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PENN STATE ERIE, THE BEHREND COLLEGE

THIRD YEAR UPDATE
to
**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE FRAMEWORK
TO FOSTER DIVERSITY AT PENN STATE: 1998-2003**

December 12, 2001

OVERVIEW

Introduction

This is an update to Behrend's initial plan to implement the goals identified in A Framework to Foster Diversity At Penn State: 1998-2003. The plan was initially developed by the College's Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) in collaboration with College leaders during the 1997-98 academic year and updated during the fall 1998 semester in consultation with the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity.

The central goals of the Framework remain:

1. Develop a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity.
2. Create a welcoming campus climate.
3. Recruit and retain a diverse student body.
4. Recruit and retain a diverse work force.
5. Develop a multicultural curriculum.
6. Diversify University leadership and management.
7. Coordinate multicultural transformation and organizational change (*Moving Toward a Multi-Cultural Future*, November 1997, p. i).

Vision

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.

Mission

With significant input from the DEEC, the Provost's Committee on Diversity (PCD), and the Women's Liaison Committee, the College will develop, implement, and evaluate strategies for recruiting and retaining a more diverse College population, for assessing the campus climate and promoting an appreciation and celebration of differences, and for ensuring equal access to programs and services by all members of the College community.

Belief

An important priority of a quality undergraduate education is the process of learning about differences through personal exchanges, discussion, reading, and reflection, both inside and outside the classroom. Students who are encouraged to understand life experiences and perspectives different from their own will gain from that understanding throughout their lives (see Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Developing an appreciation for differences requires a diverse student, faculty, and staff population, and an environment free from prejudice and barriers. It also requires an intentional structuring of the learning environment that provides such opportunities for growth.

GOAL 1

DEVELOP A SHARED AND INCLUSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY

We believe that diversity initiatives cannot be isolated from the mission or core technology of an institution of higher education. Consequently, The Behrend College uses an integrated approach to developing and sharing our understanding of diversity issues.

Responding to feedback from the previous diversity strategic plan update, the College formed the Provost's Committee on Diversity (PCD) during the 1999-2000 academic year. Chaired by Jack Burke, Senior Associate Provost and Senior Associate Dean, the PCD has focused attention on a plethora of issues including strategies for recruiting minority and women faculty, developing principles of good practice for faculty and staff interviews, educating the College community on diversity issues, and supporting the provision of child care, among others.

The PCD works in collaboration with the Diversity and Educational Equity Committee (DEEC) and the Women's Commission Liaison Committee (WCLC). DEEC is chaired by the Director of Student Affairs and focuses primarily on issues affecting the recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented groups, students with disabilities, and returning adult students. The WCLC has sponsored networking opportunities for women faculty and staff and was involved in the decision to relocate the childcare center to its new location. Both DEEC and the WCLC have representatives on the PCD to insure an integrated approach.

A number of College initiatives drive our integrated approach. They include the aforementioned DEEC, PCD, and the Women's Liaison Committee, but extend well beyond those bodies and their considerable influence. Diversity issues are discussed among faculty members in each of our four schools, are reflected in the strategic plans and strategic performance indicators for units both academic and administrative, and are agenda items regularly at meetings of the Provost's Advisory Committee (PAC). Faculty members are urged to integrate diversity issues into their curricula. Student activities initiatives are designed to integrate multicultural viewpoints (example: every major presenter but one on campus in the 2001-2002 academic year reflected an underrepresented group), and directly address diversity issues (our Multi-Cultural Council sponsors an annual "Harambee" or "unity" dinner).

GOAL 2

CREATE A WELCOMING CAMPUS CLIMATE

We are fortunate to have been free of any major incidents of bias in the past several years. Most occurrences of intolerance are covert, usually stemming from ignorance. The College does a fairly good job at maintaining a welcoming climate, but we are cognizant that there is room for improvement, so we have initiatives and processes in place to address the issues.

Recognizing that a celebration of diversity must come from the highest levels, Penn State Behrend begins visible support for diversity at the highest administrative level, with the Provost's Committee on Diversity. More than simply an advisory body, PCD can implement policy decisions that affect the entire college constituency. Commitment does not end at the committee level, however. Behrend has a permanent student affairs staff member directly responsible for general issues of diversity and plans to hire a half-time specialist dedicated to students with disabilities within the year.

Concrete examples of support for diversity include the recent additions of a stair tower with an elevator to provide easy direct access to our residential area, a new elevator in the Reed Union Building, and revamped arrangements for commencement guests with disabilities.

Support is also demonstrated by implementing targeted recruitment of students, staff, and faculty members from underrepresented groups. The Provost and Dean hosts an annual event to recognize and encourage strong academic performance by students of color and to encourage applications to graduate school. Student Affairs sponsors themed programming during Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Women's History Month, and integrates those themes into programming year-round through Residence Life and Student Activities.

Climate issues among faculty members and staff members are identified and aired through PCD. Students' issues can be identified and aired by DEEC, Student Activities staff, and Residence Life professional and paraprofessional staff members.

The size of the college allows us to respond to concerns surrounding diversity and climate issues swiftly. The relatively flat organizational structure at Behrend permits us to integrate our responses across any real or perceived barriers. This approach can involve units or individuals responsible for judicial affairs, campus safety, campus programming, counseling, student development, the faculty organizations, the Provost's Office, the physical plant and operations, and nearly any other academic or support area of the organization. One example is a recent decision to spend considerable money to provide adequate lighting in an area of campus that students, especially women, identified as being too dark at night to ensure safety. The issue was raised at a "Pizza with the Provost" program, a regular get-together in which students can raise concerns about virtually any aspect of the College.

GOAL 3

RECRUIT AND RETAIN A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, maintains a commitment to attracting, enrolling, and retaining a student body whose diversity reflects that of the region.

Several recent initiatives support the commitment.

1. The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid has convened a continuous quality improvement team to improve the College's efforts in attracting students of color. Issues identified by the team include improving the relationships with the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia Recruitment Centers, outreach to potential change-of-assignment minority students, and the development of a peer recruitment program involving students of color from outside of the Commonwealth. A continuous quality improvement team will identify and discuss initiatives specifically designed to increase enrollment of students who will add diversity to our community.
2. Further, a search is underway to fill the admissions counselor position dedicated to recruiting and enrolling students of color. This person plays a critical role in the recruitment of students in Erie.
3. On-going recruiting initiatives include the Minority Advanced Placement Program/Women in Science and Engineering Program (MAPP/WISE) and the Penn State Educational Partnership Program. Now in its ninth year, MAPP/WISE offers female and students of color who have completed the 11th grade to enroll in a credit-bearing course during the eight-week summer session. Programming includes library, computer, and study skills sessions, field trips to various industries related to science and engineering, and speakers representing a diverse work force.
4. Student Affairs has overseen a myriad of programs and services designed to create a more inclusive campus environment for students and thus impact retention positively. Great strides have been made in the recruitment of students of color into leadership positions in student organizations in addition to the Multi-Cultural Council. Students of color are strongly represented in the Student Government Association through Senate, Executive Board, and committee chair positions, the Lion Entertainment Board (the college's student programming board), and a variety of academic and service organizations.

Evidence of progress is best demonstrated by the increase in spending of Student Activity Fee funds in the category of Diverse Populations and Issues funding category. Funds allocated to support diversity-related programming have increased by nearly 45% to over \$24,000 for the current academic year. Programs funded include an African Odyssey, the Multicultural Performing Arts Series, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Campus-wide Celebration, and Yellow Rage Slam poetry.

The Student Government Association budget allocation committee has also demonstrated

strong support for the Multi-Cultural Council and its member organizations (including the Association of Black Collegians, Asian Student Organization, International Student Organization, National Society of Black Engineers, Organization of African Students, Organization of Latin American Students, the Returning Adult Student Organization, Trigon, and Women Today). On campus with over eighty student clubs and organizations, nearly 35% of SGA funds support the student clubs overseen by the Multi-Cultural Council. MCC clubs are supported financially and are consistently some of the best clubs on campus. At the Spring 2001 Honors and Awards Convocation, the National Society of Black Engineers was recognized as Penn State Behrend's best student club.

5. A new retention initiative starts in the Spring 2002 semester with the development of a student of color outreach program. Current students of color have been recruited to contact students of color in OFFER or PDACC status to encourage students to attend Penn State Behrend. Returning and new students will be paired as "buddies" for the Fall 2002 semester to assist in new students' academic and social transition to the college.

GOAL 4

RECRUIT AND RETAIN A DIVERSE WORK FORCE

We also have a commitment to attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse group of faculty and staff.

The minority representation in our faculty and staff has been quite flat in the last three years. While we have not been able to increase the number or percentage of the work force from previous levels, at least we have not decreased in diversity representation. Some of our efforts have not worked, and we have had success with some other efforts. We continue to address this goal, however, and consistently review and revise our efforts with input from PCD, Human Resources, and search committees and hiring officials.

Our efforts to locate and recruit staff members include our advertising of position openings in publications where we will reach candidates from diverse backgrounds. Our most successful efforts have probably come from personal contact through recruitment by peers and through professional organizations. We maintain active membership and involvement in professional organizations in order to identify and recruit qualified quality candidates personally for our positions. Our efforts to locate and recruit staff members actively include our advertising of position openings in community publications as well as contacting such organizations as the Hispanic-American council, Greater Erie Action Committee, State Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Job Center that will help us reach candidates from diverse backgrounds.

We have addressed the retention issue by becoming active members in a relatively new organization, Erie Insight. This organization helps new to the area professionals form contacts within the community. Because the Erie area has a relatively small population of minority professionals, the lack of community contact has made it difficult to retain professionals of traditionally underrepresented groups. We also have attempted to strengthen the sense of community within the College by instituting more dynamic professional training and development programs aimed at bringing individuals of various disciplines together by offering a diverse range of programming. In addition to this we have further begun strengthening traditional College-wide social events and adding new activities celebrating our sense of community and our diverse backgrounds. (International Fair, Martin Luther King Celebrations, Welcome Back Party, Harambee Dinner, Dinner with Six Strangers, Friday Fiesta, Kwanzaa Dinner, and other events).

If our budget allows, we will create a Minority Dissertation Fellow program and a faculty position in an area that will attract minorities (e.g., African-American History) next year.

GOAL 5

DEVELOP A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM

We feel strongly that the strength of a college's curriculum comes in part from the institution's commitment to programs, majors, and courses that reflect the diversity of the world in which we live. Carrying our integrated approach to diversity to curricular offerings, we can cite a number of programs that contribute to the University's diversity goals.

Academic Degree Programs

- International Business Major
- International Studies Minor
- Women's Studies Minor
- Business, Liberal Arts, and Sciences Major: Includes modules in Foreign Language, International Cultural Studies, Study Abroad, and International Policy

Behrend ICC/DF Courses

- PSYCH 120 - Cross-Cultural Psychology
- PSYCH 472 - Psychology of Gender
- HSTRY 109 - Gender and History
- INTST 100 - Introduction to International Studies
- INTST 400W - Seminar on International Studies
- ELISH 485 - World Novel
- ELISH 487 - Women Poets
- POLSC 123 - Ethnic and Racial Politics
- POLSC 132 - Politics of International Intolerance
- COMMU 402 - International and Intercultural Communication
- MANGT 340 - Human Resources Management
- MANGT 442 – Managing a Diverse Workforce
- MANGT 480 - International Management
- MRKTG 470 - Global Marketing

In addition to these courses, several PSU 007 (First-Year Seminar), ENGL 015, and ENGL 202 classes contained significant diversity themes in their content.

International Education Programs and Studies

Behrend encourages and supports student enrollment in academic programs outside of the United States. Between 1999-00 and 2001-2002, 264 students participated in significant international experiences—in 15 countries—directly related to their academics. Penn State Erie sponsored or organized ten programs during that period. Additionally, 30 student athletes traveled internationally with their athletic teams.

International Students

International students and international exchange students add significantly to the diversity of the student body in the classroom. International student enrollment at Behrend increased from 24 students in fall of 1999 to 43 students in fall 2001.

GOAL 6
DIVERSIFY UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT.

The college believes that support for diversity must come from the highest levels. One measure of diversity is in the leaders and the management at Behrend. To breed and develop leadership and management potential among employees we encourage and support participation in the Penn State Leader program, involve all levels of staff in personal mentoring, and we encourage involvement on committees and other service projects by staff members from underrepresented groups.

GOAL 7 COORDINATE MULTICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

An effective organization can constantly transform itself to meet the needs of the environment. At Penn State Behrend, we recognize that a commitment to diversity often requires realignment and refocus. Recent realignment initiatives include plans to hire a half-time disability coordinator to meet the needs of that group of students more effectively. We also realigned and reformulated the DEEC and created PCD to better assess, respond to, and advise college leadership about issues of diversity in our community. We set affirmative action targets to our schools to encourage their commitment. We also instructed search committees on multicultural issues based on training we received from Affirmative Action.

We renewed our commitment to attracting international students by initiating a groundbreaking engineering exchange program with RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia and by moving most of our international student functions to Admissions. Coupled with the decision to hire a half-time staff member devoted to services for students with disabilities, this latter move allows our multicultural affairs staff member to devote a greater proportion of time to our minority students. In addition, a staff member was assigned to coordinate all international exchanges (as well as international education programs initiatives and study abroad advising) for the college.

If fiscal resources allow, we have plans to create a Minority Dissertation Fellow program. We will also, if budget permits, create a position in an area that will attract minorities (e.g., African-American History) next year.