

**Feedback on Progress Implementing the
Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
College of Communications
Final Report**

The College has made commendable progress in implementing various diversity initiatives, particularly recruiting and retaining students of color. It has elevated the importance of the Office of Multicultural Affairs by creating an assistant dean position to lead that office's operations.

Progress still needs to be made in the areas of recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and staff. In addition, based upon the information provided, it appears that programs to develop leadership and management skills in underrepresented faculty and staff are absent. The report was lacking in strategies to address staff issues.

RESPONSE: We could not agree more that progress in the areas of recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and staff must continue. We intend to build upon our successes. It should be noted that in 2003-04 the College had the third highest percentage of all University Park academic colleges with 20.8 percent of its full-time faculty being people of color – and had the highest percentage of full-time faculty members who are African American, Hispanic and American Indian (11.3 percent). Eight percent of our full-time staff was minority. See also the College's response to the references to programs and strategies to address leadership, management and staff issues later in this report.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ It is positive that the College has expanded its definition of diversity to include sexual orientation since the 2001 *Framework* update.
- ❖ The presence of an assistant dean for multicultural affairs, who is a member of the dean's executive committee, is commendable, as is the "Diversity Ambassadors" program.
- ❖ The report notes the presence of a diversity committee that includes the dean and faculty, staff, and student representation. More information on the role, activities, and impact of this committee would be helpful. While it is commendable that the dean is actively involved in diversity efforts, the dean's membership on the diversity committee may be problematic. ***RESPONSE: The College thinks it is important that it be made clear that the Office of the Dean is committed to enhancing diversity – and the dean will remain on the diversity committee. See the column written by the dean for a booklet published by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications – Diversity: Best Practices, A Handbook for Journalism and Mass Communications Educators – that was headlined: "It Begins with Leadership." The column is reprinted at the end of this Feedback report.***
- ❖ Funding for the Office of Multicultural Affairs exceeds \$30k in addition to salaries.
- ❖ The message of diversity is communicated through the assistant dean for multicultural affairs in monthly meetings with faculty and students and through new employee orientations.
- ❖ The College has a diversity link on its Internet homepage and a diversity support services brochure for prospective students.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ A climate survey was conducted in 2000. It would be helpful to include specific outcomes and action items taken to address areas of concern. ***RESPONSE: The College looked carefully – and with great interest – at the results of the diversity section of the comprehensive University-wide Faculty/Staff Survey conducted in winter 2004. Some 82 percent of the College respondents agreed that the unit "is welcoming for employees from underrepresented groups;" 66 percent agreed that "acceptance of diversity in the workplace has improved in the past three years;" and 78 percent agreed that the unit "proactively addresses issues related to race." The College percentages are well above University means.***
- ❖ In 2002, the Office of Multicultural Affairs opened in a prominent location next to the Office of Internships and Career Placement.
- ❖ The College offers cultural heritage recognition events and publicizes them for University-wide participation.

- ❖ It is positive that the assistant dean holds monthly diversity strategy meetings and participates in all faculty searches.
- ❖ The College provides support for student clubs that emphasize diversity and diversity-related outreach initiatives.
- ❖ It is unclear whether the unit encourages and supports faculty, staff, and student participation on University-wide committees that foster diversity. **RESPONSE:** *The College certainly supports faculty, staff and student participation on University-wide committees that foster diversity. Its students have been among the most active on campus with diversity groups. A number of our students are involved in various university student organizations. In recent years we have had student leaders serve as presidents of Black Caucus, NAACP and the Caribbean Student Association. Our students continue to be active participants in and take on leadership roles in clubs such as the Puerto Rican Student Association, Latin American Student Association, Japanese American Association, and the Coalition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Student Organization, to name a few. In 2003-2004, the College had three exceptional students who were acknowledged for their outstanding leadership and academic achievement by the University's Multicultural Resource Center. One of our faculty members has played a leadership role with the Pow Wow; our faculty members have participated on committees that have reviewed progress by units toward meeting the Framework to Foster Diversity challenges; and our staff and faculty have long been active in promoting and participating in cultural heritage events and lectures on campus. Such participation occurs regularly – and naturally.*

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The College increased enrollments of students of color by 15 percent since Fall 2002. During the 1998-2003 Framework period, the undergraduate minority student body has increased by 40 percent. An explanation for the year-to-year variances in enrollments would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** *An explanation for year-to-year variances in the percentage increases of students of color enrolled in the College could include many variables – not the least of which would be the number of students accepted by the University's central admissions process and, of course, the number of students who are accepted who eventually decide to enroll. That said, the significant 40 percent increase over the five-year period is something the College is very proud of, even though the percentage increases, on a year-to-year basis, might fluctuate somewhat. The bottom line: a 40 percent increase during the period is the significant number for the College.*
- ❖ The Review Team notes recruitment and retention initiatives have focused primarily on African American students with less emphasis on Hispanic/Latino and Native American students. **RESPONSE:** *The College plans to continue to network with high school administrators, teachers and counselors to enhance its Hispanic and American Indian student populations.*
- ❖ Positive initiatives under this Challenge include: Diversity Ambassadors (undergraduate and graduate students) phone-a-thons to recruit students of color; an annual two-week summer high school minority journalism workshop; College funding for \$82k in scholarships for students of color; visits by the associate dean for graduate studies and the assistant dean for multicultural affairs to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs.
- ❖ Women are well represented in both undergraduate and graduate programs as are international students and students of color. The tables provided reflecting enrollments and progress in diversifying enrollments are helpful.
- ❖ It is positive that retention rates for undergraduates from underrepresented groups are higher than campus-wide percentages. The College attributes the high retention rates to academic advising, peer mentors, academic intervention, scholarships, etc.
- ❖ Graduate student retention is successful for a variety of reasons including mentoring, fellowships, assistantships, and one-on-one advising.
- ❖ Best practices identified included regular recruitment visits and relationship building with HBCUs, and establishing cohorts to “build a culture of diversity.”

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ It is positive that of the 53 full-time faculty members in the College, 11 (20.8 percent) are people of color and 19 (35.8 percent) are women.
- ❖ A visiting professionals program exists, and plans for a faculty exchange program with HBCUs are in development.
- ❖ The College indicates that recruiting a diverse staff has been a challenge; 3 (8 percent) are persons of color and 24 (62 percent) are female. The report indicates a majority of staff jobs are grades 21 and below, and these positions are recruited from the local labor pool.
- ❖ The University's Minority Professional Entry Program was successfully utilized in 2000 and 2002.
- ❖ No specific retention strategies exist for underrepresented faculty and staff. *RESPONSE: Pages 32-36 of the College's Final Assessment of A Framework to Foster Diversity for the 1998-2003 period include several strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce – and several successes are noted. The number of full-time minority faculty members has nearly doubled (to 11) since 1998. The College's percentage of African American, Hispanic and American Indian faculty members (11.3 percent) is the highest of the University Park colleges. Retention strategies are noted on pages 33-34. Only one tenure-track faculty member from an underrepresented group has resigned since 1998 (that person resigned to take a tenured position at another institution) and only one full-time staff member from an underrepresented group has resigned – and that person was promoted to a higher-level position on campus and was replaced by another person of color. The College has been fortunate in not only hiring but also retaining faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.*

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

- ❖ Diversity modules have been incorporated into more than 85 course sections, 30 of which were created since the 2001 *Framework* update. Three stand-alone diversity courses are also offered.
- ❖ There appears to be a minimal number of courses offered that focus on LGBT issues.
- ❖ The College cites numerous examples of faculty research related to diversity that bring multicultural and international perspectives into the classroom.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The Review Team notes the lack of attention to this area, beyond the opportunities given to the assistant dean for multicultural affairs. *RESPONSE: The College appreciates that the review team noted that the College has appointed an African American to the post of assistant dean for multicultural affairs. It should be noted also that the report lists an African American female as manager of facilities. In addition, our associate dean for undergraduate education-designate is a female and the dean's senior staff includes several women, two of whom are from underrepresented groups: director of development, director of human resources, director of operations, facilities manager and financial officer.*
- ❖ The College indicates that staff members are encouraged to take advantage of University-wide leadership development programs. Based upon the information provided, it does not appear that specific programs have been implemented to identify and assist faculty and staff from underrepresented groups in developing leadership skills and opportunities.
- ❖ A demographic profile of the composition of the College's leadership team would be helpful. *RESPONSE: The College's administrative team of the dean, associate dean for graduate studies, associate dean for undergraduate studies and assistant dean for multicultural affairs currently includes three white males and one African American male. Effective in July 2005, it will include two white males, an African American male and a white female. And as noted above, several members of the dean's senior leadership staff are women, two of whom are from underrepresented groups, in the following positions: director of development, director of human resources, director of operations, facilities manager and financial officer.*

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The College's strategic plan update (1999/2000) outlined four goals related to the *Framework* including recruitment of underrepresented faculty and students, climate assessment, and coordination of organizational goals to support diversity.
- ❖ Significant financial commitment has been made to diversity-related initiatives.
- ❖ In the last ten years, the College has increased its annual minority scholarship awards from \$1,450 to \$82,000.
- ❖ A change in the title from director to assistant dean of multicultural affairs has elevated the importance of the position and the Office of Multicultural Affairs was relocated to a highly visible student area.

RESPONSE:

The following article by the dean of the College of Communications is featured in the booklet published by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications – Diversity: Best Practices, A Handbook for Journalism and Mass Communications Educators.

IT BEGINS WITH LEADERSHIP

By Douglas Anderson

One of the greatest challenges administrators of accredited journalism-mass communication programs face is providing leadership to create a welcoming climate while diversifying the student body, faculty and curriculum.

Through its diversity standard, adopted in 1984, implemented in 1985 and refined over the years, ACEJMC has provided a clearly articulated philosophical statement and set of expectations. For more than a decade, the Council, its committee and hundreds of site-visit teams have measured programs against the standard.

No program has earned gold stars for effort and achievement across the diversity spectrum; a few have been singled out for significant strides and solid accomplishments; several have passed inspection by narrow margins; and a not unsubstantial chunk have been found lacking, some during more than one review.

Almost every year, it seems that the Council makes an example of a program that, despite the resources available to it, not only has failed to push the diversity ball forward but simply has dropped it. And I suspect that, on occasion, through unique mixtures of combustible human dynamics, the Council has unfairly clubbed a program into submission.

Through it all, though, I am convinced the diversity standard and those who have worked to keep it on the front burner have made our programs stronger. Virtually all, if not all, accredited programs are more diverse—in spirit, commitment and accomplishments—than they were before the Council implemented the standard.

As I've observed the schools under review during the past dozen years, one thing has become clear: The administrators who seem to be conscious of the real value of a diverse faculty, student body and curriculum are those who think about it—and work toward it—every day of every week. They do not merely put on a frantic full-court press in the months preceding a review.

I've known administrators who can tell you to the second decimal point—off the tops of their heads—the goals and progress their programs have made on the quantifiable aspects of diversity. Normally, the same administrators have a feel for the pulse of their programs' non-quantifiable diversity indicators. These usually are the same administrators who refuse to dwell on the particular challenges their programs face—whether real or perceived, human, geographical or economic.

Without doubt, diversifying a faculty, student body and curriculum requires energy, commitment, human and financial resources.

Fortunately, we've seen many of institutions devise strategies and programs worthy of emulation. All of them share a single characteristic: a commitment to daily—not cyclical—diversity advancements. They always are keeping an eye out for potential faculty members; they consistently are looking to recruit—and retain—students of color; and they constantly are sensitive to climate issues. More often than not, they are long on accomplishment and short on rhetoric.

Not unlike the great Czech runner, Emil Zatopek, who lacked flair but whose dogged determination enabled him to capture an unprecedented triple crown (the 5,000 meters, 10,000 meters and marathon) at the 1952 Olympic Games, committed administrators recognize the diversity quest for what it is: a long-distance race, not a sprint.

There are bumps in the road, but those of us in it for the long haul should be able to show real progress and achievement. This booklet provides the insight and strategies to help us move toward our destination.