Framework to Foster Diversity, 2010-2015

Penn State Altoona
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A Message from the Chancellor

As Chancellor, I am committed to leading our college’s mission of diversity and inclusion. At Penn State Altoona, our shared vision involves the establishment of an ongoing culture of diversity. Achieving this culture—both in terms of creating a diversity of ideas and a diversity of ethnicities—is an integral aspect of our success as a twenty-first century academic institution.

At Penn State Altoona, we recognize diversity as a source for cultural enrichment. We endeavor to enhance and diversify the culture of our community by uniting our constituencies and by establishing international partnerships.

We are committed to achieving diversity through the growth of our student body and our faculty and staff. As we note in Goal 3 of Penn State Altoona’s Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, we are dedicated to creating a more inclusive, civil, and diverse learning community. Indeed, the college’s recent update to its Framework to Foster Diversity shows that we have made significant progress in implementing our diversity initiatives. Yet we continue to recognize that it is important for our college to remain committed to equity and diversity in all its forms, as well as to continue to identify and implement improvements in these areas.

In the central Pennsylvania region, moreover, Penn State Altoona serves as a signal force in our community’s cultural development. We will continue to foster a diverse cultural environment by hosting nationally and internationally prominent speakers and performing artists, and by presenting an array of artistic and cultural events that celebrate local, national, and international cultures.

As history has shown us, the interaction of a diversity of ideas and peoples serves to improve our understanding of both ourselves and the world. By initiating academic curricula and cultural experiences that celebrate diversity in all its forms, we will succeed in preparing our students for rich and rewarding futures beyond the university.

Lori J. Bechtel-Wherry, Ph.D.

Penn State Altoona
Penn State Altoona Diversity Mission Statement

Penn State Altoona values and celebrates diversity in all of its forms. The educational environment of our Campus is enriched by the diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures that come together in a spirit of learning.

We value learning in all of its forms – classroom instruction, independent learning, co-curricular learning, faculty research, and study and improvement of our own administrative and academic processes. Learning involves developing an appreciation for people from different backgrounds and who exhibit diverse types of thinking.

At Penn State Altoona we proactively engage faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members to explore and experience various cultures and diverse life experiences that are available on campus and in the community. As a learning community we challenge and support each other to understand how various cultural backgrounds, life experiences, challenges, and orientations affect how we see the world. These interactions afford us the opportunity to broaden our worldview, as well as enhance our sensitivities and appreciation of diversity.

Penn State Altoona is committed to being a leader within the University and our community by fostering an environment where diversity in all of its forms is celebrated, affirmed, and vigorously pursued. It is our intent to create a campus community that affirms the dignity, value, and uniqueness of each person. It is our intent to aggressively pursue the recruitment and retention of a more diverse administration, staff, faculty and student body. Moreover, we want to ensure that the campus climate is welcoming and affirming for all persons.

Our goal is to graduate individuals who understand and appreciate the things we all have in common, as well as those things that make us unique. We strive to instill in them the skills, attitudes, and sensitivities that will be essential for them to be leaders and change agents in a diverse, multicultural world. (Est. 1998)
Penn State Altoona Definition of Diversity

Penn State Altoona values and celebrates diversity in all of its forms. The educational environment of our college is enriched by the diversity of individuals, groups, and cultures that come together in a spirit of learning. Penn State Altoona is committed to providing equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications. Penn State Altoona will not tolerate discrimination against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Prerequisites for Success
Successful and enduring diversity can only exist when certain factors and understandings exist on a campus. These prerequisites for success include the following:
http://asunews.astate.edu/DiversityStrategicPlanDraftFeb17.htm

A. The university must continue to make a significant financial commitment and investment in people and programs, most notably in the areas of faculty/staff recruitment and the academic development of minority students.

B. An understanding must exist that the challenges surrounding the issue of diversity must be shared, and met, by all campus members. It cannot be the responsibility of a limited number of campus participants.

C. Diversity does not simply happen. Rather, it is the result of coordinated and sustained efforts of all members of the campus community. It requires that the university be innovative and willing to take perceived risks and implement different strategies to build and sustain diversity throughout the campus.

D. All campus members must be willing, to some degree, to embrace different peoples, ideas and methods in significant and meaningful ways throughout the campus community.
Challenge 1: Develop a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

Goal: Build an infrastructure that embraces, promotes, and supports diversity by establishing a clearinghouse for diversity activities, seeking strong partnerships to advance diversity goals, and implementing marketing strategies for programs and services that target diverse groups in the Penn State Altoona community.

Strategy: Redesign the marketing plan for the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity to include an overhaul of the website to provide more information on programs, resources, and services.

Action 1.1: Create an online brochure that can be accessed by faculty, staff, and students.

Action 1.2: Make the website more user friendly.

Action 1.3: Provide a link in which students, faculty and staff can provide direct feedback on programs and services.

Action 1.4: Establish and maintain an online Diversity Resource Center.

a. Catalog the books, videos, etc. held by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity and make the list available to the campus as a resource.

b. Collaborate with off campus resources to provide easy access to diversity understanding for students, staff, faculty, and open to community members in the Greater Altoona area.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of University Relations

Timeline: Spring 2010

Strategy: Develop a customized diversity training program to include multicultural staff and faculty retreats and professional development workshops geared towards assisting employees and new hires in understanding and contributing to the College’s Diversity efforts.

Assigned to: Penn State Altoona’s Division of Student Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, MOSAIC Committee, and Human Resources in consultation with the College Faculty Senate.

Timeline: Fall 2011
**Strategy:** Collaborate with the Office of Student Life to incorporate a diversity awareness program as a part of new student orientation and student organization leadership training.

**Action 1.4:** Design a program for new student orientation to enhance the awareness and sensitivity of students to diversity issues on Penn State Altoona’s campus.

**Action 1.5:** Include diversity training as a part of preparedness training for orientation leaders, campus ambassadors, resident assistants and other student groups representing the campus.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Life

**Timeline:** Fall 2011

**Strategy:** Establish an assessment instrument that measures the level of knowledge, attitudes, and skills of Penn State Altoona’s faculty, staff, and students in relation to various aspects of diversity.

**Action 1.6:** Explore offering one workshop per semester that focuses on assessing and implementing diversity into student learning outcomes and course rubrics.

**Assigned to:** Office of Planning and Institutional Research, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, MOSAIC committee

**Timeline:** Spring 2011

**Strategy:** Revamp the MOSAIC Committee and reestablish goals.

**Action 1.7:** Implement a Campus Climate Survey for Fall 2010

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

**Timeline:** Fall 2010
**Strategy:** Create a series of cultural celebrations that highlight the cultures of underrepresented groups.

**Action 1.8:** Create campus wide steering committees to plan programs for nationally recognized months such as:

- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Martin Luther King Day: Breakfast and Day of Service Annual Event
- Black History Month
- Women’ History Month
- Asian American Pacific Heritage Month
- Disability Awareness Month
- Pride Week (LGBTQ)
- American Indian Heritage Month

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity  
**Timeline:** Fall 2010

**Strategy:** Establish Religion Education Awareness Week to educate and make the campus community aware of the different faiths represented on campus and in the community.

**Action 1.9:** Collaborate with various campus ministries to develop relevant programming.

**Action 1.10:** Seek partnerships with local religious organizations to develop collaborative programming.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Religious Affairs staff  
**Timeline:** Fall 2010

**Strategy:** Create a series of workshops entitled “Dialogue across Difference” designed to facilitate open communication among faculty, staff, and students concerning diversity.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, MOSAIC Committee, Student Life committee of Faculty Senate  
**Timeline:** Spring 2010
Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

Strategy: Diversity Mission Statement Visibility Project

Action 2.1: Visibly display copies of the Diversity Mission Statement in all major academic and student services offices at Penn State Altoona.

Action 2.2: Work with community organizations to develop partnerships and encourage opportunities for them to display a visible commitment to diversity through appropriate signage.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Council, and Office of University Relations

Timeline: Spring 2012

Strategy: Ensure that those who have front line contact with students/community are acknowledging visitors appropriately and creating a welcoming environment for all.

Action 2.3: Develop a professional development workshop designed to create a welcoming environment.

Assigned to: Office of Human Resources, Staff Advisory Council, Office of Student Affairs

Timeline: Fall 2010

Strategy: The Director of Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will work with the MOSAIC Committee, Faculty Senate, and others to provide Safe Zone Training once a semester in support of LGBTQ faculty, staff, and students.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, MOSAIC Committee, Faculty Senate

Timeline: Spring 2011
**Strategy:** Campus Climate Open Forum

**Action 2.4:** The Director of Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will work with the Director of Student Affairs, the Chancellor, and campus constituency groups—i.e., Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, and Staff Advisory Council—to create a Campus Climate Open Forum.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate, SGA, Staff Advisory Council.

**Timeline:** Fall 2010

**Strategy:** Encourage international students and students from underrepresented groups to participate in Fast Start and to serve on campus wide committees. Fast Start Altoona is a mentoring program designed to help first-year students from African American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American backgrounds, as well as other students interested in accelerating their transition into college life.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Strategy:** Creation of a Diversity Ambassador Program to provide upper-class peer support to special population students and diversity organizations. These peer leaders will also conduct and market diversity programming.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Life

**Timeline:** Spring 2011

**Strategy:** Creation and distribution of the Synergy Newsletter, which will highlight the diversity efforts of individual campus members and program. In addition, it will provide information on current trends, research, and stories relating to diversity and equity.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

**Timeline:** Fall 2010
**Strategy** Creation of Diversity Service Recognition Awards and the reinstitution of the MOSAIC Award. The purpose of these awards would be to encourage excellence in students, faculty, and staff related to activities that contribute to the overall diversity goals of the university.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, MOSAIC Committee

**Timeline:** Spring 2010

**Strategy:** Explore the creation of an annual Diversity Summit to be hosted by Penn State Altoona.

All members of the Penn State Altoona community would be invited to attend the summit, which would be scheduled to take place annually. This event will present interactive sessions designed to increase awareness of and encourage open dialogue regarding diversity issues. During the summit, the aforementioned Diversity Service Recognition Awards would be presented to campus units/individuals to recognize their diversity efforts.

The Diversity Summit supports Penn State Altoona’s strategic goals to foster a supportive campus community and to enhance student learning. Supervisors would be encouraged to allow staff to use administrative leave or release time to attend one or more of the sessions, and faculty would be encouraged to bring their classes to the summit.

**Assigned to:** MOSAIC Committee, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Diversity Student Organizations

**Timeline:** Spring 2011

**Strategy:** Create an Adult Mentoring Program

**Action 2.5:** In collaboration with the Adult Center, the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will form a mentoring program designed to assist adult students with their transition to Penn State Altoona. This program may consist of small informal workshops/group sessions held monthly.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Adult Center, Health and Wellness

**Timeline:** Fall 2010
Strategy: Establish a Multicultural or Social Justice Center.

Action 2.6: Identify space for the center.

Action 2.7: Establish mission, environment, and usage guidelines.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs, Faculty Senate

Timeline: Fall 2013

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

Strategy: Assess the Fast Start Program annually in terms of recruitment, retention, and quality of programs.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Timeline: Spring 2010

Strategy: Create career development sessions for Fast Start mentors.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Career Services

Timeline: Fall 2010

Strategy: Explore, through working with the Office of Residence Life and Faculty Senate, to determine if a living learning community called “Mosaic” could be encompassed in the framework of the residence halls. This pilot project would begin with one floor in which students who are committed to diversity would conduct programs and awareness activities, in addition to a major service project in conjunction with a faculty member. This item is directly tied to the growth model for the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity outlined in Challenge 7.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Faculty Senate, Office of Residence Life, Housing and Food Services.

Timeline: Fall 2011
Strategy: Develop a recruitment plan designed to increase diversity in the undergraduate student population.

Action 3.1: Work collaboratively with the Coordinator of Minority and Special Admissions to provide opportunities for student recruits to interact with the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity during visits.

Action 3.2: Work with Academic Affairs to include a diversity component in FTCAP.

Action 3.3: Increase minority enrollment to 14% students of color in the full-time undergraduate student body.

Assigned to: Academic Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, and Admissions

Timeline: Fall 2013

Strategy: Provide increased connections for commuter students.

Action 3.4: Hold focus groups with commuter students to assess needs.

Action 3.5: Work with the Office of Student Life to provide programming designed primarily to attract commuter student participation.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Student Life

Timeline: Fall 2010

Strategy: Create an educational diversity speaker series called Finding Your Path to introduce students to faculty of color.

Action 3.6: Recruit faculty members to share their life experiences with students about becoming successful in their college careers and beyond.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Timeline: Fall 2010
Strategy: Explore opportunity to create a Zero Tolerance for Hate link designed specifically for the Penn State Altoona campus community.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Timeline: 2010

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Strategy: Explore establishing an online Human Resource diversity training module for Faculty and Staff search committees.

Action 4.1: All members serving on search committees would be required to complete this training prior to participation on a committee.

Assigned to: Human Resources, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Council

Timeline: Spring 2011

Strategy: Encourage search committee chairs to utilize minority databanks to advertise vacant positions as appropriate during the search process.

Assigned to: Human Resources

Timeline: Ongoing

Strategy: Continue development of recruitment strategies to attract a diverse population of administrators, faculty, and staff members.

Action 4.2: Targeted advertisements in research journals, media outlets, and conference-related venues in order to recruit minority candidates.

Action 4.3: Continue to develop diverse pools of applicants for faculty and staff positions in all divisions.

Action 4.4: Create peer-mentoring opportunities for minority faculty, administrators, and staff.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Human Resources,
Academic Affairs

**Timeline:** Fall 2010  
**Strategy:** The Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will work with Human Resources to extend diversity programs and webinar offerings from the University Park campus to Penn State Altoona.

**Action 4.5:** Create a cross-culture professional development training program to enhance both theoretical and practical knowledge and to improve employees’ customer service skills.

**Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies**

**Strategy:** Explore the possibility of increasing course offerings that address diversity issues in the classroom and curriculum.

**Action 5.1:** Encourage the creation of permanent courses focused primarily on issues of diversity.

**Assigned to:** Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs  
**Timeline:** Fall 2010/ongoing

**Strategy:** Continue to enhance diversity resources for faculty and students for the purpose of strengthening the library’s collections in the area of diversity research and in support of a diverse curriculum.

**Action 5.2:** Seek feedback from faculty, staff, and students on media resources that could enhance the library’s diversity resources.

**Timeline:** Spring 2011

**Strategy:** Promote and develop experiential opportunities for diversity. Increase undergraduate students’ curricular and co-curricular exposure to diverse cultures.

**Action 5.3:** Explore the establishment of a Resident Assistant cultural exchange program with an international university.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Residence Life, Office of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Chancellor
Timeline: Fall 2010

Strategy: Enhance faculty’s exposure to multicultural pedagogy. Explore the development of a multicultural teaching academy to provide support to faculty course development.

Action 5.3: Establish a task force to benchmark programming at other universities.

Assigned to: Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Timeline: Spring 2011

Strategy: Develop and implement assessment measures to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of programs aimed at enhancing diversity.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Planning and Institutional Research

Timeline: Fall 2010

Strategy: Prepare an annual report that recognizes best practices related to diversity initiatives within programs.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate

Timeline: Fall 2013

Strategy: Collaborate with Education Abroad office to enhance cultural exchange opportunities.

Assigned to: Office of Education Abroad, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

Timeline: Fall 2014
Strategy: Explore the opportunity to create an internal diversity grant program that encourages faculty to conduct research in areas that service underrepresented groups or that have community connections. Recipients would be required to present research or projects to the campus community along with summary reports.

Assigned to: Academic Affairs, MOSAIC Committee

Timeline: Fall 2013

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

Strategy: Penn State Altoona will investigate the development and implementation of an Administrative Fellow/Senior Administrator Shadowing Program to enhance the skills of staff and faculty who desire to move into more senior positions of leadership.

Assigned to: Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Staff Advisory Council, Academic Affairs, Chancellor

Timeline: Fall 2014

Strategy: Penn State Altoona will seek out new members of the College’s Advisory Board from underrepresented groups to better reflect the diversity of our campus. The Chancellor will work closely with the Chairperson of the Advisory Board to identify candidates for membership from diverse backgrounds.

Assigned to: Chancellor

Timeline: Continuous

Strategy: The Chancellor, as well as all members of the Executive Staff, will promote the philosophy that all college committees, task forces, search committees, and strategic planning teams include representation, as appropriate, from underrepresented groups.

Assigned to: Chancellor, Academic Affairs

Timeline: Continuous
**Strategy:** The Chancellor, as well as all members of the Executive Staff, in consultation with the college’s Faculty Senate will identify, nominate, and encourage members of diverse groups to seek University-wide leadership opportunities on task forces, commissions, and advisory bodies.

**Assigned to:** Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate

**Timeline:** Continuous

**Strategy:** Penn State Altoona will annually solicit and make available, via report, the diversity involvement efforts of the college’s executive, administrative and support staffs.

**Assigned to:** Human Resources

**Timeline:** Fall 2011

**Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals**

**Strategy:** The Director of the Division of Student Affairs and the Director of Institutional Equity and Diversity, in consultation and collaboration with other offices at the college and University Park, will develop a five-year strategic growth plan for the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. This plan will address fiscal resources, staffing and facility needs, as well as programming and services designed to make this office a model program within the university.

**Action 7.1:** Explore the establishment of an Assistant Director for Institutional Equity and Diversity position, along with a full time liaison position within the Office of Student Affairs, to work specifically with university organizations and special events. In addition, explore the provision of graduate assistant and administrative assistant for the Office of Equity and Diversity through appropriate funding.

**Assigned to:** Office of Student Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

**Timeline:** Fall 2011
**Strategy:** The Division of Student Affairs will establish a relationship and programming statement to incorporate the area of Campus Religious Affairs into the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity.

**Action 7.2:** The Director of Institutional Equity and Diversity will establish a five-year strategic plan for integrating religious diversity within the college.

**Assigned to:** Office of Student Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

**Timeline:** Fall 2011

**Strategy:** Penn State Altoona will continue to work with community agencies such as the NAACP and other diversity groups to help establish community support, activities, and resources to meet the needs of our diverse campus population.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity

**Timeline:** Spring 2011

**Strategy:** The Director of the Division of Student Affairs and the Director of Institutional Equity and Diversity, in conjunction with the college’s Advisory Board’s Committee on Student Affairs, will establish a diversity training program for current and new members of the Board.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Office of Student Affairs

**Timeline:** Fall 2013

**Strategy:** An annual report of activities, services, and programs instituted by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity will be submitted to the Chancellor and Director of the Division of Student Affairs.

**Assigned to:** Office of Student Affairs

**Timeline:** Fall 2010

**Strategy:** Explore the realignment of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity position as a direct report to the Chancellor. This would ensure that issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity are represented at the highest level of administrative decision making.

**Assigned to:** Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Chancellor, Office of Student Affairs

**Timeline:** Fall 2011