

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

Penn State York's Diversity Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 proposes a comprehensive array of goals and actions. Many of the goals and actions, however, are given in broad strokes, which makes envisioning how the actions will be accomplished difficult. The plan would be strengthened if more detail on implementation were outlined. Importantly, strategic indicators are not identified, which makes it impossible to monitor implementation and gauge progress within each Challenge. There is also no sense of metrics by which the Campus might assess program success, particularly with new endeavors. A related concern is that it was difficult for the review team to determine which practices are already established and which are new or to be put into place. The plan would be further strengthened by evidence of broad and diverse participation across the Campus, both in development of the plan itself and in proposed implementation.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- Developing a Multicultural/Diversity center to increase the influence of the diversity committee and increase student participation is commendable.
- Developing goals and outcome assessments for the multicultural coordinator will be helpful for increasing the effectiveness of the position. **RESPONSE: See Appendix A – Multicultural Coordinator goals and outcome assessments.**
- Establishing an international liaison position is positive.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- Maintaining a systematic climate assessment process is a positive strategy to identifying and addressing climate concerns.
- Increasing religious and multicultural awareness and visibility of diversity resources is laudable. How the implementation of the related activities will be assessed needs to be addressed. **RESPONSE: See Appendix B – Assessing Diversity Programming.**
- Organizing programs to increase social interactions between students, faculty, and staff is laudable.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- Increasing scholarship opportunities and developing sources of need-based aid at the Campus level for students from underrepresented/underserved populations is commendable.
- Evaluating retention initiatives and the campus retention plan is very helpful to ensure students' progress and timely graduation.
- Strengthening mentoring and support services for underserved students is laudable. Details on how these services are to be monitored will be valuable. **RESPONSE: EOP support services include voluntary summer meetings, a pre-fall "ropes" challenge course, new student orientation, weekly group meetings, tutoring appointments, individual student-adviser meetings to track progress, identify and address concerns/needs, monthly How to Succeed lunch speakers, and personal invitations to cultural programs and trips. Previous year EOP students mentor new EOP students.**

EOP evaluative measures include number of summer meetings attended, number of students participating in the ropes course, number of students attending new student orientation, number of regular weekly group meetings attended, consistency with which regular tutoring appointments are upheld, whether or not a student appears on the Electronic Progress Reports (EPR), individual student-adviser meetings to track progress, identify and address concerns/needs, number of How to Succeed lunches attended, number of cultural programs and trips attended, and completion of a written evaluation at the end of the semester (See Appendix C – FALL 2010 Educational Opportunity Program Evaluation).

Nittany Success Center support services include professional and peer tutoring, study groups, workshops on study skills, time management, note taking, learning styles, concentration, memory, and use of campus services. In addition, classroom and testing accommodations for students with learning or physical disabilities are provided.

The Nittany Success Center measures of success include numbers of students served, actual services delivered, and improvement in grades.

Multicultural support services include a pre-fall ropes course, new student orientation, weekly group meetings, individual student-adviser meetings to track progress, identify and address concerns/needs, monthly How to Succeed lunch speakers, and personal invitations to cultural programs and trips. Previous year students of color mentor new students of color.

The Multicultural Center evaluative measures include number of students participating in the ropes course, number of students attending new student orientation, number of regular weekly group meetings attended, whether or not a student appears on the Electronic Progress Reports (EPR), individual student-adviser meetings to track progress, identify and address concerns/needs, number of How to Succeed lunches attended, and the extent to which the students are involved in co-curricular activities including working in campus offices, membership on committees, and participation in clubs and activities.

At the end of each semester, the Take Charge committee reviews all first year students who earned <2.0 and contacts them by email, snail mail, telephone and/or Facebook and makes every attempt to do a one-on-one triage to save the student's academic future. Evaluative measures are the number of students that persist to the second, third, and fourth years.

- Establishing an international liaison is meant to assist PSY's support for the internationalization of the University. How this position's responsibilities are defined should be discussed. **RESPONSE: Based on the job description for the Penn State York Director of Enrollment Management - Research and analyze markets for special populations such as international students...identify opportunities and problems relating to the identification, recruitment, and retention of these special populations. More specifically, work with the University's Office for Global Programs, campus Admissions, and university and campus Student Affairs contacts to develop and implement a process to successfully acclimate international students.**

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- In the 2004-2009 diversity strategic plan, a Diversity Advocate was listed as part of the search committee process. Why PSY seems to be establishing this position in the 2010-15 plan needs to be clarified. **RESPONSE: Having a Diversity Advocate on faculty search committees is a continuing action and should not be viewed as a new initiative; however, adding the Diversity Advocate to our staff searches would be new.**
- Collaborating with the Affirmative Action Office and the Office of Human Resources and advertising position openings in minority-prevalent areas are positive strategies to better reach diverse potential applicants.
- More detail on implementation of the new approaches to evaluating the merit of diversity scholarship and research, including how the open discussions are to be monitored and assessed, would be helpful. **RESPONSE: Beginning in 2010-11, this initiative will be under discussion by the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Campus Senate.**
- Strengthening the mentoring programs for diverse faculty and staff is a good idea for increasing retention of minorities in workforce. More information on how these programs are to be improved is needed. **RESPONSE: New faculty are individually welcomed by the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA) who provides an overview of the PSU system and then welcomes both faculty and staff at Faculty Orientation and again at the faculty/staff fall picnic. While the DAA does**

- *not tailor advice to specifically to minority members of the faculty, he attempts to create an atmosphere where all members of the faculty are encouraged to seek advice when needed. In addition, the Chancellor has a welcome reception for all new hires each semester. Additionally, the campus' e-Learning Support Specialist meets individually and in groups to introduce and coach new faculty through the intricacies of the various PSU teaching and learning tools.*

A new mentoring initiative will be to give search committee members the opportunity to volunteer as a "transition liaison" and assist new hires in becoming acclimated to the local and campus area by providing information about housing accommodations, school districts, informal introductions to the campus, and to act as an over-all friendly contact. This will enable the new hire to more easily integrate into the campus and community.

- Utilizing frequent climate surveys for feedback to increase job satisfaction is positive.

Education and Scholarship

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

- Increasing the number and variety of diversity related courses and increasing enrollment in these courses are positive actions. Implementation strategies for these actions need to be explained. ***RESPONSE: Survey faculty to determine what diversity components are currently integrated into their non-US or IL courses. This will encourage them to incorporate more diversity components and/or view their course from a more global perspective.***
- Increasing quality and quantity of diverse activities and connecting curricular and co-curricular experiences is laudable. The details of the implementation should be included. ***RESPONSE: Current connections between curricular and co-curricular diversity experiences include English 15 /Habitat for Humanity, Biology 120A/community gardens, German 139/Holocaust Museum, and Hist21/Ellis Island exhibit. To encourage further collaboration, 1) information on the availability of student activity fee funding for curricular/co-curricular connections will be more pointedly disseminated, 2) connections between cultural programs and coursework will be discussed one-on-one with staff and faculty and 3) Student Affairs office will work toward being more planful in co-curricular programming thereby increasing the potential for curricular involvement. Survey faculty to determine what co-curricular programs they would like to see brought in to complement their course work, thus reinforcing the campus diversity plan.***
- Supporting innovative teaching approaches such as service learning and embedded travel experiences and increasing the funding are laudable.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- Instituting diversity advocates in search committees for administrative hires and promoting diverse composition of leadership for teams at all levels are admirable approaches. More detailed description of what the role of a diversity advocate in search committee would entail would be helpful. ***RESPONSE: Penn State York follows the "Guidelines for Recruiting a Diverse Workforce," published by the Affirmative Action Office at Penn State. Specifically: Penn State York charges one individual on each faculty and staff search committee to be a Diversity Advocate. This individual's job is to:***

****Ensure that Penn State York is advertising in multiple venues.***

****Ensure that the search committee itself reflects the diversity of the campus/unit and is made up of individuals who have broad perspectives and a commitment to diversity.***

****Be mindful of biases that could inadvertently screen out well-qualified candidates who have not followed the traditional career path.***

****Help develop a set of questions that will assess a candidate's past history and comfort level working with a diverse student/staff body – students/staff with learning disabilities, from various racial and ethnic groups and sexual orientations, and then make sure that all***

candidates are asked the same questions.

- Instituting diversity reports at staff and Campus Senate meetings is a positive strategy.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- Holding all campus units accountable for fostering diversity is laudable. More information on how this will be implemented will be helpful. ***RESPONSE: The Staff Review and Development Plan includes a diversity measure that requires a staff response. Campus Pre-March conferences will include a discussion of faculty involvement in diversity efforts.***
- Fostering new partnerships based on the campus strategic plan is a positive strategy to augment the linkage with underrepresented and underserved communities.

APPENDIX A

Multicultural Coordinator goals and outcome assessments

1. Collaborate with PSY graduate office in solidifying partnership with University of the Sacred Heart, Puerto Rico
2. Community involvement at the local and state level
 - York County Hispanic Coalition
 - Governor's Advisory Committee on Latino Affairs
 - Crispus Attucks Community Center
3. Increase number of students of color participating in Leadership development activities
 - PSU Summer Student Leadership Conference
 - Campus leadership program
 - Club and organization participation
 - How to Succeed program
 - Leadership programs within and without PSU
4. Increase quality and quantity of programming with Diversity Committee
 - First Friday series
 - International Coffee Hours
 - Themed monthly celebrations – Hispanic heritage, disability awareness, American Indian, GLB, Black history, women's history, Asian history, Jewish American
 - Unity Week
5. Multicultural Center services
 - Move office from Main Class room Building (MCB) to Ruhl Student Community Center (RSCC) – outfit with appropriate furniture including lounge space and printed and electronic resources, computer, printer etc. using stud.
 - Work on building reputation of office across campus
6. Collaborate with recruitment and retention programs
 - Assist in development of recruitment plan
Increase numbers of students of color coming to PSY
 - Assist in development of retention plan
Increase numbers of students returning to PSY
 - Assist in development of ESL and underprepared student programs
Increase numbers of students receiving 2.0+ after one year

APPENDIX B

Diversity Programming Assessment

Name of the activity:

Date:

The goal of diversity planning is to create an environment that is “characterized by equal access and respected participation for all groups and individuals irrespective of cultural differences and, more importantly, where the multiplicity of characteristics possessed by persons are not simply tolerated but valued.”

With this goal in mind, please respond to each of the following questions:

Item	(1) STRONGLY AGREE	(2) AGREE	(3) UNDECIDED	(4) DISAGREE	(5) STRONGLY DISAGREE	(6) NOT APPLICABLE
1 – This activity increased my sense of belonging at Penn State.						
2 – This activity increased my perception of Penn State being a welcoming community.						
3 -This activity helped me make progress toward getting to know others different from myself (i.e. race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion)?						
4 - This activity introduced me to my responsibilities to learn from differences between people, ideas, and opinions as part of the university community.						

1. As a part of the campus diversity planning, what would make this activity more beneficial to you? Please offer comments below; you may continue on the reverse side of this page.

(Taken from the Framework for Diversity indicators and the Penn State Principles.)

APPENDIX C

FALL 2010 Educational Opportunity Program Evaluation



1. **Meeting once a week throughout the semester to stay on track was helpful.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

2. **I find the topics at our weekly sessions useful and productive.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

3. **I feel that EOP made the transition from high school to college smoother and a little bit easier than it otherwise would have been without EOP.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

4. **I feel connected to campus and the resources that are available to me as a student at Penn State York.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

5. **My individual meetings with Chelsea were helpful and informative.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

6. **The expectations set for me through EOP are reasonable, manageable, and fair.**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Comments:

7. **What suggestions for improvement do you have? Is there anything you would change about the EOP Program? How may EOP better serve your needs?**

8. **What is your favorite thing or things you like best about EOP?**

9. **Overall, how would you rank the EOP Program on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rating?**

1 2 3 4 5