Enrollment Actions Report

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Artwork: Michael Tubbs

Data courtesy of the Office of Enrollment Management, Graduate School, Office of Student Financial Assistance, School of Honors, Center for Teaching & Learning, Academic Assistance & Resource Center, GenJacks, Office of International Programs, University Marketing Communications, Residence Life, Controller’s Office, and Office of Institutional Research.

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INTRODUCTION

Stephen F. Austin State University has seen remarkable longitudinal growth since its opening as a teachers' college in 1923. Total Lumberjack enrollment has increased by 850 (7.2%) in the last ten years. However, from Fall 2010 to Fall 2015, total enrollment dipped 2.7%. (See table below.) This document outlines efforts taken by the university to improve recruitment, admission, and retention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>3,775</td>
<td>3,747</td>
<td>3,558</td>
<td>3,376</td>
<td>3,353</td>
<td>3,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>2,275</td>
<td>2,273</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>2,296</td>
<td>2,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>2,335</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>2,475</td>
<td>2,468</td>
<td>2,446</td>
<td>2,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2,884</td>
<td>2,953</td>
<td>2,972</td>
<td>2,894</td>
<td>2,929</td>
<td>2,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Bacc</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>1,285</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>1,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12,954</td>
<td>12,903</td>
<td>12,999</td>
<td>12,772</td>
<td>12,801</td>
<td>12,606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When considering the impact of efforts outlined in this document, it is helpful to consider the breakdown in enrollments of first-time full-time undergraduate, full-time transfer undergraduate, continuing full-time undergraduate, part-time undergraduate, and graduate students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,975</td>
<td>6883</td>
<td>2406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11,463</td>
<td>6374</td>
<td>2136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>6474</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>10,631</td>
<td>6220</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>11,382</td>
<td>7008</td>
<td>2117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also helpful to consider are the numbers of undergraduates who applied, were admitted, and enrolled at the university. From 2014 to 2015, SFA saw increases in each of those metrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,975</td>
<td>6883</td>
<td>2406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11,463</td>
<td>6374</td>
<td>2136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>6474</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>10,631</td>
<td>6220</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>11,382</td>
<td>7008</td>
<td>2117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Note that in January 2010, the Board of Regents approved an increase in admissions standards, which went into effect for students who applied as first-time, full-time applicants for the Fall 2012 semester.
In its *2016 Marketing and Student Recruitment Practices Benchmark Report for Four-Year Colleges and Universities*, Ruffalo Noel Levitz identified 10 items that respondents from four-year institutions most frequently rated “very effective” for marketing and student recruitment.\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking by Effectiveness</th>
<th>Strategy/Tactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Campus open house events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Campus visit days for high school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meetings or events for high school counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Encouraging prospective students to apply on the admissions website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Campus visit events designed for school counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Encouraging prospective students to schedule campus visits on the admissions website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Weekend visit days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community college visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A planned, sequential flow of communication to prospective students, from the beginning to the end of the recruiting cycle(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>High school visits by admission representatives to primary markets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departments across campus engage in many of these actions to recruit prospective students.

**Proven Recruitment Actions**

**Campus Experiences/Tours**

An exciting, information-filled visit to campus is a key opportunity to recruit prospective students. Notably, a campus experience/tour affords the institution the opportunity to showcase the quality educational experience provided to students, to highlight the attractiveness and beauty of the campus, and to help students envision themselves living in the dorms, learning in classrooms and labs, and socializing in common spaces. To provide this overview of campus life, the Office of Admissions hires a number of students (known as Jack Walkers) to guide prospective students and their families around campus and provide them with insight into the typical student experience. Recent total numbers of tour participants are listed below.\(^7\)

**Showcase Saturday**

Showcase Saturday is a half-day event in which the campus is open and programming is offered for prospective students and families. The event is hosted on three selected Saturdays throughout the academic year. While campus tours are available during Showcase Saturday, the event provides an even deeper opportunity for prospective students to engage with SFA because of multiple opportunities to meet with faculty, staff, and students from across campus.\(^8\)

Showcase Saturdays offered in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 attracted 2,370 prospective students and 4,325 guests.

**Individual College, School, and Department Tour Initiatives**

In addition to the campus experience provided by the Office of Admissions, individual colleges also offer students the opportunity to learn more about their unique programs while visiting campus. For example, Dr. Michael Tkacik (Director, School of Honors) holds individual meetings with prospective students and parents to explain the benefits of the Honors program and to discuss available scholarship monies. Department personnel in the colleges across campus do the same.

\(^5\) Ruffalo Noel Levitz is a leading provider of technology-enabled services, software, and consulting for higher education enrollment management and fundraising. Boldface items in the table indicate practices that were not being used by more than one-quarter of institutions within the sector, despite the ratings of effectiveness.\(^6\) Though not discussed extensively in this report, the Office of Admissions maintains and annually updates print communication flows for senior, junior, sophomores, and freshman prospects as well as for families. It also maintains a communication flow for 7th and 8th graders. These are included in Appendix A of this report.

\(^7\) Note that these totals include prospective students, family members who participated in a tour with them, and K-12 students who toured campus with a large group.

\(^8\) As noted in Hossler and Bontrager’s *Handbook of Strategic Enrollment Management*, such experiences are key, as “[e]very point of contact or impression experienced by a potential student at the institution becomes a moment of truth in his or her decision process” (109).
### High School/CCJC College Fairs and Visits

High schools and community/junior colleges host college fairs to provide their students with the chance to learn more about a variety of higher education and technical/vocational programs. These fairs are excellent opportunities for admissions recruiters to interact with a significant number of prospective students in a fairly short period of time. The table below includes data on the number of recruiting events Admissions staff attended to recruit for recent and future entry classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Fair</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACRAD College Fair</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACRAO College Fair</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate College Fair</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National College Fair</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Hispanic College Fair</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-TACRAD College Fair</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Visit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>476</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation Visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Visit</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Credit/Early College Event</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch Visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch Visit</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Area Recruiter Network Visit</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Area Regional/Network Visit</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>229</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous Recruiting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Signing/Scholarship Event</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java with Jacks Event</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Recruiting Event</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Counseling (off campus)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influencer Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor/Influencer Event</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop By</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Totals</strong></td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>3651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, to expand SFA’s reach and make possible increased contact with prospective students and influencers in South Texas, the Houston metro, and the Dallas metro, the Office of Admissions created and filled three new recruiting positions in the spring of 2016.

### Counselor/Teacher/Influencer Contact

High school guidance counselors, teachers, and community/junior college advisors/counselors are important influences on a prospective student’s decision about what four-year institution to attend. The Office of Admissions works to ensure that high school and community/junior college counselors are aware of all that SFA has to offer. To this end, SFA Admissions recruiters distribute bags filled with information to high school and community/junior college advisors/counselors. Admissions recruiters also routinely answer inquiries from counselors. Additionally, the Office of Admissions hosts counselor breakfasts, coffee-and-donut events, and lunches in specific regions. Typically, 40-80 counselors attend an event.

In the summer of 2014, the Office of Admissions also hosted Counselor Camp, a two-day event at which counselors from high schools across the state gathered to learn more about SFA’s degree programs, academic opportunities, and campus life. More than 30 counselors attended the event. Admissions anticipates hosting Counselor Camp again in the summer of 2017.

Additionally, the Office of Admissions routinely sends “swag” (pennants, pencils, shirts, bracelets, posters, etc.) to contacts at elementary, middle, and high schools and community/junior colleges for display in classrooms and counselor offices. From September to December of 2015 alone, Admissions provided such items to more than 250 school contacts.

### Direct Marketing: Email

Direct marketing via email is one of the most cost-effective means for reaching prospective students. Data from 2015 shows that 49% of prospective students prefer email as the form of first contact from a college or university. Each year, the Office of Admissions plans a sequential flow of communication to prospective students. Data about the volume of communications sent in FY16 is included on the following page:

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9 In Ruffalo Noel Levitz’s 2016 Marketing and Student Recruitment Practices Benchmark Report for Four-Year Colleges and Universities, email outreach was ranked the second most effective mode of communication for undergraduate marketing and student recruitment for four-year public institutions. (See page 3 of report.)

10 Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2015 High School Students’ & Parents’ Perceptions of & Preferences for Communication with Colleges. (See page 4 of report.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Sent</th>
<th>Email Description</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Number of Emails Sent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Academic #1</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>17,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>2015-2016 Showcase Saturday Save the Dates</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>20,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Safety Report</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>20,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 11</td>
<td>Fall Showcase Saturday Reminder</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>27,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Academic #2</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>27,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>General Scholarship</td>
<td>All admits</td>
<td>3,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Apply Now</td>
<td>All prospects</td>
<td>13,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>Financial Aid &amp; Scholarship Reminder</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>22,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Scholarship Deadlines Reminder</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>23,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Visit Campus/Spring Showcase Saturday Dates</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>33,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>Academic #3</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>36,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Showcase Saturday Information</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>37,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Fall 2016 admits</td>
<td>6,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Fun Email</td>
<td>All prospects for summer and fall 2016 who have not yet applied</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Student Activities &amp; NCVB link</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>26,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>SFA Traditions</td>
<td>All prospects, applicants, and admits</td>
<td>27,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Jack Camp</td>
<td>Fall 2016 admits</td>
<td>6,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>SFA 101</td>
<td>Fall 2016 beginning freshmen admits</td>
<td>6,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9</td>
<td>AARC</td>
<td>Fall 2016 admits</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>Convocation</td>
<td>Fall 2016 enrolled freshmen and new transfers</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>356,501</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To assist with email and direct mail outreach (discussed below), the Office of Admissions purchases from the College Board (the organization that administers the PSAT and SAT) lists of names and contact information for approximately 60,000-70,000 prospective students.

### Direct Marketing: Mail

Data also show that 37% of prospective students prefer direct mail as their first form of contact with a college or university.\(^{11}\) A survey of public four-year colleges and universities lists “publications in general (viewbook, search piece, etc.)” as the fifth most effective mode of communication for undergraduate marketing and student recruitment.\(^{12}\) To this end, the Office of Admissions produces a number of print pieces that it sends to prospective students. The total number of direct mail items sent to prospective students between August 2015 and May 2016 is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Total Direct Mail Items Sent (August 2015 – May 2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>114,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>38,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>7,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>3,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade &amp; Younger</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>80,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>244,575</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Direct Marketing: Social Media

SFA maintains a presence on four social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Each of these outlets allows SFA to connect with prospective students, current students, alumni, friends, and the community. Additionally, many departments and student organizations have individual social media accounts and use them to target specific groups of students and/or alumni.\(^{13}\)

Some basic statistics for the university’s official social media pages, as of June 1, 2016:

- **Facebook:**
  - 62,570 total page likes
  - Within the last 12 months (June 1, 2015 to June 1, 2016), the number of page likes grew from 53,463 to 62,124, a gain of 8,661 (16.2%).
  - The page’s average post reach in the second half of 2015 was about 11,791; in 2016, average post reach has been about 25,000.

- **Instagram:**
  - 4,151 current followers (an addition of approximately 3,500 followers in the last two years)
  - 180 posts made in past year
  - Each post normally receives anywhere from 150 to 350 likes.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 4.
\(^{12}\) 2016 Marketing and Student Recruitment Practices Benchmark Report for Four-Year Colleges and Universities, 3.
\(^{13}\) A 2013 report by the SFA Department of Audit Services noted that 49 departments had Facebook accounts, 23 had YouTube accounts, 17 had Twitter accounts, and 6 had LinkedIn accounts. Report is included in Appendix B.
Twitter:
- 13,900 followers
- 259 tweets in the last 12 months; total of 1,381 tweets in the history of the page’s existence

LinkedIn
- 53,519 followers; 430 new followers in May 2016 alone
- 595 page views in May 2016

University Website
Equally as critical to direct marketing is the SFA website, which is a valuable resource for prospective students and their families. Data for the number of page views on the site in the past 1.5 years is below.

Recognizing that the university’s site is a primary recruiting tool that must be responsive to myriad devices, University Marketing Communications and Richards/Carliberg have been developing a new website that will debut in September 2016. The new site will be geared toward prospective students and will be mobile friendly and adaptive.

Departmental Recruiting Events
Many departments host their own events designed to recruit high school students. Such events include (but are not limited to) the Pre-Law Academy (hosted by the Department of Government each summer for high school juniors and seniors), Art Day (hosted by the School of Art each November, to which high school teachers bring their top five students), Theater Day (hosted by the School of Theater three times a year, in which prospective students are invited to campus to learn about the School), and Cooking Up Careers (hosted by the School of Human Sciences hospitality program, in which high school students are invited to learn more about SFA’s culinary program).

Additionally, many departments reach out to high schools and community/junior colleges to make presentations and/or recruit for their individual programs. In the College of Education, nutrition faculty speak with students who are members of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) at Nacogdoches High School and Lufkin High School. School of Music faculty actively recruit from middle and high schools in target markets. The Dean of the College of Fine Arts also sends faculty to performing and visual arts recruiting fairs at Rice and SMU. Theater faculty attend TheatreFest with two current students and actively recruit and audition prospective students. They also attend audition events in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. The School of Art hosts between 175 and 200 students at its annual Art Day. Director Chris Talbot notes that the event is an important one because it provides opportunities not only for students to learn more about the program and to meet faculty, but because of the contact it provides with high school art teachers, whom he notes “are our most important recruiters.” He notes that the connections with art teachers have resulted in additional admissions and have also opened doors for School faculty to visit high schools and reach even more prospective students.

Internal (Employee) Recruiting
Because SFA’s employees are its greatest resource, the university offers tuition assistance to employees, their spouses, and their dependents. Currently, the tuition assistance program provides enough support for about four hours’ worth of coursework per semester. However, the Attracting & Supporting High-Quality Faculty & Staff strategic plan working team is seeking to increase funding to cover a minimum of six hours per semester and is also investigating a vesting schedule for tuition assistance. Note that courses paid for with this tuition assistance program must be taken in pursuit of a degree. (That is, the tuition assistance program funds cannot be used to pay for courses taken for “fun.”)

From 2011 to present, the university funded coursework for 274 employees and 361 dependents.

Financial Aid
The Office of Student Financial Assistance recognizes that sending financial aid award letters in a timely manner is key to recruiting new students and retaining current students. To this end, the office typically begins sending award letters in late February/early March. Office staff process awards twice weekly from late February through August. Their first focus is processing awards for freshmen who have applied for the fall semester; when the bulk of these are completed, they begin processing awards for other student classifications. This past year, the office awarded aid to about 9,000 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Awarding Cycle for the Aid Year</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>April 13, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>March 6, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>March 29, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>May 2, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>March 12, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14 For the 2015-2016 year, award letters were sent at a later date than desired due to a Department of Education audit. For the 2011-2012 year, award letters were sent at a later date than desired due to the Banner implementation.
For the 2017-2018 award year, two major changes will take place with respect to federal financial aid:

1. The FAFSA will be available earlier (October 1 of the current year instead of January 1 of the upcoming school year).
2. The FAFSA will collect income information from an earlier tax year.

Due to these changes, the Office of Student Financial Assistance anticipates beginning to send award letters in December 2016.

The staff of the Office of Student Financial Assistance also provide a variety of presentations over the course of the year to numerous audiences. They provide information to prospective students and families at Showcase Saturday, to prospective students at various Texas high schools, to about 300 high school counselors via a quarterly newsletter, and to current freshman via SFA 101.

Scholarships
The Department of Student Financial Assistance is tasked with awarding scholarships (including Alumni Association scholarships, SFASU Foundation scholarships, University Regents scholarships, departmental scholarships, etc.) to current and prospective students. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the office awarded approximately 800 scholarships, the value of which totaled $8 million.

Athletics Recruiting
Athletics awarded just over $4 million in scholarships to student-athletes for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Graduate Recruiting
To aid in the recruiting of graduate students to SFA, the Graduate School provides supporting funds to individual graduate programs to aid in their efforts to recruit within target markets. For example, in the past year, the Graduate School provided travel funds for one program to visit and recruit from regional private higher education institutions without graduate programs (e.g. East Texas Baptist University, Letourneau University). The program also provided travel funds for another program to attend a graduate fair in the Houston area and assisted other programs with funds necessary to bring prospective students to campus for the purpose of recruiting.

Additionally, the Graduate School has endeavored to provide greater flexibility with respect to how programs can allocate funds for GAships, RAships, and/or TAships. Previously, these assistantships were all funded at (nearly) identical levels; now, the departments receive a certain dollar amount designated for assistantships and can award those monies as they like, provided they meet a designated minimum for each assistantship. For example, in years past, a program may have been allocated funds for five GAships worth $10,000; under the current restructuring, if a department wishes to use those funds to craft three GAships worth $16,666 each, it can do so. Additionally, the Graduate School has worked with the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs to identify and distribute state-allocated funds for graduate student research.

Recruiting for Online Programs
Those programs that offer degrees, degree completion programs, and/or certifications entirely online are showcased and promoted by SFA ONLINE. SFA ONLINE provides funds for online programs to recruit in target markets. For example, to recruit for the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership (Principal Preparation Program), SFA ONLINE funds conference fees and booth space at the Texas Computer Educators’ Association’s annual convention and exposition. Two program faculty attend the conference (which is attended by more than 9,000 K-12 educators) and recruit students. Such expenditures often have immediate, specific return on investment. SFA ONLINE also often provides promotional items for distribution at such conferences and conventions. Furthermore, SFA ONLINE advertises in print and online in specific venues designed to reach target audiences.

SFA ONLINE personnel respond to numerous student inquiries throughout the year. From June 2015 to mid-June 2016, personnel responded to 1,737 program-specific inquiries collected through the SFA ONLINE website.

International Recruiting
The Office of International Programs (OIP) recruits international students via a number of methods. Program staff use foreign language microsites (via companies like HotCourses) to provide information about the university and its courses to prospective students. Additionally, the office maintains agreements with agents in foreign countries (currently, India and Jordan) to identify interested students and help them begin the process of applying to SFA. Office staff also conduct recruiting trips to maintain connections with agents and attend college fairs at high schools and foreign colleges. Staff also provide information to EducationUSA (affiliated with the State Department) about SFA and its programs.

OIP is currently in the early stages of developing an agreement for Vietnam National University – International Education Institute to represent SFA in Ho Chi Minh City to recruit students. Additionally, OIP is pursuing developing articulation agreements with the International Education Institute for the business and computer science degree programs.

The office constantly monitors and evaluates the Open Doors Report for information about potential countries to target and potential sources of funding for international students.

OIP also provides materials to the Office of Admissions for the latter’s use when interacting with international students at high school and/or community college fairs. In the future, OIP staff anticipate working with Admissions staff to target international students attending community colleges.

The director of the OIP also anticipates creating some form of ambassador program for current international students to recruit individuals from their home nation and schools.

Honors Recruiting
The School of Honors actively recruits high-performing high school and community college students. When students tour campus and express interest in the Honors program, the Honors director meets with those individual students and parents for about an hour. Additionally, the Office of Admissions provides the Honors program with lists of students who have applied for admission and who performed well on the SAT/ACT. These students all receive letters and personalized notes from the Honors director.
The Honors director also maintains relationships with honors directors at community colleges (namely Tyler Junior College, Lone Star–Kingwood, and several other Lone Star campuses) and visits those campuses to recruit students. The Honors director also invites his counterparts at other institutions to visit SFA with their students; for these visits, the Honors director asks key departments to attend and chat with these prospective students. The Honors director also maintains communications with Phi Theta Kappa (an international honor society that recognizes the academic achievement of students at two-year colleges) chapters and several specific high schools (e.g. Coram Deo).

The School of Honors annually gives away approximately $60,000 in scholarships, the bulk of which is dedicated to first-time students.

New Recruitment Actions

The PARTNER Program

The PARTNER Program was developed in 2013 as a joint effort by the Office of Academic Support Services at Angelina College (AC) and the Office of Admissions at SFA. Beginning in February of each year, SFA provides AC with a list of students who are denied admission at SFA. Those students are sent a letter offering them the opportunity to join the PARTNER program. Students who take at least 15 credit hours from AC and maintain a 2.0 are then granted admission to SFA. Beginning in Fall 2016, students will also be required to take SFA 301 (a transition course offered at no charge by SFA) and earn a grade of “C” or above. Students in the PARTNER Program also benefit from joint advising by counselors at AC and SFA and from access to SFA facilities and athletic events.

Effective Fall 2016, SFA will begin offering sections of SFA 301 at selected community/junior colleges at no cost to interested students. The curriculum of SFA 301 will introduce prospective students to the

MOU with Lone Star College

In April 2016, SFA opened the first physical off-site branch at Lone Star College’s University Center at Montgomery and will begin offering courses there this fall. Two bachelor’s and one master’s degree will be offered through the partnership to individuals seeking to build on associate’s degrees, vocational or technical training programs, military training, and occupational licensure or certification, or to advance in any social work industry. Many courses will be offered online or at night to increase flexibility and cater to the partnership’s main demographic—working professionals and other vocational/technical students. An SFA Office of Admissions employee is periodically on site to discuss all aspects of the application and enrollment process with individuals who intend on pursuing a degree at SFA or through the University Center at Lone Star. This employee will also assist community college students with taking classes that will seamlessly transfer into SFA for their intended major.

Destination SFA at Tyler Junior College

On May 9, 2016, the presidents and provosts of SFA and Tyler Junior College (TJC) signed a memorandum of understanding for Destination SFA. This new program links SFA to TJC students bound for our institution. One floor of a TJC dormitory has been decorated with SFA paraphernalia, and Destination SFA students will be encouraged to enroll in SFA 301 in the fall to become more acquainted with the SFA campus. SFA’s Dean of Student Affairs also maintains ties to TJC’s Student Affairs team and is working to showcase SFA’s student life and engagement opportunities to these prospective students.

Partnerships with Panola College and Lone Star College

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programs, services, and personnel of SFA so as to begin to integrate them into the campus community prior to their physical arrival on campus.

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Partnership with Angelina College

Effective Fall 2016, SFA will offer two sections of SFA 301 on the Angelina campus. By doing so, the university will have identified those individuals interested in transferring to SFA and begun to help them learn more about the campus, support services, and traditions.

Partnership with Panola College

Administrators are working to strengthen connections with Panola College leaders. Talks have begun concerning offering a BAAS track with an emphasis on energy technologies.

Attempted, Low ROI Enrollment Actions

Awaiting additional information.
ADMISSION ACTIONS

Pathways

This program was originally developed by the College of Liberal and Applied Arts more than a decade ago. It offers first-semester freshman applicants who do not meet admission requirements the opportunity to become eligible for admission by enrolling in seven semester credit hours during the Summer II term. These hours include two three-hour courses and SFA 101. Students who satisfactorily complete the program with an overall “C” (2.0) GPA and who do not have any grades of “F” continue into the fall semester.15

Additional data on Pathways enrollments:

| Pathways Enrollments, 2010–2015 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Cohort      | Total Students | # Eligible to Enroll in Fall | % Eligible to Enroll in Fall | # Enrolled in Fall | % of Total Enrolled in Fall | % of Eligible Enrolled in Fall |
| 2010        | 200            | 156                          | 78%                          | 149              | 74.5%                        | 93.7%                        |
| 2011        | 196            | 146                          | 74.5%                        | 143              | 73.0%                        | 97.9%                        |
| 2012        | 197            | 146                          | 74.1%                        | 139              | 70.6%                        | 95.2%                        |
| 2013        | 217            | 174                          | 80.2%                        | 172              | 79.3%                        | 98.9%                        |
| 2014        | 179            | 149                          | 83.2%                        | 148              | 82.7%                        | 99.3%                        |
| 2015        | 111            | 111                          | 100%                         | 109              | 98.2%                        | 98.2%                        |
| 2016        | 18716          | 1100                         | 80.2%                        | 882              | 78.2%                        | 97.5%                        |

Concurrent/Dual Credit Students

Dual credit students are those who take college classes while still enrolled in high school. This program is open to high school students, grades 9-12 who have obtained a minimum grade average of 85. In addition, students must submit a minimum composite score of 1010 (critical reading and math only) on the SAT, 21 on the ACT (not including writing), or 101 (critical reading and math only) on the PSAT. Students must meet Texas Success Initiative requirements to register for reading and writing intensive courses, as well as math courses. A recommendation by the student’s high school principal or high school counselor must be submitted as well. Data regarding recent years’ numbers of concurrent students is found below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concurrent/Dual Credit Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for the decline in the Academic Year 2015-2016 numbers may include:

- Cost increase – During AY 2015-2016, the price for dual credit classes increased.
- High school counselor turnover – The Office of Admissions works very closely with high school counselors to spur student interest in dual credit classes. Last year, there were a number of personnel changes among high school counselors.
- Garrison High School administrators decided that for AY 2015-2016, they would only count toward a student’s graduation requirements dual credit classes taken at Panola College. They have since reversed this decision.
- Woden High School is so invested in the ECHS program that they are not promoting dual credit to their other students nearly as much.

Early College High School Program17

“The SFA Early College High School (SFA ECHS) is a collaboration between Woden ISD, Nacogdoches ISD, and Stephen F. Austin State University. Early College High School is a promising high school reform model targeting students for whom the transition into post-secondary education is currently problematic. Students participating in [the SFA ECHS] engage in a rigorous and supportive academic program of study that blends high school and college work with the goal that students will graduate with a high school diploma and an [associate’s] degree or up to 60 college credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.

The ECHS curriculum includes core courses that are approved as dual credit classes taught by university professors on the SFA campus. Students participating in the SFA ECHS begin in grade 9 taking one course each fall and spring semesters. In grade 10, students also take one course each fall and spring

15 Note that Pathways is a program that seeks to aid students in becoming admitted to the university. At this time, the program does not have a retention component.
16 At the time of printing, this was the estimated total number of Pathways students for Summer II 2016.

17 NISD is considering phasing out the ECHS program. See http://dailysentinel.com/news/local/article_56a35f60-f951-11e5-94d0-9f4055d08608.html. At the June 23, 2016 meeting of the NISD School Board, trustees voted to table the issue until the board’s July regular meeting.
semesters. If students are making adequate academic progress, they are able to enroll in multiple courses each semester during their grade 11 and grade 12 years. Academic advisors at the high school confer with university personnel in selecting appropriate courses for ECHS students. Continuation in the program is based on academic success.

To be eligible for the SFA ECHS, students meet specific criteria, including academic performance and demographic characteristics. The program seeks to provide opportunities for students who demonstrate academic promise, who are recommended by public school personnel, who are first generation college students, who are eligible for the federal reduced and free breakfast and lunch program, and/or who come from a demographic that is underrepresented in higher education. [Program staff] expect to grow each admitting cohort to approximately 100 students.

The SFA Early College High School Council provides oversight and meets quarterly. The council is comprised of representatives from SFA academic affairs (faculty, administrators, and staff), from Woden ISD (administrators, counselors, and faculty), and Nacogdoches ISD (administrators, counselors, and faculty).18

**Articulation Agreements**

Currently, SFA has 74 articulation agreements in place with higher education institutions across the state, nation, and world. These agreements support a number of programs, including (but not limited to) biotechnology, nursing, social work, and human sciences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AOP Enrollments, 2011–2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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RETENTION & COMPLETION ACTIONS

Proven Retention Actions

Academic Assistance Resource Center (AARC)
The Academic Assistance Resource Center provides free academic support to students. In 2015, the AARC received 75,105 visits from 6,167 clients. These clients participated in one or more of the services provided by the AARC, such as:

- **Supplemental Instruction sections.** Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support model that utilizes peer-led study sessions to improve retention and success in targeted, historically-difficult courses. SI sessions meet outside of class and are facilitated by academically successful students known as SI leaders. SI leaders attend all of the assigned lectures, take thorough notes, and participate as a traditional student in the course.

- **Peer tutoring services.** The AARC offers peer tutoring in numerous subjects. Students are welcome to schedule appointments with tutors or to utilize walk-in table hours to receive academic assistance.

- **Learning and study skills workshops.** AARC staff conduct a variety of workshops throughout the year for classes. These include workshops on general and specific learning strategies, study skills and strategies, documentation and style guides, and test preparation and anxiety.

Data show that those students who visit the AARC are retained at higher rates than those who do not. Additionally, there is a correlation between the number of visits a student makes to the AARC and an increased likelihood of that student being retained in the following semester and academic year.

Data show that those students who visit the AARC frequently for tutoring have higher GPAs. Data also shows that SI sections have a higher number of students who earn grades of A, B, and C than D, F, or W.

Additionally, for those students who are on or nearing academic probation, the AARC provides the Jumpstart Mentor Program. The program aims to assist students in regaining satisfactory standing by providing peer mentors to meet with students on a regular basis to support their academic needs.

**Undecided Advising**
SFA’s Academic Advising Center provides advising services for two primary audiences: undecided majors and students who have not successfully completed the requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI).

In terms of general advising, the Academic Advising Center ensures that new and continuing undecided students meet with an assigned advisor three or more times per semester to discuss degree options, monitor performance, and encourage the exploration of possible majors. This is part of the Associate Provost’s Freshman Success Initiative. From June 2015 to May 2016, the Center conducted 1,442 general advising appointments.
The Academic Advising Center also provides advising to students who are still TSI liable. This includes determining each student’s status based on transfer coursework, re-testing, facilitating registration into TSI courses, and making referrals to academic support providers. This also includes assisting non-local students in finding a location to complete TSI testing, preparing them for TSI assessments, and interpreting their scores once received. Most notably, TSI advising includes providing individual students (regardless of major) with written action plans for satisfying the requirements of the TSI. From June 2015 to May 2016, the Academic Advising Center conducted 1,408 TSI-related advising appointments.

In the past, the Center offered “best practice” advisor training to professional advisors and faculty across campus.

**SFA 101**

SFA 101 is a one-hour course designed for first-time full-time students that is designed to improve student success and retention via emphasis on the following topics: academic integrity, accessing and evaluating information, learning strategies, university resources, time management, SFA history and traditions, and working successfully with peers, faculty, and staff. Recent SFA 101 enrollment is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th># First-Time Full-Time Students Enrolled in SFA 101</th>
<th>% of First-Time Full-Time Students Enrolled in SFA 101</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>1252</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the program’s inception in the late 1990s, SFA 101 has been proven to increase student retention. The most recent three years of comparative data are included below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th># Enrolled Fall 2012</th>
<th>Returned After 1 Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th># Enrolled Fall 2013</th>
<th>Returned After 1 Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th># Enrolled Fall 2014</th>
<th>Returned After 1 Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th># Enrolled Fall 2015</th>
<th>Returned After 1 Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average # Enrolled</th>
<th>Average Returned After Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All FTFT</td>
<td>2336</td>
<td>1559</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>2177</td>
<td>1546</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>1559</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergrads</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFA 101</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal regulations mandate minimum standards of “satisfactory progress” for students receiving financial assistance in order for a student to continue receiving assistance. The standards for determining progress at the university are composed of three separate measurements: grade point average (GPA), pace of completion, and maximum hours allowed for a degree level. Students who fall behind in their coursework or fail to achieve minimum standards for grade point average and completion of classes may lose their eligibility for all types of federal, state and university aid.

The grade point average is the qualitative measurement used for academic work at the university. For financial aid purposes, an undergraduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA 2.0 or better and a graduate student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. Pace of completion is the quantitative measurement of the number of hours completed each semester at SFA. In order to continue to receive financial assistance, students must complete 67% of the cumulative hours attempted at SFA and in any accepted transferred hours to SFA. The maximum number of hours allowed is one-and-a-half times the minimum program length for all degree programs and allowable certificate programs.

Students are given a warning semester when the required GPA or pace of completion is not met. A student who is placed on financial aid warning may receive financial aid for one subsequent semester. At the end of the warning semester, students not in compliance are not eligible for financial aid.

Because financial aid is necessary for many students to continue their education, the notion of losing such aid is a powerful motivator for many students to re-dedicate their efforts to their education. Thus, SAP is a useful retention device. Of those students who were on an academic plan in the past two semesters, approximately 30% have been successfully retained.

Residence Life: Residential Learning Communities

A residential learning community is a floor where students with a similar major or interest can select to live together and learn about a particular subject under the guidance of a faculty or staff member. Living in a residential learning community provides opportunities for students to informally develop a network of friends with shared interests, improve their grades through this community of support, and transform a residential setting into an active place to live and learn. To foster community growth, residential learning communities provide social and academic activities outside of the traditional classroom. These communities are varied to reflect the interests of our students, however all provide programming and partnership with staff or faculty.

The first year learning communities are Freshman Leadership Academy, First Year Honors, Science Technology Engineering and Math, Natural Resource Management and Generation Jacks. The Freshman Leadership Academy is based in Steen Hall and provides programming in conjunction with the Student Engagement Leadership and Service Office. The First Year Honors community in Wisely and Landing Hall is a high achieving environment that provides social and academic programming through the School of Honors. The Science Technology Engineering and Math Community in Lumberjack Landing focuses on creating science based programming outside of the classroom. Some of these programs in the past have

Note that financial aid probation/suspension is different from academic probation/suspension. Students on academic suspension who are allowed by their academic dean to attend classes may receive financial aid only if they meet the financial aid satisfactory academic requirements.
been dinner with a prenatal nurse, visiting a fish hatchery, and volunteering to teach a middle school science class. These core learning communities continue to grow several years after their introduction.

The newest additions to our living-learning communities are the Natural Resource Management and the Generation Jacks communities. The Natural Resource Management community promotes service learning opportunities within the Forestry, Environmental Science, and Spatial Science majors. The goal of this residential learning community is to facilitate the student’s identity to their particular major and network within their academic department. The Generation Jacks community is exclusively for first-generation students to provide them academic experiences within an excellent supportive network. This community includes cohesive curriculum with linked courses within the cohort to enhanced faculty and professional academic advisor support. These new communities were created in order to jumpstarts professional development and lead to higher satisfaction within the college experience.

The upperclassmen learning communities are Community Service, International and Upper Class Honors. The Community Service community focuses on providing service activities, so students can gain a better understanding of how to improve the quality of life for others. The International Learning Community provides American and international residents ways to interact while learning about different parts of the world. This community’s programs include social and academic opportunities for students to learn about different cultures and to teach others about their own heritage. The Upper Class Honors community incorporates activities provided by the School of Honors in addition to creating mentorship programs for the upperclassmen to help first-year honors students acclimate into the campus culture.

Residence Life: Learning Lounges
Learning lounges are located in every hall to further enhance an environment which is conducive to academic success. These spaces are equipped with whiteboards, computers and desks to provide our students with the tools to further their living and learning experience on campus. Residential Life staff monitor the rooms in order to ensure these spaces remain productive academic environments. The largest leaning lounge on campus is the Cole Student Success Center. It is housed in Lumberjack Landing, the newest freshman hall on campus, and is open to all residents regardless of their academic classification. The Cole Student Success Center provides classroom space for Supplemental Instruction though the AARC. Like many of our communities, the Cole Center also has several smaller rooms for group or individual study session and a computer lab to help with online academics. Overall our leaning lounges provide space for students to focus on their academic goals within their community.

Residence Life: Leadership and Engagement
The Residence Life Department provides several leadership opportunities to students. First year students are able to hold officer positions within their hall council and work with the Residence Hall Association. The Residence Hall Association is a student organization sponsored by the Residence Life Department which serves as the voice of residence on campus and promotes a positive residential living experience. RHA with the assistance of Hall Councils, provide programs and activities geared toward student learning and social development. Students are able to shape their college experience.

**iCare**

iCare is an early alert system that provides a means through which faculty and staff can seek early intervention for students with behavioral/classroom management issues, attendance issues, and academic performance issues. Each report submitted is reviewed by qualified professional staff members committed to student success. Issues evaluated and associated actions include:

- **Behavioral/Classroom Management Issues:** When issues are primarily behavior and sufficiently concerning, they are referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. They may, at their discretion, refer a case to the Behavioral Intervention Team, or appropriate disciplinary actions may be taken as deemed necessary. If issues are more minor in nature, a case may be referred to another appropriate resource such as counseling or disability services.
- **Attendance Issues:** Attendance issues are referred to program volunteers within the college of the student’s major. These volunteers include faculty members and academic advisors. If the student resides on campus, Residence Life is contacted and a “Knock and Talk” is conducted by Residence Life professional staff members. These staff members include the student’s Residence Hall Director or Assistant Residence Hall Director. Because attendance issues may be part of a larger problem, attendance issues may be routed to either the behavioral or academic performance tracks depending on the details of the case.
- **Academic Performance Issues:** When students are performing poorly in class, the Academic Assistance Resources (AARC) is notified. The AARC Director makes personal, individualized contact with students, and they are made aware of the numerous resources available to assist them. When poor academic performance appears to be related to a disability, the student may be referred to Disability Services. Academic Advising and Career Services referrals may be made for student who are considering (or should be considering) switching majors or who would benefit from career guidance.

The iCare Program has the ability to improve:

- At-risk students’ knowledge of and access to the resources they need to succeed at SFA.
- The frequency and quality of contact between at-risk students and university employees committed to their success.
- Faculty/student engagement

The iCare Program can:

- Significantly improve the retention of at-risk students; particularly first-year freshman.
- Help to identify student who have behavioral issues or may be in crisis
- Help identify and address students who may be disruptive to the learning environment of others.

**International Student Retention**

The Office of International Programs has $100,000 in scholarship funds that it uses to help defray costs

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21 The functionality of the iCare system will be assumed by the Early Alert system, a feature of the Student Success Collaborative, this fall. Piloting is underway this summer.
for about 100 currently-enrolled international students annually. Additionally, the office provides advising to students on issues related to immigration. The OIP also sponsors the International Student Association to help international students form a community and to help local students learn more about international students and their cultures.

**Study Abroad**

As noted in George Kuh’s *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, diversity/global learning experiences are a powerful high-impact practice. Kuh notes, “Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.” SFA currently supports multiple study abroad opportunities for students:

- Faculty-led study abroad trips – several of these are hosted annually, and these opportunities account for about 90% of study abroad experiences for SFA students. OIP promotes these during the Weeks of Welcome, and individual faculty also promote them in their classes. Funds from the $3 international education student fee help defray the costs of faculty-led study abroad programs.
- Exchange programs with specific institutions – these are agreements for study abroad that the university maintains with specific institutions (e.g. School of Theater has a program with Rose Bruford College in London, UK; College of Business has a program with an institution in France; School of Music has a program with an institution in Tasmania). These exchanges account for about 10% of our students’ study abroad experiences.
- Independent study abroad – these are individual study abroad experiences coordinated via ISEP.

**Recent/New Retention Actions**

**GenJacks**

Generation Jacks (GJ) is an extended learning community exclusively for first-generation students. GJ students take three of their fall classes together and also live on the same floor of a residence hall during their first year. They receive priority registration and also take a career development course to better prepare them for work. They also receive mentoring from previous GenJacks and mentor high school students. The table below summarizes support provided for GenJacks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>1st Semester</th>
<th>2nd Semester</th>
<th>3rd Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>2 core courses + special section of SFA 101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Coaching</td>
<td>4x per semester</td>
<td>4x per semester</td>
<td>4x per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>1-1 Counseling</td>
<td>1-1 Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events</td>
<td>At least 1 event</td>
<td>At least 1 event</td>
<td>At least 1 event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentoring</td>
<td>Required for GenJacks freshmen</td>
<td>Required for GenJacks freshmen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complete copy of the report is available here. Note that Kuh’s High Impact Educational Practices are also cited in the 60x30TX Plan as a strategy for increasing completion by improving student progress “through” higher education.

**Service Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GenJacks freshmen mentor at-risk high school students</th>
<th>GenJacks freshmen mentor at-risk high school students</th>
<th>50-hour internship with private company, NGO, or SFA office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Below is data comparing populations of the 2014 cohort of first-time, full-time (FTFT) students:

**Comparative Retention Rates, 2014 FTFT Cohort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Original Cohort Retained</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GenJacks</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Gen, not GenJacks</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not 1st Gen</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship</th>
<th>1st Gen. mentor at-risk high school students</th>
<th>1st Gen. mentor at-risk high school students</th>
<th>50-hour internship with private company, NGO, or SFA office</th>
</tr>
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</table>

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<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GenJacks</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Gen, not GenJacks</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not 1st Gen</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Success Collaborative**

The Student Success Collaborative (SSC) is an EAB product that that helps advisors, administrators, and...
other key personnel track students’ progress through coursework and helps identify patterns for successful completion/non-completion. For example, SSC aids in the identification of benchmark courses in degree programs and provides information on what grade is needed in those courses to ensure the likelihood of success in the remaining courses in the program. In tracking student progress and patterns, the product helps identify at-risk students and possible redirect them to appropriate resources or alternate programs.

SSC is now used by all advisors across campus. It interfaces with Banner to show advisors all of a student’s prior coursework and provides a location for advisors to make detailed notes about advising sessions with students.

**CAP Degree Audit Program**

CAP is the university’s designated degree audit program. An extensive push was made in the spring and fall to ensure that the degree plans in CAP are accurate. Thus, the university will be enabling the student side of this program either this summer or fall; this will enable students to see at any point how courses apply to their chosen degree and how courses might apply to other degrees.

Additionally, departments will be able to enter course substitutions and exceptions directly into CAP, thereby minimizing the amount of time staff in the Registrar’s Office will have to spend manually entering exceptions and substitutions for graduating seniors each semester.

**Student Success Center**

One of the top strategies emerging from the 2014-2015 strategic planning process was the design and implementation of a unit that would enhance student retention, graduation, and time to completion rates. The goal was to craft an organization that would unite administration of existing programs crucial to a new student’s success so obstacles to student persistence can be effectively and comprehensively addressed during the critical first year of a student’s academic career. The University College Exploratory Committee investigated this strategy and presented recommendations grounded in the research of successful models of University Colleges and student success centers discussed in various articles (Raab & Adam, 2005) and books, such as *Organizing for Student Success* (Evenbeck, Jackson, Smith & Ward, 2010).

As a result of the committee’s recommendations, Provost Bullard announced the formation of the Student Success Center in May 2016 and named Dr. Dana Cooper as its executive director. A primary goal of the proposed Student Success Center (SSC) is to remove obstacles for students (particularly first-time SFA students) to graduation by linking multiple student success initiatives into a unit reporting to a single academic unit head, creating a central space for these services, and establishing collaboration with other student services. This unit head will report directly to the Provost and will coordinate the activities of the following: academic advising and degree planning for undecided majors, tutoring, SI groups, academic workshops, freshmen success course content, change in majors, enrollment services for developmental students, and assistance in course registration.

Additionally, the center will build partnerships with the following key campus units in order to assist in resolving issues, concerns, and challenges for students: Career Services, Residence Life, Registrar, Business Office, Students Rights and Responsibilities, Financial Aid, developmental education programs, the Involvement Center. The key staff of these units might serve on an Advisory Board for the SSC and regularly have a voice in the direction of the SSC regarding those decisions directly impacting their departments.

**Guide App**

This application, available to students with smartphones or tablets, is an EAB product that is being launched this summer with incoming freshmen. Guide’s purpose is to outline specific steps to common processes (e.g. registration, paying tuition and fees, accepting a financial aid package) and providing students with just-in-time information to successfully complete those processes.

An email was sent to students in the first freshman orientation session of 2016, informing them of the availability of this app. More than 100 downloads were completed prior to orientation, and the app was opened multiple times by more than half of those who downloaded it. The app’s functionality was reviewed multiple times during orientation.

**Re-Imagining the First Year Project**

Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY) is a project coordinated by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) that is aimed at ensuring success for all students, particularly those who have historically been underserved by higher education: low income, first generation, and students of color.

For the project, AASCU has created a coalition of 44 member institutions that will work together for three calendar years (2016-2018) to develop comprehensive, institutional transformation that redesigns the first year of college and creates sustainable change for student success.

The goal of RFY is to dramatically improve the quality of learning and student experience in the first year, increase retention rates, and improve student success. The RFY project is a groundbreaking collaboration to substantively and sustainably alter the first-year experience for students at participating AASCU institutions. Among the initiatives proposed by SFA’s RFY committee are:

- Implementing “15 to Finish” initiative – this program is designed to educate students about the necessity of taking 15 hours each semester to achieve timely completion to graduation. University employees began educating students and parents about this program at freshman orientations during the summer of 2016 and will roll the program out to all advisors by fall.
- Creating programmatic, discipline-based initiatives to engage students in their chosen major earlier. This effort to get students engaged in their major field outside of class is similar to what the College of Business has been doing with the Passport Program.
- Analyzing gateway courses with high DFWI rates and share data and best practices on student success with those who teach them.
- Identifying and publishing clear pathways to success for all degree programs. This will be a degree map or semester-by-semester plan.
- Reorganizing advising processes and procedures to better support first-year students. To this end, the team is evaluating other advising models.
- Linking career development activities to degree pathways. Doing this weaves in the marketable skills noted in the 60x30TX (the Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan).
Developing recognition and support for outstanding work in student success. This also includes providing redevelopment resources for those teaching gateway courses.

- Evaluating those programs with high retention rates to identify best practices
- Investigating multi-semester registration.

**Affordability**

Administrators and employees recognize that the cost of higher education has increased exponentially in the past 15 years. To this end, a strategic planning team has been identified to develop recommendations for ways to increase the affordability of an SFA education to current and prospective students. The team will begin meeting this fall.

Some affordability measures are already in place. For example, Barnes & Noble provides students with the option of renting textbooks as opposed to purchasing them. While this option actually decreases revenue for the bookstore, it provides valuable cost savings to students.

**New Completion Actions**

*Hurry Back, Jack*

This new program provides financial incentives for students who have not recently been active students but who have 12 or fewer hours remaining to graduate.

**APPENDIX A**

SFA Office of Admissions
Communication Flow
SFA Office of Admissions
High School Freshman Communication Flow
Prospects for Spring 2019 through Fall 2019

Prospective student
Early August
Early letter

January 1
“Freshman Career Interest Postcard”

March 1
Freshman College Planning Brochure

Move into sophomore flow

Family

November
Parent Letter: How to prepare your child for college

May 1
Freshman College Planning Postcard

Move into sophomore flow

7th Grade Communication Flow
Prospects Spring 2021 through Fall 2021

Mid September
“it’s Never Too Early” Postcard

Mid February
Academic Postcard

8th Grade Communication Flow
Prospects Spring 2020 through Fall 2020

Mid September
Parent Letter: College Going Culture

Mid January
“Study Tips” Postcard

Early May
“Start Considering Your Career” Brochure

Revised 7/01/15
Office of Admissions

e-mail blitz flow to all prospective students. Topics vary.
High School Sophomore Communication Flow
Prospects for Spring 2017 through Fall 2017

- **FALL**: “Showcase Saturday” postcard (ad hoc) Artwork #1
- **December**: Sophomore College Planning brochure
- **SPRING**: “Showcase Saturday” postcard (ad hoc) Artwork #2
- **April**: Sophomore GAP (no transfer information) NEW PIECE Layout like Tour Piece. Feel good piece, lots of campus photos, less text. Tips, Planning - financial & H.S. prep, outcomes, visit.
- **June**: Sophomore Family Financial Planning Letter from Director
- **Move into junior flow**

**Prospective Student**
- Sept. 1: PDF version for Website
- **October 1**: e-mail blitz flow to all prospective students. Topics vary.

**Family**
- **Late January**: Sophomore College Planning Postcard
- **Move into junior flow**

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*E-mail blitz flow to all prospective students. Topics vary.*

Revised 7/01/15
Office of Admissions
SFA Office of Admissions
High School Junior/Transfer Communication Flow
Prospects for Spring 2017 through Fall 2017

Prospective Student

- Junior Letter
  - Transfer Letter
  - "Classic GAP"
  - Proctor Letter with academic insert (outcomes, majors)

FALL

- October 1
  - PDF version for Website
- November
  - "Campus Experience" postcard

SPRING

- February 1
  - PDF version for Website
- March
  - "Campus Experience" postcard

Move into senior flow

Family

- Junior/Transfer Family Brochure
  - Update & Revise
- May/June
  - Financial Aid Letter from Director
    - w/ tri-fold version of "Mini Value/Financial Planning Brochure"

- e-mail blitz flow to all prospective students. Topics vary.

- Make sure all "Transfer" pieces don't have high school references in them.
- Transfer Letters - use Monique or Kevin as contact/signing

Revised 7/01/15
Office of Admissions
APPENDIX B
The Department of Audit Services
Report on Social Media

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Audit Services has completed an audit of the use of social media by university departments. The advent of social media has transformed the communication environment. Per our 2013-14 risk assessment survey of 95 university departments, social media is currently being used as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Type</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The objective of our audit was to determine whether the university has appropriate controls to mitigate social media risks. The scope of our audit included social media use and related activities as of May 31, 2013.

We performed our audit in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Our audit procedures consisted of reviewing the university’s use of social media; assessing risk; researching best practices; reviewing the university’s policies and procedures; and other procedures as deemed necessary.

SUMMARY OF FINDING AND OBSERVATIONS

We found that controls need to be strengthened to mitigate social media risks. Our suggestions related to Social Media Guidelines is included in the attached Details of Audit Observations.

We appreciate the assistance provided to us during our audit by the Office of Public Affairs, University Advancement; Information Technology Services; Athletics; Early Childhood Laboratory; Admissions; Dean of Fine Arts; and Dean of Student Affairs.

Gina Cogliostro, CPA, CFE
Director of Audit Services
Stephen F. Austin State University
DETAILS OF AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

Observation 1: Social Media Guidelines

Background: The Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) published Social Media Guidelines to guide state agencies and institutions of higher education on the use of social media for official State of Texas business. These guidelines suggest that the following issues should be considered:

- Privacy notification
- Monitoring
- Public Information Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 552)
- Intellectual property rights and ownership
- Accessibility
- Records retention
- Employee use
- Security

Observation: Currently 44 out of 55 university departments surveyed are utilizing some type of social media. We judgmentally selected five departments responding affirmatively to the survey to review department procedures related to social media. One department, Athletics, has social media guidelines applicable to student athletes. We noted that the university does not have social media guidelines for the university community.

Recommendation: The university should consider establishing social media guidelines for the university community.

Management Response:

Responsible Party: Jill Still, Vice President for Advancement

Implementation Date:
YOUTUBE
1. Most Communication
2. Secondary Education
3. Economics & Finance
4. History
5. Financial Aid
6. Nursing
7. Provost
8. Psychology
9. Mathematics & Statistics
10. Business, Communication, and Legal Studies
11. Military Science
12. Counseling
13. English & Philosophy
14. Biology
15. Residence Life
16. SFA Charter School
17. Computer Science
18. Social Work
19. Physics & Astronomy
20. Enrollment Management
21. Vice President of Finance and Administration
22. Communication
23. Dean of Liberal & Applied Arts

LINKEDIN
1. Financial Aid
2. Provost
3. Financial Services
4. Student Rights and Responsibilities
5. Student Services
6. Student Engagement