

Live captioning transcript – October 30 – Board of Regents Meeting #358

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GOOD AFTERNOON, EVERYONE. WELCOME, IT IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS. I WISH WE HAD THE SUNSHINE YESTERDAY, BUT GRATEFUL TO HAVE RAIN . GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE SUNSHINE TODAY. WE WILL CALL THIS MEETING TO ORDER. THIS IS THE 358th MEETING OF THE STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS. I WILL CALL ROLL CALL. RICKEY HENDERSON , JUDY OLSON, LAURA, NANCY , WE ARE COMING BACK TO YOU . I WILL KEEP CALLING THE ROLE, FIRST. ANTHONY, BRANDON, GRAHAM GARNER, MICHELLE GARRETT, BRIAN IVEY, GINA , LORENZO SMITH, AND JILL STILL. WE ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AND WE HAVE ANY SAY SOMETHING TO THE TABLE. PAGES JOINING US

at her first meeting as a student regent. We have had the opportunity to spend time with Sage prior to this meeting. We have each very much enjoyed getting to know Paige and seeing her in action. She throws a mean candy bar and a parade. She did a great job with that. She has done a great job so far as a student regent. From Texas, she graduated last December with a bachelor of science in agriculture and is now pursuing her Master of arts in student affairs in higher education. And we are very glad that you are here and appreciate your participation in this meeting and all the board efforts. What we have is a very important meeting today. We will receive four reports. We are receiving reports from four different stakeholder groups at

SFA. I think we all know about these reports in the context of these reports. But just -- before he dive into them, what this process started over the summer , Dr. Westbrook made an announcement of the details and calendaring of a review system affiliation at SFA. We had gotten a lot of informal request over a long period of time. Over the course of last summer, decided as a board that we would formalize the process to see what the pages are, essentially. And in that, a subcommittee was born of the court officers. Myself, Mason, and Jim Winston. He has been a year or two away but as a lifelong resident. And former board chair. Dr. Westbrook is a member of the subcommittee. There is a website that lays out in great talent all of the steps taken and the steps get to be taken. I invite everyone to go to that website to look at the material there. To really familiarize yourself with this process, if you have not yet. And the information is provided at the link on the website. They detail every document that has been part of this process. Every question posed to the University system, and the response received from the University system , and every proposal that has been made as part of this process. I encourage everyone to familiarize themselves with those documents.

There is a lot of detail there, but it's important to understand all of those details. And we are hearing today from four groups that have information included on that website. As part of this process, each of the four stakeholder groups were invited to ask any question they wanted to of any of the University systems. And those questions were presented to the University systems unedited. A total of 176 questions. We did not total them. The systems to some the questions they sent and we said we know there are many, but it is because it is a very important process to this university. And we are not entering into this process likely. And we have a lot of questions . And each of these groups have been given the opportunity to ask whether they want to ask. Once responses were received, they were posted to the website. And now

these groups have been able to get back together and review the responses and create a report for this order. The purpose of this is so that the supporting groups who are SFA community have an opportunity to give input to the board as we analyze what is in the best interests going forward. So we are excited to get these reports today. We are grateful to each one of these groups for the time and effort that they have put in to their work. It is vital to this process and we think each one of those groups for their efforts and their thoughtful work as we have marched through this fall semester and looking at their issue. With that, our order on the agenda for the report today, we will first hear from students at SFA. Then the staff counsel, then academic and then alumni reports. With that, anything else for the board before striking reports? Spee02

Element you one thing. Everyone has hard copies of the book that is on the website. And hard copies from today. If you're not a digital person and he have a hard copy of everything, it is on the website. Spee01 thank you. All right. So I haven't seen that. There she is. Madison, you are up first.

How is everyone?

It is Sunday, hallowing. This is the report from student government. Data collection. We took the submitted feedback for the University system. Once we received those responses, we hosted a roundtable event where students could come in and voice their opinions. They have hard copies they can look through. And we have posts of what they can write about strengths and weaknesses of the University system. These are the results. If you have any questions, we have answers. So the strengths. Students that like it was noninvasive. We felt there was networking advantages by being a part of it. That is huge. And access to academic resources and financial aid and scholarships programs.

The Forster department here -- weaknesses. Students were concerned about an increase in cost of tuition. They felt that the University system provided very vague answers that left them feeling off of this agenda. That word was used with every student at this event. They did not feel that they had more to offer than the network because of the vague answers and comparisons. So next is Texas state. Strengths. There was no specific flexion University mentioned in the response. If we were to join that system, we will be treated as equals with every other university in the system. They saw an approximate 20% increase in enrollment across the University system. All universities in the system are localized in the Texas region. Some students thought that was important as well. Weaknesses. The responses submitted explicitly outline the approach to financial support. He felt that Texas Tech did a better job with this. And in comparison with the other, Texas state offers the least amount of financial support. Texas Tech. So strengths. Students reported a nonabrasive footprint on this culture. They felt the benefits from professional and graduate opportunities offered was a definite strength. Student organizations, their response was highly favored by students. That is a big priority we submitted in questions. Texas Tech specifically had that on the head when they said this will not be a concern. Explicitly, Texas Tech said no jobs will be lost as

results of the merging. Students felt that was a huge priority. The Chancellor Council funding would provide financial aid opportunity. They felt it was cool that it was part of SFA. That was bring home back. University

-- a couple students made the inference that with funding from Texas Tech, because there are no schools, we would have to become eating -- competing against other schools. Weaknesses. While other systems allow tuition to remain, Texas Tech would impose a biannual proposal to be approved by the overworking board. Students felt this would be problematic as it encourages tuition increases. No increases current for employment benefits. They did talk about increased benefits. And could have offered more responses on that, financially. And then last but not least, the University of Texas. So strengths. This one is more financially based and answers were kind of driven moneywise. They pledged \$1 million for financial aid. To me dollars -- \$2 million for library, and software systems. So weaknesses. Responses were largely financial based rather than the other university systems. Students thought this was business feeling it was student culture here at SFA. They did not submit sufficient responses to the questions about student salaries. That was high on priorities for academic strategy. So far no considerations. Ultimately, this decision to join lies with the board. But we do ask you consider the following in this order when you're making a decision. So one, maintenance of the student culture and SFA to the financial benefits and financial aid, and how it benefits the University. And benefiting the students academically, providing them opportunities. With that, does anyone have any questions?

Thank you. Questions for medicine? Nice job. Okay. How many people participated in your roundtable discussions?

We have about 20 students that came through. We set it up for like an hour and a half. It was a little late but with the crutch timeline and the schedule, we had about 20 students looking at all the reports. This is what they came up with.

Madison, thank you very much. Next we will receive the staff counsel report from Allison Reed.

I made a joke when I first got here. This is my very first report to the board. The first one was the most difficult. So thank you for picking such an easy topic for me, today. Good afternoon. I am Allison Reed. It is my honor to be here today to present. So here we go. Like my predecessor, Megan Weatherley, I too prefer to begin with gratitude. From the beginning, she made it abundantly clear that stakeholders in this evaluation process was pivotal to success. As a representative body entering second year, staff counsel is working to demonstrate incredible value and expertise for the table. Thank you for noting the importance of voices of so many that make a difference. Additionally, thank you for showing through your actions a shared government. So how do we do it? First we place a call for feedback. I think there is great value in sharing what that looks like when it comes to asking staff for input. So first, staff varies difficult and differently.

The milk indications just do not reach everybody. This is why staff counsel provides flyers on their display boards. And we participate in what we like to call boots on the ground awareness campaigns. We target our departments like the physical plant operations and transportation grounds. Due to these efforts, I am happy to report that our initial feedback request granted almost 400 responses. When comparing this to the number of current full-time staff, which was our target audience, that is a response of almost 50%. With the grace and incredible effort of our staff counsel, he managed to condense hundreds of responses down to one page. There was a list of 20 questions that reflected the staff interest regarding system affiliations. What did the questions look like? Ironically, they look a lot like questions of the subcommittee of the board as well. Of the 20 questions, they were five distinct categories. Is included governments, policies, and procedures. Which had questions about things like local autonomy, firing procedures, and the upcoming presidential search process. The second category had accountability, which included questions about representation, resource allocation, enrollment management and performance objectives.

Our third category was human resources. This included questions about changes to benefits, retirement eligibility criteria, insurance, approvals and of course employee tuition assistance. Fourth category was organizational structure and institutional alignment and identity. They were questions about the alignments of the values of institutional culture and dedication to our local and regional communities. The last one was finance. Most of his questions covered around a level of autonomy to the SFA. Of these 20 questions, they were three in particular that reflected staff interest. First, noting significant concern about the impact of system affiliation on jobs. Do we ask systems to address overlap as well as positions that may be currently outsourced? We also noted the studies and asked each system what specific actions that would take to first close the gap between SFA employee salaries and salaries of the institutions. And two, to address celery salary equality. We asked what degree they should maintain their traditions. Would SFA be able to keep its name, logo, colors and our rain? To me again from a place of gratitude, I would like to thank each of the systems for the dedication and hours spent entering all of the stakeholder questions. 176 is not insignificant. To understand how viable the time is? We appreciate your consideration in our interest and concerns. So what does the data tell us? I promise I'm getting to that. Before we share, it is more important to know that given the tight turnaround between the system responses and our reporting deadlines, we were not able to provide the same level of which as we did the initial feedback process. For this stage, staff completed a survey that provided an opportunity to share and post questions. Given the nature of this method, counsel facilitated opportunities for discussion at our October meeting. We blended information from both efforts to build the following analysis of strengths and weaknesses. This graph provides a quick snapshot of responsive groups from the digital survey tool. We asked staff to write how they felt about the system responses to each of the 20 post questions. Options were negative, neutral, and positive. They also had a comment box with each ranking set that prompted staff to further describe feedback. The numbers displayed here go deeper into responses. But it is important to know the limited range using this tool. In just a moment will expand on this and consider responses for

discussion, which has a significant amount of participation. Let's look at the blending of these responses. We'll start with UT. As you can see from this graphic, UT went well. Staff was impressed by the thoughtfulness of the proposal. And the willingness to complete several behind the scene to answer questions and greater detail. Staff respected and responded favorably to the willingness to state several methods of immediate financial investment. Both to the institution in regard to infrastructure as well as for our students. Weaknesses. UT ranked pretty low in regard to witnesses. I noted it was a little bit unclear about the amount of transitional support that would be provided. Even though it was specifically stated that UT would preserve it, there was some concern given that the majority of institutions heard the name. Staff thought they could be changes over time. Moving on to Texas. They also ranked well with the majority of staff on campus. Sass was protected and impressed by that nature. They were impressed by the generosity in regard to employee compensation and what appears to be increased benefits for staff. They were also impressed and noted that affiliations proceed as a positive cultural one. Weaknesses also worked low. They noted similar concerns in regard to nine of conversation and what that would look like. In regard to financial support, it was not quite as clear how they would provide support. There was also concern regarding two focuses on academic programs. Staff felt it was important to consider the investment in the proactive groups. Texas State and Texas Tech were closely aligned when it came to reception of staff responses. Staff appreciated both system focuses on SFA autonomy. Many staff that are eager to see opportunities for growth and change were concerned that affiliations with either of the systems would not result in significant progress. Under strengths, transitioning to Texas state system appeared to be clean and efficient, given that we share a lot of systems and software processes. Staff respected and responded very favorably to Texas Tech efforts to show the alignment between our cultures and our values. Under witnesses, compared to UT, this is in regard to staff questions. The amount of financial support provided was unclear. Neither system directly address the concerns surrounding salary equity. So final considerations. In short, investing in continued success. If I could summarize SFA's staff in one word, it would be pride. Even in times of hardship, SFA staff take great pride in being part of the University. For almost 100 years, we meet our Mark on Texas by providing life-changing educational experience. In order to do that, staff recognize that regardless of the outcome, whether we join assistant will remain independent, to invest in the continued success of SFA, we have to be willing to embrace change. Changes that result in increased transparency, thoughtful indication, and intentional connections between all levels of our campus. Ultimately look forward to focusing on parties Asian of what matters. People that love and support this campus and success. Regardless of the outcome, staff is ready to embrace changes for this institution. Thank you for your time. Are there any questions?

Thank you for this document. We have two questions before us. You all did a good job of revisiting your stakeholders with regard to the second question. I am curious about what your thought is regarding

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question one. Should SFA affiliate or not? Do you have a feeling for that? I want Madison to address that as well, later on.

That is a big question for a person to represent. Personally, I look forward to any transition that can grow support and success for SFA. No matter what that means. I find great comfort in the questions that matter the most to staff. Questions about our identity and devotion to our community and connections to what matters to us. I felt very favorable responses came from all systems. That gave me great comfort. That is up to's way of saying it.

Thank you.

You mentioned the financial part of it. Is that what the focus typically amounts to, what people are being paid in the staff the question? What is the driving force when you hear people saying they want change or living at the next level? Are they looking for resources, funding, or I don't know. Can you sum that up?

I heard a lot of conversations across the different bodies here on campus about the importance of the financial support. It is not just about finances. Particularly when it comes to staff. The most inspiring thing I've found is that staff reports anything and they want to know how it impacts them. Then they ask about if they lose their job. First it was about

this region. It is ultimately from the perspective, what staff is looking for, and that takes all facets of support for growth. Support in regards to recognition of their efforts. Sometimes that means an increase in salary. But in general it is support and guidance so they can move forward and continue to support SFA. Not just the finance part.

Thank you. Sumac

Before move on, I want to follow up with David's response.

I echo what she said as far as looking for an investment in the future. As a fourth-generation lumberjack, I cannot be institution. I want it to succeed. I think the student response from the beginning of this process to now has been 50-50. 50 percent of our students say let's be independent. Our name, our culture, our colors, once we submitted that to the University systems and got a response back, I think we are seeing an increasingly more open-mindedness about joining the system. So personally, I think joining is responsible. I think there is a reason there only two of the state are independent. I think as far as being able to put our foot down in the legislative session, it would help. However, I see the other argument that if we join assistant, will be ultimately lose our identity? That may not be a major occurrence automatically, but will it happen in a span of 100 years? I think it is a complex decision we need to work free from a student perspective. It is still up in the air for students. They don't know how this process

works. Where as others to quarter groups are more focused on what they are concerned about. Students are like I don't want my university to change. You know?

On that question, as far as the name change and culture itself, do the students from all four systems and likelihood of the changing is a small? Each systems that you will keep your identity and your name. Obviously some may, because they have shown history of keeping the name, and others don't have a history, do you think they feel like every system will be the same and we keep learning regardless? Or is there some reservations there?

For sure. Most concern is the University of Texas. Some students felt okay that the mascot would stay the same and the colors would be the same. I know students are very comfortable with Texas State and Texas Tech. The president reached out to the Chancellor of Texas state did the same things that were mentioned in the report were mentioned the end of medication. So there is no flagship institutions. Every university has a seat at the table. This is a bigger university so we give them more swing. I felt like students were comfortable with Texas state. They felt it will be okay in regards to keeping our identity.

Thank you.

Of the questions? For Allison or Madison? We are giving you guys a pop quiz, now. Faculty and alumni, we know one question that is coming your way. Know the questions for Allison, is that correct? Thank you very much, Allison. Next, we hear from Dr. Smith with the report from the academic groups.

Good afternoon. I am sharing and it is my pleasure to present to you the academic affairs of the perspective strengths and weaknesses. As you know, this is not intended to be a PowerPoint. I plan on speaking directly from this podium. You have a copy of the memo sent to you. As you know, there are six inquiries that resulted in several responses from the faculty and academic affairs. I want to focus on not so much the numbers. The numbers speak for themselves. But rather the principles behind those inquiries. I do want to, for the sake of clarity, to read those inquiries. We asked academic affairs to look into the survey. The first one had to do with staff salaries. That is we inquired into the perspective system affiliates' commitment to introduce new revenue to increase staff salary. Again, you have the numbers in front of you. I will let those numbers speak for themselves and not comment on the numbers. But we do have, for each of the systems, we had about over 200 responses, over 1000 participants. And we had a clear response for each of those inquiries. The perspective of system affiliate commitments to introduce new revenue to increase staff salaries. The second inquiry has to do with the commitment to introduce new revenue to increase faculty salaries. These first two increases are aligned very well with the academic affairs of priorities established last year. The third one, financial aid. We inquired to the commitment to introduce new revenue to increase student financial aid.

The next one, signature programs. We inquired into their potential to introduce new revenue to advance programming. Two more. We also acquired in two financial strengths. We are interested in the potential to produce financial strength to support future initiatives. And then finally we inquired into what we are calling mission centric budgeting. That is their commitment to align budget allocations with the SFA mission. I am not going to comment on the numbers. They speak for themselves. Of course if you have questions about our survey, am happy to answer those. But I would like to spend a little bit of time on the principles that we would ask you to consider as you are evaluating the strengths and misses of the perspective system affiliates. There are many definitions of student success. Student success is defined as the ability to think critically, or professionally, achieve your goals, and contribute to society. And a hallmark of that success is a degree. Leading to opportunities to go to graduate school, get a job, go to the military, or perhaps start your own business. We have to focus on student success. It is really centered around the hallmark. A key hallmark of getting a degree leading to various opportunities.

The staff and faculty are successful in advancing student success. Advancing community success. They are passionate, they are giving everything we have to drive up student success. But they are struggling. They are struggling a lot. The faculty and staff and academic affairs are struggling. They are hurting not just financially. Some of them are hurting emotionally and professionally. The good news is that we have an opportunity to find a solution to that problem. I will talk more about that. Let's look at the first principle. I'm calling this principle the front-line principal. Investing in people who interact directly with students. These are people inside and outside of academic affairs. Faculty, advisers, recruiters, reception staff, police, counselors. Not just in academic affairs. These are the people who engage students directly. I remember what it was like to be a professor engaging in students. Working in the laboratory, teaching classes, working curriculums. Helping students publish a paper or be a co-author on the paper. Giving letters of recommendation. There are a few things that give a faculty member such a warm feeling than getting a letter back from a student graduated five years ago and they say Dr. Smith, I remember you and what you did for me. He made all the difference in the world for me. You helped me publish a paper. You spent extra time helping me work on those problems. And because of you, Dr. Smith, I am a manager at this company. I will come back and visit your campus. The students do not remember. Even know who the co-host is. They don't remember you either, in meetings. But they remember those faculty members. Those academic advisers. The administrator sitting at the front desk who would give them the extra attention. That is the first time they have been on campus and that person sitting at the front desk in the department office showed patience and care for that student. They remember those people. Those are the front-line employees. Not just an academic affairs, but in every division and every department. Those of the people that have the most direct and meaningful impact on our student success. So the question might be, then, to what extent are those prospective affiliates dedicated to supporting the front-line? But of course, as you know, it leads us to the second principle. They're not successful without the supporting starting line. Looking back to when I was a professor, I cannot tell

you how many times staff, I.T. support, and administrators saved the day for me. When I was going up and all my materials were set up, about a day before it was returned to the committee, the format was not right. It was wrong. I was very concerned, but it was one administrator and she was working the front desk and she took the time to go through my entire package and fix it. Because of her, I was able to get it submitted successfully. I will never forget that Secretary. We have those people here. All over the place. When I spoke about the front-line, front-line success depends upon what I call the secondary support line success. So to what extent are those prospective affiliates committed to supporting the supporting lines on the front lines? It is all tied together. But we need support for those lines. So that leads us to the third principal. Not only for financial clarity and transparency, but for financial clarity as well. So transparency could simply be a big spreadsheet. Lots of numbers and all the numbers are there. Most people, including myself, it is hard to observe that. We need time to reflect upon that. I need time to ask questions and go to the Dean's and academic heads and directors and faculty to get consultation. I am not prepared all the time to respond to a big spreadsheet. So transparency is the spreadsheet and the presentation of that. It takes patience and time. So to what extent will those perspective system affiliates be interested in promoting financial transparency and clarity for SFA? The academic unit, the directors, the Dean, they were in the business, so to speak. In the sense that during the service business, you serve the students and community. They manage space, they manage equipment, they manage personnel. They are running a business. And that means they have to make difficult choices because as much as I would like to provide resources for all of the colleges and departments, there's never going to be enough money to support all of them to the extent that they want. They have to make very difficult decisions. So this fourth principle has to do with a mission centric budget caught the mission centric budget principal. Looked most favorably upon budget proposals. Why is mission centric budget proposals important? Let me give you two examples of many. There is an academic program on this campus a couple of years old. If it is not among the fastest growing program on campus, it is the fastest growing program on campus. It is possible that three to four years from now, people will not get accreditation for that program. Let me repeat that. Probably the fastest growing academic program on this campus, we are on introductory to not get accredited. We are working hard, but I believe it's because we change trajectory. If we don't do something for that program, to intervene with outside financial support, we are in trouble. This is the fastest growing academic program in SFA. Or among the fastest one. On average, our academic programs make millions of dollars that account for tuition. On average, our academic programs make millions of dollars not for academic affairs, but for the whole university. I am interested in investing in those. But in particular, the ones that have the highest return on investments. Because we care for our students. Because you want to drive up revenue for the entire university. Not just academic affairs. Looking back at the program, what are we doing? We have a high academic program. We are struggling to feed it. There is another program. It is arguably the star program. It is right up there, all the programs. It is among the biggest one at SFA. I was just talking to the program lead. I was told that for this

program, again, one of our highest profile academic programs, five professors walked into this program office recently at different times and said they are actively looking to leave the SFA. Actively looking. They told this lead do not expect -- do not be surprised if they are not there in May. At the same time, if that wasn't unsettling enough, for the first time ever in the history of this program, they have fewer applicants than they have planned on giving out, for the first time ever. Perhaps our number one highest profile academic program on this campus. For the first time ever, that happened. Fewer applicants. The number of people they want succeed. The trajectory might change. But we are on a trajectory that is very, very concerning for this academic program. Just for that same program, a roof and a water leak. This time a huge section of the ceiling fell down into the hallway. A large section. Fortunately, no one was hurt. What are we doing? We are hurting. This program is a star for SFA. And we are starving. I am very interested in investing in these programs strategically, not for the benefit of only academic affairs, but for the whole university. To what extent will the perspective affiliates invest in these -- not only all of our programs, but particularly our high programs? The ones for which we can get a huge amount of investment to serve the entire university? Those are just two examples. I could give you a lot more. But it really leads us to the last principal. I mentioned at the beginning that there is a solution to this difficult situation we have an academic affairs. The last principal is the first step. It encompasses the first step towards a solution for academic affairs difficulties. It is called the narrow gate principal. It is about how much further SFA cancer his constituents and community. It speaks about difficult choices, that principal. It winces towards not the wide gate, the narrow gate. The narrow gate of success. I am not exactly sure what that solution is going to be for the SFA, whether we remain independent or affiliate. But I am sure that if SFA turns away from that wide gate, the gate that has all the easy questions, it has all the easy comfortable conversations, if we turn away from that wide gate and we faithfully march together to the narrow gate, the narrow gate that demands of us hard inquiries and difficult conversations, it demands of us a prescription of our institutional level priorities. It helps inform our decision-making for this university. If we focus on that narrow gate and difficult gate, the one that is less traveled, I do believe that SFA will continue to grow success to advanced student success, faculty success, community success, staff success, right here in this beautiful city of Nacogdoches, Texas. That is a summary of my commentary on the principles. Again, here are the numbers. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about what has been presented to you.

Thank you very much, Dr. Smith. Questions?

You presented some really pressing

circumstances that various programs are encountering here at SFA. All the crisis opportunities that seems to me to demand a specific and urgent response. And yet I am having some trouble instilling a specific part of the answer to these crises. To our first question, it strikes me that things seem to change. And it doesn't sound like it will satisfy your circumstances anytime. So I would really like to know not just your

opinion about that, but also what do you think the community's sentiments are about the first question.

About the first question being should we affiliate with the system or not? I'm going to give you an answer that will not be satisfactory, to be honest with you. I cannot speak for the entire community. I can tell you that we are very, very interested in whoever it may be, whether we remain independent or affiliated. We are very interested in leadership holding up our mission and looking at it, and saying it says excellence, not mediocrity. Excellence in teaching, research, activity and service. It speaks of a personal touch. We are interested in that leadership taking that mission and lining the budget up with that mission. And engaging in very difficult, uncomfortable, but necessary conversations to advance the success of our students. We do this because we care so much for our students. It is not about academic affairs. So that as an unsatisfactory answer, I do recognize that. But I cannot speak for all of those I represent an academic affairs and answering to that. But I can just tell you we need better alignment between the mission and our budget. As I said, the deeds that the unit had, they are running a business. Not in the sense that are delivering qualities and commodities, but we have to have a better alignment. According to numbers, we are at about 25% of our operating budget. So I do want to note that depending upon how you slice and dice the numbers, that is not a hard number, 25 percent. It can go up or down. I would ask -- it is 25% of our budget. Does that really affect our mission?

I will follow up on his question. What I heard you say is a couple of things. One, you think -- I don't want to put words in your mouth. Correct me, here. Looking for leadership, you are looking to find a mission and move forward with that mission. Is that correct, regardless if it is in the system or out of the system? We need to find our purpose, mission, and go for it? Is that fair?

Yes.

Second question.

Several weaknesses are focused on financial. I understand. If I looked through the questions and answers, people are very concerned about where SFA is financially and what our salaries are compared to others. He made a comment earlier, and I know from your background, engineer science, he went to look at information and you want to examine it and get the transparency. I agree with that. We have to spend some time looking at information. Because in information, and I use the word data, there is answers within information. But we have to spend time looking at it. As I look at these financial questions we have and the desire to get people up to a certain grade of pay, I know people look at what we pay on average. And the look at what other institutions pay. Those numbers are readily available. If memory holds collect correct, it is about \$4000 a year. A lot of the systems are showing in schools that they are in the upper mid 60s. We know those numbers well. I know there is a gap between those two that we need to

get resolved. I also know if there are other analysis can look at that is equivalent -- [No audio]

I think it is always important to look for those numbers. Are you referring to the student faculty ratio with those numbers?

The reason it is important to not just look at enrollment numbers, if you look across the state of Texas of the institution, they have the numbers out there.

There are some schools that gets much higher. I know that UT statements said -- [No audio]

This is why I am so appreciative of our meetings. Because not everyone is exactly the same. Of course we are interested in that. One we talk about student faculty ratio, that number stands out to me. When you refer to yes, as

the student equivalent over the full-time faculty equivalents, what about advisers? Did you know that there is one person working half-time, serving and advising 400 students? That is 800 to 1. One person. Think about the impact we can have on our enrollment by just giving the students we have our academic advisers are making all the difference in the world. But no one is not sustainable to mentor and advise 400 students half-time. There is in a great appreciation for the person doing that job, but that is not there. But as for me to work on.

Let's talk about the student [Captioners transitioning] faculty ratio. .

We are looking at our scores. Trying to introduce a more efficient use of our spaces. We identify 12 rooms already that is going to come off line. That is going to help our students score, help the president bring more resources to our campus. That is one example of what we are doing to increase the efficiency in academic affairs. This course. We are also right now looking at changing the minimum section size for our undergraduate sections for the lower level undergraduate sections. 20. We are. We have this right now. It is being evaluated, reviewed. Set very soon so that hopefully will perhaps be at the next Board of Regents meeting to approve a policy that is going to bring our minimum section size for undergraduate lower sections, lower level. That will move the needle. There are exceptions of course. As I mentioned, one of the things that I made really clear for me, of course there will be exceptions of that. Also evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As you know, we have students, a higher return on investments. Trying to direct more of our resources to the extent that we can for our graduate students so we can, again, bring in more revenue for the University. We are doing a number of different things. A long list of others that we are doing but we are with our efficiency. I recognize there are opportunities to both our sections, overall introduce a higher student faculty ratio.

One of the questions I have and I will go back, the system has a reference, sometimes it is all the same, as I look at it, we had 683 full-time faculty. 816. 816, I do have a question about that. Why there is a difference between that number and full-time faculty. The count versus full-time faculty.

It should be different.

They have full-time equivalent of 995, a total of 1605. Why would there be such a difference between total number of faculty? Why would that number be?

Probably overload. The full time, it is 12. 12. And for a lecture, 15 . Probably the reason why is higher than that count . They are working with a lot of overload. That would be my guess.

One of the things is an average salary. You look at the average full-time equivalent, making decisions for 60 people, 65. We look like it already, why are those numbers not aligned, much lower? I am just asking why there is 1600 versus 900. >> A lot of it has to do, a part of it has to do with the commission. Breaking the research and activity. When I asked the professor, there were times when I would see a course release. An external finding from staff for the ministry. That is a way to find that mean, very valuable. That is their strength. The research and activity is essential for a university. I remember when I was teaching as a professor I couldn't tell you how many times I would stop in the middle of a lecture and say you know, that reminds me of something I published last year. That reminds me of a research I was working on with General Motors. We would stop with the most wonderful conversations right in that classroom all centered around activities. I can't really speak directly to that but a little bit more about their mission with a different emphasis on research.

Other questions for Dr. Thank you very much. I appreciate this very much. Up next is alumnae. I am hearing that Portugal purposes we may need to take a short break. That may need to do with the alumnae report. Is that right?

Give me 10 minutes.

5 to 10 minutes. [The event is on a recess. The session will reconvene at 2:15. Captioner on standby.] [No audio]

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All right. We are back in session. We are about to hear the last of the system affiliation evaluation reports. This report is from the alumnae. Being presented by Erica who is the president of the board of the alumni Association. A very new role . It became effective over the weekend. Is that correct? Welcome to your new role. Now you get to make a presentation.

The staff counsel representative. This is the first one. If I would have said two years ago when the board elected me into this President elect role, this was coming from my first the turtle day. Yeah. I don't know what I would have said. I would still be here because I am a very passionate alum of Stephen F. Austin. So excited to be here to represent the voice of two parts of alumnae. One is the 150,000 alumni that we have out in the markets. 90% of which are in the state of Texas. We will talk about that in a minute. Also, from an operations perspective internally, how our office runs and why this discussion about system affiliation is really important to look at through the lens of those two audiences. I did have some talking points. Some data that I am going to share with you. We are going to work to get that posted so you could take that home with you. Certainly use this in your future deliberations for each of you as Board of Regents members who are making this incredibly transformational decision. I am thrilled that the process was designed to include stakeholder groups to allow the opportunity to be heard. If we learned anything about our fiercely independent alumni, we like our voice to be heard. We were taught that here on this campus by the way. Allowing people the opportunity to be heard is really, I think is really important. Dr. Westbrook, laying out the process very clearly as there were questions that came up. Way back to the process overall. I thought I would start today with putting up here, what are alumni Association board of director resolutions? When you leave and you go outside of this beautiful place, if you were to find an alum in the market, they would take SFA as SFA. Not seen as an independent organization from the institution, maybe I would say interdependent. We will get to that on the next slide. SFA as a brand is SFA. He experiences everybody leans on is what they have when he was here, whether they have a child, parents that attended. They have a family member that works here. Or all of the above. Any time our board tackles questions or things that get brought into the public life, which like the system affiliation, we have a resolution that we came up with as a board that helps us. Our North Star. We mentioned that. Having a North Star and remembering our role and what we are here to do. Essentially, we are here to support the best interest of the institution. We want to do our jobs in excellence. Everybody should own their lane and do their job and excellence. Usually have a very challenging lane right now to make it very difficult decision on behalf of the 115,000 alumni as well as those that call Nacogdoches, SFA home. Our North Star is we own engagement and we grow lumberjack pride. In order to do those two things, there is an amazing staff of seven people where 427, depending on what day it is. What we do, we do and excellence. We are going to talk about how we could make that change. This probably makes Craig a little uncomfortable every day. Walking in the office, I am a change agent. Change to be difficult, challenge not to be difficult but to say are we doing what we are doing in excellence? Maybe doing things a little differently. How do we change but not notice who we are? We have some difficult conversations in the executive committee and on our board. All for the better. Change management is hard. Very hard. This is our North Star. We own engagement and grow lumberjack pride. The most important thing for us is how can we do it better? That leads to Mike point of the good, bad, best continuum. Where do we sit? Where do we see ourselves in the marketplace as a university? For the alumni Association I pose this when I came in as

President elect and got a multitude of answers. Some feel our alumni Association is best and class on the good better best continuum. Some think we do things pretty well. When you compare us to some of our like institutions, and used in , from an alumnae perspective, how we manage engagement. Really impacting in a lot of ways. We are restricted because of our size and how we depart and operate as a 501(c)(3). Funding is a big part of that. You are not going to not hear that from our organization at all. Where do we sit? I would say we probably sit on the high side of good. If we were already best in class we wouldn't be having these conversations today. We wouldn't have some of the questions of who really owns getting a student here to SFA. That should be our other Northstar that we all remember. Even for faculty and the staff that work here. If we don't have a student we don't have a campus. We don't have a university. Even from an alumnae perspective I would argue to say back in 2018, even as early as 2018, that was when we did the merger of the foundations. If you were to ask alumnae what they knew, we grow money for scholarships. We don't recruit students. That was probably one of our biggest shifts as an alumni Association where we engage our audience and even though we have alums out there that we know recruits and send their kids, their friends and all other things, we didn't really say that we owned recruiting students. I argue it is all of our jobs. Every single one of us. No matter if you work in the office of recruitment, development, initiatives. You have a job expectation. It probably helps with statistics and accountable's, I would hope. We all own engagement and enrollment here at SFA.

That was 2018. Part of that, a big part of that, that was where we were at a the strategic plan. For the first time, with the alumni Association, we own engagement. That was how that was going to happen. At the center of everything we think about because when the student graduates to become a part of our extension. We have to make sure they keep coming back. The first group, we will go to the next flight. Talking about our alumni in two different ways. We are going to start with the internal voice. This is really Craig and his staff and how we function with the board in terms of fiduciary responsibility and oversight. A lot of questions at the time our deck was due. Working to try and get clarifications on. We have since gotten. The questions we ask, I believe there were 68 or so questions to the system. Thank you to all four systems in addition to the 100 and however many. 60 or so from the group and the others, thank you for responding. Some did it better than others. My challenge to the board is don't make a heavy decision based on whether they had the right person filling out an RFP in response to the system. Taking the time to dig into the details because it is too important. We did get some clarity. The University of Texas system as well as the Texas state system. And the Texas Tech system. The three of those responded to all of our questions and relative to the points on the screen here about operational impact of our office. We are not going to change a thing. This is important to understand because the designation that Texas A&M, they just put it into a policy. We had to go to that policy, asked to help us understand, what is your understanding of this from a legal perspective? Needed to clarify, help us understand, how do you determine that policy and how would we fit into that as a 501(c)(3) organization? Today we have an interdependent relationship, University foundation , University pays half the salary of our incredible staff. Very small salary. Our team that

really cranks out and owns lumberjack pride and in a very proud way. That interdependent relationship was important. There were some concerns from the perspective that one of the designations could have altered our entire existence as an organization. We got clarification. The policy states such as, all of the legal language, with the attorneys, you just add such vibrance to anybody. The battle right now with my new legal team, we won't get into that. Understanding the clarity of understanding with the institution as it relates to the 501(c)(3). This is a good thing. My challenge, Craig and Isaac challenge is okay, that means we can breathe. Nothing major is going to change. Not at risk of going backwards. Are we thinking of the possible? That is what I want to pose to everybody here today. Are we staying where we are at to just maintain what is amazing about this place? Struggle with the ceiling falling through. Some of these other challenges, athletic Fieldhouse, not too long ago, I think I saw the outside of Ivey's office. You could see the outside, that of his is probably the same as it was from 24 years ago when I was a student here. My point is, are we thinking beyond just surviving or are we really thinking of possible, how we are going to get good to better to best, that is where I think it is really important. From an operational perspective, we are not going to go backwards. Check internal voice, ran it by our board, input. Cover up this voice, this is great. Next slide. This is the voice of 115,000 living alumni. I will say this is on my stat sheet. Spent over 40 hours of my personal time going through the initial feedback from all of our stakeholder responses on the website of which there were 949 total unique comments. Annually. On a spreadsheet. I actually had a lovely print out that was sides of paper printed back and forth. This big. I went through every single, as did Jill. Several time took the people to read through that. The summary is what you see on the slide. To release statistical things. If you could quantify, we did our best from a data perspective. I am big on data. It helps us tell the story and paint a picture. Two things that are 115,000 living alumni things are important. Our brand. Don't change our name, our colors, don't change our logo. Don't change what made this a part of what my brand is today. Don't change. Concerned about culture. This was the only thing I was close. Let me give you some numbers. Of the 949 total unique comments on the SSA system website, also what emerged was we have, our social media for SFA alumni is pretty fantastic. We have got our alumni Association board page. Also a group for those of you that may not be a part. That says it is not ours. We care because there are 115,000 living alumni. You know you went to SFA. The you know you went to SFA group, as with the community page held by a proctor, guiding people saying hey, important, your comments, no factual basis to what you just said. We went to hear you. Go put it in this website. You may have seen my name on social media. Driving people encouraging them to go out let their voice be heard. 949 of them did that. We want to, on the most active pages, 257 additional unique responses. Of that, this actually is a pride thing. 99.2% of them said something related to branch. Don't change our name. 99.2. From a data perspective, that is what we call overwhelming. Strong and overwhelming. That means still .8% that didn't necessarily agree or they didn't comment on it. I can tell you there are people that very passionately feel that we need to remain fiercely independent. Whether or not their opinion is based on facts, many of them are not, not understanding the assignment. The perception is

shaping the reality. Needing to remember that. Perception changes reality. That is why the devil is in the detail. Really understanding each system and decide is this where we need to go? 99.2% said if we don't change the brand, I am okay. Let's consider, this could maybe work. I was actually surprised and I think it goes into the due diligence of the process established, the noise that came up really quick on Thursday, on vacation, sitting in that room because I am an adjunct professor in the College of business this year. I had experience in multiple ways. Living my best college life in my 40s right now. I get to teach an amazing class and involved in a number of ways. I was actually surprised that as quick as it exploded, it dissipated. I think it is because of the process. Now kudos to the process. 99.2. On the culture side, the only other thing that really emerged was even close was this idea of culture. It is important to us. SFA is very unique and we don't want that to change. It is what makes us special and this is where we can go in. That percent was the next closest. Really the rest of it was more rhetoric, sifting through the noise. Allowing people to be heard. Reading. This just is not, not even rate. There are so many. Perception shapes reality. The transparency of the process from the system, I certainly have taken time to respond or read all of the responses from the systems. It really helps to close some gaps. I am going to share with you, those are the two things. I want to call out the other thing that this other comments that I heard fairly often was we want the, I want the integrity of my degree to stay intact. Some would even go as far as to say if I have to get a new degree that says Texas A&M on it, I am done giving to the University. That is not the point but that is a whole different conversation. It goes back to this point, this is important. The brand of the institution is woven into 115,000 lives. We need to remember that. The responses for the most part will actually, all of them, they came back and said we are not going to change your name. The other thing to you is the fun discussion about legislation. Back in 2009, you can't change thy name. Just as quick as something could be legislated in, it could be legislated out. That shut a few people down. It is important because this is important to our stakeholder group. I want to talk a little about culture. This is something that I figured out and I had an aha moment after some conversations with several folks. There is a perception. Remember, perception shapes reality. In the systems that have a flagship campus like University of Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, the culture of those flagship campuses

is the culture of the system. It is a real perception. Going through the process of reading and learning and asking questions, finding these campuses not as a flagship campus, I can tell you, again, this is from the research I have done. Not the case. In many of them have regional influences. We can look at what would be a close one. I talked to a professor at University of Tyler, University of Texas Tyler. They would consider themselves a more conservative type of organization from her perspective. Then compared to the flagship campus of University Texas of Austin. There was another,, too. A conversation with if you look at UT, that seems to be the one most concerning for people. We do not want Nacogdoches to become Austin. That is a concern for people. It goes back to this perception of University of Texas in Austin is the system that just is in my findings, not the case. Same for Texas A&M. A little last night, I think the why behind that is, you

got a state who has the name states and they have been a part of that system for a long time. Perception shapes reality. Doesn't mean it is real. Let's remember that, too. That is pretty much it for our voice. If we go to the last slide, the general consensus, this is really important because our board, we met, we had a resume call, talked about the findings, reviewed the information with them, we actually had a supplemental survey very similar to the staff counsel. In corporate America, when you find something that works really well, it is called rip off and duplicate. We use the same format in which those questions were answered. The same thing with alumni for the questions for our group. To get some clarity. Now people have time to read and digest and understand a little bit more. The general consensus, if when you are looking at this like, really important. Our board said this. Make sure that if the SFA alumni name does not change, the brand stays and if our culture should remain to stay intact, allow to be that independent unique culture that we have then overwhelming support or strong support for system affiliation consideration. To me, this was a huge. That data is important because the people who go through the process and respond, I also think of the back and in January with the city of Nacogdoches talking about the comprehensive plan. There were individuals who were very passionate. One woman stood up and spent I don't want to spend \$400,000, we shouldn't use that money. I have a background in this. I can do it for free. My question to her was did you engage in the process? Probably went to the top of the list. Those that took the time to engage in the process, we got the responses from the systems, not going to change the name, not going to change your brand. A couple of them, I am going to enhance it. We want to do what we can to leverage it. That is this is important. It is not, not to say there aren't naysayers. In the .8% of our data. Okay. Again, summarizing the internal voice of our operations, from an operations perspective. We say yes. If it is going to make this place better, if we are going to get to go from better to best, having these consideration conversations in this whole process, gosh, I hope you make the right decision. If there is a compelling reason, good to better the best, we really need to think about that. Long and hard. From a fiercely independent alum that probably fell in the camp of we just need to remain, the independence makes us, it is what our secret sauce is, that purple secret sauce time has changed. What I want to call out, too, we are a part of the system in the state of Texas. If you look at what the historical trends of the state of Texas, not a lot of infusion of capital into education with the state of Texas, they provide a great safety net. The safety net was there. I don't how great it is but there is a safety net. We really need to think about that. Behind the story, this is a confusion that I have come to. There are systems that did a great job answering the questions. If they are giving us what we say we already do well, we are going to say yes. We align with you on that. Texas Tech did a masterful job of that in the nine minute 47 second video that exists. From a marketing perspective, missing our management marketing, international business departed, probably saying yes, they killed it. They are like, wow, I didn't even really understand what this is all about. That was pretty cool. So, we have that. We have that brand identity. We have that culture. They say yes, we value that. My question is what else? I am going to go ahead and lean right into the question that was posed. Should we affiliate, our data says, the two

things important to us, remain still, consideration, affiliation definitely should be a strong yes consideration for it. The next question is the what else? There is a clear distinct separation between two systems. Texas State and Texas Tech. University of Texas and Texas A&M systems. The financial peace is significant. One of them is significant. The other one, I think we make inferences that it could be a detail. Don't kill the messenger of who filled out the RFP, dive into it, get the answers. If all things were to stay the same, my question to Texas state system and to the Texas Tech school would be okay, what else? What are you going to bring, what else are you going to bring to a significant value that will get us from good to better, better to best? Before you can answer that as a board, on behalf of this great place, really understand, who do we want to be? We have to figure that out.

Do we want to just get better, a little better? Still be fiercely independent? The Texas state system alludes to that a little bit. Our biggest archrival, Houston state, since they have been in the system, they have exploded. They got a fantastic leader. I don't know her but I watch her in the marketplace. She has done some pretty amazing things, that was a game changer. They stayed in the Texas state system. We are kind of left behind a little. You go to the Texas Tech system. Can you imagine if we were, I can't even imagine. It might be rolling over in his grave. I actually liked the red. Also I understand random identity may be a little bit different than most. The Texas Tech system, those cultural values are there. When you look at pairing the number of institutions in their system, probably more on the high side from a leadership perspective, if we get a leader, when we get a leader, that is the most important thing. That is going to help us figure out that North Star. Texas Tech is the warm fuzzy feeling one right now I think because they did a great job selling what they do well. You go to Texas A&M and there is just this big monster. They have got several schools in their system. They fit very well. I also noticed, somebody mentioned I think it was Madison, they mentioned a lot of focus on stem which I know they love, forestry. What else? I am certain that there is a lot to the what else, we just got to get into that. What that looks like. They touch on funding, we didn't go deep. They got the game changer, University of Texas system. I am not partial to either. Just saying what the information presented to me. They were very specific, showing a lot of information about financial enhancements. We have to think about these things, who do we want to be?, We want to get a little bit better than what we are today, going into a Texas state system, liking the image of we are in the ocean. We got floaties on right now. Occasionally a fish will come by and poke a hole, you have this so we don't sink. Or do we want to become an Olympic gold breaststroke swimming champion? Good, better, best. Short and long term gain. At the end of the day, from a funding perspective, culture is amazing. It means nothing if we aren't here. Right? We have to really think about that. I don't envy the position, I hope the information all of our stakeholder groups has brought has brought clarity about what is important. Certainly, I don't want to minimize the heaviness of this in a very magnificent way. This is game changing.

And this is, great to be a part of this process. I love being back in Nacogdoches now as a local. Involved in a number of ways, I want to be a part of the solution, I know alumni, 115,000, they all want to be

a part of the solution. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a voice. What questions do you have? Questions, board members. On a personal note, I have served the alumni Association. I was in the role you are in. At one point in time I addressed the board as the president of the alumni Association. I can say from personal experience, it is hard to boil down 115,000 at one time. We appreciate your efforts in doing that. Appreciate all of the work that the alumni Association has done through you, through Craig, a development sphere and Jill, still. All of your efforts are valuable information the stakeholder group are critical we appreciate all of the information thank you very much.

Last closing thought Bernie Brown if anyone follows Renee Brown. A two-part podcast. I sure this when I first moved back. In a nutshell, about how we approach solving complex problems. [Captioners transitioning]

Armored is comfortable where I am at, one world, leave me alone. I am okay. Daring leadership is having that willingness to be willing.

And I think being here and having this conversation shows the willingness to be willing. The hard part is that discernment and trying to set aside, especially from a data perspective, when you've got bias, right? How do you set aside the bias and really try to help out figure out that true North. My challenge to you is don't be armored, be daring. You have been very daring to get to this point so I'm looking forward to seeing what our results are.

Where we are now, we have received these reports. I'm sure folks are saying, what is next? What are the next steps? This subcommittee that was mentioned earlier, is taking all this information in. And we have now, as a board, received this information and the subcommittee will add this information to what has been received from the four systems. Every piece of paper that has been received from the four systems, I can't reiterate enough, is on line. And it is available, if you printed out, it looks like this. I urge everyone to look at that information to study it, to get a good understanding of what is posted because the goal in all of this is to have a transparent process. To have a process where our stakeholders are involved and have an opportunity to participate and provide input. And all of the information received is public information and we will gather these reports today and add that to this process. The subcommittee will continue to meet, Gina ogle speak attended our second round of meetings, if you go to websites, you will see the persistence in the meetings we had with the board of systems. A financial component is a big part of this. And we have to review and do an end of analysis of the financial peace and Gina is working on that right now. So she will do a comprehensive financial report that will be provided to the subcommittee and also presented to the board as a whole, so that that is digested by the entire SFA community. That is in process right now. We anticipate that we will have a special called board meeting to present all of this information to the campus, likely, in the late November, possibly, on November 29th. We will just see. When that date is set, that will be communicated to the entire campus. And the Nacogdoches community as well. We are in process right now. And we are grateful for

the groups, and what they have done, the effort and the energy that they have put into their reports because it is important information for this board to receive as we analyze this question of, what is in the best interest of SFA? Anything else to add before we close out on the reports? With that, that concludes our business in open session today, we do have a continued executive session, we will not take any action today. When we go into executive session, we will come back at the conclusion and end the meeting, but no additional action will be taken at this meeting today we will convene in open session tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. Today, we will gather up. [The event is on a recess. The session will reconvene when executive session ends. Captioner on standby.] [Captioners transitioning]