

**Before you read the feedback and report revisions, you are strongly encouraged to review the Overview, History and Calendar Web page at**

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

**A FRAMEWORK TO  
FOSTER DIVERSITY  
AT PENN STATE**

**Finance and Business/Treasurer  
December 14, 2001**

**A FRAMEWORK TO FOSTER DIVERSITY  
AT PENN STATE**

**FINANCE & BUSINESS  
1998-2001**

**INTRODUCTION**

As part of its 1997-2002 strategic plan, Finance and Business established a comprehensive initiative to address issues of diversity within the organization. The initiative, known as Strategy 5, under the capable leadership of Assistant Vice President Dr. Betty Roberts had as its primary goal to *"develop and implement a recruitment and retention plan that ensures a diverse workforce within Finance and Business"*. Previous studies of the Penn State workforce were utilized to evaluate specific improvement needs for an enhanced climate and a diverse workforce. Included were a thorough review of the 1994-95 Diversity Climate Survey and the 1996 Faculty/Staff Survey, as well as recommendations of the 1991 Strategic Study Group on the Status of Women.

Six actions were subsequently developed to support the goal

- **Action 1**

*Develop proactive recruitment and retention plans at all levels of management.*

All levels of management are to incorporate recruitment and retention efforts into their daily activities to improve the climate for a diverse population.

- **Action 2**

*Within each administrative unit, develop a plan to build and utilize a diverse human resource pool when filling vacant positions at staff and administrative levels.*

Resources, including linkages to historically black colleges such as Lincoln and Cheyney and the Minority Vitabank Program, are to be communicated and utilized throughout Finance and Business when filling vacant positions.

- **Action 3**

*Establish funding guidelines for recruitment, retention and professional development.*

Administrative units are to be creative in identifying and utilizing financial resources for recruitment, retention and professional development.

- **Action 4**

*Ensure that management personnel are accountable for the actions of their staffs through regular assessments such as the Staff Review and Development Plan.*

Senior management is to be held accountable for the development and implementation of diversity goals. Diversity is to be a daily management and employee activity. Awareness and sensitivity to issues of diversity are to become part of the Finance and Business culture so that staff naturally engage in behaviors and processes which are comfortable and welcoming to a diverse population.

- **Action 5**

*Review existing diversity initiatives within, as well as external to, the University and benchmark best practices for implementation within Finance and Business.*

Practices that have been successful are to be identified and shared throughout Finance and Business. Assigned diversity teams are to serve as the mechanism for distributing this information.

- **Action 6**

*Identify opportunities to cultivate strong community partnerships as a means of developing a more welcoming climate.*

Community partnerships are to be developed in an effort to enhance the opportunities and resources available within the local area to meet the varied needs of a diverse population.

The following represents an overview of the activities of Finance and Business that support the seven challenges of the Framework to Foster Diversity.

### **Challenge 1. *Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- 1. How does your unit define or describe diversity? How is this understanding demonstrated in areas of emphasis within your unit?**

Finance and Business considers diversity to be an integral part of its mission and has developed the following definition for diversity:

*Diversity- For Finance and Business means developing our resources and capabilities, heightening the sensitivity of and providing a welcoming workplace for everyone, increasing the presence and providing professional development for underrepresented people throughout the organization; utilizing the unique and wonderful variances of all people; enabling all employees to contribute to their fullest potential; and being among the centers of excellence within the University community.*

In the 2001 Finance and Business Staff Climate/Diversity Survey, 73% of the respondents agreed with the above definition, an increase of eight percentage points since the 1998 survey.

- 2. How has your unit distributed to and discussed information with staff about the University's diversity initiatives?**

General [University and Finance and Business](#) diversity related information is distributed via e-mail and hard copy and discussed regularly at staff meetings. Major units in Finance and

Business have a diversity team and representatives of each unit are on the Finance and Business Strategy 5 Diversity Committee. All new staff members attend the basic course on diversity offered through the Human Resource Development Center. Most of the individual units also require annual diversity training for all employees. Unit diversity teams have created diversity bulletin boards to disseminate up-to-date information to all staff. Unit heads participate in extensive diversity training and the annual Finance and Business Spring retreat has focused on diversity. All directors and managers have participated in a presentation on diversity by the theatrical group, SST. Diversity related information has also appeared in the Finance and Business staff newsletter [and will be the sole topic of the Finance and Business diversity WEB site scheduled for implementation Fall 2002.](#)

### **3. Does your unit have a diversity committee? What is its role?**

Finance and Business has a unit-wide diversity committee, known as the Strategy 5 Team. Under the direction of Assistant Vice Presidents Dr. Betty Roberts (1997-2000) and Tom Gibson (2000-present), this cross-unit committee is responsible directly to the Senior Vice President for Finance and Business for the development of diversity initiatives and implementation activities to achieve the goal to ensure a diverse workforce within Finance and Business.

Major units in Finance and Business have diversity teams, as required, to address local issues and provide information and ideas to the Strategy 5 committee.

## **Challenge 2. *Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

### **1. How does your unit's leadership demonstrate visible support for diversity?**

The Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has given diversity initiatives a top priority within his organization. He has routinely met with employees [from underrepresented groups](#) to hear their concerns and suggestions, [which are passed on to the diversity team for review and action.](#) [The 2001 meeting produced a range of suggestions/concerns from increasing accountability of middle management to diversity to publishing Finance and Business historic EEOC data in the Finance and Business newsletter.](#) Strategy 5 continues to be lead by a senior staff member and has broad cross unit representation. Multiple diversity/climate surveys have been undertaken to gather information regarding current attitudes of the workforce in order to create diversity initiatives and training programs to meet the goal.

Diversity training has been incorporated into the Finance and Business annual retreat. Within the units, funding and release time are provided for training, seminars, dinners, special activities and conferences related to diversity. The Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has mandated that all new employees receive orientation training. A major element of the orientation program for new hires addresses the climate and the need for a welcoming environment throughout the entire University community. All training programs for new employees emphasize the relationship between successful employment and respect for others. Most recently, the *Penn State Principles* have been included in all new staff orientation packets.

Managers and supervisors have been charged with creating an environment that provides employees the opportunity to openly discuss areas of concern and share diversity-related information. Senior management pays close attention to climate changes within their units and are empowered to respond to climate related issues which may be identified. Additionally, the supervisory team, recognizing the benefits of retaining a diverse workforce, support flexible work schedules to meet a variety of work/family needs.

A Finance and Business diversity WEB site is under development to keep employees aware of resources, both internal and external to the unit that provide diversity related information, ideas, activities, support and training.

## **2. How does your unit identify climate issues?**

Within Finance and Business, unit leaders were provided with the results of the 1996 Climate Survey, the 1998 Diversity Climate Survey and, most recently, the 2001 Climate/Diversity Survey. Each unit analyzes and responds to specific areas of concern identified in the survey and provides training to address issues within the unit. Additionally, some units conduct their own climate surveys as well.

Each administrative area within Finance & Business has a designated diversity representative who communicates directly to the unit head about specific climate issues within the unit. Further, each unit is represented on the Strategy 5 team.

More informally, management and supervisory staff regularly visit their production areas to identify local climate issues. In some units, human resource staff has the opportunity to conduct site visits and talk with employees at random Suggestion boxes are available for employees to submit anonymous concerns.

## **3. How does your unit respond to climate issues?**

Depending on the unit, either the department head and/or the human resources representative respond immediately to climate issues within Finance and Business. All issues are researched and acted upon. When appropriate, the Penn State Affirmative Action Office and/or the office of Vice Provost for Educational Equity is consulted as well. All units have identified training programs to respond to specific issues.

## **4. What unit-wide and individualized approaches have you developed to enhance overall climate and individual's satisfaction with the environment?**

Diversity education is a priority for ensuring a welcoming environment within all of Finance and Business. All new employees receive diversity training to ensure that the importance of a welcoming and respectful work environment is communicated within the first few weeks of employment. Finance and Business units provide annual diversity training for their staff, or require it as an underlying theme in all of their conferences, workshops, seminars, retreats, and other professional development activities. An open door policy is in existence to allow employees to freely discuss any concerns regarding their working conditions. During the staff review process, individuals are recognized who have taken part in diversity initiatives.

### **Challenge 3. *Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

#### **1. How does your unit contribute to recruiting a diverse student body? What practices have been most successful?**

Finance and Business is not directly involved in the recruitment of a diverse student body. Indirectly, we are responsible for managing the University's investments, which provide many of the scholarships, and grants that help to make a Penn State education affordable for all students including those from underrepresented groups. Likewise, at any given time, Finance and Business employs 2,000 to 2,500 students. Work opportunities not only help students with their finances, but also offer them another connection, another resource of support within the University community. Research has shown that students who work for at least a few hours per week tend to be more satisfied with their college experience, which contributes to their retention at the University. Finally, the Finance and Business workforce is large and interfaces with students daily. From Housing and Food Services to University Police, from the Office of Physical Plant to the Bursars Office, all staff strive to be aware, sensitive and understanding of the needs of our student population, which contributes to a more welcoming environment and ultimately to the retention of a more diverse student body.

### **Challenge 4. *Recruiting and Retaining a diverse workforce***

#### **1. How has your unit actively engaged in locating and recruiting staff from underrepresented groups?**

Units within Finance and Business are being encouraged to participate in the University's Professional Entry Program (PEP) as well as Finance and Business's Professional Entry Program. The units utilize the OHR VITA BANK and Staff Assistant Training Program. Many units advertise in national and regional employment publications and utilize the *IMDiversity.com* website to locate individuals to fill staff positions. Where applicable, units participate in various minority career fairs at Penn State as well as across the state and the Eastern Region of the United States. Finance and Business also recruits interns and full time staff by visiting historically black colleges and universities. Employment marketing collateral has been designed to appeal to a diverse population. Vacancies are advertised in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Washington, DC and, in most cases, candidate interview expenses are funded. Currently under development is an extensive internship program for college seniors, [from underrepresented groups](#), who have a career interest in higher education management. Designed to be the benchmark for all internships of its type, the program will fund up to six internships throughout all of Finance and Business each year with the intent of offering available full-time positions to interns who successfully complete the program. The initial internship is scheduled to commence in the winter, 2002.

#### **2. What recruitment strategies have been most successful?**

The PEP initiative has been the most successful, closely followed by the staff assistant training program. Housing and Food Services and Hospitality Services have successfully recruited students from underrepresented groups for extensive summer internship programs.

Attendance by Finance and Business recruiting staff at career fairs at historically black colleges and universities in the East has proven to be very successful in raising awareness of Penn State as a quality employer to potential candidates.

**3. What retention strategies have you implemented in your unit to retain members from underrepresented groups?**

Units within Finance and Business use a variety of strategies to retain employees from underrepresented groups. Some units have initiated mentoring or "buddy" programs, which involve connecting employees for the purposes of support, coaching and assistance. All units require employees to participate in diversity awareness programs with the notion that continuous training will support a more welcoming environment for all employees.

**4. What retention strategies have been most successful?**

The most successful retention strategy involves employees feeling comfortable with their work environment and adequate support from all levels of the University community. Within Finance and Business this plays out in the following ways: open and honest communication, informal and formal mentoring, immediately addressing acts of intolerance and providing professional development and leadership opportunities. In addition, the Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has routinely met with employees [from underrepresented groups](#). These meetings have provided another outlet for staff to express concerns and offer viable resolutions directly to the highest level of the organization.

A welcoming environment in the surrounding community is also a significant factor in the retention of employees. The University is currently in discussions with the area business community to partner in diversity training for non Penn State employees. [This effort, through the Community Diversity Advocacy Group, will utilize the resources of Penn State and the local business community to create staff development programs targeted to retail employees and those who regularly interface with the public.](#)

**Challenge 5. *Developing a Curriculum that Supports the Goals of our New General Education Plan***

This challenge is not applicable to Finance and Business,

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

**1. How has your unit assisted staff from underrepresented groups in developing leadership skills and management skills?**

Professional leadership/managerial development opportunities (including the Penn State Leader, Mastering SuperVision and Management Institute) have been offered to and attended by staff from underrepresented groups within Finance and Business. Staff has been extended an open invitation and support for time release to participate in various efforts including diversity teams, staff advisory committees, Martin Luther King Jr. Planning Committee, various University commissions and the Leadership Forum. Opportunities have also been extended and supported by the units so staff can participate in community

activities such as Leadership Centre County and the Community Diversity Advocacy Group. All of these opportunities have contributed to developing leadership and management skills.

The implementation of the University Staff Review and Development plan has provided an integral tool in assuring the development of leadership skills in our staff. Quarterly reviews ensure that incremental progress has been made. Accomplishments are documented annually through the SRDP process. Central training budgets have been established to support special training needs, both for courses offered by HRDC as well as by sources external to University community. A leadership model was developed to help define and establish leadership and accountability expectations. Managers have been encouraged to position minority employees for future leadership opportunities.

Many mentor relationships have been developed within Finance and Business units. By providing support and assistance, encouraging participation in training and development opportunities, retention is enhanced and turnover reduced.

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

- 1. What organizational realignments, systems of accountability, resource mobilization and allocation strategies, long-term planning strategies, etc. have your unit implemented to ensure the realization of the University's diversity goals?**

The diversity initiative of Finance and Business is a long-term commitment to achieve the goals of the University. The Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has charged every unit head to be an active participant in the process and holds each unit head accountable for positive results. A senior member of the Finance and Business staff provides the leadership and day-to-day direction for the diversity initiative. Semiannually, reports are given to the Finance and Business unit heads emphasizing progress on current activities and creating opportunities for discussion of initiatives for the future. Diversity training and professional development for current staff and recruitment activities for future staff are funded. The SRDP process focuses on diversity and training. All unit heads are accountable for the annual completion of the SRDP process for all staff. Training hours are reported and reviewed by central OHR as part of the process.