

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
College of the Liberal Arts**

The College should be commended for its financial investment in various diversity initiatives. The fact that money has been spent on this topic is apparent throughout the document. Such an investment of resources represents a focus on the “front end of the process”; the College is encouraged to more fully explore opportunities for systematic approaches to climate assessment and enhancement, and retention in the future.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College’s recognition of the importance of diversity in reaching its goal of quality is commendable.
- ❖ The Review Team notes that the definition of diversity appears in the third paragraph of question one; it might be helpful to reverse the first and third paragraphs of this section. The College should consider expanding the definition beyond focus on race and gender to include LGBT, disabilities, international, religions and cultural diversity.
- ❖ It is commendable that the College regularly disseminates information regarding diversity to faculty, staff and students, and many concrete examples are cited. The College should include opportunities for interactive discussion.
- ❖ Given that the role of the multicultural coordinator has a student focus, the College is encouraged to develop some mechanism to address the broader scope of diversity issues including academic and faculty issues.
- ❖ Absent information on the activities of recent ad hoc committees for diversity planning, the Review Team was unable to determine the role of the committees and the College’s rationale for reliance upon them. Ad hoc committees for diversity planning may not always provide the continuity of a standing diversity committee.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The College’s positive focus on financial resources, as indicated by the supporting data, has led to better recruitment and retention of women and underrepresented groups.
- ❖ It is unclear how the college may have followed-up on the 1995-96 focus groups and survey regarding climate for diversity. The College should develop an on-going mechanism for routinely identifying climate issues, and for assessing climate and satisfaction.
- ❖ It is positive that all new teaching assistants are required to attend a workshop on sexual harassment. The College should consider expanding the requirement to include additional aspects of diversity.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Financial support and scholarships which target underrepresented populations are positive. Faculty trips to HBCUs and relevant conferences are a potential “best practice.”
- ❖ It is positive that the percentage of offers and enrollments has remained relatively stable despite a shrinking pool.
- ❖ The College is encouraged to address climate to enhance retention.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ It is positive that departments are encouraged to aggressively identify and recruit underrepresented faculty candidates. The College should consider a college-wide strategy and support for the departmental efforts.
- ❖ It is commendable that the College has invested in recruitment at the senior faculty ranks; this strategy has positive implications for retention.
- ❖ Contacting colleagues nationally to identify promising PhDs and junior faculty from underrepresented groups is a positive strategy.
- ❖ The College is encouraged to develop a College-wide systematic mechanism for sustained recruitment of staff from underrepresented groups.
- ❖ The College is encouraged to clarify strategies for retention of junior faculty.

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

- ❖ Beyond courses which are multicultural by nature, it is unclear how diversity is infused into the broader curriculum of the College.
- ❖ It is commendable that diversity is a significant component of the First Year Seminars. Also commendable are the requirement of an additional non-western, pre-European domination, or non Judeo-Christian course for B.A. Programs, and additional diversity course requirements for eight majors.
- ❖ It is positive that Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) supports an inclusive research agenda that recognizes scholarship of diversity. It is unclear how information about the opportunities for RGSO support is communicated to scholars from underrepresented groups.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ It is positive that advancement to professional and leadership positions is available for women and underrepresented staff.
- ❖ Other than the staff fellowship program, it is unclear what structured processes exist for targeting underrepresented faculty and staff for leadership experience and opportunities.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ More explanation is needed about how the administrative consolidation of the Departments of African and African American Studies, Labor Studies and Industrial Relations, and Women's Studies supports diversity goals.