

## **Inside Outreach**

### ***Next Steps for Outreach***

**March/April 2004**

Dear Colleagues,

***"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." -Albert Einstein***

One of the key tenets of an effective change process is to keep everyone informed of the actions and steps as an organization proceeds through the transformation. I promised to keep you informed of the progress of our change process in Outreach. In this edition of Inside Outreach I want to bring you up-to-date on several initiatives underway.

Following, you will find:

1. An update on the work of the Outreach Steering Committee
2. The Strategic Imperatives which will lead us to more fully realize the Promise of Outreach
3. An outline on how we plan to keep you abreast of discussions underway within the Outreach Steering Committee

### **Outreach Steering Committee**

You will recall that on March 1, I announced that we would integrate Continuing Education and Distance Education/World Campus to focus more on credit programming (including blended learning) across Outreach delivery units, consolidate administrative and support services, deliver a more coherent response to our academic partners and our customers, and develop common budget models among programming units (eliminating internal competition), streamlining services, and achieving new efficiencies. Several actions have been taken in the last few weeks to begin this transition process.

A few days after the March 1 announcement, Gary Miller and I met with Unit Leaders in Continuing Education and Distance Education to begin discussing the transition process. A half-day retreat, last week, for CE and DE leadership, served as a launching point for integrating these two major delivery units. The enthusiasm and leadership that has been demonstrated as we begin to make this change has been quite impressive at all levels.

On March 1, you will recall that we also announced the appointment of an Outreach Steering Committee, led by Gary Miller and Ted Krichels, to look holistically at the evolution of our organization.

The Steering Committee participated in a full-day retreat in late March and will continue meeting on a weekly basis to actualize the plan for Outreach. I have asked them to:

- Determine new organizational structures to ensure the alignment of resources with strategic priorities
- Explore thematic program areas to match University expertise with community needs
- Identify innovative programs, products, fiscal models, and delivery systems
- Recommend strategies to improve customized and value-added services and increase net revenues for academic departments and internal research and development
- Provide tactics to advance the integration of the outreach delivery units
- Find ways to provide greater focus on execution
- Foster new ways to advance the scholarship of engagement within the core academic mission

### **Strategic Imperatives: Realizing the Promise of Outreach**

I challenged the Steering Committee to build their work and recommendations on the Promise of Outreach guiding principles: leadership, excellent service, entrepreneurship, and community and learning. And, also on the work of the four Strategic Positioning Teams. To that end, I charged the Committee to meet the following five strategic imperatives as they build the new Outreach organization. These imperatives will drive the thinking of the Steering Committee and will serve as the underpinning for our organization:

**Innovation Culture** - Create an organization that empowers diverse staff and faculty to innovate and lead in their work to advance the Outreach mission and that challenges all employees to maximize their potential as University Outreach professionals.

**Connection** - Create an organization that serves as the matchmaker between Penn State's academic resources and citizens, communities, and other stakeholders to create mutually beneficial relationships that address

the key strategic societal challenges that impact the quality of life in Pennsylvania.

**Technology Accelerators** - Create an organization that uses technology to advance the design and delivery of academic programs, enhance educational experiences, and ensure the cost efficiency of internal services.

**Resource Optimization** - Create an organization that optimizes available resources through revenue generation and operating efficiency to support innovation, return value to University partners, and fulfill the Outreach mission.

**Excellent Service** - Create an organization that provides services that add value to the outreach agendas of all Penn State colleges and campuses and to Outreach customers, clients, and students.

### **Keeping You Informed**

As I mentioned above, I intend to ensure that at every stage of planning, we will keep you informed with updates, summaries, and reports. Our communication plan for keeping you abreast of discussions within the Steering Committee includes electronic broadcast communication and face-to-face dialogue in large and small group settings. Here is the plan:

1. Ongoing e-mail updates will be provided to all members of Outreach by Ted Krichels and Gary Miller, co-chairs of the Steering Committee. The first e-mail communication is forthcoming, early next week. Look for updates from: [SteeringCommittee@outreach.psu.edu](mailto:SteeringCommittee@outreach.psu.edu)
2. A Website is being developed to post reports and updates from the Steering Committee. We also plan to post a summary of the Strategic Positioning Teams' final reports at that site. Next week you will receive more information from the Steering Committee about the Website.
3. A Town Hall meeting will be planned for all Outreach staff to attend prior to the launch of the new fiscal year.
4. Unit meetings will be scheduled with members of the Steering Committee to foster open dialogue around the transition and provide opportunity for Q&A.
5. An Employee Communication Team, led by Tracey Huston, has been convened to create a long-term employee communication strategy to identify vehicles/modes to communicate organizational change, strategic positioning outcomes, vision, and values; strategies for reinforcing organizational vision, values; and ways to foster enhanced cross-unit communication within Outreach.

While it is important that you hear from the Steering Committee and from me, it is equally important that we hear from you. I encourage you to continue asking questions, offering comments, and making recommendations. We need your talent and your thinking. Don't hesitate to share it.

I conclude by offering this quote from the president of the University of California: "Unprecedented problems today confront the universities and colleges of America. But there also faces unprecedented opportunity. It is a time for taking stock, for looking through new lenses-and for critical evaluation of the university body in all its parts--tangibles and intangibles--and, above all, a firm conservatism against a shortsighted present and a sacrificed future." UC President Robert Sproul wrote these words 70 years ago, in 1934, in the midst of the Great Depression. I believe that this passage still resonates today.

Craig

*P.S. Many thanks to everyone who made such an important contribution to the land-grant recognition and celebration of Penn State's sesquicentennial in Harrisburg last week. Because of your hard work, Penn State received important accolades and visibility in support of our important land*