

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

The review team recognizes the Schreyer Honors College's efforts to include the feedback and response presented in the mid-term progress implementation review. Although the College's definition of diversity is inclusive, the report focuses mostly on race and ethnicity, excluding other underrepresented groups included in the definition. The format of the report is excellent. The new chart with progress reports and measures is a positive step toward implementing diversity initiatives. The plan would be enhanced by the inclusion of more specific metrics to assess program success.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College's definition of diversity is inclusive and clear.
- ❖ The review team commends the diversity committee's well-defined purpose and its focus on high priority diversity objectives of the diversity plan. Information on the Committee's goals is clear, but the measures and outcomes of such goals are not addressed in this challenge.
- ❖ Using listservs and other e-mail communications to distribute and discuss diversity information regularly among students, faculty, and staff is an effective way of developing a shared understanding of diversity. The College's senior survey results and increased program attendance suggest that students place a high value on this communication. The roles of the multicultural coordinators are well defined and encompass areas that reach students, faculty, and staff. The team considers these best practices.

RESPONSE: Thank you for your support of our efforts.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The College's support of diversity programming and the focus on diversity in a variety of honors courses are to be commended. Information on how academic units are encouraged to develop honors courses that focus on diversity would be useful.
- ❖ The report chart is an effective way to track and measure the success of the diversity plan's progress. However, it is not clear how the chart is shared with students, faculty, and staff.
- ❖ The College's efforts to integrate climate discussions into staff meetings and retreats are a positive step toward creating a welcoming campus climate.
- ❖ The focus groups and dinners with the dean provide forums for students to express climate concerns. It is unclear, however, if there are formal methods for individuals to report climate issues outside of the mentioned forums.
- ❖ The College is commended for its proactive and timely approach in responding to and addressing climate issues for students. Information on how climate issues for staff are identified and addressed should be included.
- ❖ Diversity-related service learning opportunities for students are positive. Approaches aimed at enhancing individual's satisfaction with the environment would complement these activities.

RESPONSE: Thank you for your support of our efforts. Please note that focus groups on climate are conducted with students living in Atherton and Simmons Hall on an every other year basis. In addition, a formalized climate survey is conducted once every four years

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The College made significant efforts to recruit underrepresented students. Notable efforts include phone calls to students with offers of admissions by scholars, the dean, and Advisory Board members.
- ❖ Advisory Board members are routinely updated on diversity recruitment, initiatives, planning, and scholarships. This information is key to actively engaging them in recruitment programs for underrepresented students and brings diversity to the forefront of the College's recruitment and philanthropic activities.
- ❖ The review team commends the College for updating its administrative policy (M-11) to be inclusive of adult and part-time scholars.
- ❖ The Review Team notes that it would have been helpful to have enrollment and retention data for students to assist in evaluating the success of the programs mentioned in the report.

RESPONSE: Thank you for commending our efforts in this realm. We shall include enrollment and retention data in future reports.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ While some of the College's strategies for recruiting a diverse workforce are evident, there is no indication of specific retention strategies specifically designed for underrepresented staff.
- ❖ The review team commends the SHC for the significant increase in underrepresented students who have work-study positions or work as scholar assistants in the College.
- ❖ The efficacy of increasing the diversity of the honors faculty through academic programming is unclear. The assumption that intercultural/international competency courses are taught by members of underrepresented groups is unsubstantiated.

RESPONSE: Our workforce is very small (a total of 13). Thus, retention strategies for under-represented minorities (n=2) are individualized. Release time to pursue college course work and degree programs is the most important individual strategy.

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

- ❖ SHC is to be commended for continuing and expanding its partnerships with academic units to develop and offer numerous courses focused on diversity issues, including some with travel components (domestic and international). However, these courses appear to focus primarily on race/ethnicity and international cultures.
- ❖ Even though the SHC promotes a very broad definition of diversity, there is no indication of an interest or effort to partner with academic units to develop courses related to other areas of diversity, e.g. LGBT and gender issues, people with disabilities, adult learners, etc.

RESPONSE: We take great pride in the new honors courses that we have helped to stimulate across campus that address under-represented minority issues for African-Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics as well as other international populations. A substantial number of honors courses already exist that explore issues pertaining to gender, adult learners, LGBT, people with disabilities, etc., in a variety of departments in the colleges of Education and Liberal Arts. Some honors students also produce undergraduate theses that address these issues as well. Therefore, the SHC focused on the area of greatest unmet need and we shall continue to do so in the future.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ SHC staff development requirements include structured diversity development plans.
- ❖ Many SHC staff have been involved with career-advancing activities: e.g. administrative fellow program.

RESPONSE: Thank you.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The report lists many groups that the SHC has partnered with in advancing its diversity goals.
- ❖ The report does not address “organizational realignments, systems of accountability, resource mobilization and allocation strategies” in its efforts to advance the University’s diversity goals.

RESPONSE: Diversity is thoroughly incorporated into our strategic planning process addressing resource mobilization, allocation of staff, and accountability issues. It is unreasonable to expect the SHC to influence resource allocations or organizational realignments outside the college.