



## Penn State Berks

### Strategic Plan 2005-08 Action Plan Progress Report

# Executive Summary

The Agenda for Growth, 2005 to 2008 Strategic Plan for Penn State Berks, included eight strategic initiatives to support the College mission and help enhance the four goals that support the College in its vision to be a “nurturing, learning-centered environment that integrates teaching, research, and service inside and outside of the classroom and seeks to enhance the quality of life within the community.”

The list below provides a summary of progress within the strategic initiatives based upon feedback provided from budget administrators responsible for action items in the action plan of the strategic plan:

Initiative	Description	Overall progress
A	Establish an institutional culture dedicated to student learning.	Needs attention
B	Develop a comprehensive academic plan.	Progress
C	Develop and implement a comprehensive and sustained marketing strategy.	Progress
D	Invest in resources that promote retention, student learning, and community.	Needs attention
E	Enhance diversity of students, faculty and staff.	Progress
F	Enhance financial means to support the College’s goals and strategic initiatives.	Needs Attention
G	Support research and scholarship to advance knowledge and creativity.	Progress

Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A presents a quantitative summary that led to the conclusions listed above. Appendix B shows the status as identified by the budget administrator as of April 2007 as well as comments pertaining to the progress of the action items. These items are available on the College’s public drive (p drive) under the 2005 to 2008 Strategic Plan folder. The following identify key accomplishments and areas that continue to need to be addressed within each of the seven strategic initiatives. The initiatives were ranked in priority order.

#### **Strategic Initiative A. Establish an institutional culture dedicated to student learning.**

*The College's vision anticipates the cultivation of a sense of community around a common dedication to promoting and supporting student learning both inside and outside the classroom. Achieving this vision will require (1) reaching consensus about college-wide learning goals, (2) developing strategies for attaining those goals that recognizes and values contributions from all units at the College and encourages collaboration, (3) systematically assessing efforts to meet the goals, and (4) incorporating feedback from the assessments to ensure continuous improvement in the efforts to promote student learning.*

**Successes:** The completed tasks include implementing a common reading program and enhancing the mission of the orientation program to incorporate the first-year experience. The impact of these new programs is still being determined.

**Challenges:** While the majority of the action items pertaining to enhancing a culture dedicated to student learning are continuous and in-progress, several items received no action or were suspended due to changes in leadership or insufficient resources. These items include:

- The development of a Learning Council and the establishment of a Center for Student Learning,
- Renewing efforts pertaining to the Communication across the Curriculum program,

- The use of part-time faculty and wages, and
- Hiring support staff in Student Affairs and in the Planning, Research and Assessment office.

### **Strategic Initiative B. Develop a comprehensive academic plan.**

*A comprehensive package of academic degree programs and outreach programs needs to be developed via a more systematic process. This process includes establishing benchmarks for program success and an external review of programs.*

**Successes:** The three academic divisions identified six potential degree programs for market research and pre-approval through ACUE: Biology (SCI), Communications (HASS), English (HASS), Physics (SCI), Security & Risk Management (EBC), and Theatre (HASS). Many of the action items within this initiative are completed or in-progress. The FT tenure-track positions have been hired for the Elementary Education program. The Science Division head position was created as at FT position and a FT tenure track chemist was hired.

**Challenges:** The identification of new programs is limited to those that require little or no additional costs, including no new faculty positions and no additional physical resources. Faculty office space and program start-up funds are still an issue. In addition, changing policies and organizational structures within the Penn State University system may impede approval and implementation of new degrees.

### **Strategic Initiative C. Develop and implement a comprehensive and sustained marketing strategy.**

*A recent major market research effort revealed that Penn State Berks leads its competitors in several attributes including academic reputation and affordability. Image issues and questionable awareness that the College offers baccalaureate degree programs continues to persist within the College's service area. In addition, the funding for BK's marketing efforts is the lowest among other Penn State stand alone colleges and competitors. Enhanced, systematic marketing strategies need to be implemented that promote our degree programs and successes in student learning.*

**Successes:** Enhancements to the College website were made with the inception of College-wide use of RedDot and the creation of a College webmaster position.

**Challenges:** No new funding has been identified for marketing initiatives. University Relations strives to recycle funds from lower impact marketing strategies to higher impact strategies. In addition, UR is dependent upon marketing initiatives driven by the University Relations office.

### **Strategic Initiative D. Invest in resources (services, facilities, and instructional technologies) that promote retention, student learning, and community.**

*The need exists to consider how instructional technologies enhance intentional student learning and as a result, what resources (enhanced services, facilities, and hardware/software) are required to support learning processes both inside and outside of the classroom. This includes considering alternative classroom models such as hybrid learning initiatives and the infrastructure needed to enhance the competitive technological stance of the College within the service area.*

**Successes:** While this initiative needs attention, several tasks were completed that move the College forward in offering hybrid and blended learning experiences for students. The College Ten Year Master Plan should be presented to the Board of Trustees in Summer 2007. The completed tasks include:

- Hiring a software training specialist,
- Providing training for faculty and staff on technology related to distance education,
- Upgrading campus to wireless technology,
- Hiring part-time multi-media specialist that also serves as part-time webmaster, and
- Funding to support travel for development of hybrid/blended learning experience.

**Challenges:** Lack of space due to the delay in the approval of the new building and support for additional housing prohibits the College's ability to redesign or reconfigure space.

### **Strategic Initiative E. Enhance diversity of students, faculty and staff.**

*High school graduation populations within Southeastern Pennsylvania continue to experience growth during this planning cycle while other regions with the State are expected to experience a decline. Penn State's and the College's competitors, as a result, have increased recruitment efforts within the service area. In addition to enhanced competition for high school graduates, demographic trends within the service area continue to become more diverse, especially among the Hispanic or Latino American populations. Finally, recent layoffs in manufacturing positions resulted in many adult students seeking new careers and thus college degrees. Opportunities continue to exist for the College to enhance the diversity of its students through recognizing changing demographic trends and helping potential students prepare for college.*

Successes: While specific tasks have not been completed, many of the tasks have progressed forward. This is most notable via the *Framework for Diversity MidPoint Report*.

Challenges: Due to lack of office space and funding, the FT admissions counselor position has not been filled.

**Strategic Initiative F. Enhance financial means to support the College's goals and strategic initiatives.**

*The critical need to increase private resources for the continued success of Penn State Berks is emphasized by changing financial aid policies, rising tuition, and declining State appropriations. We must be resourceful in generating revenue to advance the goals of the College. Revenue sources may include partnerships, grant funding, private donors, or other unique, entrepreneurial-like opportunities.*

Successes: The Development Office continues to seek opportunities to enhance endowed funds and scholarships for students.

Challenges: Changes to the budget model makes it difficult to predict continuous temporary funding for operational budgets.

**Strategic Initiative G. Support research and scholarship to advance knowledge and creativity.**

*Research that enhances academic reputation needs to continue to be supported through current or improved funding levels, enhanced laboratory space, and individual faculty offices.*

Successes: The change in the Chief Academic Officer and division leadership resulted in more emphasis on research and scholarship. Funding for research development grants was restored to its prior level of \$2500 for faculty in Spring 2007. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Undergraduate Research Council was hosted by Penn State Berks in Spring 2007 with outstanding representation from Berks undergraduate students. Research interest groups were formed by faculty in EBC and colloquiums sponsored by SCI and HASS.

Challenges: Grant funding is still limited based upon restrictions and reduced funds available from both internal and external sources.