Engagement and Data Gathering Session

Group: SFA ROTC Cadets

SPT Partners: Justin Blount, John Calahan

Date: October 24, 2014

Design: Interview

Attendees: 23

KEY DATA:

1. If you were describing SFA to your peers at other universities, what about SFA would you say is special or unique?

   A) Truths
      i) Traditions (Battle of the Piney Woods, Spirit Rock, axe handles/axe’em, firing ROTC cannon, homecoming bonfire)
      ii) Small class sizes/size of student population (not too big, but big enough)
      iii) Clean, pretty campus/well taken care of (one student said has a “private school look”), small size makes it easy to navigate, pretty natural features (Azalea Garden, etc.)
      iv) Good, close relationships between student and faculty.
      v) Parking policies are too strict and limiting.

   B) Trends
      i) Great ROTC program
      ii) Small town festivals in Nac/small town feel (Blueberry Festivals, Milford’s Barber Shop, farms, etc.)
      iii) Diverse and large number of student organizations
      iv) Diverse student body
      v) Professors dedicated to student success
      vi) Large number of majors/fields of study; school does not seem to emphasize one school over any other.
      vii) East Texas location/naturally pretty area

   C) Unique Ideas
      i) Surfin’ Steve is cool
      ii) Lot of running trails
      iii) REC Center looks nice, but is not well equipped (restrictive policies)
iv) Specialized off campus private services
v) Chester the Ghost in the theater
vi) Theme of purple

2. **What could SFA do or be to encourage you to support the university both while a student and after graduation?**

   A) **Truths**
      i) More school spirit/continuous school spirit activities throughout the year, not just at certain times.
      ii) More advertising/support for ROTC
      iii) More entertainment events (concerts, etc.)
      iv) More advertising for SFA

   B) **Trends**
      i) More alumni based events/student alumni interaction
      ii) Separate weight room for ROTC/let them use football weight room.
      iii) Better on campus food/more options
      iv) Stop nickeling and diming students on fees/lower tuition

   C) **Unique Ideas**
      i) Create a student government body with more power/allow student organizations to do campus projects for things they care about
      ii) Higher wages for student employees
      iii) Keep frats/sororities from crowing up the Student Center with fundraisers
      iv) More educated staff in weight rooms
      v) Financial incentives to better school spirits
      vi) More grad level research opportunities
      vii) Get SFA name in front of more high-schoolers

3. **What is one innovative idea that SFA could implement to improve the student experience?**

   A. **Truths**
      i) Better parking for students/more commuter parking
      ii) Technology upgrades/improvements (specifically wi-fi)
      iii) Better/healthier food in cafeterias

   B. **Trends**
      i) More outdoor activities
      ii) More advertising for ROTC program
      iii) More student on-campus jobs
      iv) Smoke-free campus/restricted smoking areas
C. Unique Ideas
i) New Military Science building
ii) Allow alcohol on campus
iii) Get rid of campus bus to encourage more walking, or change campus bus to pick students up off campus (apartment complexes, Walmart, etc.) and then they can walk around campus
iv) More nutritionists/dieticians for students
v) Private College of Business fund for student entrepreneurship (student/faculty get together and actually start businesses).
vi) Restrict sitting on Rusk building steps in front of the student center.
vii) Give the faculty more discretion to treat students like adults and not baby them.

4. How has your experience at SFA prepared you to be successful in life?

D. Truths
i) Improving basic skills (studying, time management, work ethic, organization & leadership).
ii) Frequently it was noted that good quality professors/interaction with professors in smaller class sizes helped with this.

E. Trends
i) School supports the ROTC program well/gaining leadership skills from ROTC.
ii) Learn the value of money and being responsible with it.

F. Unique Ideas
i) Have not been here long enough to know.
ii) First time being away from parents has taught responsibility/independence.
iii) Friends for the future/networking/have become more socially active.
iv) Real world challenges/experiences in the classroom. Curriculum that builds on itself to become more challenging.
v) Opened eyes to diversity/how big and different the world is.
vi) Improved writing and communication skills
vii) Hasn’t taught me anything other than how hard life is away from your parents.

5. Why did you choose SFA?

G. Truths
i) Location (close to home, or just far enough away, but not too far)
ii) Good ROTC Program
H. Trends
   i) Affordable tuition
   ii) Small class size
   iii) Pretty campus/big enough, not too big.
   iv) Variety of majors
   v) Got accepted

I. Unique Ideas
   i) Good running trails in town
   ii) Nice college town/away from a bigger city
   iii) Lumberjack is a cool mascot
   iv) Variety of organizations
   v) REC was nice
   vi) “All you need is a heartbeat to get in.”
   vii) Fast response to application

6. What have we not asked you that you would like to discuss?

   A) Truths
      i) Too much faculty/staff parking, not enough student or commuter parking.
      ii) Too many restrictions in the REC weight room/unknowledgeable staff
      iii) Improvement in online services (too many different things to log-in to, change to single log in to access services for class, administration, etc.).

   B) Trends
      i) Clean the ag pond

   C) Unique Ideas
      i) Students should be able to carry concealed weapons.
      ii) Students are required to live on campus for too long.