

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

Penn State Mont Alto is rightly concerned about the lack of a diverse student body. To remedy this issue via out-of-state and out-of-area recruiting and increasing scholarship funds has merit. Allocation of \$30,000 yearly to the Student Success group to increase retention programming is laudable. Noted is the disparity between overall retention of majority vs. minority students. The goal to diversify major campus committees, the advisory board, and professional program boards will require perseverance; the review team recognizes the existing lack of diversity on campus and the surrounding area. **RESPONSE: The student body is diverse. In the fall 2009, enrollment from underrepresented groups totaled 21% of the total student population.**

Mont Alto's plan as presented is confusing. Goals appear to be appropriate. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine what and how outcomes will be measured and who will be measuring information. Plus it is unclear how information will be used to assess progress. The review team recommends that Mont Alto rework the plan to include metrics with measurable outcomes and appropriate completion dates; proactive goals as stated should remain. **RESPONSE: The campus addressed the individual points below; in general, however, the campus plan has been updated to indicate the office or offices responsible for implementing the individual action items. Action items will be implemented to achieve the projected outcomes, and the numbers of short-term goals have been increased. Finally, the metrics have been defined to provide specific, quantitative, and detailed measurable outcomes.**

### **Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- Mont Alto notably plans to disseminate diversity information through a variety of media - Web and social networking sites, Adobe Connect, and links to other university diversity sites. Clarity on how Web content will depict diversity would be helpful. **RESPONSE: A diversity forum will be created by Director of Student Affairs (DSA) and added to the campus Web page to communicate the campus' diversity statement, information about services, contacts, and avenues for reporting problems. Links will be provided to the diversity page from the landing pages of other departments. The Director of Public Relations and Marketing (DPRM) will place stories and images in The Bridge (alumni publication), on the Web site, and other relevant publications demonstrating Mont Alto's commitment to diversity. Each Bridge issue will have at least one diversity-related story.**
- Increasing the influence of the Campus Climate Committee and Senate Diversity Committee is favorable, as is establishing an open line of communication with the Chancellor. Committee memberships and charges are listed; however no usable assessment metrics are given. **RESPONSE: A Campus Diversity Survey will demonstrate that both the Campus Climate Committee (CCC) and Senate Diversity Committee have successfully promoted a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity. The survey will be developed by the CCC with significant input from the Mont Alto Faculty Senate (MAFS) Diversity Committee. The survey developed on campus will then be submitted to the Office of Affirmative Action to ensure that the survey instrument is sound and the results are meaningful. This survey will be conducted annually beginning in 2011. At least 65 percent of the respondents of the campus community surveyed will agree or strongly agree that both the CCC and Senate Diversity Committee have successfully promoted a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity. The first survey will be developed by the CCC and will be the baseline to look for improvements. The Chancellor meets with the CCC.**
- The timeline is unclear; lacking are start dates and responsible parties to complete action items. **RESPONSE: All items listed are already underway; each Action Item has been assigned to one or more of the administrative areas at Penn State Mont Alto.**
- Unanswered questions exist; how will diversity connections appear in publications? Who will develop a survey that accurately assesses climate and campus performance? What strategies will be in place to ensure responses come from underrepresented groups as well as majority groups? **RESPONSE:**

*The DPRM will include stories and/or images in all publications that demonstrate the diversity in the student body and faculty. The Chancellor will stress the importance of diversity at each Open House and Offer Reception. The survey will be developed by the CCC with significant input from the Mont Alto Faculty Senate (MAFS) Diversity Committee. The survey developed on campus will then be submitted to the Office of Affirmative Action to ensure that the survey instrument is sound and the results are meaningful.*

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

- Estimably, Mont Alto will continue to value difference by: providing training in cross-cultural communication; including diversity issues in FYE/orientation programs; providing Web links to LGBT and Zero Tolerance Networks; presenting professional development workshops on diversity; and encouraging SGA members to become involved in the Campus Climate Committee. **RESPONSE: The CCC will regularly submit recommendations to the Chancellor to improve the campus climate.**
- Noted is the Campus promise; 100% follow-through on all lack of welcoming climate complaints.
- The Campus could consider creating a link to commissions (CFW, CORED, CLGBTE) to get access to University wide initiatives and encourage faculty, staff, and students to join. **RESPONSE: The DSA will include the additional links as suggested by the Review Committee. The campus has two, tenured faculty members who are also members of CORED. They will work with the CCC to expand its campus outreach services through their participation on the outreach subcommittee.**
- Completion dates seem far off. Immediate actions to move towards goals are encouraged. **RESPONSE: Timelines have been updated to include shorter-term evaluation of progress (where applicable). Additionally, individual Action Items, and in some cases, individual Projected Outcomes, have been assigned completion/evaluation dates replacing the single completion date for each Goal.**

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

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

- Optimistically, the Campus will continue out-of-state and out-of-area recruiting. **RESPONSE: The campus has just begun recruiting international students and welcomed five new international (visa) students for the fall 2010 semester.**
- Previous lack of success dictates a need for new recruitment tactics in international and athletic diversity, as well as women within traditionally “male” majors, such as engineering. **RESPONSE: The campus is developing new interactions among our nursing faculty, admissions counselors, and DPRM to attract more males into the nursing program. Our engineering faculty, admissions counselors and DPRM will attract more women into our engineering program. Additionally, the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA) plans to send one of our engineering faculty to training to learn new recruitment approaches for underrepresented groups in engineering. Continuing Education (CE) will utilize the resources provided by the Veterans Outreach Office to assist prospective students who are veterans or reservists to make informed decisions about program enrollment. Resources include financial aid guides, online forms, GI Bill benefit information, and Veterans Home information. This information will be shared through printed material, Web presence, and social networking media. Additionally, the Veterans Affairs office mails campus information directly to discharged veterans in the campus service area. CE will also work closely with local agencies such as CareerLink to promote funding opportunities geared toward aging workers, disabled workers and other individuals of target populations seeking job training.**
- Mont Alto is commended for addressing retention of students from underrepresented groups as well as disparities between underrepresented/underserved groups and the general student population in areas such as graduation.
- Of concern, the Plan does not clearly describe *how* actions will be implemented to produce stated measurable outcomes. The *how* is not linked to the outcomes. **RESPONSE: See previous response for some specific and detailed tactics to achieve the Projected Outcomes.**

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

- The need to diversify faculty and staff is recognized; however recruitment plans are ambiguous. **RESPONSE: The campus agrees that this component of our plan is less detailed than other components. In order to improve the diversity profile of faculty and staff, the campus faces three hurdles: 1. diversity in the pool of qualified applicants; 2. an accepting and welcoming environment on campus; and 3. the perception by the applicants that the campus is accepting and welcoming. The Goals and Action Items in the campus plan work towards addressing the first two hurdles. An improvement in the actual campus environment will lead to an improvement in the perception of the campus environment. In recent faculty searches, the campus has attracted a diverse pool of qualified candidates and has extended offers of employment to two potential faculty members from underrepresented groups.**
- The creation of an “on-boarding or orientation committee to analyze best practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining new faculty” is praiseworthy.
- The Campus will create a “campus employees handbook.” This initiative is impressive; however, metrics for measuring success are very vague. More specificity would be helpful. **RESPONSE: The 2012 Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey respondents will show an improvement that the campus welcomes employees from underrepresented groups. At least 70 percent of the respondents to the 2012 Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey will respond that their department provides visible leadership to foster diversity. At least 75 percent of the 2012 Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey respondents will show an improvement that the campus welcomes employees from underrepresented groups.**
- The Campus wishes to create a collegial team atmosphere. Teamwork awards will be produced. A fine goal; yet clear analytic metrics are lacking. **RESPONSE: The campus has already implemented a number of awards that have led to an improvement in the campus morale. Increasing the number of awards given is one metric that provides the opportunity, but not buy-in. A more important metric is the number of qualified nominees for the existing awards. The campus did not intend to offer a separate teamwork award, but does recognize teamwork through the Chancellors “Good News” emails and during faculty/staff luncheons.**
- Diversity training of various kinds will worthily continue and be recognized in annual reviews.
- No measurement of the percentage of employee training participation is stated. **RESPONSE: The campus has included specific percentages throughout as our goals for employee training participation.**
- It would be helpful to know these answers: “What types of diversity training will be offered?” “Are employees given time during the workday to participate?” “Who develops the training?” **RESPONSE: HDRC offers an excellent selection of diversity training programs. Campus Continuing Education will create any program to address campus-specific needs which are not met by existing HDRC programs. Faculty and Staff will be given time, during the workday, to attend such training.**
- The review team suggests reviewing methods other than surveys to achieve outcomes. **RESPONSE: The campus will conduct focus groups (faculty, staff, and tech services) in 2012 and 2014 to determine changes in attitudes and future programming needs.**

#### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- Faculty teaching courses covering U.S. diversity issues will laudably be urged to work together to: 1) assign projects to teams composed of various cultural groups to see how well they work together and 2) create ways to assess students’ knowledge of U.S. cultures.
- Noted, a similar procedure is planned for faculty teaching International Cultures courses.
- More students will be encouraged to take courses with embedded international travel; however, how finances will be handled for students who cannot afford to go is uncertain. **RESPONSE: The campus has asked the Director of Development, Financial Aid Coordinator, and Director of Finance and Business to identify potential donors interested in establishing an endowment to support international traveling in Spring 2011.**

- Metrics for measuring these outcomes are imprecise and unwieldy. **RESPONSE: The metrics include pass rates and grade distributions for the appropriate type of course. The employee surveys have been reviewed.**

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- Mont Alto admirably plans to increase membership of underrepresented groups on all leadership committees and University-wide initiatives, yet it is questionable as to *how* this goal is to be accomplished. **RESPONSE: Campus committees are appointed by the Chancellor after consultation with Administrative Council; the Chancellor will ensure that the make-up of these committees will reflect the faculty/staff diversity profile.**
- The Campus will look for internal candidates from underrepresented groups to fulfill interim positions or shadow existing campus leaders to develop leadership skills; however, there are similar problems with this candidate pool. **RESPONSE: After further consideration, the shadowing initiative is being postponed.**
- Metrics could be clarified to indicate specific goals in numbers and/or percentages. **RESPONSE: The make-up of campus committees will parallel that of the appropriate faculty and staff.**

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

- Notably, the Campus wishes to increase the diversity of its advisory board as well as those of professional programs.
- The mid-term status review of the campus Strategic Plan will optimally include an evaluation of the tactics and metrics detailed in goal 3 of the campus Strategic Plan. **RESPONSE: The metrics have been updated to include an evaluation of the objectives, tactics and metrics from Goal 3 of the campus Strategic Plan.**
- The review team suggests the appointment of an assessment committee charged to develop strategies to assess students' appreciation of diversity be completed prior to the completion date of September 2013. **RESPONSE: The campus assessment committee is in place; the sub-committees charged with developing specific assessment strategies will ensure that students' appreciation of diversity is assessed by September 2011.**