Penn State Shenango has made notable progress in crafting its 2010-2015 diversity strategic plan as a stand-alone Campus. The review team found particular strategies worthy of commendation in discussions of Challenges 2, 3, 4 and 5, along with potential best practices, particularly in the area of recruiting underrepresented/underserved faculty. There is room for improvement in strategies directed toward the other Challenges. Spelling out acronyms on first use would provide more information as to the role that specific programs or groups play in Shenango’s attempts to meet its diversity objectives. Using the term “underrepresented/underserved” could be used as an alternative to be more reflective of a broader definition of diversity.

For the 2010-2015 reporting cycle, Shenango is encouraged to cultivate a much more robust culture of evidence, offering data and more examples to provide context to its goals and objectives. The plan would be strengthened by providing an overarching perspective to each Challenge. Specifically, an opening paragraph to each Challenge would provide context, continuity and focus to the goals and action items. Also, what is listed in the column “Measures of Success” are in some cases outcomes and in others, virtually the same as the action item itself. It would be helpful to gauge progress for each goal or Challenge by identifying performance indicators indicative of overall progress, and providing baseline data and thresholds for success.

**RESPONSE:** The plan will be reviewed based on the suggestions made in this document. Also, the time frame for the implementation of actions will be reviewed as well as the measures of success.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

**RESPONSE:** The campus decided not to craft its own definition of diversity, but instead to wait for the definition of diversity created by the University Faculty Senate. If the campus is expected to create its own definition, that goal will be added to this section.

- Having faculty communicate the diversity definition via the syllabus is noteworthy. The statement may also indicate how the definition was created. Besides the syllabi, are there other ways the diversity statement will be communicated, particularly that include staff? **RESPONSE:** A Diversity Statement to appear on course syllabi starting Fall 2010 has been drafted and will be reviewed by the Diversity Committee and the campus faculty senate. In addition, the Diversity Statement will appear in our marketing brochures, FTCAP and Orientation handouts, and the campus web page.

- It is unclear whether the diversity link has been placed on the Campus Web site. Additionally, the measure provided (number of “hits”) may not be useful as Shenango moves forward. Other measures of success should be explored. For example, a question could be added to a larger survey of faculty, staff and students asking whether they have visited the link and how useful it is to their understanding of diversity. **RESPONSE:** The link will become active after the transition to the new web page template and program is completed. It is already a part of the learning outcomes in Physical Therapy Assistant, Nursing, and Mechanical Engineering Technology programs.

- A more thorough explanation should be provided about the Diversity Certificate. **RESPONSE:** The Diversity Certificate requires students to earn 12 credits in Diversity related courses. All students earning the Diversity Certificate must take either SOC 005, WMNST 001, or WMNST 003 and choose three additional 3-credit courses from a list of courses in two areas of focus, with at least one course from each focus area. The two areas of focus are Women, Gender, and Sexuality and Race, Ethnicity, and Religion.

- More information regarding how “the appreciation for diverse populations” is to be added to student internship contracts and graduation criteria would be helpful. In addition, it is unclear how appreciation for diverse populations would be measured. Will graduating students or interns be administered some assessment of their diversity competence? **RESPONSE:** The campus is moving forward with Learning Outcomes and measurable ways to ensure an appreciation for diversity will be included in all program outcomes. Examples will be provided in the mid-term report.
• The cultural film festival is a good strategy. Target numbers for those who attend would serve as useful baseline metrics for evaluating success.

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

• The review team found it problematic to assign community service in cases where student misconduct is uncovered regarding acts of hatred and/or intolerance. Utilizing community service as a punitive measure may represent community service in a negative light. **RESPONSE:** Good point. The campus will devise other means of punishment for those found guilty of committing acts of hatred/intolerance.

• No baseline measure was provided to suggest the extent of acts of intolerance on Campus. Monitoring acts of intolerance would provide an overall success indicator of the use of community service. **RESPONSE:** While there have been no recent cases brought to the Judicial Affairs committee, faculty do report about instances in which students have expressed their disdain for certain groups of people in inappropriate ways. The campus is interested in addressing those situations in a more forceful manner and to try and lessen student biases where possible.

• The goal to ensure that judicial hearing boards are comprised of diverse members is admirable. Care should be taken that the same students are not overburdened in the effort to be more representative. **RESPONSE:** Good point, but the expectation is that the number of cases brought to Judicial Affairs will remain quite low.

• A survey of faculty, staff and students is commendable, particularly if repeated periodically. **RESPONSE:** The plan is to administer the surveys every two to three years. Unfortunately, the very small number of minority faculty and staff will, at least initially, keep the campus from having any meaningful disaggregated data to compare.

• The creation of “safe zones” is positive.

• It was unclear how an annual “Get to Know your Fellow Employee” forum will increase productivity and create better customer service. Similarly, the Campus should be more intentional in promoting diversity and a welcoming climate in its monthly lunches for faculty and staff. Discussion of jobs and general campus issues will not necessarily contribute to a better climate. **RESPONSE:** The Chancellor already meets regularly with staff and campus climate issues can be addressed at those forums.

• The welcome packet for new faculty is a potential best practice. The Campus may want to consider adding a metric to assess how useful the packet is in faculty retention and Representation (Access and Success); the packet may rise to a best practice if data demonstrating success is provided.

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

• It is commendable to increase scholarship money for underrepresented/underserved students.

• The plan should specify what forms student engagement in community organizations will take (e.g., service learning, internships, volunteering, etc.). This programming approach is far better than the punitive approach described earlier in the plan. **RESPONSE:** The midterm update will address this point in more detail, but since the submission of this plan, the campus has started a chapter of Circle K International and will add the minor in Civic and Community Engagement for Fall 2010.

• Providing child care subsidies are praiseworthy and a potential best practice.

• The pre-enrollment bridge program offering developmental instruction to adult learners, first-generation college students and other “at-risk” students is a potential best practice. **RESPONSE:** The campus sought funding for this project through the President’s Future Fund in Fall 2008 but proposal was not selected. The campus would relish the assistance of an experienced grant writer to help obtain funding for this project.

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

• It is positive that faculty and staff from underrepresented/underserved populations will have the opportunity for increased professional development activities. Additional information and clarification of the nature of such opportunities, and their particular relevance for those populations should be
noted. **RESPONSE:** One example, the campus has offered to pay for a non-native English speaking member to have her research submitted to American Journal Experts, a research paper editing and English proofreading service. Other examples will be provided in later updates.

- The appointment of “cultural mentors,” who are members of a similar cultural background for newly-hired faculty, is a potential best practice. **RESPONSE:** For example, the campus has hired a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Taiwanese citizenship. Several people on campus are finding out about Asian communities in Pittsburgh, PA and Youngstown, OH.
- The use of the planned Community Council to recruit applicants from underrepresented/underserved groups, meet with candidates informally, and help new employees connect with diversity community organizations is commendable, and is a potential best practice. **RESPONSE:** This was one of the practices presented at a recent Academic Leadership Forum at University Park on diversifying the faculty.

**Education and Scholarship**

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

- Explanation of how student participation in cultural events will be increased would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** For example, the campus did require students to attend at least one cultural event as a requirement of its PSU 008 course.
- Seeking funding for students for alternative spring break trips is commendable. More information regarding these alternative trips would be helpful, such as the nature of the trips, whether there are efforts to encourage participation by diverse students and how the funding is targeted (to help diverse students participate?).
- The number of International Cultures courses that exist and the intended goal for this action item should be clarified. **RESPONSE:** Since the University has not increased its requirement on how many credit hours a student must obtain in IL courses, the campus will focus more on embedding emphases on international cultures throughout the curriculum and creating course embedded travel abroad opportunities.
- The proposed committee to recruit and attract international students is noteworthy. **RESPONSE:** Thank you. Admittedly, the first step for this committee is to determine the feasibility of bringing international students to a non-residential campus in an area with limited public transportation and limited number of restaurants and other commercial establishments.
- It is a potential best practice to use technology to enable campus students to interact with students at international universities. The timeframe for having this initiative in place should be noted. **RESPONSE:** Hopefully, the campus will be able to give examples in the midterm update.

**Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- The action items in this Challenge are relatively vague; more information on implementation would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** Regrettably, the workforce at the campus is not very diversified in certain areas such as African-Americans, Hispanic, etc. Therefore, the focus is on diversifying the workforce at all levels. Further, there are very few formal leadership positions at the campus and turnover is not high. Thus, the most immediate area where campus leadership can be diversified is the Campus Advisory Board.
- In past plans and updates, a Shenango program that was similar in its focus to the University’s Administrative Fellowship was mentioned. Information about whether this program may be implemented during the 2010-15 planning period would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** This is not part of the 2010-15 plan, but because of the discussion generated by the Review Team’s suggestion, a multi-campus Administrative Fellowship plan is being considered.

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

- The initiatives in this Challenge are moderately vague and in need of clarification. More robust initiatives and implementation strategies under this Challenge are requested. **RESPONSE:** The
composition and role of the Diversity Committee will be re-evaluated so that there is a formal structure and the committee is well placed to affect change as needed.

- Shenango is encouraged to clarify the Diversity Committee's role in facilitating organizational change and ensuring implementation of the 2010-15 diversity plan. **RESPONSE: see previous response.**