Diversity planning is a continuous and evolving effort on the part of the University and each of its organizational entities. This Plan is prepared in response to the University’s latest diversity strategic planning update cycle. In order to prepare an effective Plan, we need to examine our successful endeavors as well as identify areas for improvement.

“The Framework to Foster Diversity 2004-09” organizes the seven challenges within the four dimensions: Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations, Representation (Access and Success), Education and Scholarship, and Institutional Viability and Vitality. Our Strategic Plan to support the Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09 follows that organizational methodology. Our diversity initiatives are described and organized under each of the seven challenges.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

*Continuing Diversity Initiatives 2004-09*

ITS participates in a variety of activities that help our staff and others throughout the University develop and/or improve their understanding of diversity. These activities taken together provide many opportunities for all segments of the University community.

a.) ITS provides a variety of methodologies for the University community to enhance their knowledge of diversity issues as well as to keep current on issues pertaining to diversity. We will continue to add to our library of web-based tutorials that the Penn State community can use to research and learn about a variety of diversity topics. We will routinely notify the Office of Human Resources when our library of web based tutorials has been enhanced. OHR can then notify the local Human Resource Representatives to share this information with the local staff members they represent. We also developed the capabilities for the implementation of the Diversity Newswire and Staff Newswire used by the University to periodically publish new diversity initiatives and developments. Our development of the Portal offers the Penn State community an additional way to collect and review the latest diversity information and offerings in one place through a web browser.

b.) ITS continues to support to the Office of Human Resource programs that provide opportunities for underrepresented group members. These programs offer ITS staff opportunities to interact with individuals from varied cultures and underrepresented groups. Staff in ITS provide training and mentoring and build relationships that ultimately improve the understanding of diversity in our organization.
These programs include: The Opportunity Network for Employment Program, which is targeted at individuals with disabilities.

The Staff Information Technology Program, which provides summer internships for African American, Hispanic and Asian students from a Philadelphia information technology school.

Staff Assistant Training Program, which provides summer internships for young female students from underrepresented groups who wish to enter the office professional workforce.

c.) ITS will reconstitute its Diversity Committee to replace members that have left the organization and will provide the appropriate organizational support for the Committee efforts. The Committee will be empowered to develop a minimum of two educational programs per year for staff participation, identify a suitable assessment instrument to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programs presented, and adopt a suitable methodology for assessing the climate of ITS.

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

A welcoming campus environment is created in a variety of ways. ITS has developed partnerships with several units to improve the campus climate and help provide a level playing field for underrepresented groups. ITS will continue these successful partnerships with other University organizations to help provide a welcoming campus environment. Through our initiatives, we provide training and employment opportunities to individuals from underrepresented groups as well as funding for some program activities.

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**

a.) ITS will continue to work with the University Committee for Instructional Facilities to ensure that the University’s general purpose classrooms have the appropriate information technology to enable faculty to develop an effective learning environment for all students. We will continue our partnership with the Office of Disability Services to provide assistance to students, faculty, and staff with various ADA issues. Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT), a unit of ITS, provides several varieties of software and hardware components that are used to ensure all students and faculty using the University’s instructional facilities have access to the appropriate technology needed for a positive educational experience.

b.) ITS will continue to provide resources and support to the following programs designed to encourage the education and development of underrepresented persons. Each of these programs provides opportunities for various segments of underrepresented populations.
1. ITS began the Academic Computing Fellows Program (ACF) in 1987 to provide opportunities for an advanced education at Penn State. Since then we have had 38 participants. The Equal Opportunity Planning Committee has supported 11 of these participants. This Program also provides the participants with a graduate assistantship, stipend for conference attendance or equipment to support their research, and exposure to various campus researchers that are willing to collaborate and/or advise on various points of the participants’ research.

2. The Professional Development Program (PDP), which ITS began in 1989, provides an opportunity for a new Penn State graduate to begin an information technology career within ITS. This three-year program provides a full-time job including 3 years of mentoring for the program participants. The participants spend one year in three different ITS organizations becoming competent in three different information technology areas. At the end of the Program they select the ITS organization that they want to continue to pursue their career. We have had 15 people complete this program.

3. The Administrative Information Systems (AIS) Recruitment and Development Program provides an entry level IT position for a current University employee in grades 15 thru 18. The Program participants receive an intensive 12 month training program including mentoring by dedicated ITS staff members to ensure the participants obtain a well grounded background in a specific IT specialty.

c.) ITS provides several different opportunities for improving the organization’s climate. Our Vice Provost holds monthly climate luncheons with a changing segment of the employee population. These meetings are a valuable resource for identifying climate issues. Pertinent comments and action items are carried forward by the Vice Provost to meetings with Senior Directors for discussion and resolution. Over 63% of our staff members have attended these meetings during the past two and one half years. Our Senior Directors have also patterned similar discussion groups in their organizations. One-on-one meetings with randomly selected employees are used in lieu of group meetings in the organizations that are too small for group meetings. In addition, one of our larger units has implemented one-on-one meetings between the unit’s Senior Director and randomly chosen staff members to discuss the organization’s overall climate and any individual issues.

d.) Our Human Resource Representative and his support staff are housed in Old Main. In order to offer a less intimidating environment for ITS employees, one member of the ITS Human Resource staff holds weekly office hours in various ITS buildings to facilitate employee opportunities to discuss any issue that is of importance to them.

In addition, orientation sessions are held quarterly for all new ITS employees. These sessions are used to brief employees on how our individual units interact, and provide an opportunity for the new employees across ITS to become acquainted with each other. In addition, these sessions offer our new employees a structured way to learn about new product offerings and services provided by ITS and to visit our facilities and gain knowledge of policies and services that are important to them as employees. This
orientation program ensures that the new employees know about sexual harassment policies, ADA, FMLA, safety, training opportunities, and other issues associated with building a welcoming climate in ITS. These sessions have been so well received that the seasoned staff (those with more than three years of service with ITS) have asked to attend similar sessions so that they can benefit from the same information.

e.) ITS holds a yearly general “all staff” meeting for all ITS employees. This meeting is used to brief employees on major issues affecting our organization, new initiatives and services we provide to our customer base. We also provide breakout sessions on topics of interest to stimulate smaller group discussions. We will offer a diversity segment at our next meeting May 2004. We will also develop a section on our internal employee homepage that will include a diversity message from the Vice Provost.

We also hold what we term 2nd level meetings (2nd tier managers) every six to eight weeks. These meetings are used to discuss topics that cross-organizational boundaries and affect most employees. Various perspectives are presented and a consensus is reached on how we approach items such as, climate issues, space planning, performance appraisals, human resource policies, customer service, university needs, new product development, etc.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

**Challenge 3 – Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body**

ITS constantly evaluates new technology for all segments of the student population to level the technology playing field. This translates into new software packages, improved hardware configurations for the student labs and technology classrooms, new and/or improved software for collaboration and ease of access to class assignments, and interaction with the course instructor.

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**

a.) ITS will continue to sponsor and support the Academic Computing Fellows Program that was established in 1987. In collaboration with the Graduate School and Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC), we support various graduate students offering a broad exposure to the University research community, academic administrators and information technology expertise within ITS. This initiative also provides a graduate assistanceship and stipend for conference attendance or equipment that support the student’s research activities. Each year, at least one student from an underrepresented group has participated in this program.

ITS annually recycles computers from our computing labs to other campus units. The Office of Educational Equity is one of the units that receives these machines. In recent
years, these workstations have been used by the Office of Educational Equity to support students who are unable to afford a personal computer.

**Challenge 4 – Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce**

We routinely use various methodologies to recruit new employees and continually seek new initiatives to support a diverse workforce. Under the auspices of the Office of Human Resources, we advertise for the skill sets needed to fill our positions electronically and in print at the various publications patronized by underrepresented groups.

We have taken advantage of the new HR - 88 policy that enables organizations to hire individuals for a minimum of a 30-hour workweek and still provide benefits. Seven members of our staff opted for this opportunity. Four of the employees that requested this accommodation were female parents. This policy enables them to contribute to their family’s well being at an increased level while providing additional family time for the parent. We view this as a win-win situation.

We utilize the Opportunity Network for Employment Program, the Professional Development Program, and the Staff Information Technology Program as ways to provide our staff with opportunities to act as mentors, learn about other cultures, and develop a better understanding of diversity. ITS has very little turnover in our staff and these programs provide another method for our staff to learn about other cultures and play an active role in the development of another individual.

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**

a.) ITS continues to support our Professional Development Program. This is a three-year program that provides continuous training and mentorship along with the opportunity to work in three different ITS organizations while helping to launch a career in IT for individuals from underrepresented groups. To date we have had 15 individuals complete the program and each of these individuals is a success story. Those individuals in the PDP have learned the latest technology skills while offering our ITS staff the opportunity to mentor and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. We have been very successfully in starting these individuals in a successful career in information technology. This year we will seek additional partners within the broader Penn State community in an effort to expand this program to other colleges and departments.

**Education and Scholarship**

**Challenge 5 – Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies**
As an academic support unit, we provide access to the information technology that is used by the colleges and schools to develop their curricula.

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**

a.) Our Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) unit assists interested faculty with developing courseware. TLT recently was awarded an AT&T Foundation grant to help faculty incorporate diversity into their courses through the use of technology. As part of Project MELD (Multicultural Enhanced Learning for Diversity), faculty workshops will be developed to help professors explore techniques for creating an open classroom climate, web sites will be created that catalog teacher and student views of classroom experiences for useful feedback, and databases will be generated to record successful diversity-based classroom activities, including projects, lessons and research that faculty members can incorporate in their courses. The ultimate goal of this project is to use technology to aid students in obtaining a broader worldview. We will report on the effectiveness of this project after data can be gathered to gauge its use. The project is due for completion in April 2005.

b) ITS is in the process of using a PULSE survey to learn how students gauge the effectiveness of their multicultural experiences at Penn State, specifically how well their education is preparing them to interact, associate, and work with “all” people. This PULSE survey will help us focus on areas that students find most frustrating and most rewarding. We want to identify pedagogical approaches that have a positive impact on attitudes, including activities outside the classroom. Results from the survey will allow us to provide targeted online resources and live training activities for faculty at all Penn State locations, as part of Project MELD (Multicultural Enhanced Learning for Diversity). The survey, to be administered in 2004, will draw from a random sample of undergraduates at University Park and at least four other campus locations.

c.) In December, 2003, ITS recycled workstations from our computing labs at University Park to support the College of Arts and Architecture's relationship with the Charter High School for Architectural Design (CHAD) in Philadelphia. The goal of CHAD (http://www.chadphila.org/) is to prepare urban high school students for careers in architecture. The majority of juniors and seniors that use these workstations come from underrepresented groups. These machines provide an outstanding educational opportunity for a young high school student to use state of the art equipment to further their architectural interests.

**Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**
ITS has one of the lowest turnover rates at the University. There are few opportunities to replace staff that leave our organization. Of the ten members of the Vice Provost’s executive team, two are female. Of the 29 second tier managers within ITS, 34% are female. This is an increase of 57% from 1998. We continue to use the Professional Development Program as a pipeline for recruiting new staff to careers in IT at Penn State and thus increase the size of the pool for future leaders.

We have spent a good deal of time over the past two years looking for good senior management training opportunities for senior IT leaders. The only reasonable option we have found to date is Educause’s Frye Institute. At most, each university can send one attendee to this institute each year. This year we have targeted our nominee to be a senior female manager – specifically with the aim to ensure diversity in our future management ranks. We plan to continue that emphasis in the coming years.

We require all mid-tier managers to attend the Penn State Management Institute and Mastering Supervision programs, which have a strong diversity component. Over 72% of our managers attended these courses within the past three years.

We continuously encourage participation in various IT technology groups to broaden the development of our staff as well as to gain contact with other participants outside of the Penn State community. We use this venue to scout for appropriate individual that may be interested in joining ITS should the opportunity present itself. As we do this, we focus our efforts on hires that would diversify our leadership team.

We encourage participation in the Commission for Women activities, especially the mentoring program. We have had 18 women actively participate as mentors or protégée’s since the mentoring program began in 1999. The chair elect and the previous chair of the Commission for Women are ITS employees.

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

To help assure that diversity is part of the Penn State culture, ITS has participated at many different levels to bring students and staff into the University community. We try to level the playing field for individuals with disabilities so they are provided a more meaningful educational experience; provide formal and informal educational opportunities for the staff and students to gain knowledge of underrepresented groups and issues.

ITS has demonstrated a long-term commitment to **Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body** through its continued funding of the Academic Computing Fellows Program since 1987. Our collaborative efforts with the College of Arts and Architecture to support the CHAD program and our recycling of workstations to the Vice Provost of Educational Equity are other examples or relatively new initiatives to improve the opportunities for students from underrepresented groups.
We also have demonstrated a long-term commitment to **Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce** through our support of the Professional Development Program for the past fifteen years. We collaborate with the Office of Human Resources by supporting their programs by providing mentors, trainers, internship’s for participants, and funding for all or portions of these programs. We have supported Staff Information Technology Program and the Staff Assistant Training Program since their inception.

**Current Diversity Initiatives 2004-09**

a.) ITS will review our current organizational mission statement and update it as necessary to ensure that it clearly states our organization’s support for diversity.

b). We will improve our current interface points with the Office of Educational Equity to help increase our collaborative efforts to develop appropriate programs and practices to improve our units understanding of diversity.

c.) ITS developed the Professional Development Program in 1989. In conjunction with the President’s Opportunity Fund, we have funded this program for the past 15 years. This program has provided an effective method for attracting and developing employees from underrepresented groups. This highly successful program will to be supported by ITS for the foreseeable future.