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**< <http://www.equity.psu.edu/framework/updates> >**

**Feedback on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
Penn State Erie, The Behrend College**

There is no definition of diversity.

*RESPONSE: The College's vision statement provided a succinct yet complete definition/description of diversity: Behrend will have a student, faculty, and staff community that reflects the diversity of the region in which we are located and serve. The College will provide programs and services in and outside the classroom that examine and promote an appreciation and celebration for differences of race, ethnicity, global perspective, gender, age, physical ability, and sexual orientation, among others. The college environment will be free of discriminatory barriers, both physical and attitudinal.*

It is difficult to determine which activities the committees are responsible for.

*RESPONSE: The Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) has a student-centered mission and deals with recruitment and retention issues as well as the campus climate for students from underrepresented groups, students with disabilities, and returning adult students. It functions as a steering and policy-review committee, although it also helps directly with student recruitment (phonathons, sleeping-bag weekends). The Provost's Committee on Diversity (PCD) focuses on strategies for hiring underrepresented faculty and staff, on training needs (e.g., sexual harassment, affirmative action searches, etc.) and campus climate issues (e.g., educating the campus community of the University's nondiscrimination policies). The Women's Commission Liaison Committee (WCLC) focuses on networking opportunities, mentoring, and, most recently, on the relocation of the childcare center. The PCD, DEEC, and the WCLC have overlapping membership to ensure coordination and collaboration.*

The 1998 plan offered much more detail than this update does, including a valuable self assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses.

*RESPONSE: We agree that this current document provided much less detail than the 1998 plan (and the 1995 plan as well). It appears that we misinterpreted the meaning of the term "update." In the strategic planning process, there was always a distinction drawn between a full-blown plan (like the 1998 Diversity Plan) and an update plan (not full-blown). Since we were providing an update, we did not provide the same level of detail that is found in a full-blown version.*

Overall, the information provided in the Update is weak, and insufficient to clearly assess the College's progress. The team noted that the recent change in leadership may have been a factor. *RESPONSE: Clearly this update was prepared in a period of transition in personnel and when the College is shorthanded and stretched. However, the issue was not the transition, it was the interpretation of what was meant by "update."*

**Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity**

- ❖ The Provost's Committee on Diversity (chaired by the #2campus executive officer) is well positioned to attend to diversity issues brought to it by the EDDC, WCLC, campus units and students.
- ❖ Reports that the strategic plans and performance indicators submitted by all campus units must address diversity issues
- ❖ Has three operating diversity committees.
- ❖ The role and activities of the Director of Educational Equity Programs were not described. As of 1998, there was not a person in this position. The 2001 update does not mention whether a person has been hired for this position.

*RESPONSE: The Director of Educational Equity Programs is responsible to the Director of Student Affairs for the development and administration of College programs and services directed toward the retention of underrepresented student groups and special needs*

*populations. The director serves as general counselor/advisor for students of color; advises the Multi-Cultural Council; and coordinates programming with the Office of Student Activities. The director also assists with assessing the effectiveness of retention efforts through data collection and evaluation, assists in the development and operation of the Multi-Cultural Resource Center, and supervises a new part-time coordinator of disability services. This new position allows the Director to focus more on services to underrepresented groups. The director also has primary responsibility for the coordination of the Educational Opportunity Program. The director co-chairs the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee and serves on the Provost's Committee on Diversity.*

*Recruitment and retention of staff in this position has proven to be a challenge. The former director served in the position for two years and was highly effective. She left for personal reasons and returned to New Jersey. The current director was hired in August, 2000 and will be leaving the position effective May 31, 2002. Her spouse was transferred to Cleveland in December. A search is now underway for a new director to begin June 2002 or soon thereafter.*

### **Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate**

- ❖ Provided examples of responses to needs of people with disabilities and to requests for better nighttime lighting.
- ❖ No examples of responses to needs expressed by ethnic minority students/faculty/staff or by LGBT students/faculty/staff.

*RESPONSE: A variety of on-going programming and one-time events have been planned to develop support for LGBT students, faculty, and staff. The College has provided support for celebrations of National Coming Out Day, Allies Day, and GLBT history month. Trigon, a support and programming group for GLBT students, has sponsored the Safer Sex Cabaret for the past five years. This event involves both Behrend and Erie community members in a program designed to educate attendees on protecting themselves from sexually transmitted disease and enjoying intimacy without intercourse. On an individual basis, students experiencing issues related to sexual orientation are routinely seen at the Personal Counseling office. As well, arrangements were made for a transgendered student to use a staff restroom in the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology when the closest unisex restroom was on the other side of campus.*

*The Multi-Cultural Resource Center continues to serve as a hub for students of color and clubs and organizations dedicated to issues of diversity. A plethora of on-going programs including the College's Speaker Series, Multi-Cultural Performing Arts Series, etc. draw a great deal of input from students/faculty/staff from underrepresented groups. In addition, Residence Life staff devote considerable human and financial resources to foster a positive climate in the residence halls.*

- ❖ No mention is made of the results of the 1998 campus climate survey nor how it has been utilized. This is a missed opportunity to specify how the Unit is working with climate issues identified in the survey.

*RESPONSE: The climate survey helped shape student programming. In truth, the low return rates and small cell numbers limited the usefulness of the results.*

### **Challenge 3: Recruiting and retaining a Diverse Student Body**

- ❖ Evidence was provided for the multiple approaches being taken to recruit students of color

- ❖ The number of enrolled undergraduate and graduate students of color has increased, although their proportion of the total student body has remained the same. Reference should be made to recruiting and retention strategies, particularly for graduate students.  
*RESPONSE: We have two graduate programs for part-time students, an MBA and a new Masters of Engineering in Manufacturing Systems Engineering. The MBA program is also offered through distance learning. Recruitment has been largely via general newspaper advertisements. Both programs are under revision, and there are CQI teams working on recruitment strategies for both programs, including strategies for recruiting students from underrepresented groups.*
- ❖ Gives examples of increases of expenditures from Student Activity Fees and by the student government for diversity programming, which illustrates the positive value placed on student activity.
- ❖ Does not provide data concerning any changes in expenditures from the campus's operating funds for diversity programming.  
*RESPONSE: Provision of expenditure data was neither requested nor implied in the questions posed to the Colleges. However, the College has devoted substantial dollars to diversity-related activities and projects, including the new childcare facility which represents the biggest project the College has undertaken with its own operating funds (\$1.5 million). It has also expended \$300,000 to improve handicap access (coupled with a \$200,000 grant), increased the pay of minority faculty members, picked up the operating costs of its MAPP/WISE program, and raised substantial dollars to support the Penn State Educational Partnership Program (PEPP) and scholarships for underrepresented students. The College has also expended approximately \$50,000 on interpreters for the hearing impaired.*
- ❖ The disparity between the retention/graduation rates of white students vs. students of color is increasing. The causes and remedies for a lack of improvement in the retention of students of color were not addressed in the update.  
*RESPONSE: These retention data available to date do not permit us to assess the outcomes of the strategies we introduced in this planning period. However, we don't agree that there has been a lack of improvement in the retention of students of color. For the most recent annual data available, the percentage of baccalaureate students of color retained after three years was 60% versus the average of 54% for the previous five-year period.*
- ❖ There are no performance indicators.  
*RESPONSE: We were using the official data provided by the University to determine outcomes and performance. Thus, we didn't replicate them in our update.*

#### **Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce**

- ❖ While the College is forthcoming in acknowledging its limited progress in increasing minority representation among faculty and staff, there is no apparent overarching organizational effort to remediate this situation. There is an increase in the number of female faculty in higher ranks, and of black assistant professors. It is difficult to determine whether progress made in this challenge because the College has not made full use of the opportunity to discuss its strategies.  
*RESPONSE: We think we did explicitly state our strategies for recruiting a diverse workforce, through more aggressive use of the President's Opportunity Fund, through the creation of positions in disciplinary specialties that are likely to attract faculty of color, and through the establishment of a Minority Dissertation Fellowship Program.*
- ❖ College commitment to put in place new initiatives to promote retention of diverse faculty and staff, i.e., membership in Erie Insight.

- ❖ Behrend College is commended for its campus-wide events that celebrate community and diverse backgrounds.
- ❖ The report suggests that there is a limited number of strategies and resources directed to recruiting a diverse faculty and staff.

*RESPONSE: In addition to the new initiatives outlined in the first bulleted item above, we have had training sessions for all faculty who chair or are members of search committees. This training was aimed both at improving the overall recruitment process and at identifying and attracting faculty of color. We have also identified principles of good practice for recruiting. In addition we had all of the College's administrators trained in affirmative action policies and procedures. Moreover, we subscribe to directories of minority Ph.D.s and actively solicit candidates through these listings as well as through direct mail appeals to graduate departments. One new approach we plan to try is to ask UP departments to share resumes or names of minority candidates that they did not hire.*

- ❖ Need for indicators, action plans and measures related to the assessment of recruitment and retention initiatives.

*RESPONSE: We included the Strategic Performance Indicators in our "Strategic Plan: 2002-03 through 2004-05." We measure the number and percentage of underrepresented students as well as faculty and staff.*

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

- ❖ The GI/DF course offerings represent an array of content areas in race, class, gender, culture, and ethnicity. There is opportunity to include disabilities as a content area.

*RESPONSE: Issues related to disabilities are integrated into a number of courses in the College's two professional schools: in design, human factors, and engineering economics courses in the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology, and in human resources, labor economics, and ethics, law and the environment of business courses in the School of Business.*

- ❖ International programs, exchanges and studies seem to be an important and growing priority for the college. However, emphasis on international does not address domestic racial/ethnic groups. This imbalance could be addressed with courses such as African-American Studies courses, or other courses in Liberal Arts and Business.

*RESPONSE: In answering this question, only those courses with their "academic home" at Behrend were listed. These were diversity-oriented courses that Behrend created to meet its needs above and beyond those available throughout the University. Behrend does, of course, offer many of these other courses, including some from the AAAS group as well as others from the College of Liberal Arts (e.g., American Studies, Sociology, LIR, etc.).*

- ❖ Other than a brief mention of curriculum integration in the FYS and two English courses, it is not clear how diversity content is integrated in the Behrend College curricula.

*RESPONSE: The College has a substantial concentration of its co-curricular activities focused on diversity, including its Speaker Series, Women's Film Series, International Film Series, etc. Activities sponsored by the Multi-Cultural Council (MCC) organizations are very substantial and the College's leadership is making a concerted effort to have faculty integrate these activities into courses where possible. The MCC consists of the Asian Student Organization, the Association of Black Collegians, the Human Relations Programming Council, the International Student Organization, the Organization of African Students, the Organization of Latin American Students, the Returning Adult Student Organization, Trigon (LGBT), and Women Today.*

*The library has developed the collection with diversity in mind, and it sponsors exhibits on diversity themes. Diversity is a topic covered in all the College's First-Year Seminars, as are the Penn State Principles. These principles are also the main focus of mandatory small-group sessions at orientation. Diversity content is also part of the aforementioned Behrend-specific courses which were created to address diversity issues that weren't otherwise available in the University's course offerings.*

- ❖ Teaching, learning, and research are not discussed in relation to diversity and multicultural curricula.

*RESPONSE: Teaching and learning in relation to diversity and multicultural curricula were addressed above. In terms of research, individual faculty in Management, Political Science, English, Communications, Psychology, and History have research programs dealing with issues of diversity and gender. A mathematician was just awarded a sabbatical to study women in math. The College also has a research unit, the Center for Organizational Research and Evaluation (CORE), which undertakes studies dealing with aspects of diversity.*

#### **Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management**

- ❖ The College's response to this challenge is inadequate and offers no specific illustrations to support the identified strategies. For example, personal mentoring of staff is indicated, yet no specific examples of staff mentoring are provided. Participation from underrepresented staff members on committees and service projects is identified as a leadership/management opportunity; however, no samples or cases are given to add clarity and understanding to the example.

*RESPONSE: In the staff area, two staff members of color were given new duties and responsibilities that will allow them to develop new skills that will in turn increase their opportunities for advancement. In addition, we also arranged for the Office of Human Resources to offer the Mastering Supervision program at Behrend so all staff could avail themselves of this training and development opportunity. For faculty, the College provided scholarly activity support to help two minority faculty finish their Ph.D.s and enter the tenure track. In addition, salaries for minority faculty were increased to stay competitive with the market.*

#### **Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals**

- ❖ Good discussion of plans and resource allocation for new disability and international initiatives that seem aligned with long-term diversity goals.
- ❖ Recognition of need to re-align and re-position multicultural staff members to work more closely with minority students.
- ❖ It is unclear how Behrend's schools will allocate resources and new recruitment and retention strategies to respond effectively to the establishment of affirmative action targets.

*RESPONSE: Funding for positions at Behrend is controlled centrally by the College, not the Schools. The recruitment budget is also centrally controlled and temporary in nature.*

*The College's strategy for recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce is outlined in the response to Challenge 4 above. In addition, however, the annual reviews of the Directors of the four Schools will include the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce as an evaluative criterion. Toward that end, all four Schools have been apprised of their goals and progress. This practice will continue in an effort to get and keep diversity front and center.*