

Envision SFA Engagement Session

Group:	Division Directors of the Division of Finance and Administration (excludes those directors already on the SPT)
SPT Members:	Austin & Beavers
Number of participants:	5
Date:	Friday, 14 October 2014
Method:	Carousel / SWOT

Strengths

- Friendly, beautiful, safe campus
 - Located in small town (both a strength and a weakness)
- New student facilities
 - Student center, rec center, residence halls
- Well-functioning campus infrastructure
- Internationally known academic programs
 - Forestry, Theatre, Music
 - Well-established education programs
- Cost for students to attend is average, not high
- Winning sports programs
- School traditions
- Committed faculty & staff
- Strong IT support
 - commitment to keep up/get ahead of technology changes
 - Ease of student to pay register online
- Dedicated administration and strong management team
- Being independent (not in a system)

Weaknesses

- We try to be all things to all people
- Contradictory values: small class sizes vs. higher faculty salaries and classes taught by professors (vs. graduate students). Lower tuition costs vs. decreased state funding. Need to decide on priorities and what we can actually control
- “silos” – poor communication between departments
- Low salaries compared to state peers
- We have a culture of compliance instead of a proactive culture that can render compliance issues moot because we are already where we need to be
- Location
 - Small town mentality and lack of things to do
 - Not as appealing as other regions
 - High levels of prejudice in the region, lack of diversity on campus
- Dealing with increased costs with lower appropriations and lower/stagnant enrollment

- Stuck in old ways and just press on with business as usual

Opportunities

- Share faculty and staff expertise with other employees and areas (marketing faculty with university marketing, etc.)
- Grow enrollment
- Find new funding sources, including donations
- Partnerships with outside entities
- Focus our resources on what we are great at
- grow interdepartmental relationships
- Focus on STEM or other cutting-edge job opportunities for students
- Purple Pride
- Take full advantage of small class size with personal interactions
- Increase online classes to keep our costs down while increasing enrollment and funding, and reaching international students

Threats

- Loss of knowledge as long-time employees retire
- Loss of employees due to low wages/ higher pay in the market
- Loss of funding from the state
- Rising enrollment costs
- Distance education competition
 - Our students taking online courses at other institutions
- Students taking only on-line courses and not coming to campus (spending on university facilities)
- Legislative reporting requirements
- Drop in enrollment
- Changes in management team
- No funds/ limited funds for training
- Competition with university systems and their advantages in economies of scale
- Academic and staff balkanization
- Lack of communication, collaboration & trust
- Small town environment not being popular with some students
- Emphasis on athletics & athletic pay issues – may no longer be affordable
- Political changes may impact our independence, ability to change or improve, our funding, etc.

Key takeaways – Advice for the Administration and BOR

- Remember the cost associated with trying to implement big/new ideas
- Every job is important (some jobs are not as respected as they should be)
- Employees feel unappreciated
- The new generation of students is highly sensitive and needs to feel appreciated
- We need to be more cohesive, have that sense of family and everyone pulling together, and it must come from the top down.
- Stop putting the focus on what we're doing wrong, and disperse the cloud of negativity due to the threat of penalty from noncompliance. Instead focus on the positive and not be dominated by the few noncompliant squeaky wheels. Find good ways to deal with the squeaky wheels.

- We need a culture of communication, collaboration, and trust
- We appreciate the Board's decision to revisit the plan and give the opportunity for more input