

**Before you read the feedback and report revisions, you are strongly encouraged to review the Overview, History and Calendar Web page at**

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

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

Penn State Great Valley has made outstanding progress in implementing its diversity goals and articulating them in its progress assessment. The definition of diversity is inclusive and thorough. The review team is particularly impressed with the Diversity Action Council (DAC) and their strategic plan (Appendix A in the Great Valley report). For the Council to have a strategic plan is notable, and the DAC plan is thorough and well-organized. To further strengthen the report, the team recommends that examples of specific actions in the plan be included in the body of the assessment report. Faculty scholarship surrounding diversity is extensive, and many excellent diversity-related programs and workshops are cited in the report. The potential partnerships with Lincoln, Cheyney, and Lockheed Martin are especially noteworthy.

The review team observes that, despite the broad and inclusive definition of diversity under Challenge 1, most of the focus of the report appears to be on racial/ethnic diversity. Some attention is given to disability issues, but LGBT issues do not figure prominently in the report. Comments on the report under each Challenge follow:

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

- ❖ The definition of diversity is a benchmark for other units.
- ❖ The activities at Great Valley that demonstrate its understanding of diversity are commendable; however, more details on these programs would be helpful.

***RESPONSE:***

***Art Events***

***Dane Tilghma - premier painter of African American golf art and baseball images***

***Jennifer Jordan - presentation to campus by expert on African American art***

***Music Events***

***Freedom Gospel Group - four sisters singing and touring together for many years***

***Total Blend - exciting and inspirational gospel group***

***JazzTech Ensemble - jazz group featuring Penn State Great Valley faculty member***

***Dance Events***

***Positively to the Point - young dancers performing hip-hop, tap, and modern dance***

***Vision Praise Dance Ministry - inspiring group of youth dancers***

***Kumba Dance Troupe - group performing a variety of African American dances***

***Cultural Days***

***Native American Day - short lecture by Bright Shining Woman, music, and crafts***

***Hispanic Day - Hispanic Latino guitar music and Latin food***

***Chinese Day - writing artist, dragon dancers, young children dancers***

***Latino Day - briefing by Pedro Cortes (Governor's Advisory Commission) and food***

- ❖ In the final assessment report, please provide an update on the Web site and other efforts to disseminate information on diversity that were still in the development stage in the December report.

***RESPONSE: The current diversity information is located on a password protected internal Great Valley Web site. This information will soon also be available to non-Great Valley personnel through the regular campus Web site at [www.gv.psu.edu](http://www.gv.psu.edu).***

- ❖ The team notes the position of Special Assistant to the CEO for Multi-cultural Outreach. Do plans exist for assessing the position? How does the position relate to the DAC?  
*RESPONSE: Great Valley has recently hired someone for this position, currently funded as a half-time position reporting to the Campus Executive Officer who will carry out the related performance reviews. This person will also sit on the Diversity Action Council as an ex-officio member representing the campus CEO.*
- ❖ The DAC has an excellent strategic plan (Appendix A). Incorporating more information from the plan into the main body of the final report would be useful.  
*RESPONSE: These materials were placed in Appendix A to keep the main body of the report more concise.*

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

- ❖ The DAC budget allowance is exemplary. The fact that this committee has the largest standing budget of any committee at Great Valley demonstrates a concrete commitment to diversity and is a potential best practice.
- ❖ Using focus groups with a professional facilitator is a good approach for assessing climate. The report would be strengthened by providing more specifics on how a broad range of participants for the groups was insured and how the results will be communicated to the Great Valley and Penn State community.  
*RESPONSE: The minority alumni focus groups will be selected from the 225 Great Valley alumni who indicated their minority status on their student record. All of these alumni will be mailed a postcard asking for their participation in an upcoming focus group. Those who agree to participate will be invited to the campus in groups of 8-10 for a one hour meeting led by a facilitator. Results will be compiled and presented to the Diversity Action Council, and later to the entire campus at a town meeting.*
- ❖ The DAC Strategic Plan states that annual climate surveys will take place among women faculty and staff, but the report gives no indication that these surveys have occurred.  
*RESPONSE: These surveys are important to the campus, but are still in the early planning stages in terms of implementation. We anticipate their development and distribution in Fall 2002.*
- ❖ The report identifies a number of activities that promote a welcoming climate but no formal processes for responding to climate issues. The team recommends initiating these types of processes and augmenting information about the activities with further material from the appendices.  
*RESPONSE: The most important activity related to promoting a more welcoming climate will be the new Special Assistant for Multicultural Education and Outreach who will begin her position on May 6. She will be specifically tasked with working on a number of issues related to campus climate, including activities such as office hours for students who may have concerns related to diversity, developing appropriate diversity-related promotional materials, and examining our current materials for diversity sensitivity.*

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

- ❖ The prospective partnerships with Lincoln, Cheyney, and Lockheed Martin are potential best practices. However, it appears that the focus is limited to students from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Are other diversity constituents included? If so, how?  
*RESPONSE: The Diversity Action Council will soon expand its efforts to be more inclusive with all groups as described in its comprehensive definition of diversity. Specifically, we are in the process of developing a speaker series for the 2002-03 academic year that will effectively address this issue.*

- ❖ An increase has occurred among students from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Has any evaluation or analyses occurred that shed light on these increases?  
*RESPONSE: We regularly analyze the data related to our effectiveness in terms of attracting diverse populations. Our analyses have indicated the following to be related to our increases among students from diverse racial and ethnic groups:*
  - Our active pursuit of students from under-represented groups*
  - Increased faculty attention to diversity-related issues*
  - Increased hiring of diverse employees at local companies*
  - Increased hiring of international employees at local companies*
  - Partnering with local organizations to increase our visibility with respect to diversity*
  - Advertising in newspapers and with radio stations who have diverse audiences*
  - Delivering special events that are attractive to diverse audiences*
  - Increased reporting of ethnic background on various University records and forms*
- ❖ The DAC appears to limit their retention efforts to the development of student programs and activities. Should the DAC, or some other group, have a broader role?  
*RESPONSE: This broader role will be taken on by our newly-hired Special Assistant for Multicultural Education and Outreach. Since this person will also sit on the Diversity Action Council, this group will also benefit from specific ideas from this new employee.*
- ❖ Personalized service in recruiting and advising is commendable, but this approach should be tied to some formal strategies. The report could be improved by identifying concrete retention strategies, with examples, and evidence of what works best.  
*RESPONSE: Specific strategies related to recruitment and retention will be discussed during the coming year within various campus groups including the Diversity Action Council, the Council of Academic Program Administrators, and the Academic Executive Council. Ideas from these groups will be considered for implementation by the Campus Executive Officer, the Academic Division Heads, and the Director of Graduate Program Administration. Current practices related to increasing retention rates include:*
  - Monitoring student progress as they move through their academic programs*
  - Monitoring graduation rates for students in various academic programs*
  - Active involvement of faculty advisors, professors-in-charge, program coordinators*
  - Development and implementation of formal preparation program in several degrees*

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

- ❖ The outlets used for ads seem appropriate but seem to focus mostly on candidates from diverse racial/ethnic groups. This practice could be more inclusive.  
*RESPONSE: We will continue to work with the Office of Affirmative Action at University Park to identify appropriate outlets for our ads for faculty and staff vacancies.*
- ❖ Although Table 2 indicates an overall increase in racial/ethnic diversity, the team notes the decreases in Black American and Hispanic/Latino faculty and staff. Has any evaluation or analyses occurred to explain these decreases?  
*RESPONSE: All faculty and staff who leave the University are interviewed by Human Resource people either at Great Valley or University Park. These interviews have not revealed any patterns for the slight decrease in these areas.*

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

- ❖ The partnership with Penn State Delaware County for Dr. Gresson to teach a diversity and leadership class is noteworthy.

- ❖ Faculty scholarship on diversity as noted in Appendix D is extensive but focuses mostly on racial/ethnic diversity. The team encourages a broader array of diversity topics as the subject matter for scholarship.
- ❖ The report states that Great Valley has “no specific requirements to address diversity as part of the curriculum.” Instead, faculty are “encouraged” to present diversity issues in their teaching. Please indicate how faculty are encouraged and assisted in this effort. Are incentives provided? How is this effort monitored?

***RESPONSE: All Great Valley are encouraged to include diversity-related issues in the content of their courses, and these efforts are also reviewed with each faculty member's Academic Division Head as part of the annual review process. The campus also provides support through the Diversity Action Council for diversity-related travel to conferences, etc.***

- ❖ A statement on how the University's goals regarding the new general education plan apply to the graduate curriculum at Great Valley would be helpful.

***RESPONSE: Since Great Valley offers only graduate-level academic programs, we are not connected to the University's general education plan.***

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

- ❖ The number of diversity-related workshops is commendable.
- ❖ The plan notes that faculty and staff are encouraged to attend programs. Information on actual participation would be helpful in describing accomplishments in this area.

***RESPONSE: In general, approximately two-thirds of the full-time staff and one-quarter of the full-time faculty attend events sponsored by the Diversity Action Council. Benchmarking data can be developed over time since RSVPs are required for many of these activities.***

- ❖ The report would be strengthened by describing any special initiatives for developing leadership and management skills among faculty and staff from diverse groups.

***RESPONSE: We currently have two Great Valley personnel -- a Training, Education, and Development Specialist and a Staff Assistant for Academic Affairs and Human Resource Development -- working on the development and implementation of activities related to leadership and management skills across the campus including attendance by faculty and staff from under-represented groups.***

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

- ❖ The programs listed are very good, but specific information on their relation to organizational change should be included in the report. Please include a summary from relevant sections of Appendix A.

***RESPONSE: The following is a summary of programs related to organizational change on campus:***

***Faculty and staff travel grants sponsored by the Diversity Action Council***  
***Mentoring activities provided by members of the Human Resource Staff and others***  
***Attendance by Graduate Programs staff at minority recruitment fairs***  
***Monitoring of program enrollment by Graduate Programs staff members***  
***Development of student focus groups to investigate diversity and climate issues***  
***Recent hiring of a new Special Assistant for Multicultural Education and Outreach***  
***Annual monetary faculty and staff award for outstanding commitment to diversity***  
***Annual Martin Luther King events***