

**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> >**

**Feedback on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Office of University Relations**

The Review Team notes that the Office of University Relations holds a dual position in relation to the University's diversity initiatives; there are diversity issues within the unit as is the case with all units, and there are larger responsibilities related to diversity within the University. The Unit is encouraged to clearly differentiate efforts within the Unit and the Unit's service to the University; for example, there is nothing in the strategic plan that speaks to a unit goal for diversity. It is difficult to determine progress from the 1998 update. The introductory material is helpful in serving to contextualize the responses to the Challenges.

The Review Team noted that throughout the document it would be helpful for University Relations to provide data illustrating how items have been developed, and where they were published/posted/shown. There is no system for gathering data to assess effectiveness and impact of products produced and how these materials are perceived by the audience community, particularly among underrepresented populations.

Collaboration with other units should be made explicit throughout the report, as it is a positive factor. The Unit is encouraged to expand collaborative efforts to student groups representative of audiences University Relations is striving to reach. University Relations should also encourage the units with which they work to make use of student input in identifying needs and developing materials.

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

- ❖ The Unit's definition of diversity is broad and focuses on awareness, but may be appropriate for the nature of the Unit.
- ❖ There is no evidence of a diversity committee.  
*RESPONSE: Diversity issues are a standing topic at our staff meetings, so those meetings in effect serve as a diversity committee. Given the small size of our unit, this seems to work well for us.*
- ❖ It is positive that diversity issues are discussed regularly in staff meetings, and that informational materials have been distributed and discussed within the Unit.

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

- ❖ There is no system in place for identifying and responding to climate issues within the Unit. There are no data to suggest an especially positive climate.  
*RESPONSE: As noted in Challenge 1, we have diversity as a standing topic at our staff meetings, so it is something that we are constantly monitoring via one-on-one feedback with our staff.*

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

- ❖ University Relations' attention to the importance of presenting an inclusive and welcoming image of Penn State in all publications is positive, as is the Unit's assistance in developing materials to target underrepresented groups in recruiting.

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

- ❖ The Unit has indicated the strategies they have tried and acknowledged that they have not had the desired success. Indeed the number of white males is increasing in the Unit. Although turnover is minimal, analysis of turnover reports and re-examination of recruitment strategies could help identify factors which could facilitate recruitment of underrepresented candidates in the grades 15-21 category.

*RESPONSE: The number you are using on males vs. females seems to be incorrect. The number and percentage of women within University Relations has actually grown over the past 5 years. In 1997 we had 30 women out of a total staff of 56. Today the number is 31 women out of a total staff of 51. In terms of strategies on recruitment, we are exploring the opportunities for a minority intern program, and the possibility of hosting an Administrative Fellow in the near future.*

- ❖ No specific retention strategies are evident, and it is unclear what is meant by “we have paid special attention to the needs and interests of minority members within our unit.”

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

- ❖ This Challenge does not apply to the Unit.

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

- ❖ It is positive that staff from underrepresented groups are offered support for professional development opportunities such as conferences and in-house offerings; more specific examples of professional development opportunities should be provided.
- ❖ The Unit should indicate how members of underrepresented groups are targeted for leadership training and the resulting opportunities available to them.

*RESPONSE: We have spoken to staff individually to determine needs. We are trying to provide adequate opportunities without interfering in other, important activities that we also want to encourage (e.g., those who are pursuing advanced degrees). We have three women currently pursuing doctoral degrees; one who recently earned her doctorate; one pursuing a master's degree and one who just completed her bachelor's degree. Opportunities have included Penn State sponsored career development courses as well as national seminars and conferences. We have also paid for members of the staff to be part of Leadership Centre County.*

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

- ❖ University Relations is clearly “on message” with the University’s diversity goals; however, it has not translated the message into the operational practices within the unit.