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Feedback on Progress Implementing A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003 Potential Best Practices

This document highlights potential best practices identified by the teams that evaluated each Penn State unit's update in their progress in implementing the Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003. The teams did note some very promising progress, innovative approaches, and effective mechanisms for fostering diversity at Penn State that deserve to be highlighted as potential best practices. For more information on the practices listed, see the corresponding section of the [Framework updates](#).

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Several colleges have definitions of diversity that serve as potential models:
 - [Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley](#) envisions a diverse community “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 on and utilized throughout the diversity strategic plan, is based on the Penn State non-discrimination statement and focuses on multitudinal components.”
 - [Capital College](#) defines diversity thus: “The strength and resilience of a living community is a reflection of its diversity. The exclusion or removal of any group or individual from the community disrupts the dynamic interrelationships essential to the community, diminishing the community’s integrity and well-being. Only communities rich in diversity are able to respond to a changing environment and hence, only those communities will exist.” While Capital College continues to direct efforts aimed at under-represented groups by seeking balanced representation of both domestic and international ethnic and racial groups and women; the College has broadened the scope of diversity to include other groups such as individuals with disabilities, military veterans, returning adult students, and persons of all sexual orientations.
 - The [Schreyer Honors College](#) defines diversity broadly to include population differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, abilities/disabilities, veteran status, international status, language, political persuasion, and regional or geographic origins, as well as different talents, interests, ideas and creativity.
 - The [College of Health and Human Development](#) definition of diversity is excellent and inclusive of all types of human differences: “Our mission is to promote a climate of inclusiveness for all people in the College of Health and Human Development, and in the larger University. We propose to work toward this goal through increasing knowledge and visibility of diversity issues related to age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and other human differences.”
 - [Penn State Great Valley](#) defines diversity by breaking it into several parts including the spectrum of diversity, a definition of diversity, a diversity mission statement, our beliefs about diversity, and diversity-related values.
- ❖ Diversity Committees:
 - Students serve on the [Schreyer Honors College](#)’s diversity committee, in fact, three of the ten members are students. This demonstrates the seriousness with which the college takes the input

- of students as well as their capitalizing on the opportunity to learn how to best share information with the student body.
- The Campus Diversity Committee at [Penn State Erie, the Behrend College](#) is chaired by the #2 campus executive officer and is well positioned to address diversity issues.
 - The diversity committee in the [College of Health and Human Development](#) is proactive, sponsoring multiple workshops, visits from distinguished scholars, and recommending the formation of a college diversity award.
 - [Office of Undergraduate Education](#) offers significant diversity programming for the University community, and partnerships with community organizations.
 - The [University Libraries](#) Diversity Committee is well-defined and active.
- ❖ Communication approaches:
- A variety of approaches are used to communicate an understanding of diversity within the units of [Research and Graduate School](#).
 - The [Penn State Altoona](#) diversity definition was developed with input from campus constituent groups and distributed widely to the campus community.
 - The [Smeal College of Business Administration](#) maintains two well-defined multicultural coordinator positions and the Diversity Task Force.
 - The Dean of the [College of Education](#) uses his column in the College newsletter to comment on the College's progress toward diversity goals.
 - The [Penn State Great Valley](#) Diversity Action Council strategic action plan and goals reflects efforts to reach all areas within Great Valley and includes a mechanism for tracking progress on diversity.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ [The Commonwealth College](#) location at Fayette Campus makes immediate response to an incident of intolerance, informing the entire campus community about the specific incident and stating that such activity has no place on campus and will not be tolerated.
- ❖ The [Capital College's](#) First Response Team assembles College employees with expertise in communications, psychological counseling, law enforcement, and intercultural affairs to collect information, establish a support system, and counsels senior administration on possible responses when an act of intolerance is reported.
- ❖ The award winning "Cultural Luncheon Series" features informative lectures focusing on many different countries and encouraging faculty to share their personal familiarity and experience of diverse cultures with the campus community ([Commonwealth College](#), DuBois Campus).
- ❖ In [Student Affairs](#), all staff are required to annually complete a minimum of three hours of diversity training, and pre-professional preparation for graduate students. Overall, [Student Affairs](#) exhibits good integration of Division-wide and individual approaches.
- ❖ Each unit within [Finance and Business](#) has a designated diversity representative who communicates directly to the unit head about climate issues. Finance and Business also is open with results from climate surveys.
- ❖ The [College of Agricultural Sciences](#) communicates diversity initiatives and assessment results using a variety of methods (e.g., Web sites, open forums, and advisory committees) to multiple constituents of the College, including those in the public arena.
- ❖ The [Penn State Great Valley](#) allocates a budget to the Diversity Action Council. The fact that this committee has the largest standing budget of any committee at Great Valley demonstrates a concrete commitment to diversity.
- ❖ The [Research and Graduate School](#) has committed significant resources (\$1.7 million) to further diversity initiatives.
- ❖ [Office of Undergraduate Education](#) held the "First Year Seminar Best Practices Conference."
- ❖ [Penn State Altoona](#) has conducted a campus climate assessment and is currently implementing intervention strategies based on the results.
- ❖ [Penn State Erie, The Behrend College](#) has taken actions in response to needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. improved nighttime lighting).
- ❖ [University Libraries](#) created a diversity collection.
- ❖ The [College of Earth and Mineral Sciences](#) offers its staff members partial re- imbursement for expenses, incurred while furthering their education, above and beyond the PSU tuition discount, through its Staff Centennial Fund.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ [The College of Arts and Architecture](#) offers scholarships for underrepresented students at Charter High School of Art and Design (CHAD).
- ❖ [Abington College](#) initiatives regarding recruiting and retaining a diverse student body include faculty participation in student/family recruiting visits “Footsteps to the Future,” White Williams Scholars Foundation, mentorship program, “Minority Orientation Program,” and Academic Enhancement Program.
- ❖ The [School of Information Sciences and Technology](#) is pursuing an array of creative and proactive strategies for recruiting students from underrepresented groups, especially considering the size and infrastructure of this new School. Collaboration with other units and outreach to families of prospective students are particularly promising strategies.
- ❖ The [College of the Liberal Arts](#) offers financial support and scholarships that benefit underrepresented populations; supports faculty trips to Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and encourages faculty participation in relevant conferences.
- ❖ The development by of relationships between the [College of Communications](#) and high schools and Historically Black Colleges and Universities has led to the diversification of the student body and created long term channels for sustaining that commitment.
- ❖ [Intercollegiate Athletics](#) recruiting for sports teams involves in home visits, campus visits, and follow-up coaches. A contact list and information about multicultural resources available at Penn State is distributed to minority student athletes.
- ❖ [Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley](#) emphasizes marketing, orientation, and retention efforts targeted to underrepresented students.
- ❖ The Academic Computing Fellows program in [Information Technology Services](#) has a long history of success and continued support.
- ❖ [Development and Alumni Relations](#) offers FastStart, a mentoring program which teams first-year students from African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian and Asian/Pacific American backgrounds with a faculty/staff member, and an alumnus/a, to help ensure that students flourish in their new environment and get their careers off to a fast start.
- ❖ The Graduates in Earth and Mineral Sciences (GEMS) alumni activities and other initiatives in The [College of Earth and Mineral Sciences](#) stress personal contact with students.
- ❖ The [Eberly College of Science](#) participates in several programs and consortiums aimed at increasing student diversity, notably the National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering and Science (GEM).
- ❖ The [Penn State Great Valley](#) has cultivated prospective external partnerships with Lincoln, Cheyney, and Lockheed Martin.
- ❖ [Office of International Programs](#) offers Diversity Grants-in Aid to extend study abroad opportunities to students from underrepresented groups, including students with disabilities. Office of International Programs also participates in The International Hospitality Council, a town/gown volunteer organization, which helps foster international diversity and awareness in the community, especially in the schools.

- ❖ The [Smeal College of Business Administration](#) provides full tuition and stipends for all second year minority MBA students.
- ❖ [Enrollment Management and Administration](#) created a new position to recruit students in New York, and reallocated positions to better support Bunton-Waller, Academic Advancement, and Penn State Opportunity Grant Programs.
- ❖ [The College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center](#) locates and recruits graduate and medical students from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups through the use of Minority Recruitment Days for Medical Students and Graduate Students.
- ❖ [University Relations](#) attends to the importance of presenting an inclusive and welcoming image of Penn State in all publications and provides assistance in developing materials to target underrepresented groups in recruiting.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ [Eberly College of Science](#) has partnered with [Educational Equity](#) in creation of postdoctoral positions.
- ❖ [Student Affairs](#) includes student staff as an important part of its workforce. Student Affairs also targets underrepresented student and staff populations in its staff recruiting efforts; notable efforts include use of IAMDIVERSITY.COM, and have sent letters to members of targeted student groups asking them to consider work opportunities within the Division.
- ❖ Formal mentoring for faculty and staff is a good model offered by several units, particularly [Commonwealth College](#) locations at Dubois and Worthington Scranton; and [College of Arts and Architecture](#).
- ❖ [School of Information Sciences and Technology](#) includes diversity representation on search committees.
- ❖ The [Capital College](#) has successfully recruited female faculty using a variety of approaches, among which is the analysis of short lists to assess diversity representation.
- ❖ [Information Technology Services](#) has several processes for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, including a recruitment and development program for staff in lower grades (16-18, which are 81% female) that were interested in pursuing a career in information technology, and a Professional Development Program for underrepresented groups that provides a three-year training program of progressively more responsible assignments and guarantees a standing position within ITS at completion.
- ❖
- ❖ The [College of Engineering](#) conducts exit interviews with appropriate questions to determine why members of underrepresented groups left the university.
- ❖ [Eberly College of Science](#) purchases the departmental rosters from the Minorities and Women Doctoral Directory to facilitate the recruitment of underrepresented faculty. The College has also had success with identifying qualified candidates early in their graduate training, establishing contact, and making offers of employment before the individual is really on the job market.
- ❖ The Affirmative Action Office and Diversity Support Center conducted workshops for [Smeal College of Business Administration](#) Search Committee and Department Chairs to recruit a more diverse workforce.
- ❖ [The College of Medicine and Milton S. Hershey Medical Center](#) advertises positions with minority organizations and maintains relationships with organizations of underrepresented groups. Recruitment strategies include a pilot Minority Recruitment Program to introduce minorities and females to the organization, assist them with identifying available positions within the workforce and provide resume building and interviewing skills.
- ❖ The [College of Engineering](#) offers an Administrative Fellows Program to support the College's commitment to provide career development opportunities for engineering staff members. Since the program's implementation in 1991, 21 people have participated in the program of which 18 were women and 1 minority. Sixteen former fellows have been promoted to higher graded positions.
- ❖ Also within the [College of Engineering](#) is the PREP program, designed to recognize, reward, and retain exceptional staff employees within the College by providing every staff employee the potential for two promotions within grade.

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

- ❖ The work of the [College of Arts and Architecture](#) with the Hamer Center provides an excellent example of how research, service and teaching have been integrated to provide students an opportunity to be engaged with underrepresented and underserved groups in a diverse community.
- ❖ [Educational Equity](#) and the [College of Agricultural Sciences](#) have partnered to pilot the *Infusing Multicultural Perspectives into Higher Education* curriculum infusion initiative to analyze and enhance diversity content in the College's courses.
- ❖ [Penn State Berks-Lehigh Valley](#), takes an inclusive approach to integrating diversity into the curriculum with faculty research initiatives such as contemporary American literature by women of color, Cuban writers in exile, and the lives of Jews in Europe during the last century.
- ❖ [Schreyer Honors College](#) emphasizes understanding of domestic diversity within a national and internal context. The college offers five signature courses that are diversity related, and collaborates with departments across the university and offers seed grants to initiate additional diversity courses for the College.
- ❖ The [University Libraries](#) has created a Diversity Collection Group, earmarked funds to obtain diversity materials, and established start-up collection funds for new African American scholars.
- ❖ [The Dickinson School of Law](#) lists a variety of courses that support multiculturalism and diversity in the curriculum, and efforts are underway to offer international experiences to the Dickinson School of Law students and to bring international lawyers to the Dickinson School of Law.
- ❖ Visiting minority scholars from academia and industry is a noteworthy component in diversifying the [College of Health and Human Development](#) course content.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The [Commonwealth College](#) includes members of underrepresented groups in strategic planning committees, campus senates and College senate.
- ❖ Leadership and management opportunities offered by [Capital College](#) include nominations for participation on University-wide commissions and task forces; academic Leadership Forum; Academic Leadership Program in conjunction with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation; and promotion of women and members of underrepresented groups to managerial positions.
- ❖ Staff from underrepresented groups in [University Relations](#) are offered support for professional development opportunities such as conferences and in-house offerings.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The [School of Information Sciences and Technology](#) is commended for proactively building a system for diversity as it builds the organization. The set of strategies to accomplish the College's four specified objectives demonstrate important concrete efforts to meet this challenge.
- ❖ The position of multicultural coordinator in the [College of Communications](#) was elevated to the level of Assistant Dean, thereby having the authority and the time to be highly effective in helping the college reach their goals, particularly with respect to students.
- ❖ Financial commitment is demonstrated by the [Capital College](#) through the funded diversity committee and extensive programming with the community. In addition, the diversity committee has an advisory committee.
- ❖ The [Schreyer Honors College](#) is engaged in ongoing efforts to diversify its external advisory board and faculty advisory committee.
- ❖ In designating both a Diversity Action Team and a senior member of the Unit leadership to monitor diversity activities, a system of accountability in the organization is ensured within [Outreach and Cooperative Extension](#).
- ❖ Examples of organizational change within the [Research and Graduate School](#) are given:
 - A database and an on-line system to track McNair, CIC, and International graduate applicants,
 - Formal agreements with the United Negro College Fund and others, and
 - Dissemination of diversity related funding opportunities.
- ❖ Initiatives within [University Libraries](#) include:
 - Shifting of responsibility for diversity recruitment to the Associate Deans,
 - Creation of a full-time coordinator to work with people with disabilities,
 - Appointment of CQI teams to help diversify the workforce, and
 - Creation of a diversity study room in Pattee.
- ❖ The [College of Education](#) has enacted several organizational changes to support diversity, including:
 - Redesign of the Office of Multicultural Student Services,
 - Redesign of a major endowment fund to support graduate students from underrepresented groups;
 - New venture capital funds which have been used to support diversity related projects;
 - Providing seed money for new assistant professors' research;
 - Streamlining of the World Campus program to reach increasingly diverse audiences;
 - Partnerships with universities around the world to enhance faculty and student exchange; and
 - Significant changes to the guidelines for faculty search committees, which emphasize the diversity goal.