

Inside OUTREACH

From the desk of Craig Weidemann, Vice President for Outreach

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Colleagues:

Since 2003, Outreach has grown significantly in enrollments and initiatives, resulting in a 57 percent increase in revenue. We're continually advancing on the road from good to great. To keep pace with our growth and address new challenges, it's imperative our leadership, management, and organizational structure are constantly reviewed. Revisiting how we can best meet the needs of our constituents requires a strategic approach to evaluating not only our assets but also our leadership, goals, and needs for the next three to five years.

Considering the following three factors, our organization has an opportunity and a responsibility to re-evaluate how we operate on a day-to-day basis. These are: first, the retirements of one associate vice president and the executive director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development; second, our tremendous growth; and third, input from Outreach staff throughout the organization, University associate deans, and the Outreach Advisory Board.

Influenced also by innovative advances in technology in our daily work and program delivery, Outreach has arrived at a critical juncture on our road from good to great. This issue of *Inside Outreach* outlines organizational changes that will ensure we maximize every opportunity at this juncture. All changes are effective as of this month, and as changes occur within units, they will be communicated by the respective associate vice presidents.

- **The most significant change in Outreach will be the elevation of the Program Leadership Council.** Originally established to provide a forum for evaluating cross-unit strategies and programs, the Council has been empowered to lead Outreach by strategically evaluating and determining the direction of our Outreach work. This includes analysis of programmatic areas, cross-unit collaboration, program priorities, funding, etc. The purpose of the Council is to bring together voices from across Outreach to view our work from a broad perspective. To foster this vision, the Council is comprised of leaders that represent various Outreach units, levels of responsibility, and years of experience. Dennis Calvin, associate director for Cooperative Extension, will provide leadership for this critical initiative. The three Associate Vice Presidents (AVPs) and I will work to advance the Council's recommendations.

- Although the Program Leadership Council will now provide programmatic leadership, the **Outreach Executive Team (ET)** will continue to provide Outreach leadership for critical organizational issues such as budgeting and staffing. Instead of meeting weekly, the Team and I will meet once a month. This will allow me to meet with the AVPs twice a month to coordinate and advance Outreach strategic priorities and foster collaboration. Members of ET are the directors of our core Outreach units and include: the AVPs (including Daney Jackson from Cooperative Extension), Tracey Huston from Marketing, Jeff Smith from Finance, Spencer Lewis from Development, Sue Cromwell, Melinda Stearns from Client Development, and the director for the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

- As a result of expanding roles in Outreach and new responsibilities, we recognize that the functions of Penn State Public Broadcasting (PSPB) and the umbrella organization of Continuing and Distance Education (C&DE) have evolved beyond what their names indicate. For example,



PSPB engages with the public on many levels, not just via public television, and has assumed leadership for the Office of Rural Health, the Public Service Media initiative, and the Health initiative. To align with these broadened responsibilities, **Ted Krichel's title has been changed to associate vice president for Public Engagement**. However, this will not change his other role as general manager for PSPB. Similarly, **Wayne Smutz's title has been changed to associate vice president for Academic Outreach** to reflect his broadened academic responsibilities and leadership with the University's campuses and academic colleges.

- The Outreach thematic initiatives have had a significant impact and will expand beyond funding to a more holistic approach that engages new faculty and communities, new programs and funding, and greater Outreach commitment and focus on impact. In addition to our current initiatives in **K-12 Education** (Wayne Smutz), **Health** (Ted Krichels), and **Economic and Workforce Development** (director for Office of Economic and Workforce Development), a fourth initiative in **Energy and the Environment** (Daney Jackson) has been added. This new area is a critical priority of our constituents and partners, as well as an academic strength and priority of Penn State. As an additional area of responsibility, the AVPs will oversee leadership and membership, provide strategy and focus, and foster cross-unit collaboration and connections for the thematic initiatives.

- Other new Outreach-wide initiatives include the Innovation Team, External Partnerships, and International Programs. To strengthen our commitment to making innovation a core competence for everyone within Outreach, Ted Krichels will provide strategic direction for the new **Outreach Innovation Team**. Melinda Stearns, senior director for Client Development, will manage and coordinate our growing partnerships with state, federal, and corporate entities through the new Outreach-wide initiative for **External Partnerships**. And, to explore and develop a comprehensive international strategy for the World Campus and other academic programming, Pete Forster, associate director of academic programs for the World Campus, will lead the new Outreach-wide initiative in **International Programs**.

- A key component of our success is achieving and sustaining a diverse and welcoming environment in Outreach. **Sue Cromwell, director of Administration and Planning, is now senior director for Planning, Human Resources, and Diversity**. This will broaden her responsibilities to ensure Outreach demonstrates outstanding leadership in its commitment to diversity and development of its people. As part of her expanded role, Sue will co-chair the Outreach Diversity Council with Sharon Youtzy. I look forward to becoming more personally involved with the Council's work. In addition, the AVPs will make achieving and sustaining a diverse and welcoming work environment a priority for the upcoming year.

- Much of Outreach's work is in collaboration with the University's academic colleges. Recently, the academic partnership between the Justice and Safety Institute (JASI) and the College of the Liberal Arts has led to the creation of the **Center for Justice Training and Research**. The creation of this center will incorporate a research focus and expand the academic focus. Since JASI's formation 36 years ago, the unit has grown far beyond its origins in local and state law enforcement. Now JASI's work encompasses specialized training for federal and international law enforcement officials, and for other community life concerns, such as violence against women, domestic relations, and child support enforcement. Because of its breadth of work, JASI is now part of the office of the vice president for Outreach.

- With so many critical projects and initiatives now underway, **Janet Conner, manager for Analysis and Planning in my office, will provide support for and monitor all major strategic projects** in addition to her current leadership in internal communications and Outreach planning.

Thank you for your exceptional and amazing work. I am blessed to work with such a great team of dedicated professionals and an organization that continually recognizes opportunities to better serve Pennsylvania and the world. While growing pains sometimes accompany change, the bottom line is that it's exciting to work for an organization whose growth requires periodic re-assessment and refocusing for a successful future. As Robert Kennedy once said, **“All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't. And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity.”** Together, we will meet Outreach's new challenges and opportunities as we continue our journey from good to great.

Organizational changes as discussed are included in the organization chart at the end of this issue. Please look for future issues of *Inside Outreach* that will provide more details concerning our new initiatives.

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