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**Framework for Diversity
Division of Student Affairs
2001-2002**

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

Student Affairs considers campus diversity an integral part of its mission as the University Division committed to fostering learning and building community through co-curricular activities, programs and services involving students. We believe in a broad definition of diversity: race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical challenges, religious preference; veteran's status, national origin and social class. The Division interprets diversity as synonymous with efforts to ensure an inclusive, caring, open learning environment that is responsive to an increasingly pluralistic, international and interrelated global community.

Student Affairs professionals realize that the University has a dual responsibility to the students who enter the academy. As part of the academic mission, the University should help create and diffuse knowledge and skills. In addition, the University must undertake the task of forming sensible human beings who are engaged with their society.

Our staff, in collaboration with other areas of the University, assumes responsibility for affirming and reaffirming the values of both human diversity and cultural diversity, i.e., difference within, among and between all of humanity, as a means to achieve human progress. Student Affairs creates programs, activities, and services that compliment classroom learning and acknowledges, accepts, sustains and promotes humanistic social values, attitudes and behaviors.

We recognize that meaningful and vital contacts with different cultures enrich the student's academic experience. Student Affairs professionals engage students with both social and cultural reality and encourage exploration and participation in activities that promote civic responsibility. As higher education seeks to serve society, all members of the community must be encouraged by institutional structures to appreciate and accept diversity in its multiple manifestations as steps in the creation of a better world.

Several Student Affairs units view their mission as "diversity related," i.e., their mission is to serve students who are underrepresented in a research focused institution of higher education. Staff in the Center for Women Students, the Center for Adult Learners, the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs, the Paul Robeson Cultural Center, and most recently the LGBTQA Student Resource Center, are by their very mission agents of diversity education and disseminators of information about the populations they serve and the role of their service units in building community.

One of the goals of the Student Affairs Newsletter is to serve as a publication for the entire Division by focusing upon a diverse staff and their achievements across the Division. The goal

is staff recognition; however, one outcome most frequently is visible publicity of diversity efforts and networking opportunities for staff.

Two of the larger units, Unions and Student Activities and Residence Life, require all new staff to attend a diversity program sponsored by HRDC, thus introducing staff to the University's position regarding diversity in the workplace. Counseling and Psychological Services distributes information concerning diversity through a position specifically designated to coordinate multicultural student programs and services within the unit. . CAPS staff also receive information and training regarding LGBT initiatives and professional developments relevant to this community.

All units within Student Affairs hold regularly scheduled staff meetings where unit and University diversity initiatives are presented and discussed.

The Paul Robeson Cultural Center, the Center for Women Students, the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs comprised the initial "Centers for Community Education (CCE)." Directors of these units function as a Division Diversity Programming Team that plans educational programs to foster understanding around issues related to our broad definition of diversity. In the past two years we have added Judicial Affairs and the LGBT Student Resource Center. The Vice President supplements program budgets within the CCE group for the express purpose of coordinating and strengthening educational programming that focuses on the values and ethics that support equity and social justice.

Other Student Affairs units have specific diversity committees that work as leadership teams to support significant internal professional development work focused on understanding the array of issues a diverse population presents to our staff.

For instance, the Diversity Committee within University Health Services over the past four years has initiated a number of professional development training scenarios, interactive theatre with Charles Dumas, Associate Professor of Theatre, role plays about a variety of issues, and brown bag lunches with cross-cultural themes to help staff keep abreast of diversity topics that may impact staff efficiency and effectiveness with clients.

Residence Life also sponsors an on-going professional development program for all exempt and non-exempt staff which includes a diversity component. Presenters have included staff from the Affirmative Action Office, the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, HRDC, and the Multicultural Resource Center.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

The Division of Student Affairs is the only administrative area of the University that supports its broad definition of diversity by requiring all staff to annually complete a minimum of three hours of diversity training. This training is recorded on-line in every employee's professional development folder. The diversity requirement sends a clear message to the Student Affairs workforce that enhancement of diversity skills, the acquisition of contemporary information about student differences and special populations, and increased awareness of diversity issues

within the profession, are all considered essential to maintaining a viable, supportive campus climate.

Student Affairs perceives a student's enrollment as a purposeful act, one that recognizes a commitment to study, pursue a potential career interest, become involved in campus organizations and their activities, and a willingness to reach out to fellow students and explore new horizons. Thus our staff embrace Ernest Boyer's concept of the University as a place where staff (and faculty) engage students in a purposeful manner; a place where mature adults provide advice and counsel on achieving personal health and balance in one's life.

A "welcoming campus climate" is an outcome of staff-faculty collaboration to stimulate intellectual discourse and dialogue about campus climate, academic success and cultural differences through educational and retention programs like Fast Start. Fast Start is a collaborative mentoring initiative with the Alumni Association that encourages early personal connections for first year students of color through regular contact with staff and alumni.

A welcoming climate is also a place where students can gain assistance when personal and family emergencies threaten student academic progress or retention. The Lion Support program (consisting of trained student volunteers), and the staff in Student Development, assist students and families in emergency situations. Student peer advisors staff the well-known 863-2020 telephone line that provides 24-hour contact to report hateful or bias related behavior in this community.

From the very beginning of a student's life at Penn State, Student Affairs exposes new students to videos and technology to help students and parents understand expectations for a civil, open, and celebrative campus life. Divisional websites, printed materials, videos, and educational programs are specifically designed to present a view of campus life that is inclusive. The Division intentionally involves students of color in materials distributed to students new to the University. Our websites help students access information about activities and resources of special interest to diverse populations.

Because a student's living environment is the most immediate and imposing part of campus climate, Residence Life staff submits electronically secure environment reports on any significant issues or activities that impact the campus climate. This assures appropriate notification and follow-up with individuals and groups within and outside of the residence halls. It also allows tracking of various incidents to determine trends and opportunities for prevention and intervention.

Student staff in the halls are required to present a program on a social justice issue for students at least once each semester. Commitment to diversity is also evident in posters and bulletin board packets and articles in "Stall Stories" (bathroom newsletter) that attract student attention.

The Division's office of Research and Assessment conducts Pulse Surveys (<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/pulse.shtml>) that have received national recognition as an effective method of assessing multiple aspects of campus climate. Results of the surveys are available online to all Student Affairs staff and the general Penn State community. Specific surveys have

targeted diversity issues at University Park; some surveys indicate that responses from women and students of color differ significantly on items surveyed. Results are disseminated in staff meetings, and staff are expected to explore implications of the results for educational programming targeted to diversity groups and the broader student community. The Student Satisfaction Survey is another assessment tool that provides data regarding student climate concerns at various Penn State locations.

Identification of campus climate issues and efforts to help shape the climate are part of the continuous quality improvement perspective within the Division. Programs and services are reviewed for their effectiveness and importance in addressing institutionally accepted learning outcomes. Results of program effectiveness are shared with each programming unit. Senior management and a collaborative group called the Educational Programming Council coordinate this effort. This council reviews student self-assessments of programs and activities and their effectiveness in addressing the Student Affairs perspective on diversity and community.

The Vice President's Office provides funds from the central budget for unit level support of programs, collaborative activities and services that enhance the overall-climate as well as individual satisfaction with the Penn State experience.

Sexual assault prevention and education involving the Center for Women Students, Judicial Affairs, University Health Services, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services and the Centre County Women's Resource Center, is an excellent example of a successful funding project in which all areas are working collaboratively to address a serious climate issue for college men and women and their allies.

A different type of Student Affairs intervention in the campus climate is found in Penn State's support of the largest newspaper readership program in higher education. The program, initiated through Student Affairs, expands student awareness of the rich diversity in this country, the achievements and challenges faced by diverse populations in the larger society, and the interconnectedness of human concerns across our global community. For example, the events of September 11, 2001, the profiling of people based upon race and national origin, and the complexities of the conflict in the Middle East received local, national and international news coverage. Students were able to be informed and discuss these important cultural, religious and national origin issues more effectively as a result of access to the Newspaper Readership Program.

The complexity of the student experience in such a large institution was the focus of a special effort at the beginning of fall semester 2001. First-year students living in residence halls at all Penn State campuses were required to participate in an orientation in which the wealth of diversity perspectives and opportunities were presented via video and small group discussion. This collaborative effort involved the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, Residence Life staff, and media production units. Information from the Student Affairs Pulse Survey indicates that the special orientation was successful and of educational value to the vast majority of students who participated.

Many students of color live on campus and they participate in LateNight Penn State activities in disproportionate numbers, creating a positive sense of diversity and community. Not only is the HUB-Robeson Center and LateNight programming active players in creating a supportive climate, the highly praised Arts Program creates a visible multi-cultural presence that students encounter on a daily basis. Culturally diverse music and art are interspersed during live performances at peak periods of the facilities. (See Pulse web page).

Other mechanisms that help to shape the campus environment and introduce both the University and Division's vision of diversity to students include the following:

- training provided to Resident Assistants and S-Plan Health Assistants;
- classes taught by Student Affairs professionals which weave diversity into the curriculum;
- leadership training for student organizations which include diversity as a central theme; and,
- pre-professional preparation activities for graduate students within the Division.

For example, the RA training class provides participants with significant opportunities to learn about diversity. Approximately 20% of the class is devoted to diversity-related topics. The goal of the diversity section is to help students learn about themselves and others while also providing them with the helping skills needed to intervene when a situation involving diversity occurs. Topics covered could include: Diversity at Penn State; the campus climate; race; gender; sexual orientation; Penn State resources; role plays; and others.

The process for evaluation of educational programs requires presenters to review student feedback on whether they felt the program increased their sense of social and community issues, as well as increased their appreciation of different culture and backgrounds.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

The very nature of Student Affairs work in higher education calls for staff to challenge students to cross boundaries, to rethink suppositions and ideas from family and friends, and to explore their identity in ways that are consistent with a learning-centered environment.

The counseling, social science and medical backgrounds of our staff are grounded in the concept of "adding value" to the college experience. Staff are expected to stress fundamental human rights, the importance of courteousness and civility with fellow community members, and the importance of an ethic of care both within and outside of the classroom. Consequently, the climate for diversity and receptivity for diversity issues by Student Affairs staff is necessarily a high priority and a prerequisite for effective work with students.

Several of our units provide an advocacy role and work to retain students who are at risk due to gender issues, cultural background and age. These units work within the administrative and academic arenas to ensure students receive support needed to remain in school and achieve academic success.

From the visual images shown students and parents during the First Year Testing and Counseling and Advising Program, President's Convocation, house meetings in the residence halls, encounters with minority health professionals in UHS, community service experiences, and student organizational experiences, the message delivered by Student Affairs professionals and students is "We Are Penn State," and you (the student) are important to the staff who interact with you. This is exemplified in the commitment of student organization office and programming space in the expanded HUB-Robeson Center. The dramatic visual image of the Robeson Building and its programmatic and physical appeal to students of color reflect the Student Affairs commitment to diversity.

Staff work diligently to attract and retain adult learners, a population that is growing across the Commonwealth. The Center for Adult Learners staff serve as advocates for adult learners, helping identify financial benefits to both adult students and the University, and stimulating cooperation across campus units that serve the interest of adult learners. For example, The Center for Adult learner Services serves as the entry point for many adults exploring options in higher education. The Center's staff encourages adult students through such proactive efforts as:

- authoring and printing an adult minority recruitment brochure;
- working to get the general adult learner recruitment brochure revised and reprinted;
- holding outreach events in collaboration with others to recruit adult learners, such as the annual Adult Student Fair, the annual Adult Learner Information Session, and the Women's Education, Career, and Life Planning Seminar series;
- designing a set of brochures that the Center, in collaboration with the Continuing Education Office at UP, will mail to county businesses, industries, post offices, YMCAs and YWCAs, and women's organizations; and other entities.

The Center for Adult Learners also works in collaboration with other units of the University to retain adult students through:

- continuing to offer new student information programs that address students' technology concerns, negotiating the libraries virtually and physically, financing one's education, and other issues unique to adult learners;
- advocating on a host of issues including those that are of interest to other University offices and groups. Examples include the Workforce Investment Act, identifying non-degree certificate students and programs, and getting the Adult Indicator on more critical screens used by student service providers.

One should also think of the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs as a retention factor due to student/staff concern for their spiritual health, the clarification of moral questions, and the

encouragement offered to examine issues of faith, especially during periods of bereavement and issues of national security.

An important part of recruiting and retaining a diverse student body is providing structures for current and future students to address issues of difference, affiliation, sexual orientation and identity development that are critical to traditional-age students. Research from Pulse Surveys suggests that most Penn State students are willing to discuss issues of race and sexual orientation as part of their classroom and out-of-class learning experiences.

Student Affairs staff have initiated guided discussions in open forums, peer-led dialogue groups, and community-building forums in the residence halls. For example, the Dialogues on Race project consists of intensive weekly discussion groups comprised of students from diverse backgrounds and co-led by trained graduate student facilitators. CAPS is a sponsor of the program with funding support from the Office of Educational Equity. The impact of programs such as these is generally favorable and indicates that the attitudes that preceded college, often influenced by parental perspectives and peer pressure, can be challenged and influenced while at Penn State.

All units utilize affinity groups, i.e., students interested in addressing health issues, those seeking help accessing careers, support for women students to overcome glass ceilings, and staff support for students with physical disabilities seeking preparation for career interviews and assistance with challenging barriers. These student cohorts are all supported and nurtured by Student Affairs staff as part of our interpretation of a broad definition of diversity, and to receive feedback on programs and services offered.

Options for student leadership development play a critical role in attracting and retaining students of color; these opportunities exist in every Student Affairs unit. For example, students who have been part of the student executive intern class taught through the AT&T Center for Service Leadership, have actually helped change the structure of student activity funding through work with the University Park Allocation Committee, and networked with students of color across the Commonwealth via participation in leadership programs.

Information Technology staff have supported development of visual images and web-access to services that support a diverse student population. The development of the “virtual office” of Student Organization Resource Center is an example. The web-based service for students of color (and all other students) was initiated in response to student concerns and the involvement of the Diversity Committee of the Alumni Association. The Association provided seed money for the development of the “one stop center” for any student organization leaders who need answers and real people to contact.

Three Special Living Options in the residence halls have a primary focus of diversity: International Languages, Martin Luther King Jr. House for Social Justice, and the Pennypacker Experience.

The International Languages house provides students with an opportunity to enhance their French, German, and Spanish language skills. A Language Consultant specializing in each of

those languages either lives on or is associated with this house and spends at least one hour per week engaging the house members in discussion. The House is hoping to expand its focus to include other languages in the future.

The Martin Luther King Jr. House for Social Justice focuses its efforts on culture and community service. Activities are held in which students can learn about different cultures both from members who live on the floor and from students/faculty/staff who come to the floor to share their experiences about different cultures. Additionally, a number of programs are held during which students have an opportunity to participate in community service activities.

The Pennypacker Experience is a program for first year students. It is housed in Pennypacker Hall. Two distinct populations live in the building. One is the First Year in Science and Engineering Program, housing select students from the Colleges of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Engineering, and Science. The second is the Bunton-Waller Scholarship/Fellowship program for underrepresented students. These students are served by the Resident and Program Assistant staff who provide academic, educational, recreational, and social programming.

Career Services has a graduate student who is assigned to develop Minority Student Internships. The unit also sponsors a month long National Disability Employment Awareness Month program annually. In addition, Career Services staff sponsor Steppin' Up, a two day event involving a multicultural career fair and career planning conference that attracted 60 employers and 600 students.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Student Affairs recruits a diverse workforce through the staff's active networking in professional organizations, networking with our graduate departments, and focusing on particular publications when advertising vacancies. The visibility and presence of Penn State Student Affairs staff in national organizations, presentations of scholarly papers and publishing of articles of interest to professionals in the field helps to attract diverse employees to the Division.

Networking with staff and colleagues both in the University and from across the country is the most profitable method of recruiting a diverse student and professional staff. Our units use listserves targeted to underrepresented student and staff populations as a means for reaching specific groups regarding issues or opportunities germane to the unit. All Student Affairs units actively engage in recruiting a diverse workforce, e.g., the University Health Service (UHS) uses resources in the Office of Human Resources to identify minority candidates for every open position. UHS advertises in cities where there is a probability of attracting persons of color as applicants. Similarly, Residence Life posts positions on IAMDIVERSITY.com and regularly seeks candidate recommendations from current staff. As a result, last year 42% of the live-in professional staff were members of underrepresented groups.

Student staff comprise an important component of the Student Affairs workforce. Every attempt is made to recruit trainees, interns and graduate assistants who add diversity to the Division. For example, undergraduate students make up the majority of the Residence Life workforce. To create a diverse pool of applicants for paraprofessional positions, letters are sent to members of

targeted student groups, asking them to consider work opportunities within the unit. Assessment has found that this effort results in a candidate pool where 20-35% of the students are members of underrepresented groups.

The RA training class provides participants with significant opportunities to learn about diversity. Approximately 20% of the class is devoted to diversity-related topics. The goal of the diversity section is to help students learn about themselves and others while also providing them with the helping skills needed to intervene when a situation involving diversity occurs. Topics covered could include: Diversity at Penn State; the campus climate; race; gender; sexual orientation; Penn State resources; role plays; and others.

The Judicial Affairs Student Judiciary (student hearing board members and peer educators) are provided with diversity training annually in the Judicial Affairs training program. The specific training relates to how diversity issues may affect a discipline situation for students. The training occurs annually to each new class of student board members.

As part of the required Counselor Education class that all UPAC members take, a section of the class is devoted to the importance of diversity on the campus and how the Activity Fee can impact the campus climate.

Overall administrative and peer efforts to help student and professional staff feel valued and appreciated within a large institution have proven to be the best recruitment/retention strategy. Staff recognition is a Division-wide activity and includes staff from all the campuses and colleges in the system. Personal and unit accomplishments, special events, and activities engaged in during the year are highlighted.

Finally, structured exit interviews are offered to all departing staff. Information gleaned from the interviews is confidentially reviewed by Human Resources and senior administrators within the Division. We will be reviewing the results of the spring 2002 Student Affairs Staff Satisfaction Survey paying particular attention to staff responses to climate and diversity questions in a further effort to improve the retention of skilled staff.

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

Professional staff teach numerous courses that embrace the diversity goals of the University. The courses address both undergraduate and graduate instructional missions of the respective college or department, and most often, the career preparation of future professionals in the fields that support Student Affairs work.

Credit hours are generated in the College of Education that focus on the inclusion of diversity populations and their exposure to multicultural career issues, internship programs, opportunities for students with disabilities, leadership education, peer counseling preparation, health outreach to students of color, and preparation for college student personnel work.

Additional support for the co-curriculum includes the relationship between popular interest in arts and crafts and the interface of the Student Affairs visual arts programming with academic offerings in the University. For the 2000/2001 year, the Art Galleries provided a total of 41 exhibits. Eleven of these exhibits were solo female. Nine were diversity focused. Most involved collaboration with University academic departments and/or faculty in local school districts. The “multicultural murals” remain very visible in the connector between the HUB and the Paul Robeson Cultural Center. These murals are an example of the collaboration between students, faculty and staff to enhance the learning environment.

The co-curricular programming of the Division embraces the principles of Ernest Boyer, the concept and expectations for building and maintaining community expressed in the Penn State Principles, and the foundations of civility and community responsibility reflected in efforts to increase student awareness and compliance with expectations of academic integrity and acceptable conduct.

Academic colleagues involved in professional groups such as the American Council on Education and the American Association of Higher Education recognize the co-curricular experiences of students as a major factor in student satisfaction and involvement with the learning environment at Penn State and in most of higher education. Diversity is found both in the breadth and depth of opportunities for underrepresented, physically challenged, women, and religious groups and students of differing sexual orientations to engage in out-of-class experiences. Diversity is reflected in the pride these student populations take in this institution. Thus the co-curricular responsibilities of Student Affairs and the commitments of academic affiliates and graduate assistants within the Division strongly support the University’s educational and service mission.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

Student Affairs continues to have a diverse management team, both as members of the Vice President’s Office and at the level of unit director. For example, Gail Hurley assumed a broader management portfolio in her new role as head of Housing and Residence Life, while retaining her role as Assistant to the Vice President. Arthur Carter joined the senior management team in 1998, and works with educational programming across all units and student populations. The Student Affairs commitment to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBTQA) students and their allies, is reflected in the addition of a Director of LGBTQA Student Resource Center. Plus, a search for the Assistant Director of the Paul Robeson Cultural Center in 2000, resulted in the successful hire of an African American candidate.

The diversity of management in the Division reflects the multiple student populations served in a co-curricular effort that supports the academic mission of the University. Moreover, there is diversity within so-called diversity leadership. A member of management may embrace concepts important to females, lesbians, and religious minorities simultaneously. All staff are encouraged to assume leadership roles and identify ways to improve service and outreach to students. Management tasks, interaction with students, and service to students are viewed as opportunities for continuous quality improvement.

Division funds are provided to encourage leadership development programs, involvement in national conferences and other opportunities to increase cultural competence and professional advancement. This includes participation in local programs such as those sponsored by Leadership Centre County and many non-profit boards and service projects. Our diverse staff is encouraged to participate on various commissions, and University-wide committees and task forces. In large units such as Career Services and Residence Life, courses and/or programs are offered on leadership and management skills, and all staff in programs that address these areas are encouraged to participate.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

Student Affairs is in the third year of an on-line automated “Professional Activities Assistant (PAA).” The system provides an element of accountability at the individual staff member’s level and at the organizational level for encouraging and monitoring staff participation in the mandatory three hours of annual diversity training, and indeed on all facets of personal-professional growth and the achievement of unit mission and goals. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001 Student Affairs had 269 staff participate in 1085 diversity-related activities totaling 4912 hours. The Division has also led the University in the initiation of a secure electronic environment to report and track climate issues for students.

Efforts to make the University safer and more responsive to concerns of women students, especially to proactively address sexual assault and to aggressively support survivors of assault, have been the focus of a major funding grant involving collaboration across Student Affairs and members from the larger community. This Sexual Assault grant is helping mobilize an entire institution in addressing a problem affects all members of our campus community.

Recognition of the learning environment issues for students from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender communities has resulted in continued support for the evolution of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allies (LGBTQA) Student Resource Center. Center staff will continue to support education, personal safety, and campus involvement of this diverse population. As a research, teaching and service institution, Penn State and Student Affairs will continue to assess and educate the campus on issues, opportunities, and accomplishments of individuals when sexual orientation plays a role in shaping the student experience.

A synopsis of programs and services targeted to diverse student populations is attached. For additional information regarding a specific unit or the entire Division, please refer to the Student Affairs website www.sa.psu.edu and review Strategic Planning and Annual Report Documents.