

Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010-15
College of the Liberal Arts
Spring 2010

From the dean's involvement to the College's diversity statement recognizing the variety of ways that all groups can be underrepresented and underserved, the College of the Liberal Arts has demonstrated that diversity is an integral part of its mission. The review team commends the College for its use of the 2008 Report on the Climate Survey in the College as baseline data from which to measure progress, on the new minors that were proposed and accomplished in the 2004-09 update, and on the "best practices" programs, which include the administrative assistant internship program and the College Leadership Program. The review team recommends supplementary information be added to Challenges 2, 4 and 7, paying close attention to Challenge 4 in terms of the data and several practices used to increase the diversity of faculty hiring pools.

RESPONSE: We are very grateful for the comments on our Diversity Framework materials. I appreciate the time and effort spent reviewing the documents.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- The review team appreciates the College's recognition of the variety of ways in which different groups can be underrepresented/underserved in the numerous fields that fall under its purview.
- Providing a 1-3 sentence descriptor about the specific programs, e.g., the Race Relations Project would benefit those who are examining the 2010-15 plan independent of the 2004-09 update.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- Action items regarding the College's response to acts of intolerance reiterates the College's commitment to act swiftly to counter incidents.
- The review team encourages the College to think more broadly to address this Challenge in addition to following policy.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- College efforts to develop signature programs such as the Paterno Liberal Arts Undergraduate Fellows and the Asian Studies department are commendable. Both programs are currently in the process of development and provide opportunities that can be leveraged to achieve diversity goals.
- The review team commends the College's desire to expand and participate in the National Science Foundation Alliance for Graduate Education. Have any other potential programs been identified?

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- The review team commends the College for supporting emerging research areas and programs, as well as relevant dual-degree graduate programs. The College is encouraged to continue providing seed money for these programs.
- The College's participation in the administrative fellows program could be a best practice with data outlining the success of implementing this program.

Education and Scholarship

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

- Developing the Center for Democratic Deliberation, Population Research Institute and Migration Studies Project is especially encouraging.
- The review team applauds the College on the new minor offerings, Sexuality and Gender Studies and Latino/a Studies, and for its desire to enhance its study abroad programming and participation.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- The review team's impression is that the dean's involvement helps to set the tone for the activities to support this Challenge. The review team commends the dean for her efforts.
- The administrative assistant internship program could be a best practice should data be collected to determine the program's success.
- The review team praises the College on its College Leadership Workshop which rises to the level of a potential best practice.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- Elevating the title of the position of the multi-cultural coordinator to assistant to the dean and realigning the reporting line are good steps in strengthening the position and increasing visibility. It will be important, as the plan is implemented, to show how this new structure has led to support and better coordination of diversity programs.
- The team encourages the College to record strategies and successes of increasing diversity via the Paterno Fellows Program.
- The review team agrees that enhancing the centers-the Africana Research Center, the Rock Ethics Institute, the Richards Civil War Era Center, the Language Science Center, the Language Acquisition Center and the Center for Democratic Deliberation-is a thoughtful approach and highlights the variety of ways in which the College addresses diversity.