

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

The Smeal College of Business Administration demonstrates a commitment to diversity initiatives and efforts. Staff and programs are in place to ensure recruitment and retention of graduate and undergraduate students from underrepresented groups. Efforts to focus on the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups could be further developed and details and pertinent data would help to reinforce evidence of such efforts. It is notable that three well-defined positions exist to focus on diversity initiatives, and progress has been made to diversify the curriculum. A number of efforts and initiatives are noted to identify and address climate issues, but efforts related to students/faculty/staff with disabilities as well as LGBT and women students/faculty/staff are absent from this report. Smeal also supports and promotes several student organizations, but specific information about how these organizations are supported and who promotes them is not provided. While the College demonstrates a commitment toward University and College-wide diversity initiatives, the College may consider additional or modified proactive efforts in the areas noted above and within the feedback below. Importantly, supporting information and benchmark data for all Challenge areas should be provided to illustrate the effectiveness of diversity-oriented programs and initiatives.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College “considers a minority group as underrepresented if its student population does not match the population of that group in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.” The definition is student-centered, focusing on recruitment and retention, and does not appear to apply to faculty and staff, women, and underrepresented groups beyond race/ethnicity.
- ❖ The College’s commitment to University-wide diversity issues and College initiatives is represented by three multicultural coordinator-oriented positions and has increased by one since the mid-point evaluation: director of Undergraduate Diversity Enhancement Programs, Undergraduate Diversity Enhancement Programs advisor and the assistant to the dean for diversity enhancement. More information on the assistant to the dean for diversity enhancement, including reporting line and whether the position is a full-time standing position, would be helpful. Also, it is unclear how these positions handle faculty and staff diversity issues.
- ❖ Data to support the effectiveness of the START conference would be helpful.
- ❖ The College provides a comprehensive list of ways in which it distributes and discusses diversity initiatives. Additional details on these initiatives with respect to how they carry out the University’s diversity initiatives/goals would be helpful.
- ❖ Examples of the course offerings for undergraduate students and the 6 credits of global awareness and understanding undergraduates take would be helpful.
- ❖ It is noted that diversity issues are discussed with faculty and staff in the College’s strategic plan and at Faculty Executive Committee and Management Committee meetings and that the minutes for such meetings are shared with all College faculty and staff. More information about the nature/composition of the Faculty Executive Committee and Management Committee meetings would be helpful including how issues and initiatives are brought up and handled.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The Undergraduate Diversity Enhancement Programs advisor position was created in 2002.
- ❖ The Undergraduate Diversity Team conducts focus groups with students of color. It is unclear whether this team also meets with other underrepresented groups.
- ❖ The College reports that the College’s Management Committee meetings in 2001 provided a venue through which students were able to voice concerns, share experiences, and make comments and suggestions related to diversity issues; and that the dean is proactive in responding to climate issues and meets regularly with student groups to solicit information and address concerns. While it appears that climate issues have been identified through these efforts and outcomes/initiatives have been developed, specific examples are needed. The degree to which diversity issues are expressed through these forums is not clear.

- ❖ The College provides an ample list of College-wide and individualized approaches for enhancing climate/satisfaction; details about some of the most successful programs and approaches are needed.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ A thorough list of the College's recruiting efforts is provided, including participation in University-wide recruitment efforts.
- ❖ Though enrollments have somewhat increased (1 underrepresented student, 1995-2001; 3 in 2002 and 4 in 2003) the percentage of students from underrepresented groups in the Smeal MBA program has remained at 11% since 1995. It is unclear whether reasons for this have been explored. The special initiative to attract Hispanic/Latino students to the program is positive. It is unclear what other recruitment initiatives have been created.
- ❖ More information is needed about efforts to recruit and retain diverse students in the Ph.D. program.
- ❖ Retention examples are listed and involvement with the Office of Undergraduate Enhancement Programs to retain undergraduates is noted. Additional details/data would be helpful.
- ❖ More information about the nature of the mentoring program for minority MBA students and how it has contributed to retention of students would be helpful.
- ❖ Providing details about the Undergraduate Male Leadership Project, noted as a strategy to retain undergraduate students from underrepresented groups, would be helpful.
- ❖ Commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse student body is demonstrated by the array of services offered by the Office of Undergraduate Diversity Enhancement Programs and the participation of the director of that office and the assistant to the dean for diversity enhancement.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Based on the information provided in the report, the Review Team feels that the College lacks in this area.
- ❖ It is unclear whether workshops conducted with the Affirmative Action Office/Diversity Support and Education Center are one-time only.
- ❖ Mentoring and identifying resources and College-wide activities that celebrate, respect and include cultural differences have been noted as retention strategies. More detailed information about retention efforts would be helpful.
- ❖ Smeal departments state that they engage in "aggressive efforts" to attract women and minorities to faculty positions. Descriptions of these efforts and data on how many women and minorities have been recruited and retained through these efforts should be included.
- ❖ No information on efforts to recruit staff from underrepresented groups was provided.
- ❖ More information/data illustrating the outcomes of successful strategies should be included.

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

- ❖ It is positive that the College offered a number of opportunities to students to expand their own awareness about diversity-related issues. Examples of these opportunities would be helpful.
- ❖ Faculty members have published articles related to multicultural consumerism and work forces. More information on faculty research in diversity related areas, including discussion of how such research supports and enhances curriculum and examples of publications and venues, should be included.
- ❖ Three new cross-listed diversity courses were offered during the 2002-2003 academic year, and 33 undergraduate courses and 11 graduate courses have a diversity component. A list of courses and descriptions would be helpful.
- ❖ More information/data illustrating the outcomes of successful strategies should be included.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ It is positive that the College provides release-time and financial support for faculty and staff to attend leadership and management workshops. More information on the nature of the workshops, specifically whether these opportunities include diversity components specific to the diversity goals of the College and University and mechanisms for encouraging the participation of individuals from underrepresented groups, would be helpful.

- ❖ A demographic profile of the College's leadership would be helpful in determining to what extent women and other underrepresented groups are in leadership and management positions.
- ❖ More information on proactive mentoring in respect to fostering diverse leadership and management within the College should be included.
- ❖ It was noted in the report that the in-house expertise to deliver seminars on various aspects of management was least successful. More information about the lack of success of this approach as well as alternative strategies should be included.
- ❖ More information/data illustrating the outcomes of successful strategies should be included.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ It is positive that the College recognizes that diversity enhancement will not occur without leadership and commitment from the dean, including support for aggressive recruitment and retention efforts. The dean's support for diversity initiatives is notable.
- ❖ The report notes that a Diversity Task Force was appointed in 1997 to appraise the College's diversity efforts. Information on outcomes yielded by this appraisal and areas for organizational improvement with respect to diversity issues that were identified through this effort should be included.
- ❖ There appears to be strong commitment to diversity, especially in regard to students. However, more information should be included about overall organizational change to support diversity goals, including changes that may have occurred due to the efforts of groups such as the Diversity Task Force, the standing advisory committee, and the Diversity Team within Undergraduate Programs. It is unclear what systems for accountability are in place.
- ❖ The Diversity Team within Undergraduate Programs and the standing advisory committee of faculty, staff, students and alumni demonstrate College commitment. The Diversity Team appears to be a "data collection" effort rather than one that actively develops and measures diversity initiatives and programs.