Engagement and Data Gathering Sessions

Group engaged with: SFA 101 Instructors
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Design: S.W.O.T. Carousel
Attendees: 29

Top Strengths
- Small class size
- SFA 101
- Culture
- Faculty-student interaction
- Beautiful campus

Top Weaknesses
- Inconsistency across colleges (advising, communication, etc.)
- Students’ perception of nothing to do in this town (off campus)
- No reliable degree audit system
- Location (rural)
- Perceived academic prestige

Top Opportunities
- STEM Program
- Students entering college younger (home-school actively pursuing college and dual credit students)
- Graduate student recruiting support (offer tuition reimbursement to Gas)

Top Threats
- Low faculty/staff salaries
- Poorly prepared students from high school
- Increased competition
- Legislative oversight
Other Strengths mentioned multiple times (at least 4 times):

- AARC (free student support services)
- Location
- Faculty and staff commitment to student success
- Community support of SFA
- Forestry program
- Teaching focused (vs research)
- Disability services
- Nursing campus
- Observatory
- Strong degree programs that SFA has a reputation for – Forestry, Nursing and Education
- Campus beauty
- Campus is easily accessible due to size
- Cultural opportunities
- Famous alums
- Great area for biological research (national forests, experimental forest to conduct various labs)
- Higher chance for doing research with faculty
- Many students are close to home; get the college experience without being far from family
- Native language instructors
- Small enough to be personalized
- Unique history and traditions—ties students to SFA more than other schools this size

Other Strengths listed:

- 200+ student organizations
- College of Business
- Good student facilities (rec center, student center)
- Music program
- One-on-one attention
- Professors take roll – know their students
- Quality programs
- Residential campus
- Safe community
- School spirit
- Student involvement with community
- Students can know their instructors
- ASL program
- Basketball success
- Campus housing – RLCs
- Charter school (only researched base)
- Contiguous campus
- Corporate business connections
- Ethic of care – overall campus attitude
- Focus on high impact practices
• Free laundry on campus
• Gear Up
• Generation Jacks
• Increased focus on faculty and student research
• International programs
• Jack camp program
• Not part of a system
• OMA – diversity conference
• Opportunities for students to get involved/become leaders
• Partnerships with local schools
• Safe campus
• Scholarships
• SFA listens to students’ wants (recreation, lighting, food, movie theater)
• Student travel funds
• Undergrad research opportunities

Other Weaknesses listed multiple times (at least 4 times):

• Degree plans – they don’t all look the same across campus
• Distance learning needs to be more competitive; have more online programs
• Lack of student involvement/engagement
• Low admissions standards
• Need equipment/updated facilities in the Miller Science building
• SFA’s strengths are largely unknown nationally
• Silos between academic units

Other Weaknesses listed:

• Age and shape of academic buildings; crumbling at the expense of new rec center, dorms, etc.
• Alumni participation is low
• Combined computer services (SSB, INB, SSC, Imager, Grades 1st, D2L)
• Competitive pay (lack of)
• Convenience of classes; classes offered in evening for working or non-traditional students
• Development – need to attract more outside partnerships or private funding
• Early intervention practices for 1st year students – beyond ICARE
• Enrollment struggles
• Faculty/staff demographics so different from student population
• Housing costs
• Lack of centralized advising processes
• Lack of centralized student services
• Lack of large endowments
• Leadership
• Limited resources in technology
• Location away from large markets
• Low faculty salaries
• Low grad assistant support
• Market swag in other cities (Dallas, Houston: hats, t-shirts, cups)
• Married housing not available
• Need to reach more freshman and make them feel like they belong sooner
• No computer lab big enough to hold my class
• No continued outreach to students after freshman year
• No free printing (limit, locations); no printing at all in COB labs
• No integrity policy requirements
• No mentoring program
• Non-relationship oriented faculty (some are just plain mean)
• Not being part of a System
• Overloading high-paid administration who are not responsive to academic needs
• Perception as a “2nd choice” school
• Possible alumni network
• Previous negative impressions of SFA (party school)
• Relationship between Academic Affairs and rest of the university
• Retention issues
• Scholarship money – need more
• Staff/faculty buy-in
• Student attitudes
• Student perception of no help from Financial Aid
• The second we get a new system or procedure in place, we replace it with a different new initiative
• Under graduate research needs more advertising
• Unsophisticated marketing (not reaching key audience)

Other Opportunities listed multiple times (at least 4 times):

• Better promotion of strengths (like the AARC); athletic success
• Embrace change (less paper; more technological advances)
• More employee benefits (like rec center discount)
• New (more) online program offerings
• New partnerships with community/junior colleges
• New partnerships with government or non-profit agencies for research
• Recruitment
• Support programs – recruit and provide (1st generation; raise faculty awareness)
• Technology in the classrooms
• Transfer student programs (non-traditional, international opportunities)

Other Opportunities listed:

• Advertise the smaller one-on-one connection students can make at a school the size of SFA
• Attracting students outside of our region
• Build on relationship with city
• Build unique ways to support faculty and staff--draw in more qualified/diverse staff
• Campus-wide advising/support center
• Changing student demographics (younger high school students and non-traditional students)
• Each college to be more Interactive with all of their students, not just Freshman Convocation
• Expand unique programs
• Exploration of new teaching models
• Facilities - outdoor pavilion; bigger ballrooms and meeting rooms
• Faculty/departmental reaching out by calling and emailing prospects for their areas each month
• Faculty/departmental recruiting in Jr. colleges (classrooms)
• Faculty's commitment and caring for students
• Freshman/upper classman mentorship program
• HIP training
• New degree/discipline areas
• Niched curricular programs
• Partnership with high school
• Provide or mandate more faculty/staff awareness of diversity issues facing students and staff
• Purple Promise scholarship - get the word to need-based students
• Quality of education could be emphasized, i.e. Music majors, Nursing
• Raise awareness of 1st generation needs
• Raise standards to point of being the elite university in Texas
• Rec Center and community involvement
• Rural setting could be promoted as a "plus"
• Small town advantages vs getting lost in big city
• Student Center
• Targeted fundraising to alumni of specific organizations/programs to help offset budget struggles, i.e. SAA, Jackwalkers, etc.
• TRIO programs
• Unique major – Forestry
• Use of alumni network
• Use of current campus expertise to train/educate/continuing ed/best practices other campus employees
• VAAC - capitalize on this existing program to recruit
• Visitor parking

Other Threats listed multiple times (at least 4 times):

• Allure for students to go to tech schools, get out sooner to enter the workforce
• Area institutions duplicating some of our areas of strength
• Decreases in funding
• Economy
• Funding tied to completion rates (pass them all!)
• Incoming dual credit hours - unprepared 1st year
• Left hand never knows what right hand is doing
• Less prepared students from public schools
• More research funding
• Other schools offering students more money (financial aid or scholarships)
• Reduced state funding
• Strengthening economy luring students into leaving SFA for jobs
• Students feeling like the price of a degree is too much without the guarantee of a job after graduation
• Unfunded state mandates (more reports required for faculty equals less time for research and lower quality of teaching)
• Uphill battle competing for urban students

**Other Threats listed:**

• Administration (Board) out of touch with today's students and faculty
• Changing laws
• City closed-minded to growth-they want SFA, but not all that students bring with it
• Drug highway (US 59)
• Failure of student services & programs to be directly linked with academic services - not collaborating
• Lack of established business and career connections
• Lack of funding for programs
• Lack of preparation for serving new students that bring in lots of hours their first semester
• Lack of social options in town
• Lack of strict consequences
• Legislature
• Location (open campus)
• Mega university systems who have more economies of scale poaching our students
• Not being in a system (some students see this as bad since we are not labeled with another school - big school)
• Other institutions offering less expensive degrees
• Parents
• Perception of prospective students not seeing SFA as a 1st choice
• Poor local economy
• Sporting division (football) for student recruiting
• THECB