Feedback on Progress Implementing
*A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09*

Finance and Business
Mid-Term Progress Report

The Finance and Business (F&B) unit is large, complex in structure, and hosts a broad spectrum of discrete administrative departments. The Executive Vice President of the unit is personally engaged in several of the initiatives, serving as a strong role model for the entire group, and demonstrating top-down commitment to diversity. F&B is utilizing several new and continuous resources, strategies, and initiatives to further the University’s diversity goals. Formal assessment of these efforts, however, is lacking. F&B is encouraged to follow-through on plans to develop assessments and cost-analyses as soon as reasonably feasible to determine which programs warrant continued emphasis and focus. In addition, F&B is strongly encouraged to develop and implement the planned Diversity Climate Survey.

**RESPONSE:** *The Diversity Key Initiative (DKI) Team Manager reviews current programs on a quarterly basis with Gary Schultz, Sr. Vice President for Finance & Business/Treasurer. Most of the programs are only a few years old and will take some time to bear significant fruit. Where feasible, program assessment measures are being developed to improve this process. The Diversity Climate Survey was mailed to all fulltime Finance & Business (F&B) employees in May 2007. The results are being summarized by Diagnostics Plus, Inc. and reports will be ready for review by the end of July 2007. A copy of the survey tool is attached.*

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

**Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity**

- F&B is commended for its revised, more inclusive, definition of diversity.
- The provision of data on members of the less visible diversity groups, e.g., LGBT and disabled persons, to the extent that those data are available, is needed. **RESPONSE:** Demographic data, including LGBT and disabled, are being requested on the Diversity Climate Survey. We will be able to get an estimate of these populations from the survey responses since there is no official method for the University to collect this data. Additionally, we will determine from our Human Resource Representatives if staff members have self-identified as disabled. Through our LGBT Focus Group members, we hope to expand our databank of self-identified LGBT employees.
- F&B reports that its unit heads addressed specific unit diversity issues as appropriate as a result of the 2004 University-wide Faculty Staff Survey. F&B is now encouraged to follow through with its plans to implement its own tri-annual diversity climate survey. **RESPONSE:** The F&B Diversity Climate Survey was released on May 22, 2007. Several questions from our 1995 and 1998 Diversity Climate Surveys were retained so that we could evaluate our progress. A survey was not conducted in 2001 due to the pending U-wide Faculty Staff Survey (which was eventually released in 2004) and surveys that were planned by administrative units within F&B. The next F&B Diversity Climate Survey is planned for 2010.
- F&B is commended for consistent communication of diversity information via senior staff meetings, a diversity Web site, the F&B newsletter, annual retreats, and unit head meetings.

**Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate**

- Details regarding how staff fears of “repercussions” will be addressed would be helpful. **RESPONSE:** On 3/28/07, Gary Schultz met with his Administrative Unit Heads, the F&B Human Resource Representatives and the DKI Team to discuss this issue as well as other diversity related matters. He emphasized that this was unacceptable and that this needed to be made clear throughout the F&B organization. They were charged with relaying this to their direct reports. This message was also delivered by him at the 4/10/07 F&B Leadership Retreat with over 300 directors and managers in attendance. The DKI Team will prepare a checklist of “diversity accountability measures” that Gary Schultz can use with his Administrative Unit Heads. Also, specific questions were included on the Diversity Climate Survey to capture related information.
F&B has adopted the Office of Physical Plant’s statement on intolerance, which is a good outline of the process to follow if persons believe they have been mistreated.

Mitigating the perceptions that gender/race plays a larger role in the selection process than qualifications is a pervasive heuristic; it is unclear how this perception will be mitigated. **RESPONSE:** Unfortunately, our numbers disprove this perception given the low number and flat retention rate of people of color in the F&B workforce and that women are mostly in the lower SPEC grades. The F&B Diversity Website (a public site) will be updated with current demographic data so that the workforce can be made more aware of actual statistics that might help dispel this perception. One of the “diversity accountability measures” being developed for administrative unit heads will include regular reports on the diversity of search committees, interview teams, applicant pools and final candidates for filled vacancies. This additional data can be used to help promote the facts about the selection process.

It is commendable that F&B overall—as well as unit-specific—activities have been developed to address the climate for LGBT employees. Assessment of these activities is important. **RESPONSE:** Gary Schultz and the DKI Manager meet with a LGBT Focus Group each summer to address their concerns and hear their recommendations about improving the climate. This confidential session assists in assessing the climate for LGBT employees. Several questions in the F&B Diversity Climate Survey address climate issues for the LGBT community and will give us some assessment of our efforts.

The promotion of Hire Power to increase ethnic diversity is a positive initiative. Assessment of its effect on recruitment, hiring, and retention will be important. **RESPONSE:** Assessments will be done by OHR.

It is unclear whether there is a unit-wide approach to issues of race/ethnicity. **RESPONSE:** The Action Items of the F&B Framework apply to all units within F&B. Both the Mentoring Program and the Intern Program are for employees of color within F&B. The DKI Team is composed of members from almost every F&B unit and the DKI Manager is responsible for communicating to F&B Administrative Unit Heads at bi-monthly meetings. At the annual Spring Retreat of F&B leaders (300+), the Diversity Key Initiative is reviewed. These efforts provide a unit-wide approach. The proposed checklist of “diversity accountability measures” for all F&B Administrative Unit Heads will reinforce the unit-wide approach to these issues.

Potential best practices: facilitation of focus groups by the leading VP or executive of the unit; consultation with the Commissions, the Affirmative Action Office, and the LGBTA Student Resource Center for advice on program development; mandatory diversity training for all new hires; diversity-themed professional development opportunities for all staff.

### Representation (Access and Success)

**Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body**

Potential best practices: providing diversity training professional development opportunities for its student employees; assessing student employee satisfaction.

**Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce**

The Diversity Internship Program, which F&B continues to sponsor and fund, is a valuable initiative. Successful recruitment and retention of interns, however, appears to be an ongoing struggle. F&B would benefit from in-depth assessment of this program. **RESPONSE:** We are in the 5th year of this initiative and we have just placed our 15th participant (3 others are in the planning stage). Gary Schultz has instructed his Administrative Unit Heads to make a more concerted effort to provide internships in their areas and to think strategically across the organization about potential fulltime positions for these interns. Five of the fifteen participants have been retained as full-time employees with F&B. Those we did not retain have gone on to further their education or have accepted very lucrative positions with other organizations. Our exit interviews indicate that they had a positive experience at F&B and would consider returning for employment. A barrier to retention has been the inability to become rooted in the community – a struggle faced by many single professionals at Penn State, regardless of their race/ethnicity or gender. This is a much broader issue that the University will have to address.
While it is commendable that the Senior VP instructed all search committees to have a diverse pool, it is unclear how search committees are held accountable for this requirement. It is also noteworthy that the Unit plans to develop an assessment of the diversity make up of search committees. Such examination is particularly critical for upper level positions. **RESPONSE:** For all staff vacancies posted externally, the University already requires the completion of the Affirmative Action Report. This reports information on the diversity of the applicant pool, interview pool and the applicant that was offered the position. One of the “diversity accountability measures” that will be developed for F&B will be a similar tool for all upper level (potentially SPEC 25 and above) F&B position vacancies – whether posted internally or externally. These reports will be submitted by the Administrative Unit Heads to Gary Schultz to account for the gender and racial/ethnic diversity of the applicant and interview pools and final candidates, as well as the gender, race/ethnicity and employment rank of the search committees and interview teams.

F&B’s use of the Opportunity Network for Employment (ONE) to recruit individuals with disabilities into the F&B workforce is an especially praiseworthy practice.

Potential best practices: providing sponsorship and funding of the Diversity Internship Program; development and implementation of the Diversity Mentoring Program for newly hired employees of color.

**Education and Scholarship**

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

Challenge 5 is not applicable to Finance and Business.

**Institutional Viability and Vitality**

**Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management**

F&B’s intention to create a standard process and criteria to ensure diverse representation on committees, strategic teams, and project groups is commendable. It is critical that this diversity be across rank so that members of underrepresented groups will have equal status and voice within the committee. **RESPONSE:** The proposed process will include reference to employment rank as well. F&B has supported the participation of staff members throughout the ranks. For example, a former CORED chair from F&B was a technical service employee and a person of color. In future updates to the F&B Framework, we will specify the employment rank of referenced committee members and program participants.

F&B’s increased efforts to fill top management positions with diverse appointments are praiseworthy (employing a national search firm, advertising with national, diverse sources). The unit is encouraged to continue these positive efforts with attention to both gender and racial/ethnic diversity. In particular, F&B is strongly encouraged to address the dearth of members of underrepresented ethnic/racial groups among the top executive positions in the unit. **RESPONSE:** Since 1997, there have only been 3 executive positions and 14-16 administrative positions within F&B. Only 1 person of color has been in these ranks during this time period - a female administrator. Currently, we have our highest number of female administrators at 5; however all are white. We are conducting an analysis of the most recent administrative/executive searches to assess the diversity of the applicant pools and search/interview committees. This accountability data will be included in future updates to the F&B Framework.

Throughout the report, “women and people of color” is used, but it is not clear where there is overlap in these categories. Further breakdown of the demographic categories and numbers within each is needed, e.g., White women, Men of Color, Women of Color, etc. **RESPONSE:** Every effort has been made to avoid any overlaps between these categories in statistical data. Refer to the demographic breakdown in Appendix 2 and Appendix 10. We will continue to be a specific as possible.
Potential best practice: support of the Leadership Centre County (LCC) Program, including providing tuition and release time for employees.

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

- An operational definition is needed on what is meant by “proper emphasis” on diversity in the F&B mission statement and strategic plan.
- Elaboration is needed on the specific duties and expectations of unit diversity representatives. **RESPONSE:** The responsibilities of the DKI Team were outlined in the F&B 2005-08 Strategic Plan (refer to page 21 of http://www.fandb.psu.edu/fbstrategicplan.pdf). We will specify these assigned duties in future updates of the F&B Framework, if needed.
- It is stated that Administrative Unit Heads’ leadership will be measured based on—among other factors—F&B Diversity Climate surveys. It is unclear whether or not these surveys have been designed or implemented. **RESPONSE:** The Diversity Climate Survey was released in May 2007 and the analysis and summary reports will be completed by the end of July 2007. The results will be reviewed with the Administrative Unit Heads and follow-up actions will be documented, where necessary. Summary results will also be released to the workforce through the F&B Newsletter and F&B website. Consideration will be given to scheduling open forums to discuss the results.
- F&B is commended for plans to continue to support the Community Diversity Group’s (CDG) efforts to provide diversity awareness training for retail/service sector in the greater State College area.
- Potential best practice: including progress on diversity initiatives in the evaluation of all supervisors.