

Engagement and Data Gathering Sessions

Group engaged with: Donors

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Date: November 15-18th, 2014

Design: Survey Questions

Surveys Received: 16

What Makes SFA Special? Unique?

Top Responses

- Beautiful Campus
- Small School
- Great Location
- Small classes and dedicated teachers
- Professors who really care about students
- Strong school spirit

Other responses

- University's core values
- Lumberjack pride/spirit
- Quality education
- Forestry College
- Personal attention – Student/Professor Interaction

What is one innovative idea SFA Should Implement?

Responses

- Be forward thinking and creative.
- Create a entrepreneurial programs across colleges on campus whereby students from a wide range of disciplines (e.g. forestry, nursing, education) as well as business can form teams and address issues and attempt to identify some concrete solutions that are currently being faced in this world such as drought, lack of sanitation in many third world countries, epidemics, etc.
- Create more programmatic opportunities that will enable students to enter higher skilled higher paying jobs. More engineering, biomedical, IT/computer majors and drop worthless liberal degrees.
- Have overall ratings above all sister regional universities.
- Admission standards MUST be raised to the same level as other large state universities. A program to recruit new students must be developed to sell prospective students on the

VALUE of attending SFA. Parents and prospective students decide on a college by determining the value of a degree from SFA vs other universities. Lower admission standards hurt us in this comparison. Sell the individual things that SFA has that only good schools have. Create a list of things that would make a student come to SFA that shows him or her the value of SFA and that it is best place to spend your money.

- Have more articulation agreements with community colleges in the area.
- Something that strengthens and builds upon the alumni, students, faculty/staff involvement with one another. They have so much to learn from one another and SFA should attempt to foster bringing those relationships closer together.
- A sub school with associate degrees in skilled labor such as plumbing welding electrical etc. would be of more value to students than non-existent non-paying liberal degrees.
- There should be an office of community relations. Nacogdoches is as important to SFA as SFA is to Nacogdoches. The Cole Art Center is often a forgotten gem.
- Have "Big Brothers/Sisters" upperclassman for freshman. TX Tech does this for engineering majors. It helps the new students adapt to school and being away from home.
- There are NO 4 year State universities or colleges in Texas with an aviation program. The aviation degrees are associate degrees only in the State of Texas. All the surrounding states, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma have one or more aviation program to offer students a bachelor s degree in various stages of aviation.. Nacogdoches has a 5,000 foot lighted runway with full Instrument Landing Systems with a GPS overlay and is the site of the headquarters of the Civil Air Patrol for the Texas Wing. Approximately 200 students leave Texas each year to attend schools in other states to obtain a bachelor s degree in aviation. A 4 year degree is important in obtaining employment in aviation.
- Raise Admission Standards. Grow the Masters of Business Administration to be an exclusive degree Focus on Oil & Gas jobs - be the University that trains engineers, accountants, finance analysts, geologists, geophysicists that supply jobs to Oil & Gas industry in Houston and beyond.
- Grow the mens' basketball program to be the Duke of East Texas. Like it or not strong sports helps schools. SFA should follow the TCU model. I don't think we can compete on football, but we have shown we have a chance with basketball. We should be investing resources to grow that over time.

What do student need to get from the college experience to be successful in life?

Responses

- Show up on time, every time.
- Get along (work cooperatively) with others in the workplace.
- Be prepared to continue to learn for the rest of your life.
- Learn to communicate in person with people – learn to unplug.
- Develop problem solving skills and learn how and when to implement appropriate skill sets.
- Learn self-reliance.
- Put what the students have learned into action.
- Establish a meaningful work ethic.
- Develop moral values.
- Engage in real-world experiences while in college – expand internship opportunities.
- Believe that their SFA education is as good as any other Texas college.

What should SFA do to inspire you do donate?

Responses

- University of Texas and Texas A & M are very visible. Why? They have pride in their school. They give a lot of money. Texas State has had that transformation.
- Get national recognition. Make the school harder to get in. Will result in more graduates.
- Have an alumni team that goes out and discusses the academic opportunities offered through the university. Visit high schools and community colleges to share this message.
- Have faculty and academic leaders on campus speak at more events regarding the work that is done in their area, the research they are doing, the accomplishments of their field, how their work is important to me (in the “real” world).
- Show evidence that there is a sense of pride in the achievements of students as they enter the workforce. Show that the SFA education is valuable.
- Continue to offer a variety of ways to donate. The varied programs that different individuals can connect such as music, art, business, STEM, speaker series, etc.
- Be visible!!!
- Involve me.
- Set goals that the university wants to achieve and communicate those goals.
- Keep having the Lumberjacks (students) call and chat a bit. I love that. Of the three colleges that I have degrees from, SFA is the only one that I give to year after year. The thank you notes from the departments are nice too.
- If SFA would move in the direction of being a more conservative school versus moving in the liberal direction of the other schools. If SFA became known as the school that promoted conservative traditional values.
- Be specific about the university’s needs.
- Begin a capital campaign that moves the university forward in a significant way.
- Demonstrate how SFA develops future leaders.

Additional Comments:

- SFA needs to be prepared for the changes and additional challenges that are coming in higher education. Students are graduating with high debt loads and prospects of low paying jobs because they have not really learned anything in school that can't be learned elsewhere at a lower cost. The return on the investment of a college degree is becoming economically unviable. If it wasn't the access to easily available government school loans this realization would have begun years ago. SFA needs to focus on creating degrees that have relevant value upon graduation instead of creating irrelevant degrees for student knocking on SFA's door with a government check in hand.
- Good sports teams and successful programs help get the name out there.
- SFA is definitely an asset to Nacogdoches and Texas.
- We desperately need a Masters for the Nursing school. We talk how good it is but without a MS, it is losing credibility vs. other universities that are getting into the program.
- The medical field is growing faster than any other. Think about adding additional programs.
- Get an engineering degree for Chemical, Civil and others.