

**Feedback on Progress Implementing the  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Finance and Business  
Final Report**

Finance and Business (F&B) has a unique challenge of overseeing a variety of administrative units throughout the University and, given this challenge, its commitment to addressing diversity issues as a main organizational initiative through its six action points is commendable. Significant energy and financial resources within F&B are committed to diversity awareness and training, and this is commended. F&B can point to short-term results in workforce diversity. It appears that retention of individuals from underrepresented groups contributes to this increase. F&B is encouraged to include information measuring the effectiveness of retention strategies.

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

- ❖ It is positive that F&B has a definition of diversity that clearly focuses on climate, and that Penn State's anti-discrimination statement is noted. The unit may consider expanding the definition of diversity to fully encompass the range of populations included in this statement.  
***RESPONSE: The definition of diversity is being revised in the 04-09 Framework plan.***
- ❖ It is commendable that in addition to the diversity information offered at new employee orientation, all new employees are required to attend the Diversity Training Program offered by the Diversity Support and Education Center.
- ❖ It is positive that there continues to be a unit-wide diversity committee and diversity teams in individual units. There does not appear to be a specific multicultural or diversity coordinator.  
***RESPONSE: The key initiative manager is the coordinator for all F&B diversity activities. This is a senior level position within F&B and reports directly to the Senior Vice President.***
- ❖ It is positive that diversity is a standard agenda item at all regular staff meetings. More information on how diversity is discussed as an agenda item as well as specific actions taken would be helpful.  
***RESPONSE: Will be included in the 04-09 Framework update.***

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

- ❖ It is commendable that the senior vice president routinely meets with diverse staff members to hear their concerns and suggestions. It would be helpful to provide information on the Diversity Committee and unit diversity teams, including their function and their role in relationship to the senior vice president. It is unclear whether improving climate is the committee's sole function.  
***RESPONSE: The Office of Physical Plant, Office of Human Resources and Hospitality Services have unit diversity committees. The other major units have diversity representatives. The F&B diversity team receives data and input from the committees and representatives. The diversity team reports directly to the Senior Vice President through the key initiative manager. The team is responsible for diversity initiatives and activities within F&B. Recruitment, retention and climate are the principle focus.***
- ❖ It is positive that F&B has conducted multiple diversity/climate surveys. It would be helpful to include information on the results of these surveys and how the results were utilized to develop specific action items toward diversity initiatives. ***RESPONSE: Will be included in the 04-09 Framework update.***
- ❖ F&B provides release time for staff to participate in several specific diversity-oriented activities; release time for representation and involvement within the unit and at a University-wide level on groups that foster diversity and equity is suggested.  
***RESPONSE: Release time is provided for various unit and University-wide activities. These include The Community Diversity Group, Leadership Centre County, Commission for Women, MLK day activities, Staff advisory committee, etc.***
- ❖ It is positive that representative groups of F&B women and employees of color meet annually with the senior vice president. The unit may consider expanding this practice to include additional constituent groups (e.g., LGBT, etc.). ***RESPONSE: This has been included in the 04-09 Framework. The Senior Vice President will start meeting with representatives of LGBT and the Teamsters Union in the summer of 04.***
- ❖ Unit specific examples such as diversity-oriented Web sites, participation in training programs and other initiatives support F&B's commitment to climate improvement.

- ❖ It is unclear whether diversity training is required of the unit's outsourced businesses (e.g., HUB eateries, etc.). **RESPONSE: This issue will be addressed in the 04-09 Framework update.**
- ❖ It is positive that new employees participate in the Understanding and Valuing Diversity Program. The unit is encouraged to develop measures by which to determine the impact of requiring participation in this program. **RESPONSE: This issue will be addressed in the 04-09 Framework update.**

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

- ❖ It is positive that F&B strives to employ a diverse student workforce. It is unclear whether the 2,000-2,500 student employees participate in diversity-related initiatives. A demographic profile of the student workforce would be helpful. **RESPONSE: Finance & Business plans to provide diversity/climate training opportunities for all student employees by incorporating training into the initial orientation programs provided by each unit. Given the relatively short hourly commitment of student employees and the rapid turnover, it is unrealistic to provide the same level of training given to full-time staff employees.**
- ❖ It is unclear whether the unit has established procedures to ensure that companies with which the University invests are committed to diversity. **RESPONSE: This is a Board of Trustees policy. F&B staff cannot make this decision.**
- ❖ It is positive that the Office of Physical Plant works diligently to accommodate persons with disabilities. It is commendable that 43 University Access projects were completed in 2001-2003, and twenty-nine accessible projects were completed at the Commonwealth campuses during this time period.

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

- ❖ It is positive that F&B's supportive environment has been identified as the most successful retention strategy. The Community Diversity Group initiative is commended. While it appears that this effort is localized to the State College area, the unit is encouraged to explore similar partnership opportunities with communities surrounding other Penn State campuses throughout the state. **RESPONSE: We believe that this is a good program but The Community Diversity Group's focus is limited to the Centre region. The leadership at each campus location should explore opportunities in their geographic areas to provide this type of program.**
- ❖ Programs such as the Professional Entry Program, Opportunity Network for Employment, and Staff Assistant Training Program encourage recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.
- ❖ While participation in the University's Professional Entry Program is commendable, it appears that the attrition rate is over 60 percent. Data and information regarding this attrition rate would be useful. **RESPONSE: This data will be gathered and reported in the 04-09 Framework update.**
- ❖ Since 2002, nine students have participated in F&B's Diversity Internship Program with four attaining full-time employment at Penn State.
- ❖ Total non-white employees of F&B increased more than 15% (**RESPONSE: from 61 to 72**) between 2001 and 2003. Police Services increased women officers by 25 percent (**RESPONSE: currently 8 women officers**) since 1998. It would be helpful to report actual numbers.
- ❖ Some units within F&B have initiated mentoring or "buddy" programs as a strategy for retaining employees from underrepresented groups. These programs involve connecting employees for the purposes of support, coaching, and assistance. The unit is encouraged to continue to expand on its mentoring or "buddy" programs. **RESPONSE: This is a key strategy in the 04-09 Framework.**
- ❖ Advertisement efforts in a variety of national and regional employment publications, participation in minority career fairs at Penn State and elsewhere, and unit-specific retention efforts (i.e., buddy program) support the unit's commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- ❖ The Diversity Internship Program, which funds up to six internships throughout F&B each year with the intent of offering full-time employment to interns successfully completing the program, is a best practice.

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

- ❖ Not applicable

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

- ❖ Staff continue to be encouraged to attend diversity-related leadership training and activities such as the Diversity Internship Program and the Administrative Fellows Program.
- ❖ Clarification should be provided on the role and participation of F&B in the Administrative Fellows Program, including information on the number of participants from F&B, mentors from F&B, and protégés mentored in F&B, as well as any supporting information the unit may be able to offer regarding program effectiveness and impact. ***RESPONSE: A full report on the Administrative Fellows program within F&B will be incorporated into the 04-09 Framework update.***
- ❖ It was unclear whether the mentoring program is intended to be a professional development opportunity for members of underrepresented groups. ***RESPONSE: The mentoring program is intended to be for professional development and is only open to employees from underrepresented groups.***
- ❖ It is positive that development of leadership skills is assessed under the “Support of Diversity” factor on employees Staff Review and Development Plan.

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

- ❖ The senior vice president holds each unit head accountable for positive results by reviewing the activities of the diversity team to assess progress and insure accountability. This process of accountability is commended.
- ❖ A senior member of F&B provides leadership and day-to-day direction for the diversity initiative. It is unclear whether this function is part of a permanent position, or is passed on yearly to a different senior member of the F&B leadership team. ***RESPONSE: The function is not part of a permanent position. However, the senior staff member has been leading the key initiative for the past three years and will continue into the foreseeable future.***
- ❖ In 2002, F&B initiated and funded a full-time position in Purchasing and Procurement to specifically manage purchasing relationships with businesses owned by women and racially/ethnically diverse individuals. The unit is encouraged to provide data on this initiative in future reports.