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**<<http://www.equity.psu.edu/framework/updates> >**

**Feedback on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Development and Alumni Relations**

The review team views the report from Development and Alumni Relations as initial steps in focusing on diversity as a unit. At a few points in the report, the unit acknowledges that it has not made substantial progress on some of the items on its diversity agenda, particularly in terms of achieving a diverse workforce for the unit. The review team appreciates this honest self-assessment and thinks that the report positions the unit to make better progress in the future.

Significant differences exist between Development, on the one hand, and Alumni Relations, on the other hand. Some of the diversity initiatives of Development and Alumni Relations, such as developing public statements and answering constituents questions about racial incidents, seem to be roles that occur as part of the normal mission of the office; a clear differentiation between normal responsibilities of the unit versus specific diversity initiatives would be helpful. Generally, it would be helpful if the unit could provide more specific examples of its initiatives and stress outcomes. Also, at various points in the assessment, the unit reports out data only in percentages. Data should be reported in percentages and raw numbers. Finally, the report could be improved by using a format that facilitates specific responses to each question. The team suggests a point-by-point response to each question rather than narratives under each Challenge. Comments on the report under each Challenge follow:

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

- ❖ The report does not provide an explicit definition of diversity. An inclusive definition of diversity is needed for the entire organization. Throughout the report, most of the attention is focused on racial/ethnic diversity and women, which a more inclusive definition might help to remedy.

***RESPONSE: At a division managers retreat in September 2001, the following definition of diversity was discussed and endorsed by managers. It was omitted from the progress report. "The Division of Development and Alumni Relations defines the concept of diversity as one that encompasses acceptance and respect. It means recognizing and understanding individual differences. These differences can include race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. Diversity is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual."***

- ❖ The recent appointments of a diversity task force for the unit and a diversity committee for Development, along with the long-standing diversity committee on Alumni Council, show progress in this area.

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

- ❖ The creation of the full-time staff position, assistant director of student involvement, is a notable accomplishment.
- ❖ The percentage of students of color among Lion Ambassadors (15%) deserves commendation. The team wanted to know whether this percentage represents an increase or decrease from previous years.

***RESPONSE: The reported figure for this year of 15% is an increase from last year which was 13%. The Division will also seek a closer relationship with the Multicultural Resource Center to identify students who may be interested in Ambassador membership.***

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

- ❖ The FastStart program is a potential “best practices” program.
- ❖ The new diversity scholarship funds are an important step for Development. However, the report indicates that Development initiatives occur on a case-by-case basis and are not part of a concerted strategy to increase scholarships for diverse students. Development’s strategy would be considerably strengthened by a more proactive approach. **RESPONSE:** *Goals and areas of focus for the Grand Destiny Campaign which began in 1996 and will end in 2003 were set primarily by the academic and other units for which the Office of University Development raises funds. Any diversity-related initiatives were included broadly under four featured objectives: undergraduate student support, graduate student support, faculty support, and program support. The Office of University Development has proceeded on a case-by-case basis during the campaign. The end of the campaign in June 2003 will be accompanied by a reassessment of fund-raising goals for the University, and this offers a unique opportunity to address specific goals for diversity initiatives, programs, scholarships, and fellowships in the future. It should be noted that current laws pose challenges to the raising of scholarship and fellowship funds which discriminate on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, etc., and therefore the University is limited to scholarships permitted by law with preferences in those areas when established. It should be noted that in February 2002, after the submission of this report, an Enrichment Scholarship endowment was established to foster diversity. Plans are in place to solicit over 12,000 alumni to add to this student aid endowment.*

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

- ❖ The report acknowledges a lack of substantial progress towards achieving a diverse workforce within the unit, especially within Development. The unit should define some new and innovative strategies for improvement. **RESPONSE:** *The Division agrees with this analysis and suggestion and it is working on this challenge. In March the Office of Human Resources conducted a seminar on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. We plan to have further conversations with our assigned liaison from the Office of Educational Equity to build strategies in this area. The Division meets as a whole, all 220 employees, four times each year. A strategic goal is to have diversity-related presentations at two of the four quarterly sessions.*
- ❖ The unit has some activities, such as participation in the clerical intern program and full-day diversity training, that are laudable.

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

- ❖ The report indicates that Challenge 5 “will not be addressed.” Presumably, this wording indicates that this Challenge is not applicable to the mission of unit. More explicit wording would make this point clearer. **RESPONSE:** *This Challenge is not typically applicable to our Division, thus it was not addressed. However, there is one initiative underway since February which could impact curriculum. Working cooperatively with the College of Education, a prospectus has been developed to create a Center for Multicultural Understanding and Diversity. This Center would be housed in the College of Education. A founding gift of \$3 million is required and sought to establish the Center.*

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

- ❖ The 350% increase in women and people of color in leadership positions over the past five years is significant, but this percentage needs to be augmented with raw numbers. **RESPONSE:** *Since 1998, 18 women and people of color have been hired or promoted at the Penn State*

*Alumni Association into leadership/managerial positions (one African American male, and one Hispanic female). Today the Association employs 66 people with 16 of those positions considered leadership/managerial. Currently of those 16, 11 are held by women and people of color. One position is vacant at this time.*

- ❖ The composition of the executive board of the Alumni Council (five women and six people of color) and the number of promotions for women (32) over the past two years is noteworthy. It appears that the Alumni Association has made significant strides in bringing its composition into better alignment with the demographics of the student body. Does the composition of the board mark an increase in women and people of color from previous years?

*RESPONSE: The composition of the Executive Board in 2001-02 marks an increase to 6 persons of color (up from 4 the previous year) and a decrease to 5 women members (down from 6 the previous year). A variable in composition is the gender of the student and faculty representation over which we have no control. The composition of the Board for the last three years is as follows: Women: 1999-00 = 7; 2000-01 = 6; 2001-02 = 5. Persons of Color: 1999-00 = 5; 2000-01 = 4; 2001-02 = 6.*

- ❖ The Women of Philanthropy Committee appears to be mainly designed to increase philanthropy from women constituents, but how does this initiative contribute to Challenge 6?

*RESPONSE: Given the mission and activities of the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, we consider "university leadership" to encompass not just staff, but volunteers as well. Perhaps more than any other unit, attainment of our goals and objectives depends greatly on the involvement and support of leadership beyond university employees. As to the Women and Philanthropy Committee, a concerted effort has been made to involve more women as donors and volunteers in fund-raising. From 1990-96, all eight of the top fund-raising volunteers were male. From 1996 to present, three of the top 14 volunteers are women.*

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

- ❖ The change in the membership application and registration cards to "partner" instead of "spouse" and joint membership to include two people living in a household are positive developments. On the other hand, LGBT equity did not appear to be a consideration on the Development side of the unit.

*RESPONSE: The Division will undertake a review of the biographic forms and solicitation materials respective to this issue. It is important to recognize that we must adhere to IRS requirements in receipting and acknowledging gifts as to the legal status of the donor in relation to his/her domestic partner.*

- ❖ The \$23 million raised by Development for diversity-related initiatives is in the Grand Destiny campaign is significant. The team thinks it would be useful to understand this amount by seeing it in context with the overall campaign. In the context of a \$1.3 billion campaign, \$23 million could be interpreted as a low-priority item.

*RESPONSE: Please see response under Challenge Three. To put the \$23 million in context, there has been about \$560 million received to date for endowment and capital purposes. The figure of \$23 million raised for diversity is part of the \$560 million raised to date in the area of endowment and capital support. Our gift record system cannot accurately track current giving for the various categories of diversity support. Thus, the \$23 million would be a minimum estimate based on keyword searches in endowment guidelines. Also, the \$23 million does not include current, operating support – gifts that are given and expended on an annual basis.*