**Feedback on Progress Implementing**
*A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003*
**Enrollment Management and Administration**
**Final Report**

Enrollment Management and Administration (EMA) provides critical support for Penn State's diversity goals, in particular the EMA offices and staff that concentrate their efforts on increasing diversity among undergraduate students. These offices and staff include Minority Admissions and Community Affairs (MACA), community recruitment centers (CRCs), regional recruiters in key urban areas, and the Office of Student Aid (OSA). MACA, CRCs, and regional recruiters focus on recruiting students who contribute to racial/ethnic diversity among undergraduates at Penn State, and OSA oversees financial aid support for all undergraduate students, including institutional support for students of color, low-income students, and others who contribute to a more diverse undergraduate population. These efforts have resulted in steady increases in the percentage of undergraduate students of color at Penn State and have contributed to retention and graduation rates for these students that are among the highest in the nation among peer institutions.

In its final report on the implementation of the 1998-2003 *Framework*, EMA acknowledges a need to expand on efforts that contribute to the full range of *Framework* Challenges. For example, EMA states that it has no systematic approach for recruiting staff from underrepresented groups outside the normal search processes and that no specific committees exist within EMA that deal directly with issues related to diversity for EMA staff. EMA is commended for an honest appraisal of its shortcomings, but these results are disappointing, especially since the mid-point feedback report to EMA noted similar deficiencies and the University is now at the end of the 1998-2003 *Framework* reporting period. Also, the review team could not identify a diversity-related function for the Registrar's office in EMA's report. By excluding one of its major units from these endeavors, EMA truncates significant resources that could support diversity initiatives. Along similar lines, while EMA encourages staff to participate in various diversity-related professional development activities, attendance is often through the initiative of individual staff. Other than the Fall EMA Conference, systematic involvement by all EMA staff in diversity-related programs does not appear to be prominent.

Performance indicators (i.e., benchmarks, concrete goals, measurable objectives, metrics to gauge success, and outcomes) to assess the effectiveness of diversity activities are primarily absent. Even for Challenge 3 activities, for which extensive data outcomes are described, the report is not always clear on how these outcomes measure up to EMA goals. For example, the percentage of underrepresented students is reported at 12.2 percent for 2002-03, the highest ever; however, does this percentage fall short, meet, or exceed enrollment goals? Does EMA have enrollment goals for diverse groups? Also, the sections of the report designated "Recommendations" describe planning activities that should be addressed in the diversity strategic plan.

It is hoped that EMA's assessment of its shortcomings for many of the *Framework* Challenges will serve as a springboard for innovative programs for the upcoming 2004-2009 diversity strategic planning period and will be accompanied with a consistent use of concrete performance indicators as it develops new initiatives.

*Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity*
   ❖ EMA's definition of diversity is detailed and clear but focuses only on students. What about EMA staff and administrators?
   ❖ EMA is to be commended for its frank assessment of the limited effectiveness of the institutional scholarship for selected out-of-state students.
   ❖ The EMA Fall Conference is one of EMA's signature contributions to diversity for the entire University. Further details, including outcomes assessment, could identify this event as a best practice.

*Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate*
   ❖ The findings of the climate surveys conducted in 1998 and 2001 indicate that EMA is serious about assessing and improving its climate. Survey results indicate an overall positive climate for diversity in EMA. Though highlights of the survey are included in the report, complete results in an appendix would be better, especially in revealing climate issues for LGBT staff, people with disabilities, and other

diversity constituents.  It is not clear whether or not the findings of the survey were used to develop initiatives designed to improve EMA's climate.

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

❖ EMA makes a significant contribution to recruiting diverse students at the undergraduate level through MACA, the CRCs, and regional recruiters.  These efforts show tangible results in enrollment increases for students of color.  To a certain degree, these contributions are to be expected given the organizational structures within EMA that largely exist to fulfill these responsibilities.  However, it is evident that EMA discharges these responsibilities effectively and with utmost professionalism.

❖ Outside of MACA, the CRCs, regional recruiters, and OSA, how do other EMA units contribute to student recruitment and retention?  For example, as mentioned earlier, it appears that the Registrar's Office makes no significant contribution.  This office has numerous interactions with diverse students.  One initiative might be to provide cross-cultural communication training as a mechanism to proactively address potential barriers for diverse students who are navigating the registration process.

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

❖ Despite acknowledging that no systematic efforts to recruit a diverse staff have occurred, EMA notes that results from the climate survey indicate that respondents believe EMA has made progress in this area.  The EMA demographic profile (Table 5a) shows that employment of women and staff of color largely exceeds the Affirmative Action availability profile.  The report acknowledges that MACA and the CRCs make a disproportionate contribution to EMA's workforce diversity profile.

❖ If EMA put forth the same effort and creativity towards Challenge 4 as it does towards Challenge 3, this area could be one of the strongest for the Division.  A more diverse staff overall (i.e., not just in MACA and the CRCs) would help to contribute to Challenge 3 goals.

### Challenge 5:  Developing a Curriculum That Supports the Goals of Our New General Education Plan

❖ EMA states that this Challenge is not applicable.  This Challenge could be, however, a focus for the Registrar's Office through eLion, which has significant potential to contribute to the University's diversity goals.

### Challenge 6:  Diversifying University Leadership and Management

❖ EMA is commended for supporting high staff participation in leadership and management programs.  Information about promotion and advancement opportunities for diverse staff who have participated in such programs and the impact on diversifying unit leadership would be helpful.

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

❖ EMA appears to understand how organizational change can support diversity, as evidenced by its continued support for MACA and the CRCs, new positions in support of international and out-of-state students, and reallocations of general student funds for diversity programs.  The same level of sophistication should be applied to coordinating organizational change to support Challenges 4 and 6.

*RESPONSE:  EMA's response addresses three overarching issues:  1) Admission and enrollment of underrepresented students, 2) Diversity in EMA staffing, and 3) Office of the University Registrar role in retention.*

*ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT OF UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS*

> *As is outlined in the EMA 1998-2003 Framework and supported by the review team's comments, EMA provides critical support for Penn State's diversity goals.  Also in their comments, the review team applauds the contributions made in increasing diversity among undergraduates, but raises questions concerning enrollment goals for underrepresented students.*

*The review team questions how the percentage of underrepresented students, reported at 12.2 percent of all undergraduates for 2002-03, compares with the enrollment goals for EMA. What are the benchmarks? In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education issued a desegregation mandate to all public institutions within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As of 2002, underrepresented students comprised 13.5 percent of the college-bound high school graduates in Pennsylvania, providing an important benchmark in setting the enrollment goals for underrepresented students. It is projected that underrepresented students will comprise 19.5 percent of all high school graduates in Pennsylvania by 2008-09, and if the 2002 college-bound rate for underrepresented students in Pennsylvania is applied, will comprise approximately 17.8 percent of those graduating seniors bound for college. In considering a larger context, in the northeast, it is projected that underrepresented students will comprise 31.0 percent of graduating seniors by 2008-09 and 37.6 percent nationally.*

*Penn State has made significant progress in increasing the percentage of underrepresented undergraduates enrolled, moving from 8.9 percent in 1994-95 to 12.2 percent in 2002-03. Being mindful of the national, regional, and state trends as benchmarks, EMA measures success by continued progress in recruiting, enrolling, and retaining underrepresented students. Using the holistic definition of diversity outlined in the 1998-2003 Framework, it is the goal of EMA to continue to promote diversity, in all of its forms.*

## DIVERSITY IN EMA STAFFING

*EMA has exceeded the Affirmative Action availability profile for women and minorities. EMA will continue to benchmark against the availability profile and will set as a future goal maintenance of this achievement. To enhance past efforts, EMA will require that the Diversity Talent Bank be tapped for qualified applicants for all vacant positions posted external to the University.*

*EMA has shown, over time, a fairly low staff turnover rate. This fact limits the number of opportunities for hiring new staff. While the concentration of staff of color occurs largely within the Undergraduate Admissions Office (MACA and CRCs), minority staff are present throughout the division. EMA is dedicated to instilling in all staff the sensitivity and understanding required to build a healthy climate that supports and values goals for diversity in staffing and student enrollments. Leadership has always encouraged staff participation and attendance at diversity-related programs and numerous staff take advantage of this on a regular basis. EMA will turn its attention to quantifying these types of activities by staff.*

*Past climate surveys have indicated satisfaction and comfort by respondents with respect to the climate, value, and support for diversity as manifested by EMA leadership and management. EMA will continue to administer its climate survey and be responsive to any concerns raised by staff. A Diversity Advisory Committee will be appointed to continue the application of this survey, make recommendations to the Vice Provost and Dean regarding any issues identified, and to develop an agenda for bringing staff development programs that are diversity focused in-house. These actions will enhance the visibility and ease of access by staff to these important programs.*

## OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR ROLE IN RETENTION

*The Office of the University Registrar (OUR) continues to be involved in several specific initiatives related to the retention of students. The degree audit system has been developed as a critically important advising tool to enable students and their advisers the capability of tracking progress towards degree completion. The OUR is the University's liaison with the National Student Clearinghouse, enabling the University to track the enrollment of students who declined their Penn State offer of admission, and the status of previously enrolled Penn State students. Each year, the OUR publishes several key reports focusing on graduation/retention/attrition rates, time to degree, and non-returning students. The office assists in the identification and tracking of special populations*

*including adult learners and provisionally enrolled students.  The OUR has also developed the Enrollment Reporting System and the EIS Enrollment models to assist colleges and campuses as they monitor their respective student enrollments.  These efforts are combined with initiatives from the colleges and campuses to improve the retention efforts of all enrolled students.*

*The Office of the University Registrar has long maintained representation with the Commission for Women and the Commission for Adult Learners.  While not often characterized as an underrepresented group, the OUR continues to provide special focus on supporting the enrollment needs of first generation college students.  In addition, the OUR continues to provide reasonable accommodations to students with accessibility issues by ensuring that classes are held in classrooms that are fully accessible.  This often requires that a class be moved to a different room or building.*

*We trust these additional comments amplify EMA's work and commitment to these important university-wide diversity initiatives.*