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**Feedback on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Eberly College of Science**

The Eberly College of Science provided a great deal of documentation that supports only limited (mixed-positive) change in the critical numbers supporting diversity efforts. The College appears to be doing all the right things with limited results. The College Update differed significantly in terms of content, format, and volume of information from the 1998 Strategic Plan, which made it difficult to determine whether targets established in the original plan were accomplished, e.g., the establishment of an advisory system for disabled college members, the establishment of targets for hiring women, and the establishment of endowed chairs/professorships for minorities. The current update is clearly more comprehensive and provides a good overview of the College's activities and efforts to foster diversity. Despite a concerted effort on the College's part to increase the diversity of its student population and faculty, success has been limited. In addition, the College's efforts with regard to supporting underrepresented staff in terms of development, recruitment, and retention could be improved.

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The College of Science has an active/productive College Climate and Diversity Committee comprised of a broad pool of individuals.
- ❖ The role of the Multi-Cultural Coordinator (Director of Science Diversity Initiatives) appears well defined.
- ❖ The College has created a climate website.
- ❖ While the College provides a definition of diversity, the response did not clearly indicate how the understanding of diversity is demonstrated within the College.
- ❖ It is also not clear that the College's definition of diversity and the University's diversity initiatives have been discussed with students based upon the information provided in the update.
- ❖ Discussion with staff about the University's diversity initiatives is also not evident based upon the information provided.

RESPONSE: In response to these last three bullets, the College has designed the following plans as a method of disseminating the college's operational definition of diversity and a discussion of the college and university diversity initiatives to faculty, students, and staff:

- ***To develop and distribute to faculty, students, and staff annually a summary fact sheet of University and college issues relating to diversity, the college's operational definition of diversity, and appropriate University policies and contact offices.***
- ***To make use of the college Climate and Diversity Committee web site as an informational and help resource to engage the college community on issues that relate to climate and diversity.***
- ***The college climate committee will continue to reflect the diversity of the college, will include students, faculty, and staff, and will include representatives from all of the departments. In addition, each department will have a mechanism for collecting and responding to feedback on issues and concerns relating to climate and diversity.***

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ There is funding to support the minority colloquium speaker series.
- ❖ The College has a confidential, interactive website through which climate concerns are aired, however, results or outcomes were not provided.

RESPONSE: The Diversity and Climate Committee in the college solicited confidential input from the college community via a web-survey tool. As a result of the responses from this

survey, the following major activity areas for the committee were chosen; these address issues that surfaced in the data:

- *Faculty/staff relations and staff morale*
- *Junior faculty mentoring and general climate*
- *Marginalization of female and senior faculty*
- *Student advising*
- *Equity and morale issues for Instructors/Lecturers*
- *Isolation/departmental interactions*
- *Host showing of the movie “The Color of Fear” for the college during MLK week, 2002*
- *Student involvement in “The Big Picture”, a college-wide, open-house type event to inform the full college community about the missions of the college.*
- *Establishing links with the Commission for Women*

In addition, a specific objective in the college’s strategic plan for 2002-2005 is:

“Improve the climate for minority students and other students in the college by seeking improvements in all points of contact.

Improving the climate in the Eberly College of Science for all its members is an on-going process. We have shared responsibility for this process across the college. A welcoming and inclusive climate is grounded in respect for others, and this respect must be visible in our day-to-day environment and interactions.

We will initiate a campaign in the college to address all major locations of contact with our students; every place of contact should be welcoming for all students, and we will seek to ensure that minority students in particular feel welcomed. (For example, doors should have windows so that entering an office is less intimidating, staff members should greet all students and faculty immediately, and office displays should be multi-cultural and inclusive.) The college is committed to finding the resources to make the appropriate changes to our facilities, displays, information provided, etc.

- *Ensure that every department has a Climate and Diversity Committee and that there is a link between the departmental committee and the college-level Climate and Diversity Committee.*
- *Charge the departmental Climate and Diversity Committees with developing plans to improve the look and feel of places in the department where we interact with students. Focus on creating a respectful, multi-culturally welcoming environment.*
- *The dean will provide resources over a three-year period to support the recommendations of the committees.*
- *We also plan to have training so that each individual who works in these contact areas is clear about their personal role in fostering a welcoming climate for all.”*

- ❖ Good examples are provided regarding response mechanisms to climate issues, including informal mechanisms such as HR Director meetings, junior faculty discussions and focus group discussions.
- ❖ The methods used to communicate support for diversity appear weak, e.g., three e-mails from the Dean to the College community were cited as examples of demonstrating visible support.

RESPONSE: A number of other examples of methods used to communicate support for diversity are given above and several others were given in our original report. They are:

“The Dean is a focal point for leadership on this issue. He includes discussions of diversity and the efforts to foster diversity and create a welcoming and supportive environment for all in the College during college executive committee meetings, in his annual presentations to departmental faculty meetings, in the annual new faculty workshop, and during lunches with the female faculty in the college. The Dean also communicates broadly with the whole community on Climate and Diversity issues. For example, an email message concerning sexual harassment went to the entire community early this fall, and two other email messages with statements about Climate and Diversity were sent to College faculty and staff later in the semester.

Through the President’s Opportunity Fund, the President, and the Provost have provided financial assistance for hiring faculty members from underrepresented groups. The Dean provides financial assistance from College funds for these hires. The combination of University and College support provides substantial encouragement and incentive for the departments.

This year the College initiated a program aimed at bringing role models for students of color and female students through our college. The Dean has offered to pay half the expenses for any prominent scientist of color or prominent female scientist who is brought in to be a colloquium speaker. He is also offering to pay an additional honorarium to these guests if they will give a lecture to one of our large undergraduate classes.”

Our plans for distributing a summary fact sheet on the issues and policies related to diversity will strengthen our communication of support for diversity throughout the faculty, students, and staff of the college.

- ❖ Systems of accountability and a structure to support diversity are not apparent.

RESPONSE: The main structure or organizational entity in the college with responsibility to support diversity is the college Climate and Diversity Committee. The dean of the college is ultimately accountable for the diversity initiatives and results in the college; the Climate and Diversity Committee reports to the dean. In order to strengthen the systems of accountability in the college the following plans have been formulated:

- *Each department will institute a mechanism for collecting and responding to feedback on issues and concerns relating to climate and diversity; the dean will require semi-annual reports from the departments to the Climate and Diversity Committee.*
- *Throughout the college we will specifically identify those responsible for implementing plans and achieving goals, and Department heads will have the primary responsibility for achieving these plans and goals within their departments.*

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ A good breadth of examples are provided demonstrating undergraduate and graduate recruitment initiatives for underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Financial packages are in place for underrepresented graduate students for as long as satisfactory progress is made towards the degree.
- ❖ Although numerous recruitment programs are in place at the College targeting underrepresented groups, the College has experienced decreases and/or flat undergraduate and graduate enrollments of underrepresented groups (with the exception of international students) according to ‘97/’00 data tables.

RESPONSE: We agree that despite very substantial effort and dedication, we have barely kept even. Our progress has certainly not been what we hoped to achieve.

- ❖ “The response to recruitment and retention strategies that have been most successful” is weak especially with regard to citing evidence of successes. The successes are difficult to measure when the statistics reflect a downturn. For example, Asian American enrollments declined from 1997 to 2000.

RESPONSE: Our uneven progress requires that we consider alternative or additional strategies. We plan to hold focus groups and to examine those strategies which other units and universities have found to be “best practices” as ways of addressing this issue.

- ❖ Despite “daily meetings with the Associate Dean, multicultural coordinator, and faculty advisors”, the results are discouraging in regards to retaining students of color.

RESPONSE: The students who do graduate from the college go on to some of the most prestigious medical and graduate schools in the country. The retention programs which have been implemented in the college have helped to increase those numbers. However, retention in technical disciplines continues to be a serious pipeline issue, and we are working diligently to increase the pool of diverse scientists who are trained at Penn State. We will continue to evaluate our programs and to examine those strategies which other units and universities have found to be “best practices” in addressing the retention issue.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The College’s Chemistry department ranks third among the top 50 departments nationwide in the percentage of female faculty.
- ❖ The College purchased the departmental rosters from the Minorities and Women Doctoral Directory to facilitate the recruitment of underrepresented faculty.
- ❖ The College has “personalized” retention efforts to focus retention strategies at the departmental and individual levels to include monetary support and reduced teaching and/or service loads where significant.
- ❖ There is no evidence of successful staff recruitment strategies.

RESPONSE: Here again, our progress has certainly not been what we had hoped to achieve.

- ❖ The College recognizes that there is a lack of diversity within the local community which contributes to the low percentage of minorities in the college’s workforce; citing lack of diversity within the community is not a proactive response.

RESPONSE: Our college is certainly not alone in facing this issue. We plan to work with other units and the Office of Human Resources to develop more proactive approaches to recruiting and retaining staff members from under-represented groups. Two possible ideas are to reveal the ethnicity of the applicants to supervisors during the early rounds of the selection process and to post opportunities outside the university more frequently. Both approaches should give us the opportunity to increase diversity among the group of individuals interviewed for staff positions.

- ❖ While increases in the number of female faculty (tenured, tenure-track, professor, associate, and assistant professor ranks) as well as slight increases in the number of faculty from various underrepresented groups are observable in the ‘97/’00 data tables, minority representation among staff for the same time period has declined.

RESPONSE: Same response as for the bullet above. Purposeful, proactive approaches are needed and will be developed.

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

- ❖ There is no consistent/cohesive structure throughout all departments in the College to incorporate a multicultural curriculum.
- ❖ The response to how the College has advanced the University's diversity agenda through research and teaching is weak.
- ❖ The response to how diversity is integrated into the curriculum of the College lists future goals/activities; however, it does not indicate any current practices.
- ❖ The College perceives a barrier between science and culture that limits the diversity impact in the curriculum. This is not a proactive response to integrating the curriculum.

RESPONSE: In response to all of the comments on challenge 5, we agree that there is little evidence of a multi-cultural curriculum in the college. We will initiate an effort to develop multi-cultural courses in the college course offering, including financial incentives for course development. We will include in this an effort to add multi-cultural aspects to all of our introductory courses. Also, we will expand our efforts to advance the University's diversity agenda through research on teaching and learning among the diverse group of students enrolled in courses offered by our college. This last initiative is described in the college's strategic plan for 2002-2005.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The report provides examples of successes in the development of female faculty, such as Administrative Fellow appointments and CIC Academic Leadership Program Fellow appointments.
- ❖ The response to this challenge is weak, particularly with regard to development opportunities and support for minority staff and faculty.

RESPONSE: Progress here has not been as good as we might have hoped for. This year we are nominating a minority faculty member for the CIC Academic Leadership Program. For our minority tenure-track faculty members, achieving tenure is the most important prerequisite to leadership development. We purposefully focus our efforts and energies in mentoring them to maximize their research and teaching accomplishments. As our minority faculty members achieve tenure, we hope to bring them into leadership roles in the college, such as committee chairs, departmental leadership, CIC Academic Leadership Programs, PSU leadership programs, etc.

- ❖ Approaches for development of leadership and management skills specifically for underrepresented staff are not evident. Funding is noted as evidence of support for professional development of all staff, but the funds are not specifically targeted to underrepresented groups.
- RESPONSE: We are going to work with minority staff members to help them develop strategies to increase their professional development and leadership skills. For professional and leadership development opportunities for staff members from under-represented groups, we plan to offer units significant financial incentives.***

- ❖ The College plan equates women's initiatives with underrepresented group impacts.
RESPONSE: We are pleased that we have had some success in diversifying college leadership and management in terms of gender. We hope to build on that success by extending to underrepresented groups similar opportunities to move into either leadership roles in the college or into opportunities which foster their advancement.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The College established a Climate and Diversity Committee and funding support to enhance the recruitment of faculty from underrepresented groups
- ❖ Systems of accountability to ensure the realization of the University's diversity goals are not presented.
RESPONSE: Although we state clearly that the Dean is accountable to ensure the realization of the University's diversity goals, we did not delineate how that accountability is currently shared down through the college organization, including the responsibilities and accountabilities of the department heads, committee leaders, individual faculty, and dean's office staff. Every unit will have a mechanism for collecting and responding to feedback on issues and concerns relating to climate and diversity. We will work to make it clearer how our integrated policies support the University's diversity goals. For example, we will have faculty, staff, and department heads specifically address how they have contributed to supporting the University's diversity initiatives in their annual reviews.