A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State
Spring 2010 Review

Analysis and Next Steps

Presented to
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Introduction

Penn State is a leader in diversity strategic planning, particularly through our robust review process and emphasis on accountability. Dr. Daryl Smith, who was our featured speaker at the spring 2009 Best Practices in Diversity Strategic Planning Workshop and whose research on the imperative of diversity in higher education has informed our efforts, has characterized Penn State as being a frontrunner in our leadership commitment and support for diversity planning. She also cites the capacity of the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity to coordinate this work, create momentum for progress, and take the lead for the next generation of this effort, which consists of building institutional capacity for diversity, inclusion, and equity, along with enhancing our ability to measure and demonstrate our success.

Our efforts toward building our capacity and measuring our success have been our focus and will remain so over the coming years. We continue to utilize an organizational learning approach, analyzing our practices and outcomes and using that information to guide our next steps. At this time as the future direction of the *Framework* in upcoming planning cycles is being considered, it is critically important that we continue such an approach and carefully consider the lessons learned, needs, and stakeholder input in moving forward.

The 2010 review teams were invited to provide observations and recommendations, addressing areas such as characteristics of effective or ineffective plans and updates, what needs to be in place in order to perform at an acceptable level, the relationship of diversity planning to general planning, and where we are now and how we can "raise the floor" for increased diversity progress. The feedback ranged from specific suggestions to broad themes. A compilation of review team feedback can be found in Appendix A. The review team feedback as well as observations of Educational Equity staff who facilitated the team process form the basis of our analysis of progress thus far and recommendations for next steps.

The Review Process

Our comprehensive and participatory review process remains our signature strength. The public availability of final materials on the Web is a unique feature of the process and one that underscores and enhances our accountability. Final documents were posted on November 1, 2010, followed by an announcement to the University community on the L-Diversity listserv, Faculty/Staff Newswire, and Student Newswire.

The final materials posted on the Educational Equity website demonstrate an exceptional commitment to produce diligent and thorough evaluations that maintain the high quality of our reviews. As we have heard before from team participants, the work is intense and rewarding and provides insights about the University that are otherwise not transparent. The comments below from team participants illustrate these points:

- The team chair and the Educational Equity staff make a tremendous difference.
- The review process is well managed and thought out.
- I found the whole experience to be very helpful in understanding what is happening at several campuses and within several of our schools. While it was a lot of reading, the whole experience was very worthwhile.

The 2010 review, like the 2004 review, was a concurrent review that looked at both the final unit updates under the 2004–09 *Framework* and the new unit plans under the 2010–15 *Framework*. As such, it was a very demanding process and required a considerable time commitment from each team. The concurrent review, plus the fact that we were entering our third planning cycle, meant that extensive background material had to be considered in reviewing each document. Many team members commented on the amount of background reading necessary to conduct the review, especially in comparison to a midpoint review such as we had in 2007. Team members seemed to have more on their plates in terms of their everyday work duties. Due to these aspects of the review process, our staff also worked harder than usual on accuracy, consistency, and general support of team processes.

As always, the highest emphasis is placed on the integrity of the process and the results. The process remains confidential until final materials are posted on the website. Teams make honest and thorough evaluations, and units have an opportunity to respond. The public availability of final materials assures accountability. While the process is time intensive, we consider it worthwhile for the rich picture it reveals.

Where We Stand Now

Reporting

A number of units demonstrated strong planning and reporting skills that supported progress toward their diversity goals. Characteristics of effective reporting include:

- Continuity and progression between the unit update and plan
- Well written documents
- Well-constructed tables and charts with cogent data
- Use of <u>results</u> of data/information gathering tools (surveys, etc.) to drive and monitor progress
- Use of existing tools and data (Faculty/Staff Survey, EIS) and effective design of tools to capture additional data (climate surveys that include student feedback, etc.)
- Precision in concepts and terminology, including terms such as "diversity," "underrepresented/underserved," etc.
- Accountability in authorship and process for planning, implementing, and reporting
- Prioritization
- Evidence of robust and ongoing commitment, time spent, and data used in support of planning, implementation, data/information gathering, and reporting
- Information and context that helps reviewers understand the unit and its culture (brief overview, organizational chart, etc.)
- Descriptions of best practices with sufficient information and detail needed for teams to verify this identification and for other units to adopt similar practices (Qualitative and indirect measures of outcomes success may be appropriate as some practices are not amenable to quantitative measurement)
- A balanced and thoughtful report that includes efforts that have been less successful and the corresponding challenges that the unit faces
- Utilization of University resources to diversify search pools and support retention and success of diverse employees (AAO, OHR, etc.)
- Evidence of leadership and appropriate use of unit resources

The review teams noted considerable variance across units in their effectiveness of reporting. Several plans and updates were disappointing, and some units still need to make substantial progress in their implementation of unit *Framework* plans. The need for accountability in reporting and implementation were prominent in the review teams' observations. Team observations regarding reporting can be found in Appendix A.

Generally, there is a preponderance of listing, monitoring, and tracking ("project-itis"); reporting on activity tends to substitute for measuring progress. Considerable inconsistency, ambiguity, and confusion exists in concepts and terminology associated with strategic planning and diversity. Units tend to claim University-wide initiatives as unit efforts (e.g., participation in Hire Power, Affirmative Action Office search committee briefings, and including a diversity advocate on campus faculty searches). Units also tend to include general efforts as "diversity initiatives" with no indication of how they connect to or enhance diversity. Incorporating diversity within the daily operation of units appears to be uncommon, such as routine disaggregation of data.

Implementation

The review teams noted that unit commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity is clearly evident. However, there is variance across units in their level of progress. With this review, we saw more units that were making significant progress and/or performing at very strong levels; this sense of overall progress tended to make the chronically

weaker units stand out more. Team observations regarding implementation can be found in Appendix A. Areas of need noted by the review teams where progress still needs to occur include:

- Use of "intelligent" metrics and performance indicators to monitor and drive progress (the current focus tends to be on reporting on activity rather than measuring progress)
- Programmatic focus reflective of a broad and inclusive understanding of diversity (the current focus is still heavily on race/ethnicity)
- Stronger reward and recognition systems for faculty for diversity-related efforts; expectation of diversity contributions included in promotion and tenure
- Staff hiring, retention, reward, and recognition programs, particularly mentoring
- Formalized professional networks and mentoring programs
- Town/gown efforts to improve climate for diverse students beyond campus borders, particularly for campuses in more conservative and less diverse areas
- Attention to diversity at the graduate level, including efforts through the Graduate School
- Appropriate focus and expectations of multicultural coordinator positions (currently, staff in these positions are often responsible for the bulk of duties related to diversity, which relieves other key players of important diversity-focused responsibilities; also, it appears a trend may be emerging of adding too many "nondiversity" responsibilities to the multicultural coordinator position, thereby diluting the position's core functions)
- Availability of diversity training, including advanced training
- Adequate resources, particularly at the campuses; and inclusion of campuses in University Park-based efforts and programs
- Preparation of leaders (from faculty and staff) and succession planning for leadership
- Clear and consistent articulation of the benefits of diversity as part of the core message of the University, along with emphasizing the link between the capacity for diversity/inclusion and economic viability and contribution to the state and national prosperity
- Continued accountability

Best Practices
The complete Best Practices document is available online. It includes both an analysis of essential elements and the compilation of best practices and potential best practices as identified by review teams. In general, the following elements can be considered essential to effective planning, assessment, and reporting:

- Active, visible support from executive leadership, both at the unit level and for Penn State as a whole
- A clear relationship between diversity planning and general planning
- Leveraging the expertise available within the unit by broad participation in diversity planning, implementation, and reporting
- Sustaining momentum throughout the planning cycle

Units that have made strong progress in fostering diversity keep diversity in their thinking throughout all aspects of unit operation and recognize diversity among the core values and competencies that define "excellence." Our analysis of best and potential best practices suggests the following approaches:

- Incorporate diversity into all aspects of unit operation and thinking and recognize diversity as an essential element of "excellence"

  o Align diversity planning and general strategic planning
  o Recognize diversity among the core values and competencies that define "excellence"
  o Allocate appropriate resources, including budget, staff, and space resources
  o Disaggregate data and monitor intergroup disparities
  o Coordinate central-unit and departmental-level efforts

- Demonstrate active, visible leadership commitment to diversity and accountability from top unit administrators

  - Include individuals with diversity expertise and interest on steering committees, advisory boards, leadership bodies, and hiring committees
  - Designate a cabinet-level diversity position within the unit to help coordinate the implementation of diversity programs and initiatives; however, this position should not be solely responsible for diversity endeavors such that other offices and individuals within the unit do not fully participate and take ownership of advancing diversity goals
  - Ensure collaborative and interactive communication with all levels of stakeholders and constituents within and outside of the unit (including students, student organizations, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and academic and industry partners); cross-unit collaboration across the University; and partnerships with community organizations and academic institutions (HBCUs, HSIs, Tribal Colleges, and Study Abroad exchanges) to advance diversity goals
  - Empower a dynamic diversity committee to actively address and facilitate diversity goals

- Use data and information to drive and monitor progress, inform decisions regarding programming and strategic initiatives, and ensure accountability

  - Implement well-defined "intelligent metrics" as strategic indicators of progress on diversity goals
  - Conduct regular self-assessment and have mechanisms for monitoring and interpreting progress
  - Implement mechanisms for identifying and responding to unit/campus climate issues and incidents

- Encourage and support utilization of University resources, data, and expertise to enhance diversity initiatives

  - Training and informational resources (HRDC, LGBTA Student Resource Center, AAO, and Educational Equity)
  - Search and hiring resources (AAO, OHR Dual Career Program; Diversity Recruitment Program, ONE Program, etc.)
  - Retention programs, mentoring, and leadership development programs for students, faculty, staff, and aspiring administrators
  - Data resources (EIS, FactBook Plus, Faculty/Staff Survey, access to national databases, climate assessments, and input from various stakeholders—including alumni and external partners)
  - Intercollege partnerships

- Dedicate persistent attention to diversity components in all aspects of the hiring, retention, and advancement process for faculty, staff, and administrators

  - Emphasize diversity as a core competency and one of the values that defines excellence
  - Cultivate long-term networking relationships with institutions, colleagues, community organizations, and professional organizations to support recruiting faculty, staff, and administrators
  - Appoint a diversity advocate on search committees
  - Recognize and reward individual and programmatic efforts to advance diversity
  - Emphasize diversity in activity reports, SRDP (staff), and Promotion and Tenure guidelines (faculty)
  - Emphasize retention by establishing professional development and mentoring programs for faculty and staff
  - Engage in succession planning and establish advancement programs that identify underrepresented/ underserved faculty and staff and who show leadership potential and interest, and help prepare them for advancement into top leadership positions

- Dedicate persistent attention to diversity components in recruiting, retaining, and graduating a diverse student body

  - Emphasize diversity as a core value that fosters excellence within the entire University community

- o Target networking and outreach efforts to support recruiting a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body
- o Provide scholarship support to academically talented diverse students, with attention to need-based aid
- o Provide academic, mentoring, and social support programs for at-risk students, particularly in key transition times such as starting college, change of campus, graduation, career planning, and entering graduate school, and provide students with opportunities to gain leadership experience

- Encourage innovative, collaborative, and coordinated curricular initiatives to support intercultural and international learning

  - o Incorporate the unit's diversity statement and the University's nondiscrimination statement on informational materials and, for colleges and campuses, course syllabi
  - o Infuse diversity in relevant ways throughout the curriculum
  - o Enhance experiences at Penn State and through study abroad by exploring opportunities for interaction and collaboration via technology
  - o Coordinate college-level approaches to curricular integration
  - o Coordinate academic and co-curricular activities around diversity themes

- Utilize broad and inclusive communication strategies

  - o Use multiple communication formats to engage a range of audiences and initiatives, disseminate information broadly, and target key populations
  - o Communicate and visually portray Penn State's commitment to inclusiveness and the benefits of diversity
  - o Discuss and gather information from stakeholders (e.g., focus groups, orientations, and diversity forums) with involvement of unit executive
  - o Share information and data regarding diversity goals and progress

Increasing Penn State's Capacity for Evaluation

With the 2010 review, we built upon the process improvements that were put into place with the 2007 and 2004 reviews. Review team observations regarding our process can be found in Appendix A.

Given the additional demands of a concurrent review of forty-five planning units, we increased the number of review teams from five to six. As with previous reviews, the teams were carefully composed to be representative of broad stakeholder groups throughout the University. Each team of approximately one dozen members included faculty, staff, students, and administrators, comprising representatives from Commission for Women, Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity, Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity, University Faculty Senate, campuses across the Commonwealth, and selected student organizations that represent diverse student constituents. Participation of students is important to the process; however, level and quality of participation has always been inconsistent. Identifying students who have an interest and experience for participating in the review and who are willing and able to follow through with the commitment remains challenging. With this review we worked closely with the Office of Student Affairs, rather than directly with student organizations, to identify students to serve on review teams. We will continue to explore the most effective routes for identifying students who are most likely to be active participants in the process.

Teams were chaired by administrators and faculty members with significant expertise and credibility. The broad composition of the teams contributed to their insights and credibility. A considerable amount of preparation time was devoted by the review team members and chairs, especially with the concurrent review. It was advantageous that two of our team chairs had previously served on a review team and that each review team had one or two members who had previously served.

Each team's process was facilitated by a staff member from Educational Equity who attended all team meetings. Educational Equity staff provide consistency of the process, approach, and tone across all teams and from one review cycle to the next. The continuity function was particularly challenging for this review. About twenty hours of staff time was devoted for each unit review. In anticipation of the concurrent review, which is especially challenging, plus the fact that only one of our staff had previously staffed a concurrent review and two of our staff and an alternate were completely new to the process, we again devoted considerable staff training prior to the start of team meetings, and we continued to meet throughout the spring semester with regular debriefing meetings to maintain consistency and highest quality across all six teams. Our diligence in this area resulted in a relatively smooth process. **For future reviews, in addition to continuing rigorous staff training, we may need to consider factors such as staff experience and anticipated workload within the overall nature of the review; we want to remain as flexible as possible in order to best utilize the expertise of our diversity planning analysts in staffing the review teams.**

With the 2010 review, we asked for an earlier submission date and relied more heavily on ANGEL for managing documents. The December 1 date for submission of unit updates and plans allowed more time for Educational Equity staff to preview the documents and prepare them for the teams' use. For the first time, documents were provided to teams in PDF format on ANGEL, with hard copies available only by request. Many of the documents were available prior to winter break, which many team members found helpful. In cases where units requested an extension or where they simply did not submit materials until later, the missing documents were evident to the team members. In contrast to previous reviews, at this point most of the team members were familiar with ANGEL and found it to be an efficient means of document management in a secure environment. However, one team in particular experienced some technical difficulties and had a chair and several members who were unfamiliar with ANGEL, which made it difficult to the point of the team recommending finding an alternate method for document and process management. **Overall, the practice of providing documents to the teams via ANGEL was very helpful to facilitating the teams' work and, based on this success, in future reviews we will continue to request materials by December 1 and make them available prior to the break. Alerting units to this practice may provide additional incentive to meet the submission due date.**

Based on the success of our previous orientations for review team chairs, we continued and strengthened that practice with the 2010 review. A two-hour orientation provided chairs with an overview of the review process, their role, the role of Educational Equity staff, logistical information, and approaches to effective reviews. We also continued the practice of providing orientation information at the charge meeting and devoting a first meeting to team building and logistical concerns. **Given how far into the institutionalized process we are and the resulting increased need to optimize the continuity and integrity of the process, it will be beneficial to devote more time to chair and team training. This process may entail providing more informational presentations regarding the state of the University, how units have been advised in producing their reports, and unit overviews. It may also entail adding an additional team meeting at the start of the process for "practice" or dry run reviews to address the teams' learning curve prior to actual reviews.** Specific suggestions included:

- A presentation on the history of the *Framework* and review process
- A general overview of the "landscape" of the University, including organizational, administrative, and political issues
- Insight into how the units have been coached on reporting and implementation, guidelines for planning and reporting, and effective use of alternate formats
- Information about Affirmative Action guidelines and search committee briefings
- Information about preferred and inappropriate terminology
- Characteristics of effective planning and reporting
- Characteristics of effective and balanced team review and feedback (including overview comments for each Challenge in addition to particular specific items, and recognition of positive aspects that may not be able to be as data-informed as desirable)
- Opportunity to practice review and feedback

Through the 2009 final update, we have maintained continuity of the assessment questions and the data presented to units. As was evident in the 2007 review, the numerous assessment questions that guided unit reporting have

become cumbersome and have in many cases met the point of diminishing returns. Very clearly, those units amenable to learning through the process have done so; those that have not likely will not progress further under this rubric. Thus, the new streamlined structure for the 2010 plans and, more importantly for the 2012 midpoint and 2015 final reviews, is both welcomed and needed. This significant shift will be most evident in the midpoint and final updates, which will no longer be driven by a multitude of questions but will instead be succinct and evidence-based, rather than narrative-based. **As such, it will behoove us to include in team training an emphasis on the expectations of the 2010–15 streamlined approach for reporting and planning and the consequent shifts in emphasis:**

- from measuring activity to **measuring impact, with appropriate thresholds for success**
- from micro **to macro levels, and avoiding eliciting a "project-itis" and "report-itis" effect**
- from detailed narrative and processes **to performance indicators and demonstrated outcomes**
- from narrow operational concepts of diversity **to a broad and inclusive concept of defining diversity, including groups for which quantitative data are not as readily available**
- from operational reporting **to strategic initiatives, recognizing that initiatives in the plan and updates are strategic and may not represent all of the efforts the unit is making**

The review teams were concerned with strengthening the follow-through and accountability of the process. Several of the teams encountered plans that they found to be unacceptable in relation to the University's progress overall, and they strongly believed that those units should be required to rework their plan in consultation with Educational Equity. The following comment is illustrative:

- The provost and vice provost need to press some executives about accountability and quality control, and it is not beyond the pale to return some documents to units for rework with the message, "this isn't acceptable." Two characteristics of strong plans and updates are leadership and resources, so a strong message to unit leaders about the priority of diversity and diversity planning has to be part of improving the process.

The teams were assured by their Educational Equity representatives that the follow-up meetings with the provost and vice provost were significant discussions and that substandard performance would be addressed. Indeed, as the meetings took place and materials were returned to Educational Equity for posting on the website, several units did make significant changes to strengthen their plans, in addition to the response comments they returned with their feedback documents.

Increasing Penn State's Capacity for Implementation, Reporting, and Demonstrating Progress

Increasing our Capacity to Provide Resources and Support to Units
Review team observations regarding support to units can be found in Appendix A. In preparation for the 2010 review, Educational Equity received an unprecedented number of contacts from the strategic planning units across the University. Each of the forty-five strategic planning units is assigned an Educational Equity liaison upon whom they can call for assistance as needed. Most of the colleges and administrative support units and several of the campuses contacted us for some level of clarification or assistance. In many cases we were asked to participate and make informational presentations at diversity committee meetings as they began the process of preparing their updates and plans, and we were even invited to facilitate full day diversity strategic planning retreats by several units. We hope that this trend will continue and we stand ready to offer greater assistance in the implementation stages as well.

We continued our course of improving the data available to units by working with the University Budget Office to provide the data snapshots we have customarily provided, which consist of nearly forty tables. Additionally, to assist units in their own data gathering endeavors, we provided information on gaining access to FactBook Plus, EIS, and a student retention and graduation data tool offered by Enrollment Management. Use of Faculty/Staff Survey data was also encouraged. **We have encouraged units to disaggregate the data they commonly use for institutional decision making, and it will be necessary to continue to stress the importance of "closing the loop," of monitoring disaggregated and diversity-related data and using results for decision making**

purposes. Central institutional data is now more accessible to units through EIS, FactBook Plus, and other tools developed by the University Budget Office and Enrollment Management. However, it will be necessary for units to have access to mechanisms that ensure consistency of data and ease of use. **Thus, as previously planned, Educational Equity will no longer provide data snapshots to units in advance of the Framework updates. We will continue to work with the University Budget Office to make the EIS modules that they developed for our use available to units to aid in unit level data gathering. These modules will provide consistent parameters for data reporting and will correspond to data presented in the *Framework* Strategic Indicators. Additionally, we are developing a "data guide" which will assist units by outlining some approaches to data gathering and providing links to selected EIS modules.**

The review teams recommended a vigorous follow-through after the review to better support units in implementing their plans and to provide better guidance in implementation and reporting. The review teams noted that many units are in need of extensive training in what strategic planning and implementation encompasses, as evidenced by their updates and plans. Central resources are available, but it appears that more units could take advantage of those services and should be encouraged to do so. **Recommended approaches included:**

- **Encourage units to consult with their unit representative from Educational Equity and also draw upon the insight of unit members who have served on review teams**
- **More proactive follow-up with units that have been consistently weak**
- **Work more closely with OPIA to deliver workshops, and to identify and communicate with those in each unit who are working on planning, implementation, and reporting**
- **Continue Best Practices workshops and include training on specific examples such as strategic planning concepts and terminology, definitions, exemplary planning matrices, etc.**
- **Develop a list of available resources** (Educational Equity, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment/Quality Advocates, OHR, Diversity Talent Bank, Dual Career Program, Diversity Recruitment Program, ONE Program, Hire Power, HRDC, LGBTA Student Resource Center, Affirmative Action Office, Faculty/Staff Survey, etc.)
- **Focus support on Challenge 6: Diversifying Leadership and Management and Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals**
- **Continue Educational Equity leadership in fostering a culture of evidence, developing strategic performance indicators and disaggregating data**

Accordingly, in addition to continuing our work with any units seeking assistance, we plan to identify five units that could benefit most from more targeted support. These units will be offered the opportunity to partner with a team of Educational Equity staff who can work with them to maximize their progress and offer additional resources to strengthen their diversity strategic planning, implementation, and assessment.

Sustaining Momentum and Fostering Exchange of Ideas: Best Practices Workshops
Based on the insights of the review teams and Educational Equity staff, we propose modifying the format and broadening the content of the Best Practices in Diversity Strategic Planning Workshops. The audience will expand from unit executives and two members of their diversity strategic planning/implementation/reporting team. **We are developing plans to present a series of workshops, some of which will be presented in conjunction with the Quality Advocates series and/or sponsored by other University entities (e.g., the University Faculty Senate Committee on Educational Equity and Campus Environment, Schreyer Institute, etc.). Workshops will range from bringing in speakers who address areas of the *Framework* where additional progress is needed (e.g., faculty involvement and diversity and inclusion in curriculum) to more "how to" oriented workshops aimed at those who are developing update reports.** Preliminary plans include:

- Spring 2011:
  - Quality Advocates Session "Benchmarking Best Diversity Practices," Update of 2010 *Framework* review and panel of high performing units March 29, 2011.
    http://www.equity.psu.edu/workshop/sp11/index.html

- Fall 2011:
  - *Framework* overview presentation, open to the University community to raise awareness of the history of the *Framework* and how the review process works
  - Guest speaker, Thomas Nelson Laird (in planning)

- Spring 2012:
  - Full-day workshop with plenary speaker, panel, and workshops, focusing on intelligent metrics, gathering and using data to drive progress, and approaches to emphasize on populations for which hard data are more difficult to gather or are nonexistent

Developing a Culture of Evidence: Framework Strategic Performance Indicators

To advance the *Framework's* emphasis on accountability and complement the rich and complex data gathered through the *Framework* review process, we developed a set of *Framework* Strategic Indicators, which were posted online in fall 2009. The indicators provide a concise, data-driven profile of Penn State's diversity progress under each of the *Framework* Challenges. In developing the *Framework* Strategic Indicators, we sought to maintain alignment with the Penn State Strategic Indicators associated with the general strategic plan. We also utilized existing data wherever possible. The *Framework* Strategic Indicators also encourages attention to groups for which data are less readily available. For the purposes of monitoring and reporting unit level *Framework* progress, units are encouraged to adopt relevant indicators as applicable to the unit; units are also encouraged to develop additional unit-specific performance indicators that demonstrate their progress under each Challenge. With the *Framework* Strategic Indicators being in place, in addition to providing units with data snapshots as we have in the past to aid in the preparation of *Framework* updates and plans, we also directed units to our *Framework* Strategic Indicators website. **As noted above, we will continue to work with the University Budget Office to make the EIS modules that they developed for our use available to units to aid in unit-level data gathering, and we will provide units with a "data guide" that outlines approaches to data gathering and provides links to selected EIS modules. We will also update the *Framework* Strategic Indicators periodically.**

Increasing Our Ability to Stay Informed and Share Information Beyond Penn State

Educational Equity staff involved in the *Framework* process typically attend at least one regional and/or national conference per year to help keep our staff abreast of trends in the diversity arena, programs, and initiatives of other colleges and universities, and to make presentations regarding the *Framework* and other diversity structures at Penn State. Since 2007, we have given eight conference presentations at conferences such as NCORE (National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education); National Conference on Diversity, Race, and Learning; and American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) conference on Diversity, Learning and Pathways to Inclusive Excellence.

Through our conference presentations, several individuals and institutions have gleaned insight from our work and also refer colleagues to our presentations. We have had numerous follow up contacts, visits to Penn State from teams from other institutions, and invitations to present information to other institutional groups. We have a keen sense that we remain in the forefront of diversity strategic planning, implementation, and especially assessment. Almost a dozen universities have visited Penn State and/or invited us to visit their institution specifically in relation to diversity planning and assessment. Universities that have made significant contact with Penn State about diversity planning and assessment since 2007 include:

- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of California, Berkeley
- Clemson University
- Louisiana State University
- Auburn University
- Rutgers University

- Association of Theological Schools: invitations in two successive years to facilitate full-day workshops that include the Penn State approach to diversity and strategic planning
- Rochester Institute of Technology: invitation to present an overview of Penn State's *Framework* history and next steps at RIT's Campus Day of Dialog
- Missouri State University
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)
- Grand Valley State University
- Purdue University
- The College of William and Mary

Additionally, we have had interest from the American Enterprise Institute, which gathered information for a report on Hispanic education and included information on structures that support Penn State's comparatively high graduation rates for Hispanic students.

We also worked closely with the Education Advisory Board, providing a considerable amount of information and example materials that resulted in their inclusion of *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004–09*, specifically in regard to advances in faculty diversity, in their 2008 University Leadership Council National Best Practice report, *Breakthrough Advances in Faculty Diversity: Lessons and Innovative Practices from the Frontier*. This publication was followed up by a series of presentations through the University Leadership Council, which were received positively. A representative from the Education Advisory Board wrote us in 2009 to say:

> "It has been close to ten months now since we first presented the profile of your work at Penn State to provosts and other academic administrators in the University Leadership Council, and I wanted to share some of the excellent feedback we have received. Those who have seen the presentation have been as impressed as we have with your diversity planning process. In addition to sharing the material with the approximately 60 provosts who attended our 2008 Provost Roundtable Meeting series, I have also, in the past seven months, had the opportunity to give the presentation of our faculty diversity project at seven universities across the country, and audiences consistently find your planning process of the most interesting practices profiled in the presentation."

The correspondence went on to indicate that there was interest in implementing processes modeled after our process and that they had shared our website and contact information with some of their constituents.

Additionally, we submitted an application for the 2010 National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education Leveraging Excellence Award. While we were not selected for the award, we were a strong finalist and invited to provide profile information about the *Framework* for inclusion in the NCCI best practices database and to reapply in an upcoming year. Our application would have been strengthened by more information on how other institutions have applied our approach. We plan to apply again in an upcoming year and will be able to include statements from some of the many institutions and organizations that have gleaned insights from our approach.

Obviously we are "Penn State proud" of the interest our diversity planning process has garnered, and we plan to continue our efforts to share our successes.

Next Steps: Preparing for 2016 and Beyond

The message has come through loud and clear from all sectors of our diversity stakeholders, through the review process, and in other formal and informal conversations about our process: **the *Framework* planning and review process has been a significant driver of progress, and without it, attention to diversity is likely to waver, or in many cases fall off completely, which is unacceptable. Thus, the future direction for the *Framework* beyond the 2010–15 planning cycle must be done in such a way as to build and strengthen our capacity for diversity, not diminish it.**

There are basically five main components that must stay in place in order to maintain our diversity progress for the planning period of 2016 and beyond:

- **The *Framework* must retain its distinct identity with equal emphasis and must retain the robust emphasis on assessment and accountability that has driven our progress over the previous planning cycles.** Of particular concern in this regard is the tendency of units to include general efforts as "diversity initiatives" with no indication of how they connect to or enhance diversity. This persistent trend is particularly troubling in the context of the relationship of diversity planning to general strategic planning. Our stakeholders strongly believe that if diversity were to be treated as a "given," rather than an explicit expectation with accountability in overall strategic planning, that it would be easily ignored or inadvertently overlooked, thus undermining and damaging the diversity progress we have worked so hard to achieve. At the same time, diversity goals, initiatives, and impacts should be fully integrated and considered throughout the plan, including attention to intergroup disparities and impact on the diversity climate for underrepresented/underserved populations.

- **The *Framework* must remain comprehensive, addressing its distinctive seven Challenges and four dimensions in terms of students, faculty and staff, and administration.** The current reference to the *Framework* within the 2010–15 *Priorities for Excellence* suggests primarily a student focus, and this emphasis was a point of concern for our stakeholders and review teams, especially when units placed less emphasis on nonstudent components.

- **Emphasis on intelligent metrics and strategic indicators must continue.** This point includes disaggregation of data by diversity components, attention to groups for which data are not as readily available and, most importantly, the use of data and information to monitor and drive process.

- **A *Framework* review process must remain in place to ensure accountability, and diversity stakeholders must be meaningful participants in that process.** Several possible models exist for how this interest can be maintained depending on how the 2016+ plan is arranged and how diversity planning is structured. It is essential that a critical mass of individuals who are stakeholders and have expertise and experience with diversity remain represented in the review process. It is also important that the meetings with executives, the provost, and the vice provost remain intact to discuss diversity progress. These discussions have been a significant factor in maintaining accountability.

- **Educational Equity and diversity stakeholders must be involved in the process of developing the 2016+ plan.** We have worked hard over the years to cultivate and maintain buy-in and trust from all of our *Framework* stakeholders. From the University administration and governance bodies through to groups of diverse constituents and individuals who have worked tirelessly over many years to support Penn State's progress with equity and inclusion, it will be important to continue this track to ensure that the needs and concerns of these stakeholders are addressed and that they perceive that their voices continue to be heard. The 2016+ process will require careful consideration and thoughtful information gathering and feedback across these groups in order to construct a new iteration of the planning process that maintains the trust and support of all of the communities it is meant to serve.