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**Feedback on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Division of Student Affairs**

The Division's report reflects both initiatives within the Division and its constituent parts, and the Division's service to the University; Student Affairs is encouraged to differentiate more clearly throughout the report between efforts within the Division and the Division's service to the University. The Division notes the impact of the tragedies of September 11 upon the student population; climate challenges within the University and the impact of "The Village" activities of Spring 2001 are conspicuously absent. It was very difficult for the committee to assess the progress of this Division because no data was provided to support the effectiveness of initiatives described.

RESPONSE: Program evaluation data will be made available from the Student Affairs Research and Assessment office.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The review team found the wording "diversity encompasses" to be somewhat confusing, and suggests clarifying the wording to specifically indicate a definition of diversity.

RESPONSE: We will spell out the specific categories that define the term for the Division of Student Affairs.

- ❖ It is positive that several Student Affairs units view their mission as "diversity related;" the Division is encouraged to clarify its statement suggesting that the importance accorded to diversity is distinctive of Penn State among research universities. Student Affairs should also clarify the role of the Centers for Community Education and its relationship to other units.

RESPONSE: We will clarify the role of these units and update the list to include Judicial Affairs and the LGBTA Student Resource Center.

- ❖ Diversity committees seem to be unit specific, and it is not clear whether their activity is systematic and consistent across units. The diversity committees seem to focus on professional development. While this is positive, there is opportunity to utilize the diversity committees for identification of climate issues.

RESPONSE: We consider this decentralized effort to be successful for the intended purposes. We do have other methods to help identify climate issues. The Vice President meets with all unit directors bi-weekly; our Pulse Surveys

(<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/pulse.shtml>) regularly include demographic data and indicate where there are significant differences based upon all identity group categories; since Spring of 1998 there have been 7 Pulse surveys that were focused on the climate for diversity; Residence Life regularly provides residence hall climate reports; we regularly conduct a survey of our staff; our Division Exit Interview schedules ask about issues related to the climate for diversity and work environment.

- ❖ Requiring new staff to attend an HRDC diversity program, and providing various other programming with a diversity component is a positive strategy.

RESPONSE: We agree

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Requiring all staff to annually complete a minimum of three hours of diversity training is a potential “best practice.”
- ❖ Good examples of mechanisms (such as “Stall Stories,” Penn State Pulse, 24 hour telephone reporting) to identify climate issues and create a welcoming campus climate, although newspaper readership program is a stretch. Student Affairs is encouraged to include the Pulse Web address in the text and to include survey results in an appendix. Good integration of Division-wide and individual approaches.
RESPONSE: We disagree with this opinion. We believe the Student Newspaper Readership Program has been a very important program for students of diverse backgrounds and will include these data from our Pulse survey in our update. There is actually a proportionately higher use of newspapers by underrepresented students. We will include the Pulse URL.
- ❖ The Division should present information to support the assessment of program effectiveness, and the participation of students of color in Late Night at Penn State.
RESPONSE: We will add the data that supports this assessment from our regular Program assessments and Pulse surveys; and, for LateNight Penn State, the evaluation by our faculty colleagues in the College of Health and Human Development funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education will be added to this section.
- ❖ The Division should develop ways to report out information indicating trends in types of incidents and context in order to facilitate development of strategies to proactively address climate concerns.
RESPONSE: We are not sure we understand this statement in view of the new reporting avenues for hate incidents still in the development stages for all campuses. We do report the data from our Pulse Surveys and the data from the Residence Life reports are to be folded into the new campus climate reporting system.
- ❖ It is positive that Student Affairs includes their student staff in their definition of staff. The Division is encouraged to provide more information about mentor training and diversity training for this segment of staff.
RESPONSE: We will describe in the update the curriculum for the student staff and peer educators, which include specific training and mentoring on a broad range of diversity issues.
- ❖ Pre-professional preparation for graduate students is a potential “best practice.”

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Good examples of positive structures for retention include Student Satisfaction Survey; diversity focus in Fall semester orientation; diversity component in leadership training for student organizations; and residence hall programming. The Division should implement mechanisms for assessing outcomes and determining the impact of programs on retention.
- ❖ Good use of Boyer principles of community and a continuous quality improvement perspective.
- ❖ The Division should develop more proactive strategies for supporting adult learners (such as daycare and elder care options, and earlier outreach).
RESPONSE: While this is a laudable suggestion, it is not clear to us the reviewers understand the complexity of initiating such new programmatic efforts. We will add in our update a very comprehensive look at the activities (including daycare) undertaken University-Wide on behalf

of current and future adult learners through the very good works of the jointly sponsored Commission on Adult Learners.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Good use of recruiting strategies such as networking, listservs, targeted advertising, and IAMDIVERSITY.com. The Division demonstrates success with 42% of live-in professional staff from underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Inclusion of student staff as an important part of the workforce is positive. Letters sent to members of targeted student groups asking them to consider work opportunities within the Division is a potential “best practice.”
- ❖ Strategies regarding the exit interview should be broadened beyond what is mandated by the University.
RESPONSE: Perhaps it was not clear what we do in this regard, so we will add a very clear description of our own (in addition to) exit interview process.
- ❖ Despite pockets of success indicated, the data does not reflect significant overall progress in the demographic makeup of the Division’s workforce. The Division should acknowledge the difficulties it has experienced, and specify what strategies have been most successful.
RESPONSE: We acknowledged the lack of progress. There are no most successful overall efforts. We will identify, in the update, proposed new initiatives that we think will become successful in changing the overall diversity (including males) of our staff.

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

- ❖ While the Division is not directly engaged in offering academic curriculum, co-curricular efforts are acknowledged. More data are necessary regarding the number of staff involved, number of presentations in First Year Seminars, and number of presentations in other programs.
RESPONSE: We will provide this information after we complete a survey of all staff-faculty collaborations, now in progress.
- ❖ The Division met its goal of expanding on Boyer’s principles.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The Division demonstrates diverse staff in leadership positions; however, the Division should indicate how members of underrepresented groups are targeted for leadership training and the resulting opportunities available to them.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The Division should reexamine the wording of the last sentence in the second paragraph. The following wording may be more effective: “This grant to address violence against women is helping mobilize an entire institution in addressing a problem that affects everyone.”
- ❖ Positive outcomes include 269 staff participated in 1,085 diversity related activities totaling 4,912 hours; initiation of electronic tracking system for student climate issues; receipt of a major grant to address sexual assault; and continued support for the evolution of the LGBTQA resource center

Division of Student Affairs

- ❖ Pages 11-28 include extensive listing of diversity efforts in each unit in the Division. This greatly enhances the update, and reflects high levels of programming activity that impacts climate and is organized around the seven Challenges.