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Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College

Framework for Fostering Diversity Mid-Point Assessment

December 2001

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Mid-Point Progress Assessment
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Vision Statement on Diversity

The vision is for a Berks-Lehigh Valley College in which each faculty, staff, and student community member has been introduced to the people and traditions of a culture other than their own. The culture could be in this country, surrounding communities adjacent to the College, and/or in some other part of the world. The introduction to another culture and the ability to compare with one's own stimulates analytical thinking and learning at both a cognitive and affective level. The "experience" of another culture is a critically important dimension of education for global citizenship in the 21st century. Understanding and respecting the diverse characteristics of human beings allows us to add a new dimension to learning.

The operational definition of diversity, agreed upon and utilized throughout the Diversity Strategic Plan, is based on the Penn State non-discrimination statement and focuses on the multitudinal components listed below.

- | | |
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| -Adult/Returning students | -Handicapped disabled |
| -Veterans | -International students |
| -Learning impairment | -English as a second language |
| -Sensory impairment | -Socio-economic background |
| -Physically challenged | -Race |
| -Religious practices | -Sexual orientation |
| -Family structures (single parent,
adoptive parent) | -Gender |
| -Urban vs. Rural vs. Suburban
geographic location | -Citizenship |
| -Composition of college faculty and staff | -Ethnicity |
| | -Age |

Penn State Policy AD42 Statement on Nondiscrimination and Harassment

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

Challenge 1. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

The definition of diversity is stated above. In addition, Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College strives to:

- Recognize individual differences and contributions of every member of the college community.
- Commit ourselves to establishing a just community where the dignity of college community members is affirmed and valued.
- Commit ourselves to enhancing the diversity at the College.
- Commit ourselves to valuing and serving a diverse population in the nation and the world.

The University's diversity initiatives are distributed and discussed with students, faculty and staff through various means. Educational and cultural programming, new student orientation, diversity courses, FTCAP (Freshman Testing, Counseling and Advising Program), and faculty/staff diversity training are some of the ways information is disseminated. Climate surveys are also very beneficial in assisting the College with identifying needs and issues among the student body and within the faculty and staff. A new climate survey will be distributed during the Spring 2002 semester.

The general responsibilities of the multicultural coordinator are to develop programs and services for the Berks-Lehigh Valley College that foster the development of a culturally diverse college with particular focus upon supporting multicultural and international students with a range of academic, personal and related services. Specific responsibilities include:

- Develop and present campus-wide programs that sensitize the college community to the needs of underrepresented student populations.
- Serve as a primary resource person to monitor the academic progress of multicultural students and provide academic assistance as needed.
- Assist the admission office with the recruitment of multicultural students.
- Serve as a member of the College Diversity Committee and any other committees focusing on diversity.
- Provide educational and social programming for multicultural students.
- Maintain contact with University-wide offices such as Educational Equity, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management dealing with the concerns of underrepresented student populations.
- Develop and implement strategies for the retention of international and multicultural students.

The Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College Diversity Committee serves the college community by disseminating information regarding diversity, supporting diversity programming and assisting with the clarification and mediation of any issues or concerns pertaining to diversity that may arise.

Our Campus Life Department advertises the Cultural Events programs (University Block Booking) and the Arts and Lecture Series, Appendix 1, via an academic year brochure, posters and College list-serve. Student clubs and organizations utilize posters, flyers and electronic message board. The Diversity Committee announces initiatives and programming via the college

list-serve and posters. Residence Life diversity initiatives are disseminated via posters, telephone calling and resident hall monthly meetings. Human Resources and Administration both utilize the college list serve and search committee meetings in disseminating diversity initiatives.

Challenge 2. Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

Visible support for diversity among leadership is demonstrated by:

- Staff members and Director's involvement with College Diversity Committee.
- Division's initiative to plan, staff and offer diversity programming for all FTCAP sessions; diversity programs in new student and residence life orientation; diversity training for residence life staff; college-wide diversity programming including the Arts and Lecture Series; offer modules for first year seminars; develop and support student organizations that support and encourage diversity.
- Provide college-wide leadership for the development of EOPC grants and virtually all EOPC grants are developed and awarded to this Division.
- Created and staffed a full-time position to specifically address diversity needs and initiatives.
- Staff provide advising service to most diversity related student organizations
- Emphasis on open search committee participation in hiring, speakers and projects emphasizing diversity issues and involvement.
- Involvement with community groups that emphasize diversity.
- Sponsoring of a partnership between the University of Turabo in Puerto Rico with a degree in ESL to assist in supporting local schools and businesses.
- Support for diversity programming on and off campus by college CEO and Deans.

Climate issues are identified by:

- Staying in close communication with all entities in the college community and taking swift action when problems arise. Many potentially negative events can be averted before they change the climate. The Student Affairs staff is significantly and directly involved with campus life issues, individual and student group needs and the related areas of the College that are of potential help or concern. If needed, there is an immediate ability to connect with appropriate administrative leadership, Senate leadership and any standing bodies of the College such as the Diversity Committee.
- Being good listeners. If we are purposeful in our intent to listen to student and community needs, engage in constructive dialogues and have the commitment to act when action is needed; this will go a long way to not necessarily eliminate climate issues, but rather place them in a context of openness and responsiveness.
- Formal and informal surveys. The College has utilized the Penn State Student Satisfaction Survey over a number of years and will again participate in this survey during Spring 2002. In addition, Noel-Levitz surveys have been utilized twice to again look at our student populations in a national context. These formal tools are useful, but somewhat sporadic, particularly given the transitory nature of both students and issues.
- The Diversity Committee is a primary and on-going method to identify climate issues. Significant staff involvement by members of the Student Affairs division has and

continues to be characteristic and appropriate. The active involvement of all segments of the college community in this body is one of our best methods of addressing on-going climate needs and future direction.

Response to climate issues:

- Dependent upon the issue. There may be time for immediate action when a particular situation arises that causes immediate concern for safety and welfare of students. Appropriate staff would be involved in any issue and that staff may include various members of the college community including other administrative personnel.
- Issues such as a change in direction of programming, offering of enhanced support services, hiring practices and the like require responses that depend upon the constituencies and who has the ability to change an outcome. Administrative channels, student organizations, College Senate, University staff and processes, the Diversity Committee and members of the Student Affairs division may be involved as appropriate.

College-wide and individualized approaches include:

- Activities and approaches already identified in the responses above.
- Those approaches that have been implemented within the past year include:
 - Employment of a full-time Multicultural and International Student Counselor.
 - Development of a tracking system and mentoring system to assist underrepresented students.
 - EOPC funded group visits to the campuses.
 - Development of Unity Day at both locations as a part of the University-wide celebration.

Climate Rating:

- Average overall rating for Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College: 8.

Several staff, faculty and administrators have become involved with the community as board members such as Police Athlete League (PAL), Olivet Boys and Girl Club and Hispanic Community Center. Others have contributed financially to organizations such as Women's Leadership Foundation, NAACP and Berks Women in Crisis. Student groups have performed and attended functions, i.e. banquets, seminars and reading workshops at many community centers and other locales.

Another response to climates issues is conducting Town Meetings periodically throughout the year highlighting the various issues of diversity in today's society.

Challenge 3. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

For the recruitment of undergraduate students:

- Both campuses are involved with programs for at-risk youth with school districts representing a high population of underrepresented groups.
- Admissions staff visit all public high schools in the college's service area.
- Admissions also works in concert with the Penn State Community Recruitment Centers located in Harrisburg and Philadelphia.
- Private Industry Counsel/Career Link Grant is an academic enrichment program for at risk youth that offers summer academic instruction at the Lehigh Valley Campus.
- Active involvement with community sponsored organizations and events, PEPP and Pre-College Programs to identify and support college access for underrepresented students.
- Preparation for Adult Life (special education adolescents) visit the campus and are taught computer skills by the OT students.
- Personal contact and interview with each prospective Educational Opportunity student.
- Use of residential hall spaces to enhance participation of first year, underrepresented students.
- Participation of enrolled underrepresented students in Lion Ambassadors and various admission related activities.
- Cyber Sisters: a program at the Lehigh Valley campus for minority female adolescents.
- Continuing Education has a summer science program for inner city youth and has also developed a partnership with the Olivet Boys and Girls Club to offer summer camps for at risk middle school aged youth from Reading. In addition, a camp was offered for high school aged youth that focused on college preparation. CE also offers training programs and classes to companies that promote tolerance and appreciation for diversity. Professional development courses are also offered to teachers to identify teaching strategies for limited English proficiency students.
- Direct involvement of staff members related to EOP, Multicultural/International Advisor and Support Services in outreach and recruitment initiatives.

For the retention of undergraduate students:

- Various programming initiatives to enhance the understanding and appreciation of diversity for all students including, but not limited to, Arts and Lecture Series, student club support that include the Cultural Diversity Club, the Asian Club, Dimensions, Unity Club, Multi-Cultural Dance, Penn Steppers; Unity Day, Martin Luther King Day and numerous programming throughout the year to celebrate and understand different cultures. Student Affairs staff currently serve as the primary advisors to virtually all of the student organizations.
- Various program initiatives to enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity for first year students including, but not limited to, FTCAP sessions for all admitted students; general orientation programming for all students and for residential students; a multi-day, residential program "Be A Part From The Start" for new, underrepresented students.
- Staff position that directly support retention efforts including Education Opportunity Coordinator and Multi-cultural/International Counselor; positions that support students in their academic, personal and social needs.
- Support services that directly address student retention issues including campus intervention committees at each location; a tracking system for underrepresented students and mentoring program (Step-Ahead).

- A residence life program that includes annual diversity training for staff; offers a diverse resident assistant staff comprised of over 50% underrepresented students; provides 23 diversity programs for residents per semester, maintains a collection of diversity related materials for use by students and staff alike; develops and prints a student guide to religious organizations in the greater Berks region.
- Assistance with PAW (Project Aware World), a contact and support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues.
- Provide whatever support services are needed for students with physical and learning needs, including enlargement of reading materials, signing, etc. Automatic doors and a new elevator in the student center have also been added within the last year. The purchase of state of the art equipment for students with physical and learning disabilities.
- The establishment of a list-serve for veterans to notify them of any VA or related college needs and issues.
- The Division systematically attempts to assess student perceptions and needs through various surveying methods including participation in a system-wide student satisfaction survey; national surveys such as Noel-Levitz and College Board; and surveys directed at residential students.

For the recruitment and retention of graduate students:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) master's program in partnership with the University of Turabo in Puerto Rico.

Most successful recruitment/retention strategies:

- WISE Program – provides support for several workshops of diversity in science and engineering.
- The continued offering of “Be A Part From The Start” as an early, intensive orientation program for EOP and underrepresented students.
- Intrusive tracking and mentoring systems to monitor student success.
- Collaborative and mutually supportive efforts of Penn State entities, the College and community organizations and resources to address the needs of underrepresented students.
- The continuing emphasis that successful recruitment and retention of students is everyone's responsibility
- Availability of on-campus housing at Berks.

As stated above the Penn State/Career Link Academic Enrichment and Employment program at the Lehigh Valley Campus is a recruitment tool for high school students. The population consists of young Hispanic students receiving academic preparation to become better prepared for college. The Preparation for Adult Life Program trains adults with special needs in the computer skill areas. In both of these programs we are providing an introduction to the college experience for a population that we have identified in our definition of diversity.

At the Berks Campus the residence halls fill by December prior to the Fall semester. Many of our underrepresented populations have not been accepted as of yet. We reserve approximately 11%

of the spaces for EOP, Students of Color, International and Administrative Appendix 2. Reserving spaces has helped in increasing our minority student population.

Our definition of 'intrusive' pertains to the retention of the minority students at the Berks Campus. This includes inviting minority student to the early freshmen orientation (BAPFTS), Appendix 3 a week prior to classes. During this time the students get an opportunity to bond with each other and also become oriented to the barriers that need addressing on a predominately white campus. Early in the semester we meet weekly with the BAPFTS students trying to keep abreast with any concerns. After the first semester grades, students with gpa's less than 2.0, Appendix 4, are contacted by the multicultural counselor and directed to academic assisting areas on campus (learning center, tutor, individual assistance by faculty member or any other support service).

Both the Berks and Lehigh Valley Campuses have experienced increases in our minority student populations since the Fall of 1998. Minority enrollment increased from 10% (192) to 13.25% (297) students at the Berks Campus and from 13.50% (80) to 15% (99) students at the Lehigh Valley Campus, Appendix 5.

Challenge 4. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

For recruitment of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups:

- Advertising in publications that are targeted at underrepresented groups or whose readers are members of underrepresented groups.
- Submitting job openings to minority career banks nationwide.
- Networking with local corporations/businesses and community groups to advertise open positions among underrepresented populations.

For retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups:

- Offering professional development opportunities specific to faculty and staff belonging to underrepresented groups.
- Organizing diversity training workshops for all faculty and staff to positively enhance work environment.

Each search committee receives a statement from Human Resources and administration regarding affirmative action regulations. Also a member of each search committee will have received affirmative action training. We utilize faculty, staff and administrators networks in advertising positions within the college.

Challenge 5. Developing a Curriculum that Supports the Goals of our New General Education Plan.

Initiatives that support multicultural curriculum efforts:

- Besides the exposure to multicultural programs, the College has implemented a Community Building course.
- We have implemented community service learning projects in a variety of courses to expose students to multicultural opportunities. The college is exploring an International Studies major, and Urban Educations major, and a Spanish minor. These curricula will include courses on cross-cultural communication and international understanding. We have a current job search for a Latin Amercanist.
- Next semester, our prison project, which includes about eight different courses on both campuses, will create a community of learners exploring the American prison system from an emphatically multicultural perspective.

Research/Teaching that advances the University's diversity agenda:

- Laurie Grobman's forthcoming book is on contemporary American literature by women of color.
- Belen Rodriguez is conducting research on Cuban writers in exile.
- Weaver Santaniello's new book considers the position of Jews in Europe during the last century.

The integration of diversity into the curriculum:

- Biology 20 has a diversity focus embedded in a natural science general elective course.
- In BMB 001 students discuss homosexuality and show a video about the death of a homosexual patient with AIDS.
- Students in hotel/restaurant management are encouraged to attend cultural diversity programs and are rewarded with extra credit.
- Students in teacher certification programs are required to work a minimum of 40 hours with students of a background different than their own prior to the end of the 4th semester of college. Diversity topics are included in the education courses required for education majors.
- The following Diversity focused/Intercultural and International Competence courses on a regular basis (includes both campuses):
 - AAA S 110
 - Anth 45
 - Biol 20
 - Cmlit 10
 - Engl 182,194
 - Ger 100
 - HDFS 287X
 - Hist 121, 174, 175, 191, 192
 - INTST 100
 - Music 7
 - RI St 1
 - SOC 110
 - Thea 207,208

- Wmnst 1

The initiative to incorporate diversity in the curriculum that was indicated in the 1998 plan from the Lehigh Valley Campus was never developed.

The course description for Biology 20 as listed in the PSU blue book is as follows:

Biology 20 (GN; DF). Plants, People, and Places (3 credits). Useful and dangerous plants, historical (archaeological), cultural (ethnological), and economic (anthropocentric) aspects, including structural and chemical characteristics of botanical importance.

The course satisfies a general education requirement in the natural sciences, and also counts as a diversity focus course.

In the course, I hope students learn that food does not originate from the grocery store shelf, but that the food we buy is produced, processed, and has a historical and economic importance. This spring semester marks the third time I have taught the course. So far, none of the students (this semester I have 62) come from a farm background. So, I try to emphasize the economic and social/cultural importance of food crops. I also include the use of various food crops from the past (i.e., Greeks, Romans, Middle Ages) and those crops used in today's modern society in the U.S. as well as third world countries.

Here are a few examples of the topics covered in this course:

Origins of Agriculture. Discuss how agriculture helped shape civilizations, with a focus on the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia. We also compare modern agriculture practices in developed versus third world countries, and we discuss how the land-grant colleges helped shape agriculture in the U.S.

Starchy Staples. The primary focus here is with the potato, where we cover this important crop from its origins in the Andes Mountains of Peru to their processing into McDonald's french fries. We also discuss the Irish potato famine of 1845-49 and the impact on the society and culture in Europe and the U.S.

Stimulating Beverages. We cover topics relating to coffee and tea, from its origins in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, to its importance to the economy of South America. We also cover one of my favorite topics - chocolate. We discuss the use of chocolate by the ancient Aztek society, and today's use and consumption of chocolate.

Herbs and Spices. We discuss the use of plants to produce herbs and spices for cooking, and compare food preparation in developed versus third world cultures.

Cotton. We discuss the cotton industry in the Southern U.S., and how cotton played a major role with slavery in the south.

Medicinal Plants. We discuss herbal healing remedies from Greek and Roman times, to the

Middle Ages, and into today's modern times. We talk about the people of the Terra Nova Rain Forest in Belize who rely on plants for their medical care.

Challenge 6. Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- Mentorship program available for new faculty and staff. Also involvement supported for the Penn State Leadership programs.
- All faculty and staff also have access to the CEO for mentoring.
- These issues are also being addressed in the current Strategic Planning process.

In the last two years the leadership of the college has changed from the CEO/Dean of the College and Lehigh Valley Campus Director from white males to females.

The CEO/Dean came to Penn State University, Berks-Lehigh Valley from Fresno, CA, a community with more than 105 primary languages spoken. Dr. Speece's commitment to diversity has been evident from her first weeks on campus. Prior to even arriving, she arranged for support of the Reading Women's Leadership Conference, sending several tables of students and staff to this meeting designed for minority women. This support continues.

Dr. Speece serves on the Diversity Committee and the PAW committee (for gays, lesbian, transsexual and bisexual individuals.) For more than two decades she has served as a straight advocate of gay rights. She participates in the WISE programs and has served as a positive role model for young women interested in the sciences.

Under Dr. Speece's direction, there have been monthly diversity celebrations on the two campuses and she is in the process of instituting stronger affirmative action measures for all search committees.

Dr. Speece spends time with students, invites students to attend leadership programs with her and works with faculty and staff members who are working to encourage under-represented groups.

Dr. Speece has participated in PAL functions, serving dinners for hundreds of minority, inner city children, helping to raise funds to expand programming for these children and their families. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Berks AIDS Network.

Dr. Speece also provides opportunities for faculty, staff and students to attend the Hispanic Banquet, NAACP banquet, PAL banquet and other community events to support minority groups.

Challenge 7. Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- Aggressive advertising in minority journals/publications for applicants.
- Communicating with members of the local minority groups to assist in the locating of qualified applicants.

- Currently searching for a quality affirmative action video that all search committee members must view before they may serve on any search committee.
- It is a priority for Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley College to improve the diversity pool of qualified applicants.

Challenge #4 discusses the mechanisms utilized to attract diverse pools of applicants for positions within the college.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1

Community of Learning Arts and Lecture Series Brochure

Appendix 2

Fall 2002 Housing List

Appendix 3

Be A Part From the Start Program Flyer

Appendix 4

Fall 01 Grade Report (Minority Students with GPA's less than 2.0)

Appendix 5

Fall Official Enrollments (1996-2001)