

**Feedback on Progress Implementing the
Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009
The Dickinson School of Law**

This review is dissimilar to those from other academic college/academic support units due to the recent merger (July 2000) of Penn State and The Dickinson School of Law. This is also the first submission of a diversity strategic plan by Dickinson. The team applauds Dean McConaughay for embracing his charge to “promote meaningful diversity and academic excellence” at the Law School. The report presents a “good faith” effort by Dickinson to move forward on diversity issues; however, the review team urges the Law School to create a plan that follows the prescribed template relating goals and actions to the seven challenges presented in the *Framework to Foster Diversity*. The team attempted to place the information provided by Dickinson’s into the prescribed templates as was assigned. The team notes that while the report was verbally compelling, it does not include clear measures for determining the plan’s success in implementing diversity initiatives.

Response: The Law School appreciates and agrees with the Diversity Team’s recommendation that the Law School devise appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and measuring its ongoing compliance with and success in pursuing its 2004-2009 Diversity Plan. The Law School’s student/faculty Diversity Committee will be developing monitoring and measuring mechanisms as part of its responsibilities and activities during this academic year.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The establishment of a visiting professors and scholars program inclusive of minority scholars and the revision of the publication “*The Minority Report: ON to New Horizons*” is commendable.
- ❖ Dickinson’s diversity paradigm and its distribution to the campus is unclear.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The new Law School web site presents an image of an inclusive institutional climate.
- ❖ Several new initiatives to support a welcoming campus climate and that are potentially best practices include; special events for students of color during the Admitted Students Weekend, the creation of internet chat rooms between prospective and enrolled minority students, and the confidential telephone “hotline” for the reporting of incidents of intolerance.
- ❖ The review team suggests that a mechanism for assessing current programming success and a future assessment plan be implemented.
- ❖ The review team applauds the creation of a Diversity Committee comprised of student/faculty/staff. More information on constituent group representation (e.g. women, people of color, LGBT, etc.) as well as the Committee’s charge would be useful.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The review team applauds the increase in the 2003-2004 minority applicant pool by 46%, that resulted in the highest percentage of entering students of color (21%) [Black/African-American (7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (8%), and Hispanic/Latino (6%)].
- ❖ A Minority Alumni Banquet is held annually for faculty, staff, and students.
- ❖ Programs such as the Minority Alumni Banquet, “Outlaw,” and the “Differently-Abled Law Student Organization are also potential best retention practices. It is recommended that a plan be developed to evaluate their success.
- ❖ The use of the national LSAC/LSAT database is to target minority students and students self-identifying as gay or lesbian, the targeted visits to HBCU’s, and the *Summer Law Scholars Program* are all potential best recruitment practices. It is recommended that a plan be developed to evaluate their success.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The review team commends the Law School's efforts to recruit and appoint individuals who would help identify ways for the Law School to be more inclusive. This includes advertising Law School positions in a number of minority publications and on-line job search engines and the *Diversity Talent Bank* database.
- ❖ Recent hires of senior faculty/staff (6 people of color, 6 women, and 4 sexual minorities) are laudable and reflects Dickinson's commitment to diversify the workforce. Information regarding the number of openings filled by majority candidates during this same time period would be helpful.
- ❖ Minority publications, on-line job search engines, the Diversity Talent Bank database, and professional organizations are used to recruit and support the diversity of applicant pools.

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

- ❖ The implementation of programs such as *Diversity in a Changing Workplace*, to help staff develop skills to more effectively work in a multicultural organization is commendable.
- ❖ It is regrettable that the report did not include information regarding the actual content of the law school curriculum. Courses with diversity content are noted in supplemental materials (e.g. brochures, admission pamphlets, etc.) there is no mention of these in the report.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Recent hires of individuals from underrepresented groups in senior leadership positions are commendable. Information regarding the number of openings filled by majority candidates during this same time period would have been helpful in this assessment.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals.

- ❖ The Dean publicly emphasizes his "stand on the importance of diversity" and has charges the CFO and Human Resources Representatives of the Law School's "diversity initiatives with respect to staff hiring and training."