

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

The College of Medicine's (COM) 2010-15 plan attempts to restore shortcomings of its earlier plan via positive proactive initiatives. The review team suggests the use of a matrix to present progress towards strategic goals. Assessment tools are encouraged for programmatic evaluation; to assess goals; baseline metrics are needed. Quantifying workshops and training activities could provide helpful feedback. The College of Medicine did not indicate how it would assess overall progress; consider benchmarking with peer institutions. The new organizational structure includes an Associate Dean for Diversity. This is laudable; however, to facilitate department and faculty receptivity greater clarification regarding expectations and accountability for the position is warranted. Ideally, this plan should capitalize and build upon the former plan's strengths; the Junior Faculty Development Program and Cultural Competency Training are two programs, for example, worthy of mention, continuation, and valuation, and warrant encouragement by executive leadership to maintain momentum.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- Notably, COM will increase the responsibility and influence of the Unit diversity committee. ***RESPONSE: The Dean's Council on Diversity will undergo a revision of its structure and with it, an increase in its responsibility and visibility on campus.***
- Efforts to increase student involvement on the Dean's Council on Diversity are favorable.
- Providing an office structure for the Associate Dean for Diversity reflects commitment; however, there is no mention of expectations or accountability mechanisms. ***RESPONSE: The parameters of the position are still being defined. The position to date has been focused on evaluation and inventory of existing diversity programs and initiatives.***
- Laudably, the multicultural officer role will be broadened and additional resources made available.
- A collaborative effort across the hospital and medical college to report/communicate on matters of diversity and access/share administrative leadership is encouraged. ***RESPONSE: The alignment of the two offices, possibly co-located with shared resources, could streamline diversity activities and reduce redundancy.***
- Potential best practice: Enhancement of media formats to improve the flow of policy information, recruitment materials and accomplishments across all constituencies (internal and external). Consider developing an integrative way to assess outcomes; substantiate progress. ***RESPONSE: Projects that have already come to fruition under the office of the ADD include an internal/external accessible diversity website (content to be more robust over time). Current initiatives include rotating video content on the "Lion's Eye" video information systems, Video "Diversity Heroes" series, and the possibility of a Facebook page.***

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

- It is unclear who delivers the message, "regard diversity as a strength and a necessity for Unit success." ***RESPONSE: It is everyone's responsibility to deliver the message beginning with senior hospital and College of Medicine leaders. The Associate Dean for Diversity should guide the method of its dissemination. This message is not possible without the coordinated efforts of the ADD and the Chief Diversity Officer. Additionally, hospital unit leaders will make it a clear requirement that all employees will be held responsible for attending Cultural Competency training. This will help us to sustain an inclusive and welcoming campus climate.***
- Incorporating assessment of Cultural Competency into the Climate Survey could be a potential best practice. Gathering information on programs like the "Race Relations Project," which could be modified for COM implementation, might aid in this initiative. ***RESPONSE: The Race Relations Project, with modification, should be brought to our campus. The Director for Diversity, Inclusion and Employment Equity is collaborating with the COM HR Director to select which programs offered by the PSU Diversity Support and Education Services to bring to the Hershey Campus.***

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

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

- Increasing financial aid for underrepresented and underserved populations with the most need is worthwhile; it is uncertain, however, what role the academic units will have in the recruitment process. **RESPONSE: This challenge will have to be coordinated with the University as a whole. Rules restricting financial aid to strong potential students must be reviewed.**
- Greater emphasis on developing partnerships at the secondary school level may show benefits within 5-7 years; tracking these data is recommended. **RESPONSE: These activities are already underway. Any new programs from inception will have tracking data starting with an exit evaluation and interview.**
- Ongoing evaluation of student recruitment and retention programs and related initiatives is important to determine the best use/optimize limited resources (time, money, personnel). **RESPONSE: Appropriate data points will be tracked for each of the pipeline programs to assess their effectiveness. Based on that data, resources can be marshaled accordingly.**
- Potential best practice: Involving current multicultural students in the recruitment process is sustainable; consider diversifying the interview committee for *all* applicants. (Refer to B1 and B2) **RESPONSE: With the reconstitution of the URM COM Applicant committee (Team VI), related activities have also been restarted. Already in place is the participation of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) in the minority luncheons on applicant day.**

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

- The review team recommends COM sustain renewed efforts and commitments to recognize and utilize demonstrated accomplishments to diversity and equity within the HR 40, P&T, and advancement processes. **RESPONSE: For some employees, the premise of diversity activity reviewed in an HR 40 has been discussed, one on one, with each of the department chairs by the ADD. The data is to be reviewed so that a cogent plan can be moved forward.**
- The review team encourages quality mentoring of faculty, staff, and advanced students early in their careers to realize, among other positive outcomes, measureable improvements in workplace climate and retention.
- The Junior Faculty Development Program has a track record of success according to the prior plan. The continuation of this program is recommended. **RESPONSE: This program should be and has been highlighted to the department chairs as a tool for recruitment as well.**
- Intensified efforts to diversify staff and faculty are acknowledged and encouraged.

### ***Education and Scholarship***

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

- COM personnel, students and alumni are engaged with an increasingly diverse, multicultural audience/clientele. It is, therefore, imperative that COM educates and trains to that end; integrating diversity issues into existing courses is an excellent first step. **RESPONSE: A review of the demographics served the Medical Center confirms that premise; that will be one way to highlight the need for increased diversity. Diversity courses and issues are integrated into the curriculum for first and second year medical students.**
- The review team suggests regular infusion of multicultural – national and international – examples and clinical cases (without fueling or perpetuating stereotypes); permeating diversity understanding throughout COM curriculum. **RESPONSE: Review of the COM curriculum is ongoing. Multicultural content, including case studies, has been reviewed for possible inclusion where possible.**
- Providing incentives for curricular enhancement/transformation, i.e., integrating diversity across the curriculum is encouraged, including reward structures for faculty/staff contributions in this arena.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- Continuing noteworthy efforts to provide diverse composition of search committees, as well as student evaluation and student, faculty and staff performance recognition committees is recommended.  
***RESPONSE: Efforts are already underway to formalize these guidelines.***
- Maintaining a robust pipeline of promising and proven COM personnel leadership development is encouraged.
- COM may wish to explore the creation of an Administrative Fellows programs to build a pipeline of potential leaders from underrepresented groups. ***RESPONSE: Hospital Administration offers an administrative fellow opportunity for PSU health administration students and graduates, but it is not restricted to members of underrepresented groups. The COM also has an administrative fellows program.***
- Efforts to diversify leadership and management are noted, albeit this area continues to present a challenge in need of improvement and ongoing attention.

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

- The establishment and furtherance of diversity and equity initiatives are stressed, promoted and advanced by increased visibility at COM leadership levels, with the expectation that these practices and principles will be infused across all levels.
- Success and positive outcome may arise with promoting faculty and administration involvement in championing diversity; recognition and reward structures are suggested to facilitate this process.