

Best Practices in Diversity Strategic Planning
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003
Friday, October 14, 2005

Workshop Summary Notes

Welcome: W. Terrell Jones

W. Terrell Jones, Vice Provost for Educational Equity, welcomed participants to this conversation about Framework planning and indicated that participation is reflective of leadership for the process. While other universities have diversity plans, Penn State is a national leader in diversity planning; no other process is as public or participatory.

Thinking Strategically about Diversity: Lessons Learned: Louise Sandmeyer

Louise Sandmeyer, Executive Director, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment noted that the importance of diversity is generally recognized, but how to accomplish diversity goals is often the question. Penn State has an advantage through the relationship of diversity planning to the University's strategic planning. Penn State has conducted strategic planning since the early 1980s and is now in the second five year cycle of diversity planning. It is important to keep the momentum going throughout the planning cycle; implementation is the key to success. Participants generated a list of factors that contribute to successful planning:

- ❖ Food
- ❖ Resources: people, time, ideas, money
- ❖ Pre-planning, setting up objectives
- ❖ Involve people on the team who can affect change
- ❖ Ability to adapt and be flexible
- ❖ Follow-up
- ❖ Talk to and learn from those who have already been successful
- ❖ High level of communication and consultation
- ❖ Approach diversity planning as a capital campaign would be approached
- ❖ Positive attitude
- ❖ Commitment to continuous attention and action, assign a point person with authority to shepherd
- ❖ Engage the participants, address the needs of participants
- ❖ A shared vision for what we are trying to accomplish
- ❖ Tenacity to overcome barriers and naysayers
- ❖ Accountability, consequences for inaction and reward for progress
- ❖ Goals and objectives that are obtainable with a reasonable stretch
- ❖ Create a sense of purpose, don't make assumptions that everyone knows the purpose

Based on lessons learned through facilitating Penn State strategic planning and chairing two *Framework* review teams, Sandmeyer identified eight essential elements of an effective strategic plan:

- ❖ A vision for the future that can inspire, call to action, touch the heart, engage the mind, and motivate action.
- ❖ Others who share the vision, especially engaged, committed leadership who will translate the vision into reality.
- ❖ Strategies to achieve the vision, it is necessary to think and act differently for change to occur. Focus on a significant few strategies that will make a difference.

- ❖ Data and information to measure progress and improvement. What gets measured gets done.
- ❖ A system of follow-through and appointed strategy managers.
- ❖ Resources, including time, people, money and space.
- ❖ A well-developed communication strategy to keep the community informed about progress and opportunities for involvement.
- ❖ A system to recognize and celebrate progress and accomplishments along the way.

In establishing communication strategies, the ideals of effective strategic planning form a good model. The document should be in daily use. Daily goals and activities can be aligned with the unit's strategic goals. The strategic goals can be used to guide decision making. The plan should be discussed regularly in department meetings. In this way, the plan becomes part of the leadership style of the unit and infused into its day to day operations.

When there is resistance to change, it can be helpful to set up mechanisms for involvement such as town hall meetings and conversations about what the individuals want to contribute and what changes should happen to make that possible. These conversations will reveal themes which can then be further discussed to identify which ones to connect with. This process is an on-going conversation. In strategic planning, useful questions to ask those who are resistant are "what can we do to fulfill your potential and how can you contribute to the good of the whole?" People may be less resistant when they have had a chance to participate in designing the changes and when they see that something happens because of the efforts.

Anti-Diversity Strategic Planning: Diversity by Design: W. Terrell Jones

In this activity, each table was asked to generate strategic priorities for a hypothetical diversity planning report. Half of the tables were asked to design a plan that was purposefully inclusive of diversity; the other half were asked to design a plan that was purposefully NOT inclusive.

Elements of inclusive plans included:

- ❖ Measure everything.
- ❖ Host activities (town halls, festivals) that reach across campus to develop a shared understanding of diversity.
- ❖ Conduct climate surveys and collect data.
- ❖ Use multiple approaches to measuring, including quantitative data in addition to qualitative and anecdotal evidence.
- ❖ Establish collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs to connect courses with co-curricular and service learning opportunities.
- ❖ Use short evaluations asking for what action steps are in place to reach diversity goals; what changes in curricula have happened; and what changes in leadership and management have led to changes to keep on the cutting edge.

Elements of non-inclusive plans included:

- ❖ Develop vision statements, strategies, informational materials, etc. but don't share them.
- ❖ Use only selected anecdotal evidence to establish success.
- ❖ Create a cumbersome process, then focus more on process than outcomes.

- ❖ Strive to have a student body that reflects the demographic makeup of the surrounding community.
- ❖ Hire and promote only from within and use appointed positions rather than searches
- ❖ Make course electives voluntary.
- ❖ Follow the motto “love all, serve all.”

It was noted that it may be easier to design a non-supportive plan because the actions may be reflective of the status quo.

Lessons learned through the Framework review process indicate several pitfalls:

- ❖ Little or no implementation activity in the years between updates
- ❖ A diversity committee without power or administrative involvement
- ❖ Reliance on only anecdotal evidence without additional supporting data

Suggestions for improvement included:

- ❖ Use metrics to measure and substantiate success.
- ❖ Utilize the expertise of resources such as the diversity officer within the college, the unit’s diversity committee, and the assigned liaison in the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity.

There are four reasons that people do not do what they are expected to do:

- ❖ The expectations are not clear. In that case, clearly communicate the expectations.
- ❖ They do not have the training. Provide the necessary professional development.
- ❖ They do not have the ability. Focus on the abilities they do have and don’t try to make them do what they cannot do.
- ❖ They do not want to. Work with the willing.

Successful change must involve the head and the hands; the heart is optional.

Breakout Sessions

Diversity and Curricular Integration:

Jamie M. Myers, Chair, University Faculty Senate; Chris Falzone, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs; John W. Moore, former chair, University Faculty Senate

Session handouts: application for US/IL certification; list of US/IL designated courses; list of top 50 US/IL designated courses.

John Moore presented a brief history of the diversity course requirement at Penn State:

A Brief History of Diversity in the General Education Curriculum
John Moore

My role today is to provide a brief history of Penn State's recent attempts to include diversity as a required part of its undergraduate curriculum. I will divide that history into five stages: 1) before 1990, 2) 1990-94, 3) 1994-97, 4) 1997-2004, and 5) 2004 to the present.

Before 1990, our first stage, PSU had no formal place in its curriculum for the study of diversity. During the 1980's, the Faculty Senate was well aware that universities across the United States were adopting required diversity courses that defined diversity in terms of race and gender. Our Faculty Senate debated the topic, but it had a hard time deciding just what it wanted. Penn State found little comfort in what other universities were doing. While some senators wanted a required course in race or gender, the majority argued that any such requirement should focus on the various ways in which people differ from one another. That split in perspective between the race and gender people on the one hand and the all-inclusive folks on the other has underlain all subsequent discussions from the late 1980's to the present. By 1990, a consensus had emerged that the broad definition would prevail. When diversity designations started to become attached to existing PSU courses, the first course approved was one in American Sign Language. The Senate proved prescient and well ahead of the nation in its broad definition of diversity for very early it allowed us to identify disability studies as something that belonged within our concept of diversity. The broad definition required us to ask: What are the ways in which we humans differ from one another? What makes us different? What makes us alike?

The second stage began in 1990. After years of attempting to find a way to include diversity as a required part of the curriculum, the Senate reached a decision. All students would have to take either one three-credit Diversity Focused (DF) course or twelve credits in four separate courses labeled Diversity Enhanced (DE). Such courses as English 139: Black American Writers would be Diversity Focused for all of its material dealt with a racial minority. So too would English 190: Women Writers. But, some courses possessed only elements of racial and gender considerations along with its principal concern. While, for example, a course called Contemporary American Authors did not have race or gender as its principal focus, it did include some African-American and women writers. For that reason, it was identified as Diversity Enhanced (DE).

This complex system of 3 DF credits or 12 DE credits enabled the legislation to be passed, and by 1990 Penn State had a diversity requirement. But, the bookkeeping complexity of this arrangement caused headaches for students, advisors, and the machines in the Registrar's Office. In 1994, the third stage began. In that year, the Senate eliminated the 12 credits of Diversity Enhanced. As a result, a three-credit Diversity Focused course stood alone as our sole commitment to diversity within the curriculum. That state of affairs continued until the General Education reforms of December 1997.

Those 1997 reforms, the fourth stage, had their origins in late 1995. Late that year, President Spanier and Senate Chair Peter Jurs formed The Special Committee on General Education chaired by Dean Robert Pangborn and charged it to 1) assess the current General Education program at Penn State, 2) identify and analyze General Education curriculum models appropriate to PSU and 3) recommend changes in General Education, as warranted, to the University Faculty Senate. In his personal address to the Special Committee, President Spanier stressed his hope that all General Education courses would include writing and an international

dimension. The committee took that international dimension very seriously for it reflected the then current national concern with globalization and the need to prepare our students for living in that type of world.

After nearly two years of discussions, the committee sent its report to the Senate in the Fall of 1997. The Senate discussed it in a forensic session and then passed it in December 1997.

The Pangborn Report made two recommendations that touched on diversity. First, it required all General Education courses to possess a number of active learning elements, one of which could be “the application of intercultural and international competence.” Second, it eliminated the Diversity Focused requirement. All Diversity Focused designations (DF) were to vanish within a reasonable amount of time. In their place, the Senate required all students to take three credits of a new requirement to be called “Intercultural and International Competence.” The label for this new type of course was GI, G for General Education and I for Intercultural/International. All existing DF courses were to be re-examined and re-approved according to the criteria set by the General Education Implementation Committee. DF’s were to become GI’s. Major headaches resulted from the recertification process by which old DF courses were made to comply with the new standards. Some departments and colleges have yet to recover from that recertification process.

In the year 2001, two major events occurred. In April, a group of African-American students called Gye N’Yame held a major sit-in at the HUB called the Village. As part of the subsequent agreement reached by Gye N’Yame and the administration, there was to be a review of the new GI requirement. For the next two and a half years, Gye N’Yame leaders met weekly with the Senate officers, African-American faculty members, and administration leaders to hammer out an acceptable solution to what the students had identified as a major hole in the Penn State curriculum. The students wanted a single GI course to be required of all Penn State students, and that course was to be called “Race in America.” A variety of logistical and practical problems made the implementation of such a single course to be required of everyone unworkable. But, the students had made it clear to all that the newly adopted requirement called “Intercultural/International Competence” was not satisfactory. Something better had to be devised.

On September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon as well as the plane crash in Pennsylvania indicated that the International Competence requirement was crucial and necessary. The Senate was hearing that we needed one required course dealing with American issues and another course dealing with international issues.

Stage five began in the Summer of 2001 when Senate Chair John Nichols charged the Undergraduate Education Committee to form a subcommittee to study the GI or Intercultural/International Competence requirement. That subcommittee reported its conclusions late in the Spring of 2003. It recommended that we adopt one course in United States Cultures and another in International Cultures. That recommendation appeared unacceptable because it would further increase the number of General Education credits. Penn State already had the largest number of required General Education credits of any university in the nation. Penn State colleges with highly structured programs subject to nationally established criteria and accreditation could not add an additional three credits to their graduation requirements. Part of their reluctance stemmed from the Provost’s campaign to locate all baccalaureate degree programs within the range of 120-124 credits. The subcommittee recommendation seemed doomed.

In December 2003, Senate Chair Christopher Bise formed a special Senate Committee called the Conference Committee that assembled representatives of the Undergraduate Education Committee, the Curricular Affairs Committee, and the Office of the Vice-Provost for

Undergraduate Education to reach a solution. That committee proposed just what the subcommittee had proposed: one three-credit course to be called United States Cultures and another three-credit requirement to be called International Cultures. The committee dropped the term *competence*. These courses, however, would not increase graduation requirements because both requirements were to be cross-listed with other General Education requirements. Haunted by the 1997 recertification process, the Conference Committee proposed a ready and easy way of identifying which courses were to be US Cultures (US) and which were to be International Cultures (IL). Once that ready and easy process was made part of the recommendation, the Senate swiftly approved what is now the current state of affairs.

Curiously, PSU was found to have many more courses that could fulfill the IL requirement. We were not teaching a sufficient number of courses dealing with our national culture, the very point that the Gye N'Yame students had made two years before.

This quick review of our attempts to include cultural breadth in the curriculum has revealed some consistent threads in Senate thinking about diversity issues in the curriculum. The Senate has always preferred the broadest possible definition, one that will include courses that deal with the many ways in which we humans differ from one another. Those who want a narrower definition frequently attack the Senate's welcoming attitude, but the Senate has consistently reaffirmed its preference for a wide, broad, and inclusive definition. By doing so, it has made our curriculum flexible and innovative, always open to new and unanticipated requests for inclusion.

Chris Falzone noted that the Faculty Senate is fast-tracking US/IL certifications through December 2005. He noted that there are many existing courses that may meet the criteria for designation and that those courses should be submitted for the expedited certification process by December 16, 2005. There are still considerably more IL designated courses than US courses, despite the fact that integration of US diversity issues into the curriculum was a major issue contributing to the redesign of the requirement. There is a need to focus on developing new content. Faculty should consider enhancing existing courses with appropriate diversity content to meet the designation requirements. When developing any course, faculty members are encouraged to be mindful of what it would take to make the course eligible for the US/IL designation and how to infuse diversity in a meaningful and valuable way.

Discussion noted that diversity curricula may not be as well implemented in some campus locations. This may be due to lack of administrative leadership, even in cases where there is a strong push from students. In other cases, campuses have developed very creative and interdisciplinary approaches to incorporating diversity in the curriculum. Strategies to augment diversity into the academic experience include using -97 (experimental) courses to develop and offer diversity courses; and looking at delivering US/IL designated courses through the World Campus as well as designating appropriate existing World Campus courses. Some campuses have had success in utilizing an e-learning consortium that gives some flexibility in providing US/IL opportunities. The Penn State Diversity Calendar provides information on various activities. At one campus, a course is selected around which diversity displays, activities, films and programming are designed; faculty now request for their courses to be considered for this supplementation.

In the past, some course proposals that were rejected were those more narrowly focused on more potentially controversial topics. It was noted that today the atmosphere is more responsive to proposals that focus on issues of race and ethnicity.

Study abroad opportunities are also an important but underutilized element. Colleges are encouraged to build course equivalencies into the program so that students can maintain progress toward degree while abroad. There are also programs, cooperatives, spring break programs, etc. that give an international and intercultural experience.

It was noted that we do have a responsibility to our students who study abroad to make sure that they have a knowledge of US social dynamics and how we perceive ourselves, because they are likely to be engaged in such conversations while they are studying abroad. The more exposure students have to the nature of the world outside of our society, the better for our students.

One college indicated approaching the issue of diverse curricula through creating a minor or possibly major program of study to focus on diversity issues in the discipline. It was suggested that many students do not have time and energy beyond their own degree program; building courses within a minor that would also be available to students outside of the college might be a useful approach.

As trends shift toward assessing outcomes, it may be difficult to assess diversity in terms of desired outcomes, what students ought to learn. It is easier to count credits. However, Jamie Myers noted that the ideal is that the diversity requirement not be about counting credits but about incorporating diversity as a part of every course and encouraging diversity experience as an integral part of education in the discipline. John Moore noted that Penn State has the largest general education requirement of any major university, yet how do we justify that in terms of outcomes. The goal is to give students experience with a wide variety of epistemologies, teach them to think from various academic points of view, and develop academic and intellectual flexibility. We must make these opportunities available; some students will respond and grow, while others may not. One college's approach is to longitudinally track how an experience affects a student's planning decisions.

Faculty buy-in may be difficult to achieve in some departments; there may be a prevalent feeling that course content is already packed and to "add" diversity content, there must be a corresponding sacrifice of quality. In this case, there may be a need to reassess what is "quality" in terms of the goals of the course. New perspectives in the field and industry/employer expectations must be recognized and prized.

Jamie Myers concluded the discussion by indicating that the fact that the US/IL list is longer than the GI list ever was indicates progress and a commitment to incorporating diversity into courses at all levels in the major. There are ways of curricular development that include diversity, no matter what the discipline. The curricular affairs committee has a representative for each College and for the University College who can serve as a reference in course development. The US/IL subcommittee is also a resource for advice. Faculty may apply for Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC) funding to supplement college support for expenses associated with course development.

Defining Diversity and Sustaining a Welcoming Climate:

Linda Higginson & Sharon Christ

Introductions and Opening Remarks

Review of morning sessions and how these PM sessions relate to the AM.

Will focus on Defining Diversity and Sustaining a Welcoming Climate

Why are you here:

- ❖ Assist in addressing this question
- ❖ Most difficult question of three
- ❖ On campus climate committee – learning
- ❖ Recruit students and want them to come into a welcoming climate – how do we create it?
- ❖ Defining diversity is a difficult task – hard to wrap your arms around
- ❖ More difficult as this challenge is not as well defined as others
- ❖ How do we keep these topics fresh after having the definition in place – best practices?
- ❖ Feel good about our definition – how do we compare/parallel other units?
- ❖ High turnover of faculty in our college – searches reveal that “climate” is an important piece of prospective faculty’s questions/concerns about coming or not coming to PSU
- ❖ Have gone from 2% to 26% percent diversity, but the climate has not changed – looking for how to accomplish this

Five questions:

- 1) How do we conceptualize the definitions of diversity?
 - ❖ How do we go about re-shaping the definition that works for our unit?
 - ❖ Reviewed several definitions.
 - ❖ Frustration on how the University defines diversity. How can you ask us how to define diversity if we don’t have any guidelines?
 - ❖ Discussion suggested that “lists” perhaps don’t work.
- 2) What is a welcoming climate?
 - ❖ Reviewed the definition that was provided within the *Framework*.
 - ❖ Easy to see that we don’t have a climate of civil interaction – how do we create a place where this civil interaction is evident? Teaching the “old guard.” Difference is not celebrated – in fact lose people of difference due to the climate.
 - ❖ Discussion of what is community?
 - ❖ People are afraid to admit that they are ignorant of something – so safe discourse and dialogue don’t occur.
 - ❖ Good idea to assess the climate and find out where folks are – where are the challenges. Sam Richards and Race Relations class.
 - ❖ Difference between creating a welcoming climate and sustaining a welcoming climate – how do we accomplish this.
 - ❖ What are repercussions for someone who does not help sustain a welcoming climate.
 - ❖ Setting the tone – what does that climate look like.
 - ❖ Natural connections – example – research projects/partnerships.
 - ❖ Everyone’s job to promote diversity, not just the job of those who are of disenfranchised groups, but should be part of the culture of the unit, so therefore it is everyone’s job.
- 3) How do we develop a shared understanding?
 - ❖ Campus Handout – Primary diversity stakeholders as example
 - ❖ Recommendation to do this exercise within units/colleges
 - ❖ Requiring all new F&B to do an orientation that includes diversity
 - ❖ Each of administrative units has to do mandatory diversity training each year
 - ❖ Diversity web site in F&B with links

- ❖ Economic tie-in to embracing and accepting diversity (example of media and the increase in inclusive pictures)
- ❖ Increased numbers is not necessarily an indication of climate.
- ❖ Incentives – included in faculty evaluations
- ❖ York student handbook – has their “diversity statement” on the back of all handbooks and in every building
- ❖ Although there is mandatory diversity training for staff, there is not the same requirement for faculty, who spend more time with students than do staff. Joint training would/could facilitate the beginnings of open discussions between "groups."

4) What action steps are needed to sustain a welcoming climate in our units?

- ❖ Action grid as example
- ❖ Change challenge 1 to “Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of the Realities of Diversity” – town/gown relationships
- ❖ Campus community partnerships
- ❖ Subtle undercurrents of harassment and discrimination
- ❖ Climate assessments
- ❖ Creation of departmental diversity committees rather than a college-wide or unit-wide committee
- ❖ Accountability is key!
- ❖ Provide anonymity
- ❖ Provide resources

5) How do we measure our progress? Action Steps? Outcomes?

- ❖ More important to measure impact over outcome.
- ❖ The impact is that people looked at things in different ways.
- ❖ Inputs vs outputs – what lens are you looking through?
- ❖ What’s missing in this question – what are we doing with the information we uncover? Where is the accountability? What are the consequences?
- ❖ Feel isolation from colleagues – need more feedback and networking with colleagues
- ❖ Discussion group – can we have a place where we could share information, ask questions, and have best practices – chat room on OVPEE web site? Place for networking and discussion.

Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body:

Shaun Harper, Andrea Dowhower, Cyndi Freeman Fail, and Teresa Hilgren

Shaun Harper

Recruiting a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Must move beyond a “passive” approach to recruiting where we assume that students are going to come to us simply because “We Are Penn State.”
- ❖ Start with students who are already here: why did you come? (e.g., academic reputation)
- ❖ Tailor the recruitment message to tap into what we discover are our strongest points with current students.
- ❖ What kind of “branding” do we do for ourselves among diverse populations?
- ❖ Move beyond “affirmative action” in a technical sense (i.e., we have X% of students of color at Penn State) to focus on creating a truly multicultural environment.

- ❖ Pay attention to literature and how it is used and don't rely on Web-based appeals, which may not be as accessible to diverse student prospects. All recruiting literature must send the right message about diversity.

Andrea Dowhower

Student Perceptions of Climate

- ❖ Within the past few years, overall, student perceptions of climate have improved.
- ❖ Students of color have been the least satisfied with the climate, both at the beginning of their Penn State experience (1st semester, first few weeks) and at the end of their first year
- ❖ There is some evidence that diversity programming can produce a backlash. The following quote exemplifies sentiments along these lines:

“I was all for diversity before I came to Penn State, but now I am sick of it.”

Cyndi Freeman Fail

Recruitment

- ❖ The major challenge we face now is the rising cost of tuition.
- ❖ In some cases, to be honest with prospective students, we've had to “counsel” them out of coming to Penn State.
- ❖ The recruitment process is an educational process that involves the entire family. You have to educate students and parents on the value of a Penn State education but also on the financial realities of Penn State.

Retention

- ❖ Students of color come not thinking that they are a “minority,” and then they start to experience stereotype threat. We need to provide them support to mitigate this threat.
- ❖ Sometimes our interventions need to be “intrusive.” If we need to go to the HUB to find a student we need to talk to, are we willing to do it?

Teresa Hilgren

Recruitment

- ❖ Have to be willing to try something that might end up being “unsuccessful.”
- ❖ Continually assess the value of specific interventions and make changes as appropriate.