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**Feedback on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Finance and Business**

Finance and Business (F&B) clearly communicates in this update a philosophical commitment to diversity. The challenge facing the unit as a whole is due to the composition of Finance and Business-it is comprised of a variety of different units, ranging from Human Resources to Physical Plant (employing members of the Teamsters Union Local No.8) to the Airport. In each of the units, climate assessments have been conducted, and the University Planning Council indicated that Finance and Business is a model for assessment that other units could emulate.

In 1999, F&B presented a strong diversity plan and the update is strong on the surface-there seems to be a lot of discussion and planning, but little action.

RESPONSE: Finance & Business was committed to diversity long before the Framework for Diversity was implemented. Participation in the Professional Entry Program (PEP) and Leadership Centre County (LCC) are examples of the Unit's commitment. For example, since 1993, Finance and Business has sponsored 32 staff in the LCC program, 23 (71%) of which were members from underrepresented groups. In addition, the development of a diversity WEB site, the initiation and financial commitment to the internship program for members of underrepresented groups, the universal diversity training required for all new and current staff, the commitment of staff time and funds to partner with the community to provide diversity training opportunities for local businesses are all indications of both "action" and "progress" towards the stated goals of Finance and Business.

In addition, while it is laudable that F&B presents six actions developed to support their diversity goal to "develop and implement a recruitment and retention plan that ensures a diverse workforce within Finance and Business," progress toward those actions is not described in detail.

Successfully recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce is an issue for Finance and Business, as is diversifying management and leadership. In most F&B units, as in most units across the University, women tend to be clustered in the lower paying ranks (both staff and technical-service), men tend to be unit leaders, and the unit as a whole is primarily white.

RESPONSE: Finance & Business has not experienced significant turnover in the senior positions over the past five years. However, at the Spring 2002 Finance & Business leadership retreat, 41% of the 264 attendees were women indicating a commitment to the professional development of women to fill open positions in the future.

It also is not clear the extent to which turnover has resulted in opportunities for hiring from underrepresented groups. The update includes mention of a variety of recruitment techniques, but no mention of their effectiveness; an assessment effort would help in the identification of opportunities for procedural reengineering for F&B. Staff retention strategies were not fully described.

Observations and suggestions relating to each challenge are listed below.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Finance and Business has a definition of diversity that clearly focuses on climate, with the goal of diversifying the workforce. It includes attention to heightening sensitivities, professional development for members of underrepresented groups, and utilizing the differences between people to become a center of excellence.
- ❖ The unit might consider a definition that clearly includes the importance of diversifying the workforce and support for Penn State's anti-discrimination statement.

RESPONSE: Diversity committee will consider incorporating these suggestions.

- ❖ There is a unit-wide diversity committee as well as individual unit committees.
- ❖ Diversity-related information is distributed in a variety of ways. It is not clear, however, how University initiatives are shared and discussed.

RESPONSE: University-wide initiatives will continue to be shared and discussed in the F&B newsletter and will be incorporated on the F&B diversity WEB site.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Data from the 1996 climate survey indicate lack of tolerance for differences in sexual orientation and a belief that race and/or gender play a larger role in hiring than do qualifications; strategies were not described focused on changing those attitudes.
- ❖ All new employees of Penn State receive orientation that includes a diversity component. An evaluation of this module would help determine its effectiveness.

RESPONSE: The climate has improved. (55% positive in 2001 “vs.” 52% in 1998) Training and staff development are one of the key elements of the strategy. The new employee orientation program is being expanded to 1 full day with diversity training portion being enhanced. The results of this new effort are not yet known.

- ❖ Finance and Business units provide annual diversity training to their staffs; however, more information about the nature of that training would be helpful.

RESPONSE: A more complete description of the training activities will be included in the next update.

- ❖ Each unit within Finance and Business has a designated diversity representative who communicates directly to the unit head about climate issues.
- ❖ Climate surveys have been conducted in 1996, 1998, and 2001. Specific areas of concern identified through the surveys and strategies used to resolve issues were not described.
- ❖ The Senior Vice President meets regularly with women and staff from underrepresented groups to hear their concerns; more information about the number and composition of these meetings is needed. Consideration also should be given to the identification of other constituent groups with concerns that he might need to hear.

RESPONSE: Meetings have been held annually for the past two years. The format includes a general discussion of the current climate within Finance and Business and specific opportunities for improvement or assessment. The 2001 meetings produced many concerns/suggestions a sample of which included increasing the level of commitment and accountability of middle management to diversity, targeting PSU minority grads for employment, and publishing historic Finance and Business EEOC data in the Finance and Business newsletter.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ While this is not a responsibility of Finance and Business, the update indicates that the unit employs 2,000 to 2,500 students and that staff strive to be sensitive to their needs.
- ❖ As Finance and Business considers these students as employees, they have a responsibility to the students in regard to diversity in general; students should be considered when diversity-related activities are planned for the unit.

RESPONSE: Student employees should participate in unit-wide diversity training offered regularly for all full/part-time employees. Student employees who are also residence hall students receive an orientation on diversity as part of the residence life program.

- ❖ A profile of these students would help in understanding the ways in which they contribute to the diversity of Finance and Business. It also would be helpful to know in which units the students are employed.

RESPONSE: The profile and the units where students work can be generated and included in the next update.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Units are encouraged to participate in the University's Professional Entry Program as well as in Finance and Business' Professional Entry Program. Advertisements are placed in urban area publications. Staff participate in minority career fairs and visit Historically Black Colleges and Universities. There is a general description of the success of these activities without specific numbers.
- ❖ Efforts appear to be targeted primarily to African and African Americans.
RESPONSE: All diversity efforts within Finance & Business are targeted towards members of underrepresented groups.
- ❖ An internship program has been developed for college seniors with an interest in higher education management, but it does not appear to be specifically for students from underrepresented groups.
RESPONSE: We will specifically mention "underrepresented groups" in our text.
- ❖ Creating a welcoming climate has been identified as the most effective retention strategy.
- ❖ Technical-service women tend to hold higher graded positions, translating to lower paying jobs.
- ❖ Staff and technical-service employees remain primarily white.
- ❖ As of Fall, 2000, none of the administrators was a member of an underrepresented group and three of thirteen administrators were female.
- ❖ Interest was expressed in learning more about the possible partnership with the business community for diversity training.
RESPONSE: Community diversity training efforts will be explained further in the text.

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

- ❖ Not applicable.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ A variety of professional development opportunities have been offered to and attended by staff from underrepresented groups, but it does not appear that staff from underrepresented groups are targeted for leadership development.
RESPONSE: The Senior Vice President for Finance & Business specifically sponsors staff from underrepresented groups to attend Leadership Centre County. Since 1993, 23 women and minorities have been sponsored. Sponsorship includes full tuition and work release to accommodate the yearlong schedule of activities.
- ❖ Staff are encouraged to attend diversity-related training and activities.
- ❖ Managers have been encouraged to position staff from underrepresented groups for future leadership opportunities.
- ❖ Administrators in all major units are predominantly male. An articulation of specific strategies for identifying and recruiting female administrators would be helpful.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The Senior Vice President holds every unit head accountable for positive results.
- ❖ A senior staff member provides the leadership and direction for the diversity initiative.
- ❖ The SRDP process focuses on diversity training.
- ❖ Diversity training and professional development for current staff and recruitment activities for future staff are funded.