



Inside Outreach

July 2004

Strategic Positioning Accomplishments

Dear Colleagues,

"It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear... It's like being between two trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to." - **Marilyn Ferguson, American Futurist**

As we continue with the Strategic Positioning process, I know that it sometimes feels as though we in the Penn State Outreach community have been swinging between trapezes for some time now. The Outreach Steering Committee has worked diligently over the past few months, and I feel that Outreach is now starting to land--beginning to find some firm organizational footing as a result of the hard work of the Strategic Positioning teams and Steering Committee. As we try to keep you fully informed concerning the ongoing change process being implemented in Outreach, it is important to step back and recognize the progress that we've already made in acting on the recommendations of the Outreach Steering Committee.

While there are only eight members on the Outreach Steering Committee, their work has built upon the recommendations of the seventy individuals involved in the original strategic positioning teams. The Outreach Steering Committee recommendations are firmly rooted in the five strategic imperatives that serve as the underpinning for our organization: Innovation Culture, Connection, Technology Accelerators, Resource Optimization and Excellent Service. These imperatives have served as guideposts on the road to fulfilling the Promise of Outreach, and I would like to highlight the milestones achieved on our journey to-date.

Outreach Strategic Positioning Accomplishments—Process

--Four strategic positioning teams considered organizational core competencies, fiscal stewardship, academic relationships, and innovation, and developed more than 75 recommendations for shaping the future of Outreach.

--The Outreach Steering Committee was created to serve as the implementation team for the positioning recommendations. The Steering Committee then developed the Outreach Roadmap that summarizes the key elements driving the future of Outreach and provides a guide for future decisions (see below for details on the Steering Committee's web site where the Roadmap can be viewed).

Outreach Strategic Positioning Accomplishments—Organizational

- Continuing Education and World Campus were consolidated to create a new Continuing & Distance Education organization that will share resources and responsibilities across units.
- The Office of Program Resources was discontinued, with program development and college support responsibilities decentralized to the Outreach program units.
- Cooperative Extension restructured its administrative and programming regions in Pennsylvania from eight to six to strengthen program development and delivery.
- Marketing and communications functions were restructured to bring together Outreach Marketing, Marketing Research, Marketing Consulting Services, Penn State Public Broadcasting Marketing and Publicity, and Outreach Communications into an integrated and unified unit.

Outreach Strategic Positioning Accomplishments--Program and Delivery

- Significant program changes have been made to free funds and staff capacity to invest in new programs. These include: Penn State Public Broadcasting--*What's In the News and Weather World*; World Campus--*Architectural Lighting, Noise Control Engineering, Webmaster*; Continuing Education--*CREAD, Technical Communications, Arts and Health Outreach Initiative, and Power School*.
- World Campus began work with Continuing Education at University Park and the Commonwealth College to offer blended versions of two associate degree programs as part of an initiative that will create a more seamless, flexible access option for adult learners.
- Outreach is collaborating with Information Technology Services and the colleges on a three-year blended learning initiative that will support development of online and hybrid versions of key undergraduate courses.
- Management Development is making a major change in its operating model, eliminating several faculty positions and developing new relationships with the campus colleges.
- Conferences & Institutes is shifting from a longstanding focus on growth to an emphasis on a balanced portfolio and excellent service and support for signature programs.
- Outreach has identified three themes to explore further for cross-unit, statewide thematic initiatives: Workforce/Economic Development, Pre-K-12 Education, and Health.
- Penn State Public Broadcasting has made a commitment to join the Research Channel, a consortium of research universities and corporations that disseminate research programming around the world via satellite.
- A task force has been created to make recommendations on the development/acquisition of a common Customer Relations Management system.

Outreach Strategic Positioning Accomplishments—Fiscal Stewardship

- A taskforce of Outreach leaders and associate deans has developed a new gross revenue sharing policy that will be piloted in fiscal year 2004-2005, and extended to other colleges upon final approval by the provost and deans.
- Outreach has adopted several new policies designed to improve our financial stewardship, including new policies on group meals and travel.
- Cooperative Extension established a cost recovery policy that is now being implemented.
- Outreach is on target to achieve a \$2 million reduction in central University support.
- Grants writers from Continuing Education, Cooperative Extension, and Public Broadcasting were charged with recommending ways in which Outreach can improve its ability to successfully compete for contracts and grants that will provide a new source of income for programs and innovation.
- Grant and contract funding for Cooperative Extension has increased dramatically.

Outreach Strategic Positioning Accomplishments—Advisory Groups

- A Penn State Advisory Board for Outreach, consisting of 25 statewide and national leaders, was created.
- An Employee Communications Committee was created to enhance organizational communications and to provide advice and support for communication related to the strategic positioning and change process.

This is quite a list and I think we can be proud of our progress. I congratulate everyone in Outreach on your enthusiasm and support as we work together to transform Penn State Outreach.

Realizing the Promise of Outreach

We have asked each unit director to host sessions to discuss the current changes and to solicit your feedback and recommendations. They will be providing more details concerning these accomplishments and future Action Plans developed by the Steering Committee. This information is also available at the Steering Committee web site, www.steeringcommittee.outreach.psu.edu, using the following access information:

User ID: outreach
Password: steering04

We have already made significant advances in building the new Outreach organization, and the Steering Committee will continue its work to guide the organizational evolution of Outreach. I hope you share my excitement in the opportunities presented by the accomplishments listed above, as well as the potential inherent in our future Action Plan. As we travel together on the road to realizing the full promise of Outreach, I encourage each of you to consider your role and how you can contribute even further to the success of our organization. There is still much to be accomplished--be sure to share your thoughts with your colleagues and me!

One of the lessons we have learned through this strategic positioning process is that change, while at times uncomfortable, is an essential element in achieving and maintaining Outreach's leadership position within the University and nationally. Let me close with this quotation:

"Change will not only be the challenge to the American university, it will be the watchword for the years ahead. With change will come the vision, the wisdom, and the courage to lead in the century ahead." **-James Duderstadt, A University for the 21st Century**

As we embrace the transformation being implemented in our organization, let us recognize that change will serve as both a challenge and a motivator as we strive to achieve the Promise of Outreach.

Craig