

Univ. President Jordan Deals with Diversity

On November 20, 1987 Penn State President Bryce Jordan addressed the Board of Trustees on the subject of diversity. The message printed below is the follow-up to that November statement.

I should like to update you regarding steps that have been taken or are under way as a result of the statement on diversity I made to the Board on Friday, Nov. 20. As I noted then, my comments are concerned in particular with black members of Penn State's community, but I emphasize their relevance for Hispanics, Asian Americans, and American Indians. I would note further that Penn State's commitment to diversity extends to the international community as well.

Before I review with you the steps taken since November, I want to express my thanks to all those who have voiced support for our efforts in this regard. Deans and unit heads, students, faculty and staff, and members of our town/gown community have expressed to me their commitment to diversity at Penn State. Such dedication and--I might add--determination, will reaffirm our well placed confidence in this University.

Now, let me outline the follow-up to my November statement.

1. As promised in November, I will issue today a statement which makes it clear that racism has no place at Penn State and that help is available for persons experiencing or witnessing racial incidents.

That help is available, in the case of students, through the Office of Campus Life, headed by Pat Peterson. Such help for Commonwealth Campus students is available through appropriate staff persons at those campuses. In the case of faculty and staff, help is available Universitywide from the Affirmative Action Office, headed by Suzanne Brooks.

In the event that help is needed during non-business hours, the University Park community will be advised to contact the Department of University Safety or the Center for Assistance and Information. We will make it clear that these offices will contact appropriate personnel to respond to concerns and questions during non-business hours, if necessary. The campuses also will make after-hours arrangements with appropriate personnel there.

In addition to the statement I am releasing today, Carol Cartwright and Roger Williams have developed posters

that have been placed throughout the university community. These posters note the offices that may be contacted as needed here at University Park. Identical posters with appropriate campus telephone numbers have been placed on the Commonwealth Campuses. Dr. Cartwright advises me that the demand for these posters is so great that we have had to go into a second printing.

2. I also am pleased to note that a working model has been developed to prevent, anticipate, respond to, and manage acts of intolerance.

The model uses existing University offices and programs which allowed us to implement it quickly.

a. In the area of **PREVENTION**, we continue to promote activities which support a climate that is inhospitable to acts of intolerance.

One example would be acts of advocacy in support of diversity by many offices throughout the University community including the Office of the President, Campus Life, the Deans' offices, Student Programs, Human Resources, the Paul Robeson Cultural Center, Public Information, and--in the case of organization--the Black Caucus, the Black Graduate Student Association, the Undergraduate Student Government Office of Minority Concerns (student), the Forum on Black Affairs, and the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P.

Additional examples would include human relations training programs and other awareness and public education programs.

b. In the area of **ANTICIPATION**, we will be identifying issues and indicators which give rise to acts of intolerance. This is done, generally speaking, by operational departments or teams managing the residence halls, student activities, campus safety, affirmative action, and academic assistance programs.

In the past, communication between these groups was uneven. To address that, an "Anticipation Team" has been developed and is already meeting regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern.

The team, which will consult with appropriate persons **Universitywide**, consists of **Carol Cartwright**, dean for undergraduate programs and vice provost and chair of the University's Equal Opportunity Planning Committee; **Bill Asbury**, vice president for student affairs; **Pat Peterson**, assistant vice president for campus life; **Suzanne Brooks**, affirmative action officer; and **Dave Stormer**, director of public information, also is participating, and the team is keeping my office apprised

of the full range of activities through **Carol Herrmann**.

We are advised that mediation, reconciliation, or mere acknowledgement that a condition exists may be used to reduce the level of conflict and the likelihood of an incident. That certainly is an important goal in this whole program.

c. In the area of **RESPONSE**, and here we are talking about hours following an incident, specific protocols have been developed. It is agreed that the following actions will be taken after every incident:

--evaluation of information about the incident, the victim or victims, the persons responsible, and the reasons why the incident occurred.

--notification of the appropriate offices

--provision of support to the individual victims and the groups of which they are a part and the larger community they share.

--removal of the offending material and repair of damages.

--initiation of a University response statement if appropriate.

--activation of response teams to help control rumors, settle disputes, and discuss issues. We plan here to involve the skills of selected students as well as staff.

d. In the area of **MANAGEMENT**, and here we are talking about days, weeks, or months following an incident, the model does not list specific protocols.

Rather, in the area of **MANAGEMENT** there needs to be an assessment of the short- and long-term impact of the incident in order to "return to normal." Toward that end, the following general activities will be undertaken:

--identification of the people and/or groups who may be victims.

--determination of what needs to be done to respond to the victims and to heal the community.

--identification and assignment of community resources which can help heal individuals, groups, and the larger community.

--coordination of responses to achieve the goal.

Offices involved in this long-term process include the Office of the President, Counseling and Psychological Services, Human Resources, Student Programs, Affirmative Action, and others as well as--in the community--community leaders, local churches and the local media.

3. I have asked the University Policy Committee to review Penn State's Code of Conduct in relation to racism and they have done so. We are in the process of reviewing its recommendations now.

It is my goal to have the sanctions in place early in the Spring Semester to make our position on the inappropriateness of racism ever more clear.

4. I have asked Carol Cartwright to follow up regarding my pledge to urge the use of black studies and women's studies to fulfill general education requirements.

She is working with academic administrators and faculty in the colleges on appropriate ways to bring such course content to the attention of students. There are many ways in which the academic program supports our goals for diversity. We need to make these opportunities more visible to students.

Even before the new general education program is implemented, we are advertising to students the current course opportunities in black studies, women's studies, and related fields. Dr. Cartwright worked with Roger Williams to develop appropriate advertisements, and we are very pleased with what has been developed. The advertisements, in fact, are running in *The Collegian* this week.

5. Finally, I am pleased to note that Roger Williams and his staff already have implemented a regular feature in *Intercom* on minority programs and concerns.

The feature appeared for the first time in the *Intercom* of Nov. 26 under the tag, "Focus on Diversity." We have a great deal of good work to report in this new feature.

In addition to this specific follow-up to my statement to you, I continue to be very concerned about what has come to be called "the climate for women and minorities" at Penn State.

As I have thought about how to address this aspect of University life, I have come to the conclusion that climate is a matter for leadership.

Administrative officers across the University must make it clear that we have a large stake in making Penn State a place where women and minorities feel comfortable and can move their work forward in what I have described as a caring environment.

One way to do that is for deans and unit heads to call to the attention of faculty and staff existing presentations and materials. The handbook recently published called, "A Penn State Mind Is a Terrible Thing To Waste," is a case in point. The video materials this Board saw in July, which highlight problems minority students face, are another example. These and other materials should be used by those at the highest levels to underscore that our investment in them is serious. The message needs to carry down to department heads, faculty, staff, and clerical and technical service personnel.

See JORDAN, p.14