The Penn State Outreach final report on its implementation of *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003* provides strong evidence of the Division’s commitment to the University’s diversity goals. Outreach cites an array of diversity-focused endeavors, such as the “brown bag” lunch programs, sessions on diversity at the annual Outreach Professional Development Conference, and *Penn State Outreach* magazine, which contains numerous articles on diversity and is distributed to many internal and external constituents of Penn State. These endeavors are excellent mechanisms for the discussion and dissemination of diversity information.

At various points throughout the report, the review team could not sort out the responsibilities of the various sub-units within Outreach and the synergies that exist between some of these sub-units. For instance, Outreach indicates that Cooperative Extension’s diversity activities are reported through the College of Agricultural Sciences, but some components of Outreach’s report, such as the article in *Outreach* magazine on 4-H programs and the Civil Rights Compliance Plan, seem to include Cooperative Extension programs. Also, it is not clear if the magazine “belongs” to Outreach or if it is a shared responsibility between Outreach and Cooperative Extension. An organizational chart that defines various Outreach responsibilities would help make these relationships more explicit. **RESPONSE:** Although Cooperative Extension lies administratively for many purposes within the College of Agricultural Sciences, the Director of Cooperative Extension, who also serves as Associate Vice President for Outreach, has a dual reporting line to the dean of the college and the Vice President for Outreach. Cooperative Extension and Outreach work together in close partnership to leverage resources across the units through joint programming and other collaborative efforts including the sharing of information, networks, and expertise. The resulting synergies, as they relate to diversity, are reflected in our report.

Finally, at various points, the report cites data that support the success of Outreach’s programs. For example, about 11 percent of the 2002-2003 credit registrations were among students from diverse racial/ethnic groups and over 50 percent were among women. Providing benchmarks and enrollment trends would make the data more meaningful. Also, it appears that many Outreach programs have not been evaluated for their success. For example, a diversity component is part of the annual Outreach Professional Development conference, but no assessment of outcomes could be identified for this initiative other than good attendance and “high ratings.” Outreach identifies the conference as a best practice, but without substantial performance indicators, such a conclusion is premature. A consistent application of performance indicators across numerous Outreach diversity programs would strengthen Outreach’s ability to evaluate the effectiveness of these endeavors. **RESPONSE:** We agree that benchmarks and trend data are useful in evaluating the effectiveness of Outreach’s programs and will work to develop them for the future.

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

- The overall mission and broad spectrum of constituents served by Outreach comprise the primary definition of diversity. A specific statement is needed to provide a centralized focus and foundation for Outreach’s diversity endeavors. The “core values” mentioned under Challenge 2 may be a good place to begin. **RESPONSE:** The Outreach Diversity Council is currently working on developing a definition of diversity for the organization.
- The Diversity Action Team coordinates many excellent programs, but the report indicates that it is difficult to measure the impact of these activities. As an initial step in measuring the impact of its activities, Outreach may want to develop short questionnaires that could be given to program participants. These questionnaires should not only attempt to measure program satisfaction but also assess knowledge and skill acquisition along with changes in beliefs and attitudes. **RESPONSE:** We have begun to use a brief questionnaire to obtain participant feedback on programs, including asking how likely it is that participants will do or think about something differently as a result of the program and discussion.
Outreach mentions that 25-30 people attend the “brown bag” lunches that focus on diversity. What percentage of Outreach employees typically come, and is participation spread across all Outreach units? Is participation typically limited to “the choir,” or do different people come to different sessions? RESPONSE: We are implementing a “sign-in sheet” this year to track where in Outreach participants come from. Past experience suggests that while there are some who tend to attend these sessions repeatedly, participation does vary across them. We try to offer a broad range of topics to appeal to different interests. 30 people represent about 7 percent of the staff on the Outreach side of the house. Extension faculty and staff are invited and sometimes participate, but the brown bags are attended primarily by Outreach staff.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

Two climate surveys conducted in 1995 and 2002 are mentioned in the report, though survey results are not included and details about follow-up activities are sketchy. Outreach indicates that one-quarter of the 2002 survey respondents consider themselves members of an underrepresented group, but it is unclear whether or not the survey sample is representative of the Outreach population. RESPONSE: In the progress report, we noted that 24 percent of the survey respondents considered themselves a member of an underrepresented group based on sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, religion, gender, or physical or mental ability. We did not ask with which of these characteristics individuals identified and there is no way to know if the survey sample was representative on many of these characteristics. The overall survey response rate was 57 percent, providing a confidence level of 95 +/- 4 percent. The only demographics asked of respondents were gender, employment category (staff non-exempt, exempt, faculty, etc.), and length of employment. Respondents were approximately representative on gender and employment category; comparison data on length of employment is not readily available. A brief summary of the 2002 Outreach diversity climate survey is included in our diversity strategic plan. Follow up activities are highlighted in the progress report and are the basis of many of the initiatives in the strategic plan.

The “open door policy” of the vice president is commendable, but some employees may find this avenue to be unfavorable for reporting climate concerns. Outreach may want to consider implementing more formal mechanisms for improving climate (i.e., where employees can report problems anonymously and understand before they do so exactly what processes will be involved in resolving the issue). RESPONSE: The final report notes several other avenues including the Outreach human resources director, the director of planning and administration, the sexual harassment resource persons, and managerial and executive leadership. All of these avenues are, in fact, used by employees. As part of the increased communication called for in the new Outreach diversity strategic plan, these avenues will be more widely publicized. It is very difficult to address issues that are reported anonymously; we believe that the operating principle here should be confidentiality, which is explained and assured when concerns are brought forward.

Summary results of the exit interviews need to be discussed and disseminated within the leadership of Outreach. RESPONSE: They are; a summary of exit interview results is shared and discussed quarterly with the Outreach Executive Team.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

The Intensive English Communication Program provides critical support in bringing international students to Penn State and in helping international TAs develop their English skills so as to improve the quality of instruction for all Penn State students. What is Outreach’s role in this program? What progress has occurred in augmenting the English skills of international students during the 1998-2003 Framework review period? RESPONSE: The Intensive English Communication Program (IECP) is one of the teaching units within Continuing and Distance Education in Outreach. While it does bring international students to Penn State, it is not focused specifically on Penn State’s international graduate students but is open to anyone seeking intensive English education. IECP’s mission is to provide intensive English communication education, not to augment the English skills of international students at Penn State.
The World Campus partnerships, such as the “memorandum of agreement with the Organization of American States,” could become best practices if data on favorable outcomes are provided to support their effectiveness.  

**RESPONSE:** We will be monitoring these initiatives.

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

- Outreach has done well regarding the employment of women at various levels, especially women in senior staff positions; however, the employment of people from diverse racial/ethnic groups across the entire Division remains unimpressive. Also, Outreach does not consistently include actual counts with percentage increases. For example, during 1997-2003, Outreach reports an increase in its representation of staff of color across all staff levels from 4.4 percent to 5.5 percent, but no corresponding actual counts are provided. Consistent reporting of both percentages and actual counts would be preferable.  

**RESPONSE:** Actual counts are provided in the report. We agree that we have much farther to go in increasing racial/ethnic diversity among Outreach staff, but note that we are moving in the right direction. As indicated in the report, from fall 1997 to fall 2003, there was an increase in racial/ethnic minority Outreach staff from 12 individuals to 20; this is an increase of 66 percent.

- Outreach employs over 35 non-tenure-track faculty. A significant percentage are women, but none are faculty of color. This is cause for significant concern. It is unclear whether or not Outreach has structures in place to help recruit and retain other diverse workforce constituents, such as individuals with disabilities and members of the LGBT community.  

**RESPONSE:** We share the concern that there are no faculty of color in Outreach and will continue to give special attention to this area.

- A proactive and systematic process should guide Outreach’s efforts in recruiting and retaining faculty and staff of color across all Divisional units. Outreach has typically relied on conventional recruiting methods, but in 2003 the Division began tracking hiring outcomes for diverse applicants. This approach could become a best practice, though at present it is unclear how the data will be used to augment recruiting.  

**RESPONSE:** The data noted are reported quarterly to the Outreach leadership. We will be using the data as a performance indicator, looking both at the numbers of diverse applicants and candidates in our hiring pools, and at diverse hires made (we want to see increases in all categories). Beginning in FY04/05, Outreach has established a recruiting fund to support the hiring of diverse staff and faculty. This fund is modeled after similar programs at Penn State that provide matching funds in support of diverse hires.

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

- The impressive array of Outreach’s curricular contributions to diversity could be explained better. For example, Conferences and Institutes (C & I) delivers numerous programs with significant diversity content, but which programs are a result of Outreach’s intention to diversify its offerings and which occur through external initiatives, where C & I is mainly coordinating the effort as a service to its customer base? Likewise, the “value added” of diversity planning for Outreach’s public broadcasting programming could be established by identifying which initiatives go “above and beyond” more typical diversity programming venues and carefully delineating how Outreach’s efforts “made it happen.” Also, comparing diversity offerings within Outreach against appropriate benchmarks would illumine Outreach’s distinctive contributions.  

**RESPONSE:** The review team is right in noting that most of Outreach’s programs with diversity content are driven by faculty and others with whom we work; this is in keeping with our role as a program delivery unit. We will be looking at dedicating some funding within our Program Innovation Fund to proactively support the development of diversity-related programming.
Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- Outreach has done a good job of providing leadership opportunities for women faculty and staff; especially noteworthy is the Outreach Internship Program.
- Leadership development opportunities for staff of color continue to fall short. Prior to this year with the appointment of an African American staff person to an Administrative Fellowship, little has occurred in this area. RESPONSE: We have nominated and/or supported the participation of other staff from underrepresented groups on University-wide commissions and committees, including the Staff Advisory Committee and the LGBT commission. In the recent reorganization of the marketing department, one of the unit heads is a member of an underrepresented group.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Outreach Diversity Goals

- Outreach has a sophisticated understanding of how organizational change can contribute to diversity. The reorganization of the Outreach Diversity Team to the Outreach Diversity Council, which now has a clear charge and reports directly to the vice president, is impressive. Also noteworthy is the significant budget support for diversity programs. Data to support the success of these programs would help Outreach hone its efforts and redirect funding to those initiatives that can be identified as best practices.