

Institutional Equity and Diversity Committee
Summary Report

2015/16

Mission
The IEDC recommends and evaluates strategies and policies related to enhancing diversity and improving the campus climate at Penn State Behrend. It also provides advice and counsel on the college’s Strategic Plan for Diversity as it relates to the seven-point University-wide framework for diversity which includes:

* developing a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity
* creating a welcoming campus climate
* recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce
* developing a curriculum that fosters intercultural and international competencies
* diversifying leadership and management
* coordinating organizational change to support diversity goals

This committee helps to strengthen the college’s efforts to create a campus climate that promotes understanding, respect, and support for a diverse campus community through collaboration with the Office of Educational Equity and Diversity Programs, the Commission for Women Liaison Committee, the Multi-Cultural Council, and the Student Government Association Diversity Committee.

# Committee Membership2015/16

## **Academic Schools**

HSS

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Science

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Staff

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Students

* Deniz Himmetoglu, Multi-Cultural Council (MCC) – dkh5209@psu.edu
* Samantha Muhhuku, SGA Diversity Committee – snm5222@psu.edu

Ex-Officio

* Dawn Blakso, Chancellor’s Office - dgb6@psu.edu
* Sarah Whitney, Administration/Commission for Women - sew17@psu.edu
* Andy Herrera, Office of Educational Equity and Diversity Programs – aah10@psu.edu

The committee held several meetings throughout the academic year. Some of the issues discussed included:

* Membership representation
* Previous approach (subcommittees) vs. a new approach to pursue committee goals. It looks like a new approach may be preferred.
* Services to help international students and international faculty succeed.
* The University’s and Behrend’s Strategic plan for Diversity and its impact on the IEDC.
* Opportunities for Behrend to outreach/establish connections with local refugees and the agencies that support them.
	+ Recruitment Opportunity
	+ Mutual cultural competence education
* Students struggle with non-native English speaking faculty
	+ Perhaps a class or some kind of support could be offered to this faculty (is this something we could pursue with Behrend’s Community and Workforce Programs?).
* Is there something the campus could do to be more open to multilingualism
	+ **Ideas:**
		- Have a “welcome” sign in different languages somewhere on campus.
		- Have figurines of the PSU lion across campus holding the word “welcome” in a different language.
		- Have a welcome/flag display in the Reed Bldg.
		- Have a big map somewhere showing where our students come from.
* Provide trainings for faculty/Staff on cultural competence.
* Member of the international student services unit came to speak about issues related to this student population.

	+ What would you say are one of the biggest challenges facing international students?

		- Integration – this is not a one year nor a one institution challenge.
		- International Advising.
		- Cultural issues – in the classroom and on campus. Preparation can be address during international orientation and faculty training.
* Program/Position developed by the School of Business to promote “global perspective/student engagement” and interaction among international and domestic students. More to come about it.
* Global Exchange Leadership Experience (GELE)” with Penn State western campuses. International and domestic students are invited to participate in a two-day retreat to discuss global issues and better relations.
* Possible poject: “Community International Garden” being considered by Greener Behrend. The possible garden could include part or complete words (incl. foreign) carved in stone for any member of the campus community to put an inspiring or meaningful statement.
* Discussed the existence of a group that she has been getting together to discuss and identify issues related to international students and the appropriate use of the international student fee.
* We also discuss staff representation in the IEDC and whether these should be selected via a vote. She was going to check with Margie at the Chancellor’s Office for a ballot format that may be able to be used for this.
* Possible initiative: highlighting individuals on campus through digital media or other forms in order to promote community and celebrate the diversity of our campus community. This could perhaps be done with the help of a Communications major student as a class project.
* Social media presence, e.g., a facebook ---there are currently several pages by depts.
* The committee was made aware of a new group for women in Engineering.

Some of these initiatives will be pursued and implemented during the next academic year.