

**Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan**  
**A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010-15**  
**College of Earth and Mineral Science**  
**Spring 2010**

There are promising new initiatives underway in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences including the dual degree program and the “Grow Your Own Philosophy” for developing a pipeline of future students. They also plan to partner with international institutions of higher education to create dual degrees so that students will not only have international experience, but can earn a degree simultaneously from both PSU and an international university. This is a commendable undertaking. In addressing many of the Challenges, EMS plans to continue successful aspects of the prior plan, but specifies few metrics by which to measure success in fostering diversity. The College is encouraged to describe in more detail relevant goals, strategies, resources, timelines and measurable outcomes. Some confusion regarding strategic indicators and action steps required to achieve these goals is evident.

There appears to be a disconnect between the update and this plan. The new plan makes few references to programs and strategies implemented during the previous planning cycle. Neither plan focuses attention on retention, of either students or faculty from under-represented populations. The review team had hoped to see mention of programs from the Update (i.e., SEEMS, AESEDA, SROP, recruiting trips to Puerto Rico) in the 2010-15 Strategic Plan. Will participation in these programs continue? How will they be assessed? A notable absence in both the update and the plan is attention to retention of students, faculty. **RESPONSE: While this plan represent a new cycle, there will be a continuation of programs that work from previous plans. We will however improve upon our efforts where improvements are needed. We constantly seek and receive feedback from of office users. For example, we intend to add new institutional partners through programs like Africa-Array and Sloan.**

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

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

- Targeting less visible aspects of diversity such as LGBTA and veterans is prioritized in this cycle. Continued improvement in inclusiveness regarding gender and ethnicity is also needed.
- Updating marketing materials is positive. The College will want to find ways to measure the effectiveness of these materials on recruitment and on climate in general.
- The College might choose to require, rather than “encourage” a section on diversity in all FYE courses. Resources may be needed to support faculty efforts to integrate diversity issues into their curricula.

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

- Monitoring student survey responses will provide some perspective on climate within the College. It would be helpful to see student survey data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and other demographics. **RESPONSE: Since we are a small college, we meet the students individually and in small groups which encourage an environment for regular and honest feedback. Our students are not shy when it comes to providing feedback. We consider these traits as positive for the College. The Office of Educational Equity keeps an open door policy and students comes first.**
- We understand the College’s reluctance to conduct climate surveys for faculty and staff given that the numbers are so small. We would encourage EMS to seek out other means of soliciting feedback. **RESPONSE: Because we are small, we can easily invite feedback from faculty and staff as well as students. We have spent the upfront time in getting to know students and employees and as a result feedback is on-going.**
- Joining the LGBTA Support Network is a positive step; EMS may want to encourage individuals across the College to participate, in addition to the Office of Educational Equity.

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

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

- A clear, measurable goal of increasing underrepresented groups by 2-4% over the next five years is presented. The “Grow Your Own” pre-college outreach to middle and secondary schools to attract more students into the fields within EMS has the potential to be a best practice. We look forward to seeing details of the proposed pipeline strategy.
- EMS is encouraged to continue their work with Commonwealth Campuses to recruit underrepresented students.
- The College mentions veterans as a target population, but provides no strategies for recruiting or retaining this group. Specific strategies for other adult learners may also be warranted.
- Sending graduate students back to their undergraduate university to recruit students is a good strategy; it is unclear how this relates specifically to recruitment of underrepresented populations.  
***RESPONSE: Graduate students from HBCUs and or other MSIs are encouraged to share their Penn State experiences with their former faculty and peers. It is a way of discussing the merits of Penn State and the conducive environment for graduate study. Similarly, for undergrads to return to their high school is a way to interest students in our programs.***

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

- It is unclear what efforts are underway to develop current employees, particularly faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.
- Appropriate monitoring targets are identified.
- Creating a database of ABDs and new PhDs as potential faculty recruits is forward thinking.

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- The College should elaborate how it intends to ensure that all students will have interactions with international students enrolled in EMS. ***RESPONSE: Several classes offered by the college provide experiences in team problem solving. Efforts are made to make sure such groups are multicultural and inclusive of gender.***
- Tracking student enrollment in courses covering US and International culture may provide useful data.
- EMSAGE efforts to promote study abroad opportunities have the potential to positively impact student participation. Formalizing MOUs with both US and international universities would provide unique opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students and may prove to be a best practice.
- The plan to partner with international institutions of higher education to create dual degrees has the potential to become a best practice.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- Faculty/Staff Survey feedback about leadership on diversity issues should provide useful data.
- There are no action items in the matrix or the text for Challenge 6. The statement that there is a hiring freeze at the university is not entirely correct.

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

- It is positive that plans are in place to link strategic planning and diversity planning.
- Offering workshops on diversity best practices for unit executives is a good idea.