

**Feedback on Progress Implementing the  
Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Research and Graduate School including the Applied Research Laboratory**

The creation of a new Diversity Council in the Research and the Graduate School (RGS) and the Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) is commendable. Both RGS and ARL have made impressive strides in their efforts to transcend traditional University boundaries in forging new partnerships to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff and students, and in enhancing the climate for diversity in their respective units.

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

- ❖ The Research and Graduate School leadership are commended for following through on the 2001 feedback in establishing a Diversity Council with representation from faculty, staff and graduate students.
- ❖ ARL is acknowledged for restructuring and reconstituting its Diversity Committee with broad representation.
- ❖ ARL's efforts in acquiring a variety of resources (books, videos, periodicals, etc.) for circulation, discussion, and training among employees represent a positive step and a potential best practice.

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

- ❖ ARL climate teams are currently focusing on enhancing workplace atmosphere, including flex time, advanced degree opportunity access and recognition, and the promotion of socialization during lunch and break times. The ARL Open D.O.O.R. program (funded by EOPC) continues as a communication vehicle for diverse groups in ARL.
- ❖ Establishing the "Research Unplugged" downtown conversation series in fall 2003 is a laudable initiative. The forum offers diversity topics, and catalyzes town/gown discussions around diversity issues.
- ❖ The new editorial direction for *Research/Penn State* enables the magazine to fully "sample the diversity" of the University. Recent funding of SSRI and the Africana Research Center offers promise for collaborative projects addressing the intersections of race, class, poverty, gender, and ethnicity.
- ❖ The Review Team applauds the Vice President and Dean for recognizing Research and Graduate School staff with four special diversity-related awards.

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

- ❖ The Office of Graduate Educational Equity has initiated a wide range of recruitment and retention strategies, including new partnerships with HBCUs, visitation programs, national leadership with SROP, and the Sloan Fellows Program. The director of OGEE has successfully forged partnerships with graduate programs across the University. The Review Team acknowledges the reported 12 percent increase in African-American student enrollments over the past five years.
- ❖ Graduate Enrollment Services is commended for its continuing and innovative work with international students and the Returning Adult Student Center. New efforts are being directed to recognition of the successes of minority alumni.
- ❖ ARL is commended for its participation in a wide range of multicultural career programs on campus and at HBCUs. Partnerships with government agencies yield summer internships and employment opportunities for minority undergraduate and graduate students. The recent \$70K awarded jointly to ARL and the College of Engineering has the potential to attract new graduate students from underrepresented groups.

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

- ❖ ARL acknowledges the challenges it faces in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. Yet, in 2002-2003, ARL hired 20 new employees from underrepresented groups. This is a significant achievement.
- ❖ In follow-up to the 2001 feedback, the new Diversity Council was charged in December 2003 with identifying strategies to locate and recruit staff from underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Many of the Research units (IPO, PENNTAP, BFTC, SSRI) have experienced some success in recruiting and in some cases, retaining minority employees from underrepresented groups. The Review Team notes some examples of Best Practices that may be shared.
- ❖ The Review Team is concerned by the demographic data for fixed-term faculty. The report neither recognizes the disparities nor addresses them.

***Response: Several of our units have many fixed-term faculty; viz. ARL and MRI. In both cases the resources are not controlled centrally, but flow from the sponsor to the unit for execution of specific tasks. These individuals are frequently short-term; and in the case of MRI many are of international in origin, and hence represent a diversity of backgrounds.***

- ❖ It is noteworthy that efforts are being directed to retaining employees with disabilities.

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

- ❖ Although curriculum development is not directly applicable to these units, the leadership of the Graduate School oversees the review and approval of all new courses and programs through Graduate Council. Unlike the baccalaureate curricula, there are no specific requirements for multicultural education at the graduate level. However, faculty in the colleges often propose new curricular initiatives reflecting diversity topics.
- ❖ Regrettably the RGS appears to have missed the opportunity to take more of a leadership role in diversifying the graduate curriculum across the University.

***Response: We will encourage the Colleges with research and scholarship that focus on diversity subject matter to consider including diversity-foci in their courses and graduate degree programs. That said the Graduate School really does not direct curricular development, either directly or even indirectly. That is the privilege and responsibility of the Colleges. As such they are already charged with addressing this issue.***

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

- ❖ ARL leadership is commended for their support of a staff member who is chairing CORED and participating in other University-wide programs in 2003-04. Further, in 2003 the unit initiated monthly professional development seminars for staff assistants. The Review Team applauds these new programs. Documentation is provided showing that 29 women were promoted in 2002-2003 in research faculty/engineering, staff, and technical service ranks.
- ❖ Women continue to be strongly represented in the leadership of Research and the Graduate School. There continues to be a limited number of people from other underrepresented groups in this unit.
- ❖ The new Diversity Council is charged with developing approaches for diversifying leadership and management.

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

- ❖ RTTO is offered as an organizational exemplar for coordinating diversity goals across units. While many of the examples are laudable, there is little documentation of any sustained organizational realignments, long-term planning strategies, or resource reallocation to support the attainment of University diversity goals.

***Response: There is little opportunity to realign resources in this unit since much of the funding is externally provided by the State for particular programs; e.g. Ben Franklin Partnership; PENNTAP.***

- ❖ It is a positive step forward that the new Diversity Council has been charged with developing new strategies in these areas.
- ❖ ARL is commended for its resource allocation of more than \$150,000 per year in support of diversity in the unit, including salaries, programming and other diversity-related activities. The unit also continues to identify new partnerships with HBCUs that offer resource potential through subcontract arrangements.