**RECOMMENDATION OF THE ATTRACTING AND SUPPORTING HIGH QUALITY FACULTY AND STAFF STRATEGIC COMMITTEE REGARDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**

The committee working on the strategic goal of Attracting and Supporting High Quality Faculty and Staff (hereinafter the “Committee” or “We”) conducted a survey in the spring of 2016 to help determine what type of non-salary benefits were important to campus employees. One that ranked very high was employee professional development. A sub-committee examined professional development and presented its findings to the Committee.

We believe that the targeted employment of professional development funds should be a strategic priority of SFA leadership because well developed, high performing employees are critical to accomplishing SFA’s mission. Professional development funds directly impact employee morale, the quality of faculty and staff, the university’s academic reputation, student learning, and university culture. Students, peers, and stakeholders directly interact with SFA through its employees, and thus it is vitally important that employees, as the ambassadors of the university, have the resources necessary to develop professionally so that they can adequately represent SFA.

Because the issue of appropriately funding professional development at SFA is important, but the funds available for this and other strategic initiatives are necessarily limited, SFA leadership should immediately focus on developing processes and procedures for how available funds can be best used. We recommend that this task be undertaken in conjunction with the budget development process required by the deans and department chairs of each college and the division heads of the various staff departments. We encourage the university leadership to develop a robust, targeted process for the deployment of professional development funds, to openly communicate that process to employees, and to have accountability mechanisms in place for and to be transparent about how that process is implemented each year by explaining how and why professional development funds have been deployed.

We make this recommendation because properly addressing professional development funding requires addressing not just the amount, but also the procedures and processes for allocating these resources in a strategic manner to best implement the SFA Envisioned strategic plan. This necessarily involves making important and difficult allocations of funds among different divisions of SFA so that whatever professional development resources that are available are deployed in such a way that they can best accomplish our institutional goals, taking into account differences across each college and operational division within the university. We support a strategic process whereby adequate funds are allocated to professional development using appropriate procedures, processes, and accountability mechanisms to strategically deploy those funds.