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**Feedback on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Penn State Altoona**

The Update Report submitted by Altoona College illustrates a strong commitment to diversity. Some diversity-related activities include wide dissemination of the College's definition of diversity, creation and implementation of programs, both academic and co-curricular, that support diversity, and facilitation of numerous community outreach efforts that focus on minorities including persons of color, the disabled, the international community, women, adult learners, etc. All of the challenges were addressed in the Update; however, written responses to Challenges 6 and 7 were weak and lacked sufficient information to fairly evaluate the efforts put forth. Goals such as the proposed climate survey that appeared as a priority in the 1998 report have yet to be accomplished; however, it is clear that significant efforts are being made to meet the challenges outlined in the Framework to Foster Diversity. Regarding the diversity strategic plan, some items that were planned were not reported on. The review team encourages review of the plan to assess which items are most critical for implementation. (This point recognizes that Dean Cale has only been at Altoona for a few years and was not involved in the development of the current diversity strategic plan.) Finally, the report notes that Altoona's service area is one of the least diverse in the state, which hinders the college's diversity efforts, particularly for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff. The team recognizes the problems that are inherent in Altoona's geographical location, but it recommends emphasis on solutions to overcome this problem.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Altoona developed a definition of diversity that was formulated with input from staff, faculty, and students = shared understanding.
- ❖ In 1998, Altoona's goal was to incorporate the diversity statement into all aspects of the College. Since that time, the statement has been disseminated thoroughly using a variety of channels, e.g., new student/employee orientations, interview processes, handbooks, etc.
- ❖ No examples provided of activities for which the multicultural coordinator/director of multicultural affairs is responsible. The position is defined very broadly/vaguely.

RESPONSE:

- *The Director of Multicultural Affairs is a senior staff position within the Division of Student Affairs reporting directly to the Director of the Division. This position was upgraded to a senior level position in 1998.*
- *The Director of Multicultural Affairs is responsible for developing, supporting, advising and monitoring all of the College's multicultural student organizations.*
- *The Director is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating the College's year-long Diversity Programming Series that are aimed at sensitizing and educating the campus and Altoona City communities to diversity issues and diversity in all of its forms.*
- *The Director will serve as co-chair of the College's New Campus Environmental Assessment Team. In this role he/she will help guide the Committee in its efforts of conducting ongoing climate assessment and addressing issues that are contradictory to the College's mission of creating a welcoming and affirming campus climate for all faculty, staff and students.*
- *The Director will work directly with the First Year Experience faculty to establish links to campus diversity programs, serve as a resource person, and assist them in developing diversity course modules.*
- *The Director will assist the Director, Division of Student Affairs in ensuring that the goals established in the Penn State Altoona's Framework for Fostering Diversity are fulfilled.*

- *This position works directly with our 35 international students and provides an array of services and support programs that will aid in their assimilation into the Penn State Altoona environment and in their retention to the University.*
 - *The Director of Multicultural Affairs position will mature and develop over the next few years as new programs, initiatives, and goals are established.*
- ❖ Inactive diversity committee/Campus Environmental Response and Assessment Team– this weakness was recognized and will be addressed.
RESPONSE: The new membership and reduced size of this Committee has been established.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The presence of an “Adult Center”, “Disability Services Center,” and “Health and Wellness Services Center” as well as the various programs these units offer demonstrate visible support for diversity.
- ❖ The presence of numerous multicultural groups and dedicated student office space for these groups demonstrates support for diversity.
- ❖ Broad assertion made “Students, faculty, and staff know whom to talk to regarding issues and they know their concerns will be taken seriously and will be responded to appropriately.”
RESPONSE: Our efforts in providing information to students, faculty and staff regarding diversity and whom to contact should incidents of intolerance or concerns come to light have been comprehensive and intentional. We include very direct and specific information in our Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, New Student Orientation Programming, FTCAP, residence life training and educational programs, the First Year Seminar courses, and through a variety of programs held on campus during the year. Although we are doing well in getting this information out to all of our constituencies we can still improve. We will continue to make this a priority area over the next year.
- ❖ Climate assessment has not been completed to date. The original plan indicated that in order to determine what programs to offer and what departments can do to improve the services they offer, a climate assessment needed to be done. It also indicated that “very little will be accomplished because provisions cannot be made without asking what is needed.” The Update indicates the assessment will be done in Spring 2002.
RESPONSE: A Climate Survey assessing the total campus climate was moved to the Fall 2002 semester. This decision was made in light of a climate survey that was implement during the Spring 2002 semester to assess the campus climate for women.

During the Fall 2001, the Altoona Liaison Commission to the Commission for Women of Penn State University- with the support and encouragement of Dean William G. Cale – prepared a questionnaire to examine a number of workplace issues at the College.

Using the campus mail system, the survey was sent to all full-and part-time faculty and staff of Penn State Altoona. Of the 558 full- and part-time employees of Penn State Altoona, some 227 responded for 41% return rate.

The overall result of the survey was that Penn State Altoona is a good place to work, a reality supported by the data collected. This is not to say, however, that there are not important workplace issues that deserve our attention and action. The results of the survey will form the foundation on which to engage the College in continued dialogue regarding workplace issues and campus climate, direct appropriate administrative action, and correct any deficiencies identified.

- ❖ Lack of formal mechanism to respond to climate issues – will be remedied with active Campus Environment Assessment and Response Team.

RESPONSE: A Climate Survey will be instituted in the Fall 2002 semester.

- ❖ The criteria that were used to rate the college climate for diversity is weak – arbitrary/possibly biased opinions based on staff reports.

RESPONSE: The Climate Survey mentioned above will provide the College more specific qualitative and quantitative data regarding the Penn State Altoona's campus climate.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ full-time staff position: coordinator of minority recruitment
- ❖ very good outreach efforts, e.g., agreements with international universities, out-of-state high school visits, “Operation Link Up”, overnight bus trips for students from NY/NJ, collaboration with the PSU Recruitment Centers in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh
- ❖ very good adult learner outreach efforts, e.g., Altoona saves spaces in selected day and evening classes for adult learners, mailings to recently discharged veterans, WIB activities
- ❖ Successful grant attainment by Career Services for special populations
- ❖ Significant increase in minority students, currently 9.2% of student population, up 20% from 2000-2001
- ❖ Description of the Retention Committee, its activities, specific goals, etc.

RESPONSE: The Retention Committee at Penn State Altoona is composed of faculty and staff from a number of departments. The goals of the Committee are explore the reasons why students leave the College for reasons other than graduation or change of assignment, and to develop strategies, support programs and services to help students persist in the pursuit of the degree. The Retention Committee is currently developing a new exit survey and interview process that will provide the Committee with regular and reliable data regarding students' reasons for premature departure from the College. The Committee will also work with the College to administer a student satisfaction survey every two years beginning in Spring 2002.

- ❖ Given the current rate of growth among students of color, a goal of 10% by 2006 is not ambitious. *RESPONSE: Penn State Altoona has made the recruitment of a diverse student body one of the College's long-term strategic goals. We have seen our minority student enrollment grow from 5.9% in 1997 to 9.2% in 2002 an increase of 20% from 2000-2001. While continuing to enhance our academic standards, Penn State Altoona is committed to increasing our minority student population to 10% of the total student body by 2006, and to increase our international student enrollment to 100 students by 2006.*

While a goal of 10% may not seem to be ambitious given our current growth, it is important to remember that Penn State Altoona's five county service area is one of the least diverse in the state. Blair County, where Penn State Altoona is located, is 2.4% minority and the City of Altoona is less than 2% minority. The growth we have experienced in minority enrollment has come from outside our service area and out of state. We have worked hard to develop a campus environment as well as a range of services and programs that are attractive for minority students and help them to be successful. We also have one of the highest retention rates for African American students in the Penn State system. We have also been very successful in retaining students from other under-represented groups as well.

The goal of increasing our minority student population to 10% of the total student body is not an end all goal. We see it as a floor, not a ceiling. We will continue to make the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body a major focus of our efforts as a College. We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to increase the diversity of Penn State Altoona. In addition, we will continue to provide and refine the services and program support necessary to insure student success and satisfaction.

- ❖ Retention strategies for students of color should be examined in light of graduation rates. Given the many retention programs at Altoona, higher graduation rates should be expected. *RESPONSE: It is important to view Penn State Altoona's graduation rates in light of our new role as a Baccalaureate college. Most of our new degree programs are less than five years old and are just now seeing sizable graduating classes. Moreover, there are few students of color enrolled in these majors. Also most of students move on to University Park to complete their degrees.*

It is our goal to increase upper-division enrollment to over 900 students by 2006. To date Baccalaureate major enrollment is up 22.2% from 2000-01 to 721. Altoona College upper-division is up 26% from 2000-01 to 574. The Currently, Penn State Altoona offers ten Baccalaureate and nine Associate degree programs. The will continue to add high quality Baccalaureate programs with a goal of having 15-18 programs and over 900 upper division students by 2006. Many of these programs will appeal to students of color, and when coupled with a welcoming, nurturing, and supportive environment will have a positive impact on our graduation rates.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Turnover has been extremely low in the last 15 years
- ❖ Commitment to include among the qualified finalists for all positions at least one female, a person of color, or a person with a disability
- ❖ Evidence of sufficient professional development funding
- ❖ Altoona recognizes that there is a lack of diversity within the Altoona community and Blair County, which contributes to the percentage of minorities in the college's workforce (4%); citing lack of diversity within the community is not a proactive response.

RESPONSE: As was mentioned earlier, Penn State Altoona is located in one of the least diverse areas of the State. This is not an excuse, but a reality. We aggressively pursue search strategies that will identify and attract a diverse candidate pool. However, we are often competing with larger cities or organizations that also want to diversity their workforce. For example, we constantly seek qualified applicants of color for our Police Services Department. When we identify a good candidate, we often find that we cannot offer as competitive of a salary as Municipal, County or State Departments. We will continue to aggressively seek out applicants of color for all positions at the College. It is important to us to have a faculty and staff that are diverse and representative of the student body.

- ❖ Minority faculty recruitment appears weak – currently advertise in “Black Issues in Higher Education” and the Minorities Job Bank; other practices could be employed, e.g., targeting listserves, targeted recruitment at professional meetings/conferences and/or graduate schools.
RESPONSE: Minority faculty and staff recruitment will receive serious attention during this next year. This topic has been suggested as the focus for the Executive Staff and Academic Division Head Retreat held in early August.
- ❖ The college needs a more proactive approach with innovative strategies. It appears that student recruitment and retention have received a higher priority than for faculty and staff.
RESPONSE: See the item above.
- ❖ The review team noted from external demographic data provided by Educational Equity that Altoona had a fairly substantial increase in its faculty and staff numbers between 1997 and 2000. However, this increase occurred without commensurate increases among faculty and staff of color.
RESPONSE: As was mentioned earlier we have employed aggressive search strategies and have had limited success in attracting candidates of color for all positions at the College. However, we have been very successful in attracting and hiring females. Currently, females make up 49.5% of Penn State Altoona employees. We will continue to explore new and innovative search strategies, as well as work with the University Administration to create compensation packages that are attractive and competitive.

**Penn State Altoona
Human Resources Extract File as of 4/26/02**

Table 1: Appointment by Ethnic

Appointment	Ethnic							Total
Frequency	ASN	BLK	HSP	IND	WHT	ZZZ		
FTM	0	1	0	0	28	0	29	
FT1	1	1	0	0	11	0	13	
FT2	3	0	1	0	140	0	144	
GRD	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
STN	6	8	2	1	267	0	284	
WAG	1	4	1	0	79	97	182	
Total	11	14	4	1	526	97	653	

Table 2: Appointment by Gender

Appointm.	Female	Male	Total
FTM	18	11	29
FT1	5	8	13
FT2	67	77	144
GRD	0	1	1
STN	145	139	284
WAG	120	62	182
Total	355	298	653
	54%	46%	

Table 3: Ethnic by Gender

ETHNIC			
Frequency	Female	Male	Total
ASN	7	4	11
BLK	6	8	14
HSP	3	1	4
IND	1	0	1
WHT	281	245	526
ZZZ	57	40	97
Total	355	298	653

- ❖ The team recommends a stronger relationship between faculty at Altoona and the Sr. Faculty Mentor.

RESPONSE: *We will pursue this recommendation as noted.*

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

- ❖ Women's Studies minor is in the works.
- ❖ Good breadth of curriculum supporting multiculturalism.
- ❖ Initiatives supporting diversity include out-of-class components as well as community and public involvement
- ❖ Evidence is not entirely clear as to whether diversity has been successfully integrated – the unit is encouraged to state success indicators.

RESPONSE: *We will develop and monitor specific success indicators as recommended by the Review Committee.*

- ❖ Given the proximity of Altoona to University Park, the college should better utilize some of the resources at University Park, such as the Africana Research Center, Department of African and African American Studies, and other diversity-related departments, faculty, and courses. Faculty exchanges could help promote diversity at both Altoona and University Park.

RESPONSE: *We will explore the recommendations listed in this section with Academic Affairs, Penn State Altoona's Faculty Senate and appropriate staff and departments at University Park.*

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Insufficient information provided to determine specific strengths.

RESPONSE: *The current work force at Penn State Altoona is 4% minority, and the executive, administrative, and managerial, or other professional staff is 10%.*

- ❖ Altoona addressed this challenge, but its response is weak. Responses only represented two divisions, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
- ❖ Focuses on release time and professional development for all staff but describes no approaches specifically for underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Support of development of leadership and management skills specific to faculty from underrepresented groups not evident.
- ❖ The team recommends the implementation of mentoring and professional development programs to prepare employees from underrepresented groups for administrative and leadership positions.

RESPONSE: *Student Affairs and Academic Affairs are two of the three largest departments within the College. Leadership for College growth in this area will come from these two Departments. Although more work in this is needed, there is a strong commitment from the Heads of these departments to assist faculty and staff from under-represented groups develop leadership and management skills. Many of the suggestions made by the Review Committee will serve as discussion points as we explore new opportunities and initiatives.*

Penn State Altoona is committed to giving serious attention to this area over the next year.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ HR Coordinator to receive Diversity Trainer Status.

- ❖ Disability services has been realigned to better meet students' needs.
- ❖ Addressed the challenge, but the response was weak.
- ❖ Vague references to systems of accountability that monitor the various diversity initiatives in place within departments and the College as a whole.
- ❖ No current initiatives indicated for academic affairs.

RESPONSE: Penn State Altoona has instituted a Budget Recycling process whereby 1% of the College's permanent budget will be recycled each year. A Budget Advisory Committee was established to advise the Dean regarding the permanent reallocation of the recycled funds. A main evaluator used by the Budget Review Committee and the Dean to award new permanent dollars, is whether the requests for enhancements or new initiatives support and advance the College's Strategic Plan.

Penn State Altoona has a very direct and intentional focus in its strategic plan on the issue of diversity, creating a welcoming and affirming climate on campus, recruiting a diverse, highly qualified student body, and the creation of an out-of-class environment that fosters personal growth, academic achievement, and life-long learning. We will be able to monitor and record the amount of recycled funds that are allotted to enhancements and new initiatives related to diversity. The budget recycling process will be one indicator of our commitment to new diversity initiatives and our Framework to Foster Diversity.

The Campus Environment Response/Assessment Team will be actively involved in monitoring the College's progress related to our Framework to Foster Diversity.

The Student Government Association's Standing Committee on Diversity will also monitor and comment on the College's progress on and commitment to diversity in all of its forms.

The Campus Climate Survey to be conducted in the Fall 2002 will serve as another indicator of our diversity efforts, and will provide the College with quantitative and qualitative data on which to judge our current initiatives and strategic goals.

The PSU Student Satisfaction Survey conducted every two years (current survey conducted Spring 2002) will provide the College with data regarding student satisfaction with all areas of Penn State Altoona. This data will help the College note areas where students are very satisfied as well as deficiencies that need administrative action. The survey will also help the College identify both positives and negatives that have a direct and indirect impact on recruitment and retention.

The Division of Student Affairs will expand the number Student Open Forums with students from under-represented groups, as with all students.

The CERT Team will work with Academic Affairs to establish specific initiatives for this area during the Fall 2002 semester.