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

**Feedback on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity**

The Review Team notes that Educational Equity holds a unique 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 within the university. We are also aware that the Unit has recently been significantly restructured. The Unit's report reflects both initiatives within the unit and its constituent parts, and the unit's service to the University; Educational Equity is encouraged to differentiate more clearly (perhaps with subheads) between efforts within the Unit and the Unit's service to the University.

**RESPONSE:** *This suggestion for restructuring the report has been incorporated.*

While the report suggests a broad range of positive responses to the Challenges of the Framework, it is not extensive enough about the University, and not targeted enough about the unit. Indeed, the service to the University cannot be fully addressed within the scope of this project, and it should be noted that the Review Team offers feedback on both aspects to the extent presented in the report, but focuses its comments on the unit efforts.

Although the definition of diversity given by Educational Equity includes "underrepresented and underserved communities" and international populations, this definition is not used consistently throughout the document.

**RESPONSE:** *The following definition was provided: "While the various units in Educational Equity describe diversity differently in their focus on the diverse populations they serve, what is shared is an emphasis on building a welcoming and respectful environment for working and learning that strives to acknowledge and appreciate differences in personal characteristics, backgrounds, and philosophies."*

For example, international data is included in some tables and not in others.

**RESPONSE:** *The "international" category is only available for students.*

It was also very difficult for the committee to evaluate the progress made by this unit because no data was provided to support any of the initiatives described. For example, how many students are advised in the Multicultural Resource Center? Are students who seek advice more likely to complete college? How many people attend various events?

**RESPONSE:**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2001</u>
<i>Number of veterans contacted</i>	2293	2223
<i>Percent of AAP students who are minority</i>	56	58
<i>Number of students counseled at Multicultural Resource Center</i>	1698	1811

**RESPONSE:** *Data specific to program enrollment are included in the revised update. The number of people who attend various events differs drastically. For example, the Vice Provost recently spoke at a Commission for Women event attended by about 30 people, and an Outreach and Cooperative Extension event attended by approximately 400.*

Overall, there was little connection between the 1999 Strategic Plan and this 2001 Update. Many of the "future initiatives" of the 1999 strategic plan are not included in this update; with no information as to why, it is difficult to evaluate progress.

*RESPONSE: The goals identified in the “1999 Strategic Plan” remain important to Educational Equity and are the primary basis for the “2001-2003 Strategic Plan.” It has been a challenge in itself, at times, to balance those goals with the responsibilities outlined in the “Framework” and the goals set forth in “A Plan to Enhance Diversity at Penn State.”*

*The goals described in the “1999 Strategic Plan” and the progress toward attaining them follow:*

- Champion the implementation of “A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003.” Progress: As specified in the report, Educational Equity has completed the majority of the actions assigned to it in the “Framework,” thus serving as a role model. Educational Equity has distributed the “Framework” broadly and has demonstrated its leadership by organizing the diversity review process.*
- Ensure University compliance with civil rights mandates. Progress: Reports are sent regularly to the Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Veterans Affairs.*
- Recruit and retain an outstanding professional staff. Progress: These efforts are ongoing.*
- Upgrade and maintain information technology. Progress: These efforts also are ongoing.*
- Implement administrative and organizational actions in Educational Equity to support diversity. Progress: The most notable action towards achieving this goal is the new organizational structure.*

*In “A Plan to Enhance Diversity at Penn State,” Educational Equity was restructured, as follows, with status updates:*

- The Vice Provost for Educational Equity will be added to the President’s Council. Status: Completed.*
- The Vice Provost for Educational Equity will be added to the Academic Leadership Council, which includes the Academic Deans and other senior University officers. Status: Completed.*
- The Vice Provost for Educational Equity will be included in discussions about the annual budgets and diversity plans of the colleges at all campuses. Status: Ongoing.*
- The Provost and the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will jointly review and approve the annual budgets for the colleges: certified progress on the diversity plans of each college will influence this budget review and approval process. Status: Ongoing.*
- The University administration will contract for an independent review of the organization of diversity programs at Penn State, including the Affirmative Action Office. The external reviewers will be asked to meet with all relevant constituencies, including students. Status: The review of the Affirmative Action Office has been completed; the report and President Spanier’s response are posted on the Web.*
- The Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will be responsible for assessing the college progress reports on the “Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003” that were due December 15, 2001, and for developing a set of best practices to foster diversity that will be widely disseminated within the University. The Provost and the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will provide written feedback, publicly available, on the mid-term progress of the colleges in meeting diversity goals; the allocation of Equal Opportunity Planning Committee funds will be influenced by this assessment. At the conclusion of this “Framework” period in 2003, the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will undertake a final assessment of the colleges’ efforts in achieving these goals. The results of these assessments will be a major factor in budgetary reallocations made during the 2003-04 academic year by the Provost and the Vice Provost for Educational Equity. The reallocations made as a result of this process will be publicly available and will be shared with members of the Pennsylvania Legislature, including members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus. Status: Every budget*

*executive has received feedback concerning their diversity-related efforts and have been given the opportunity to clarify their updates.*

- *The Provost and the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will consult with peer institutions to identify possible additional systems of accountability for oversight of the implementation of diversity plans. Status: Penn State's diversity-related activities have been discussed with the vice provost's CIC colleagues.*
- *The Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate investigations of bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes are initiated. This office will also be responsible for the coordination of all follow-up activities. The investigations and reporting procedures will comply with all University policies and local, state, and federal laws regarding the reporting of hate crimes. The office will also be responsible for the regular dissemination of reports of incidents of acts of intolerance. Status: The Web-based reporting system is online and a hotline has been established.*
- *To further guarantee that the leadership of our academic units and the University is fully prepared to meet the challenges of moving forward on our plans, all members of the President's Council, deans, and department heads will go through diversity training during the fall 2001 semester. The training will be conducted by an external consultant with expertise and experience in such training. Status: This training has been completed.*

Also, the Unit is encouraged to provide explanation of the status of Framework responsibilities that are indicated "incomplete."

**RESPONSE:**

- *Work toward a concise institutional definition of diversity. Status: Definitions have been collected from each strategic planning unit as part of the diversity update process. These definitions will be analyzed and shared with the Penn State community with the goal of reaching an agreement.*
- *Review effectiveness of precollege student programs and develop strategies to coordinate student transitions between Penn State programs. Status: Ongoing.*
- *Establish a working committee to develop strategies for establishing programs in fields such as Asian American; Disability; Hispanic/Latino American; and Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies (with Faculty Senate and Undergraduate Education). Status: There has been no progress toward this goal. However, following the model of the Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity working to develop a minor in LGBT Studies, some of this program development may be more under the purview of the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity.*
- *Establish faculty Diversity Advisory Committee (in collaboration with Faculty Senate). Status: This activity is highlighted in the 2001-2003 Strategic Plan as an area of emphasis.*
- *Develop recommendations for reducing reliance on volunteer organizations to provide critical services to underrepresented groups. Status: This also is highlighted as an area of emphasis for the next several years.*

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

- ❖ Educational Equity is commended for developing and widely disseminating information promoting resources for diversity at Penn State. The Unit should consider strengthening mechanisms for regular presentation of information within the Unit.

**RESPONSE:** *At regular staff meetings, each director shares recent information about diversity-related activities and issues around the University, focusing on those with particular impact for their units.*

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

- ❖ Modeling of equitable practices within the unit, drafting the *Framework* and the “Enhanced Plan,” planning a diversity theme at Encampment, creating the diversity video and discussion materials for incoming freshmen, sponsoring the recruitment and retention conference, and developing the Zero Tolerance for Hate Network are all positive actions.
- ❖ Processes for identifying and responding to climate issues within the unit are vague. The unit should provide supporting evidence for how staff feels about climate in the Unit.  
**RESPONSE:** *Plans for a climate survey are underway.*
- ❖ Student Satisfaction Surveys distributed through the Office of Veterans Programs and the Multicultural Resource Center are a valuable source for supporting data. This practice could be expanded to the other student service units within Educational Equity.  
**RESPONSE:** *Surveys are also conducted in the Academic Advancement programs. An overall assessment as to the extent to which satisfaction surveys are undertaken in other units will be conducted, and recommendations will be made to unit directors to strongly consider such surveys if they are not already part of the unit’s activities.*
- ❖ It is positive that each budget unit has an assigned senior diversity planning analyst available as a diversity consultant, and that a climate assessment instrument is available. The Unit should supply information such as whether climate assessments are conducted systematically or at the request of a unit, and how many units have conducted surveys.  
**RESPONSE:** *Climate surveys are undertaken at the request of a strategic planning unit. To date, twenty-two have been conducted.*
- ❖ As the hotline and Web-based reporting of acts of intolerance progresses, information should be reported out in order to facilitate resource allocation. Also, the Unit should include information about training provided to hotline staff and how reported incidents are classified, as well as a description of the system for intervention.  
**RESPONSE:** *It is very important to chronicle the extent to which members of the Penn State community experience acts of intolerance. At the current time, both reporting and categorizing plans are being refined.*

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

- ❖ There are many positive examples included. The Unit is encouraged to provide data to identify trends in how many are seen and how many are served and to illustrate the success of the practices outlined.  
**RESPONSE:** *Illustrative data are provided above and in more detail in the revised update. In addition, performance reports are available for Academic Advancement Programs.*

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

- ❖ Although the Unit has done much positive work on this Challenge, Educational Equity is encouraged to include more detail on strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining its diverse workforce, including more information on how search committees work within the unit.  
**RESPONSE:** *Search committees are composed of representatives across the various units in Educational Equity. Staff members often identify likely candidates that represent the constituencies served.*
- ❖ Given the change in racial/ethnic composition of the unit, the unit is encouraged to clarify any strategies or future plans to address the loss of racial/ethnic diversity in staff.  
**RESPONSE:** *Given the change in the organizational structure, it is problematic to analyze any changes in the racial or gender composition of the staff. The profile of staff in 2001 included 71 percent of staff who were female and 30 percent who were members of underrepresented groups. This will be the baseline against which future employment trends will be measured.*

*It should also be noted that the diverse workforce in Educational Equity includes staff in categories not reflected in data obtained from Human Resources such as persons with disabilities.*

- ❖ Partnerships with other units to address this challenge are positive. The postdoctoral positions created in partnership with the Eberly College of Science are a potential best practice. More information on the partnership with Affirmative Action should be included.

*RESPONSE: With the recent hiring of a new director in the Affirmative Action Office, it is likely that new directions will be identified.*

- ❖ Educational Equity is encouraged to continue to explore ways to lend its resources and expertise to units struggling with achieving this challenge. Information on how budget units utilize the senior diversity planning analysts in enhancing their recruiting and retention efforts should be included.

*RESPONSE: This is one of the biggest diversity-related challenges facing the University. A staff member serves on the Staff Advisory Group where strategies to diversify the staff are discussed; in addition, a staff member serves on an Office of Human Resources committee charged to identify effective strategies.*

*To date, strategic planning units have not, by and large, involved senior diversity planning analysts in hiring processes. With plans to become more proactive in developing relationships with units, senior diversity planning analysts could work more closely to identify recruiting and retention enhancements to current practices.*

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

- ❖ The pilot initiative with College of Agricultural Sciences to analyze diversity content in their courses is a potential “best practice.”
- ❖ The Unit is encouraged to supply more explanation on indirect contributions to the curriculum, including data on how Unit resources are utilized. The Unit should give consideration to more proactive mechanisms for promoting their services, including speakers for general education classes and first year seminars.

*RESPONSE: Examples of specific courses taught include Curriculum and Instruction 297A, KEWL Leadership Training; African and African American Studies, Peer Education for Social Change; Counselor Education 497, Senior Re-entry Seminar: Life After College; and African and African American Studies 003, Scholarship and Community. Staff members are encouraged to teach, and are provided release time for development of course materials and teaching responsibilities. In future publications, information about the availability of teaching resources from Educational Equity will become more prominent.*

*By providing staff and budget support for the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity and the Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity, both of whom are working on curricular issues, Educational Equity also supports curricular development.*

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

- ❖ The Unit's support of professional development opportunities is positive. More information should be provided on leadership development opportunities in addition to Penn State Leader and Mastering Supervision Programs.

***RESPONSE: With the new organizational structure, there are opportunities for leadership on both an Executive Team and a Management Team. Other leadership development opportunities include the identification of national professional associations in which staff are encouraged to get involved.***

- ❖ Support for Administrative Fellows Program and Commission for Women mentoring program are positive. The Unit should specify any plans for creative expansion of the mentoring program.

***RESPONSE: At this time, there are no plans to expand the Commission for Women's mentoring program; however, on the agenda for the mentoring program planning committee for the upcoming year is a discussion of an appropriate administrative home outside the Commission for Women.***

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

- ❖ Addition of the Academic Advancement Programs to Educational Equity represents a significant organizational realignment. Review of all Educational Equity units to identify process improvements and increase efficiency is positive, especially considering the reconfiguration of the unit.

- ❖ Development of a Penn State system to report acts of intolerance (in collaboration with the Campus Environment Team, Center for Academic Computing, University Police Services and the Division of Student Affairs) is a positive action for accountability.

- ❖ The Unit is encouraged to provide information in this section on its coordination with other University units such as the Affirmative Action Office, Office of Human Resources, Division of Student Affairs, etc. The Unit is also encouraged to provide more information about coordination across areas within Educational Equity.

***RESPONSE: Educational Equity primarily coordinates with the Affirmative Action Office, Office of Human Resources, and Student Affairs through participation in the Campus Environment Team. On case-by-case issues, Educational Equity works with the appropriate office. With the report of the external consultant indicating that Penn State should consider changes in the Affirmative Action Office, there may be new opportunities for interaction. There are regular meetings between unit directors and Educational Equity leadership to share information about past activities and future plans.***