Feedback on Progress Implementing the
Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
University Libraries
Final Report

The University Libraries plays a critical role in how students perceive the University through the collections it houses, the materials with which it supports courses, and the knowledge and diversity of its staff. The University Libraries faces unique challenges (i.e., geographical constraints and differences between campuses) as a single entity with many locations. The Review Team notes the difficulty in providing diversity leadership across the entire system of libraries, and would like to see a plan developed to support the Libraries centralized system-wide efforts. The amount and type of data presented for University Park and system-wide is positive and has been helpful in the review process. It is noted that the University Libraries final report reads almost word for word like the midpoint report.

RESPONSE: The University Libraries included cumulative accomplishments throughout the review period in the final report. Highlights of strategic actions and accomplishments since the 2001 update are listed in the executive summary of the final report (pgs. 1-5.)

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- It is commendable that the definition of diversity extends across both the unit’s internal operations and its service/teaching missions and reflects the unit’s culture as well as the University’s culture.
- The Diversity Committee has been in place since 1988, illustrating long-term commitment to diversity.
- University Libraries has increased the participation of diverse individuals through its promotion of Web accessibility.
- It is commendable that several faculty positions are mandated to provide leadership in collection development and outreach activity. These include the social sciences librarian for race, gender, and ethnicity/affiliate assistant professor of Women’s Studies, and the Asian Studies librarian.
- A more descriptive update of the pilot program to share the Libraries definition of diversity with job candidates during the interview would be helpful.

RESPONSE: At the time of this report, training was still being developed with the Affirmative Action Office. A portion of this training is devoted to communicating Penn State’s and the University Libraries’ commitment to diversity to the candidate. A University Libraries diversity brochure, also in development at the time of this report, is now available to share with candidates during the interview.

- The Review Team encourages the Libraries to sponsor diversity social events and speakers at campuses away from University Park.

RESPONSE: The University Libraries includes diversity topics in its Campus College Libraries meetings, which are held alternately in the East, West and Central regions of the Commonwealth. Libraries employees at several campus locations are involved in campus and University diversity initiatives; see pg. 9 of the February 2004 Framework Update.

- The orientation program for diversity is a best practice. Distribution of diversity forums by videotape to all locations is an important effort. The integration of planning and assessment for diversity into all unit strategies and processes is also a best practice.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- It is commendable that all University Park supervisors are required to attend the Mastering Supervision program. It was unclear whether managers at other campuses are included in this initiative.
- It is positive that Libraries replaced the male sexual harassment officer with two women at the University Park location. The unit is encouraged to assess whether having only one contact person for all other campus library locations is sufficient.

RESPONSE: Every campus and college location has its own sexual harassment officer(s). These resources are made known to all Libraries’ employees through a variety of mechanisms.
The establishment of the Diversity Studies Room in Pattee Library supports a positive diversity climate, and should be considered for other locations.

**RESPONSE:** The Diversity Studies Room in Pattee Library was funded by private endowment money. Space for academic purposes is at a premium at campus and college locations and the University Libraries does not have access to additional physical space for such facilities. All library locations do produce exhibits dedicated to diversity topics.

It is commendable that Libraries recognized the need to ensure Web accessibility, and has established a Web site for Libraries to develop ADA accessibility.

The University Park Libraries Employee Association (UPLEA) is positive. The unit is encouraged to expand this initiative with projects for each campus or region.

**RESPONSE:** The University Park Libraries Employee Association is devoted to issues occurring at University Park library locations. Campus and college library personnel participate in activities, as available, at their respective campus locations. Several times each year campus and college library personnel gather for regional meetings devoted to library issues. Social events are always a part of these meetings to encourage interaction between University Park and campus personnel.

Participation in international librarian programs and hosting visiting librarians increases cultural understanding for Libraries’ employees. The development of exhibits and maintenance of bulletin boards/announcements are important efforts to keep the campus informed on diversity ideas and events.

The unit demonstrates commitment to diversity through encouraging participation on University-wide diversity bodies, and has had 15 individuals serve on the three Presidential Diversity Commissions during the Framework period.

A high percentage of LGBT persons that identified themselves on the climate survey felt the climate is welcoming.

It is commendable that the Diversity Committee includes student representation and that Libraries’ orientations are targeted for specific groups of diverse students.

Libraries has engaged in significant efforts to conduct climate survey follow-up focus groups on class, religion, and people of color. Ongoing assessment in follow-up to conducting a climate survey every five years was identified as a best practice. While this survey interval is not as frequent as for some units, the use of follow-up focus groups and the implementation of changes related directly to the survey are both commendable.

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

Training instructors in ADA accommodations and guidelines for teaching skills is positive. Evidence of the success of these efforts would be helpful. Pattee Library has the only complete computer lab with adaptive technologies. Libraries should consider providing comparable resources to campus locations.

**RESPONSE:** The Libraries provide at least one accessible workstation at each library location throughout the Commonwealth. The equipment in the assistive technology lab in Pattee Library is provided by ITS. The Libraries provide trained personnel to assist users in this facility.

It is commendable that the Wage Advisory Committee developed and implemented new procedures to ensure fair, equitable, and inclusive access to wage payroll positions, which are held primarily by student staff. The centralized practice for hiring wage payroll employees helps to encourage a diverse pool of candidates; a description of how this practice has impacted hiring of diverse student staff would be helpful. The hiring practices for increased student workforce diversity implemented at the Erie John M. Lilley Library were reported as highly successful; the unit may consider implementing similar practices across the system.

**RESPONSE:** The data on how centralized hiring has impacted diversity of student staff was included in “Appendix VII: Libraries’ Demographic Data 1999-2001, All Locations,” from The University Libraries Diversity Framework Update, December 14, 2001.
It would be helpful to describe the specific recruitment processes that resulted in very diverse student applicant pools. The percentage of students from diverse racial/ethnic groups employed (27.1%) exceeds the corresponding student enrollment percentage. It was unclear whether this is the number for all libraries or just University Park.

**RESPONSE:** The information regarding recruitment processes is provided on pg. 23 of the February 2004 Framework Update. The data on how centralized hiring has impacted diversity of student staff was included in “Appendix VII: Libraries’ Demographic Data 1999-2001, All Locations,” from The University Libraries Diversity Framework Update, December 14, 2001.

Best practices identified include Open house, Smart Start for returning adult students, and the Passport to Success@psu orientation for international students.

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

- The recruitment and retention CQI team is positive.
- Reorganization of search processes with associate deans being responsible for diversity recruitment and hiring and accountable through their annual planning and evaluation processes is commendable. Information on the success of this change should be included. The requirement that all positions, not just librarian searches, include a candidate from diverse racial/ethnic groups in the final pool is a good approach. Information on the effectiveness of the new interview process that includes diversity questions would be helpful.

**RESPONSE:** The Libraries will report this data in the future as the process is implemented.

- There are commendable efforts to attract diverse candidates for all hiring pools. Networking with the national Association of Research Libraries Diversity Program is used to recruit a diverse pool of candidates.
- There is a clear increase in the number of diverse employees since 2001. The number of underrepresented librarians mirrors the national distribution, but local efforts to hire diverse librarians and staff appear to have resulted in little change in the distribution of employees across the data reported for 1999 and 2001. A good increase in hiring of diverse librarians is noted in 2003; however, the staff distribution has remained the same. It is important to develop data across the entire library system since many of the diversity efforts and workforce development efforts are still the centralized responsibility of the University Libraries Unit.

**RESPONSE:** Some of this data was included in “Appendix VII: Libraries’ Demographic Data 1999-2001, All Locations,” from The University Libraries Diversity Framework Update, December 14, 2001. Since full-time and wage staff are employees of the campuses rather than the Libraries, some of this data is not available centrally and must be collected and analyzed manually.

- A description of the diversity training for semi-annual faculty meetings and other workshops would be helpful.

**RESPONSE:** The Libraries presents diversity training in a variety of forums, including the annual Collection Development Retreat and semi-annual Campus College Libraries meetings. Topics have included tracking and assessing diversity and multicultural library acquisitions and discussion of ADA and Web accessibility issues.

- The work of the Wage Advisory Committee to develop policies and procedures aimed at increasing the diversity of the part-time employee workforce is a best practice. The unit is encouraged to expand this initiative to address additional employment categories such as standing staff and fixed-term faculty.

**RESPONSE:** This initiative is specific to the hiring procedures and practices of wage staff and is not applicable to the requirements for hiring standing staff and fixed-term faculty.
**Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Supports the Goals of Our New General Education Plan**

- Tracking all course related instruction that supports diversity is positive and the unit is encouraged to share its results with interested stakeholders.

**RESPONSE:** The Libraries tracks all bibliographic instruction activities and makes this data available to the Libraries, the University, and the Association of Research Libraries.

- The development of collections that represent diverse cultures is especially commendable. The funding amounts earmarked for this initiative in comparison to regular collection development should be reported for all locations.

**RESPONSE:** Most diversity-related collection development initiatives are integrated into collection development in general. Approval plan, firm order, standing order, and serials library acquisitions in all subject areas and at all locations incorporate the acquisition of materials relating to and supporting diversity. The percentage of expenditure by location is irrelevant, since we define the collection as “one collection geographically dispersed” and since local collections are highly correlated to the local curriculum.

- Librarians produce quality scholarship on diversity across many publication audiences.

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

- It is commendable that women hold 30 of the 50 leadership positions in the Libraries.

- The number of underrepresented employees in leadership positions increased from 2 to 4 (from 4.4% to 8%), an improvement from the 2001 report. However, more concentrated efforts are needed to increase the number of leadership opportunities for individuals from diverse racial/ethnic groups since they currently hold only 4 of the 50 leadership positions.

**RESPONSE:** Employees from diverse/racial ethnic groups are given opportunities to participate in various Libraries’ committees and task forces where they cultivate leadership skills required for leadership positions in the Libraries. Increasing leadership positions for individuals from diverse racial/ethnic groups is contingent upon recruitment of employees from these groups. The Libraries have increased their recruitment efforts to diversify the workforce (see section on recruitment). Turnover has been low in leadership positions in the Libraries, thus restricting opportunities for additional diversity in leadership positions.

- There is good involvement in University leadership by the two librarians from underrepresented groups who serve on the University Faculty Senate.

- Providing funding for leadership workshops is commendable. More information on how this funding supports the development of leaders among employees of underrepresented groups would be helpful.

**RESPONSE:** All Libraries’ employees, including those from underrepresented groups have equal opportunity to participate in leadership workshops sponsored by the Libraries.

- Description of the faculty-mentoring program, including any particular facets that specifically support mentoring of individuals from diverse racial/ethnic groups, as well as data supporting the success of the program would establish the faculty-mentoring program as a best practice.

**RESPONSE:** The Libraries’ faculty mentoring program pairs new untenured faculty with tenured faculty to mentor them through the tenure-track process. During the plan period 1998-2003, the program was not formal. From 2003, the program has been structured, with specific guidelines and expectations for both mentors and mentees.

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

- The establishment of full-time positions for an Asian Studies librarian and a coordinator of library services for people with disabilities is commendable.

- The establishment of a Web access committee to ensure ADA compliance is also commendable.

- The creation of the Web site “Diversity in the University Libraries” is positive and may yield valuable information on diversity topics for all units.

- Best Practices include direct reporting of the Diversity Committee to the dean; making the associate deans accountable for diversity recruitment and hiring; strong financial and organizational support for diversity programming/activities; and the visible leadership and accessibility of senior management.