new mentoring program, and availability and involvement in professional development opportunities and professional organizations.*

## Education and Scholarship
### Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies
- The collaborative nature of these goals is applauded. Students need to deal with all aspects of the global economy.
- Providing an international perspective for undergraduate education is a clear focus. Is there a target number for enrollment in study abroad programs? Will funding be available to help students afford international experiences? Students on scholarships may be closed out of such opportunities. *RESPONSE: Goal 5.2 addresses study abroad programs, including an information session that will contain information about scholarships and funding sources. Performance indicators include the amount of funding identified by Financial Aid and Development, while a 10% increase in study abroad options and student participation are targets.*
- What is the target for increasing the number of national and international internship opportunities? Does the Career Services Office have the capacity to augment its services to accommodate additional opportunities such as these? *RESPONSE: According to Goal 5.1.B, the Director of Academic Affairs will work with faculty members to create linkages to local and international businesses/organizations in an effort to augment current internship opportunities offered by Career Services. The target for increased internships is 10%.*
- Attention to diversity issues in the curriculum such as gender, race, ethnicity, etc. appears to be missing. Goals seem to focus almost exclusively on international/global aspects of diversity. *RESPONSE: Goal 5.1 A incorporates gender, ethnic and intercultural competencies in curriculum.*

## Institutional Viability and Vitality
### Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management
- The goals for this challenge lack specificity, and reflect organizational changes that have already occurred. What steps will the Campus take to accomplish the broad goals listed in the plan? *RESPONSE: Actions within Goal 6.1 are new, and include specific performance measures to assess effectiveness.*
- A climate assessment of campus leadership would be helpful as well as a measurement instrument. *RESPONSE: The campus has contacted the Office of Human Resources to work on the design and implementation of a climate survey, which will involve feedback from campus leadership.*
- No new information beyond that which was indicated in the strategic plan is provided. *RESPONSE: The new plan has been updated with new initiatives related to the diversity of campus leadership.*

***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***
- Utilizing multiple forms of communication media to provide updates is notable.
- The Neighborhood Network Center is a potential best practice. Data to gauge success would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: The campus will utilize data and reports from the Center (including grant-based reports to HUD and strategic plan progress) to document achievements.***