



October 6, 2022

President Steve Westbrook
Stephen F. Austin State University
1936 North Street
Nacogdoches, TX 75962

Dear President Westbrook and SFA Campus Community:

Thank you very much for coordinating such a collaborative process of gathering feedback from various key stakeholders on SFA's potential affiliation with the Texas State University System (TSUS).

We greatly appreciate the thoughtfulness and extensive list of questions submitted by the Deans Council, the Academic Department Chairs Forum, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Council, Student Government, and the SFA Alumni Association.

We have tried to be brief, yet informative, in responding to the various questions and concerns, and certainly welcome any additional follow-up questions that you or the respective groups may have related to our responses, or any other issues that might inform the campus community and ultimately SFA's Board of Regents decision.

Similar to SFA, the greatest assets of the TSUS system are our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the communities we serve. After significant research and exploration, there is absolutely no question that SFA will thrive as a member of the Texas State University System.

We truly believe the strength of both SFA and TSUS is about the heart and soul of our people, our institutional culture, and the long-term goal of serving our communities and delivering excellence to the great state of Texas.

We will work collaboratively to ensure that any institutional needs; financial, legislative or other, are addressed to ensure both short and long-term success.

TSUS guarantees that SFA will retain its unique identity, culture, and traditions, it will maintain its historical strengths, and at the same time will be encouraged, supported, and positioned to achieve transformational experiences and success for its students, for the institution, for Nacogdoches, and for all of East Texas for the next 100 years.

I look forward to continuing our discussion on SFA's potential affiliation with TSUS.

Sincerely,

Brian McCall
Chancellor

Questions Submitted by the Deans Council

Acknowledging that there are unique concerns relative to specific units and a diverse set of questions to consider, our intention is to create a framework of inquiry regarding value added through system affiliation.

Legislative Support:

1. How do you utilize your position within the system to advocate for the specific needs of each of your system campuses, especially during legislative session? Please provide examples.

System Administration, on behalf of its component institutions, invests significant effort in developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with our partners in the Texas Legislature, Texas executive branch, and the federal government. Through those relationships, we inform key state and federal policy makers on the unique mission and activities of our component institutions and work with those policy makers to realize our mutual goals.

Below are a few recent examples highlighting the effectiveness of this approach:

- 1) *Sam Houston State University (SHSU) proposed a new College of Medicine (COM) with a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree to urgently address the physician shortage, particularly affecting rural Texas. The Texas State University System (TSUS) Board of Regents, System Administration, and the SHSU leadership team tirelessly worked with state leadership to gain approval for and stand up this new academic program. The COM is now enrolling its third cohort of students (totaling 330 students) in a state-of-the-art, health-science facility in Conroe, Texas.*
- 2) *TSUS's State Colleges, including Lamar Institute of Technology, Lamar State College Orange, and Lamar State College Port Arthur, serve their students by providing opportunities to earn associate degrees and certificates in workforce programs. While both the State Colleges and other 2-year community and junior colleges within the State have similar focuses, the State Colleges lack support from local tax bases. As a result of this competitive disadvantage, the State Colleges have historically charged higher tuition compared to the other 2-year colleges.*

System Administration and State College leadership worked collaboratively to identify a solution, navigated the legislative process over two legislative sessions, and secured additional state funding for the State Colleges. The additional funding enabled the State Colleges to reduce student tuition by almost 50%, broadening student access to these vital workforce programs and indefinitely changing higher education in the region. The achievement of this legislative priority has been and will

- continue to be a tremendous boost to State College enrollment and the economic development of the region and State of Texas.*
- 3) *Sul Ross State University (SRSU) operates a residential campus in Alpine, Texas, and satellite instructional sites in the Middle Rio Grande Region. The areas these campuses serve have historically reported lower levels of educational attainment, similar to many rural areas of Texas. Recognizing the ongoing need for enhanced academic programming and student support services, System Administration worked with SRSU leadership, community stakeholders, and leaders from Texas Legislature and Executive Branch in the latest round of State capital funding to deliver a historic, \$33 million investment in new infrastructure for the region. The investment will dramatically enhance the college-going culture of the region and is expected to yield significant gains in enrollment and student success, resulting in substantial economic development in the region.*
 - 4) *In conjunction with other University Systems, TSUS supported the Comprehensive Research University funding proposal established in Senate Bill 1295, 87th Regular Session.*
 - 5) *Texas State University – In support of the Universities “Run to R1”, System Administration worked with Legislative leadership over multiple biennia to provide an additional \$32 million in research funding.*
 - 6) *Lamar University–The Legislature increased annual funding to Lamar University by more than \$8.5 million to address the funding disparity between Lamar and its peer institutions. This additional financial support will go along way to enhance the competitiveness of Lamar University, including faculty compensation.*

Resource Allocation:

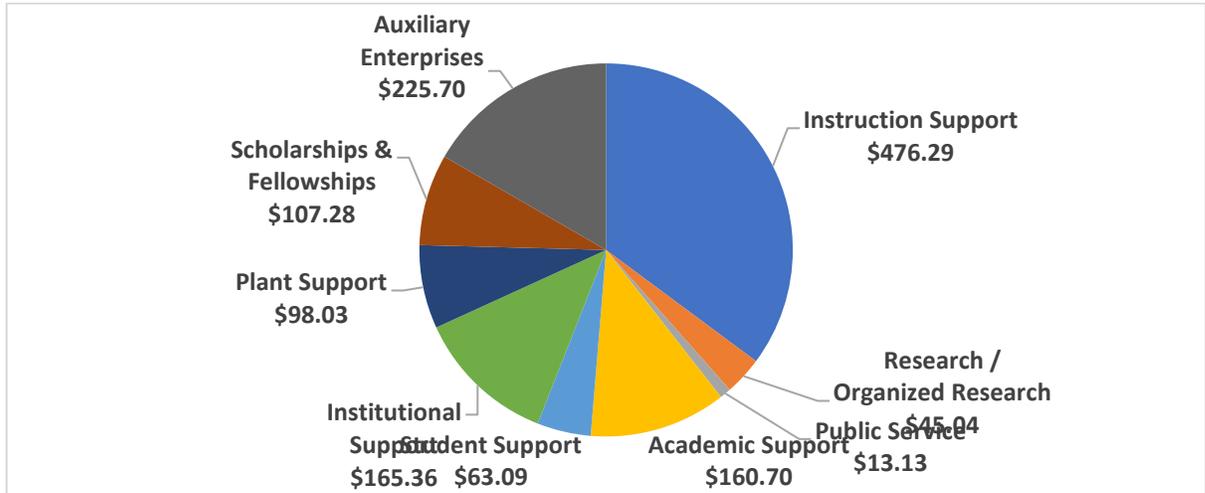
2. How does the system determine resource allocation to member institutions? To what extent does the system influence allocation of resources within each university?

Each TSUS component institution has an equal “place at the table,” receiving similar access to and support from System Administration and the Board regardless of size. As critical issues requiring immediate and intensive system engagement arise, those issues are given highest priority and are urgently handled with the full power of the System and, where needed and appropriate, the Board.

One of TSUS’ many strengths is that each component’s financial resources are intended to directly benefit the component rather than System Administration or the Board. Accordingly, financial resources are derived and maintained at the component level.

3. What percentage of each system university's total budget is allocated to its academic affairs division?

52% of FY 2023 Budget Expenditures are directed towards Instructional Support, Academic Support and Student Support.



Lamar University – 45%
Sam Houston State University – 53%
Sul Ross State University – 42%
Texas State University – 37%

4. Provide examples of how you have invested in students, staff, and faculty.

Recently, TSUS has also coordinated systemwide effort, attention, and resources related to student mental health and wellness. As a result, TSUS system administration, in partnership with its institutions is soliciting a mental health organization to help provide 24/7 assistance and support to all TSUS students, via their cell phones, as an additional mental health and wellness resource to help address this critical and growing need across the system.

Curriculum:

5. Describe the curricular autonomy that exists between the system and its member institutions.

Faculty and faculty committees control and manage the curriculum with assistance and support from academic leadership. Per system policy, recommended changes to the curriculum are forwarded to System Administration and the Board for review, and are routinely approved at quarterly meetings.

6. Provide specific examples of how the system invests in academic excellence including program accreditation and accountability.

TSUS maintains a series of Regents' Awards recognizing excellence at the System level for which SFA faculty, staff, and students would be immediately eligible. These awards include the Regents' Professor Award, the Regents' Scholar Award, the Regents' Teacher Award, and the Regents' Staff Excellence Award. In addition, the System has previously supported other System level programs including travel assistance to national student success conferences, a Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship Program for aspiring academic leaders, assisting with and promoting the development of the statewide Texas Academic Leadership Academy for new and aspiring Department Chairs and Deans that is coordinated by Sam Houston State University, and pilot grants to support faculty participation in the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). TSUS's current accountability framework helps focus institutional leadership and attention on excellence by tracking metrics and diversity in the areas of access/enrollment, student success, excellence in research, teaching, fundraising, and affordability.

Identity:

7. Provide evidence of how the system ensures that its member institutions maintain their unique identities.

TSUS components operate very independently and autonomously within System policies and procedures. Thus, System Administration and the Board of Regents are not involved in the day-to-day brand development and institutional identity activities. TSUS prides itself on having diverse, non-homogenous institutions, with each controlling their own unique identity, colors, traditions, and academic offerings.

8. Describe the reasons you are interested in SFA. How do you see SFA adding value to the system?

SFA's mission aligns perfectly with the mission of TSUS, and the students, faculty and staff will benefit from each other. SFA's offers strong academic programs, high quality and student-centered faculty, and diverse student demographics. SFA's history and traditions are a perfect complement to TSUS's current mix of universities and state colleges. Like SFA, most TSUS components were founded as state teacher colleges and operate under the name of one of the founding fathers of Texas. With the addition of SFA's student and alumni base to TSUS, additional opportunities will be available to leverage resources from both public and private sources, benefiting faculty, staff, and students across the System.

Questions Submitted by the Academic Department Chairs Forum

Compensation

1. How will adjustments (merit, raises, compression) to faculty & staff salaries be evaluated? Provide examples of how adjustments to salaries were incorporated as a result of previous affiliation with your system. How do the salary and workload expectations differ among affiliated universities, and how is that incorporated into salary?

TSUS recognizes the mission, strategies, and goals are unique to each component and may vary over time. Accordingly, there is no system-level, prescriptive policy on faculty and staff salaries or adjustments. However, System Administration does monitor faculty and staff compensation on a regular basis.

Annually, System Administration partners with institutional leadership and the Board of Regents to review, request, and approve an operating budget, a legislative appropriation request, and tuition and fee charges. Through this process, resources are identified to support adequate and appropriate compensation to recruit, retain, and develop high-quality faculty and staff.

2. What policies and procedures govern employee benefits that would be applied to our campus? Are benefits applied equally throughout the system? If there any examples of differences in benefits among your affiliated institutions, then please provide examples.

The primary employee benefits of health and retirement plans are prescribed by ERS and TRS respectively. These same benefits apply equally to SFA employees and all other TSUS employees. However, within their independent and autonomous operations each component may choose to supplemental these health and retirement benefits. Examples include Salary Reduction Agreements, Employee Assistance Programs, or Tuition Assistance Programs. These supplemental offerings are tailored by each component to fit the needs and desires of their faculty, staff, and students.

Policies and Procedures

3. Will the system guarantee faculty the academic freedom to discuss and opine on controversial topics relevant to the course, even if this offends some students and administrators? Please provide examples of how your system has supported academic freedom among your affiliates.

Freedom of speech and principles of academic freedom are central to the mission of institutions of higher education and are highlighted in TSUS System Policies and Procedures.

4. When other universities have joined your system, which of these policies and procedures remained local or which ones were merged to the system: hiring process, general counsel, dual-credit, audit services, contracting/purchasing, information technology services, grant and support programs, curriculum & program management, assessment, tenure & promotion process, office of the registrar (academic probation & suspension, audits, graduation, plan of study, program fees and differential tuition).

Although no institutions have recently joined TSUS, the following reflects the level for each area.

Hiring Process (local except for President), general counsel (System), dual-credit (local), audit services (System), contracting/purchasing (local and System), information technology services (local and System), grant and support programs (local and System), curriculum and program management (local), assessment (local), tenure and promotion process (local and System), office of the registrar (local, fees and tuition recommended local then approved at System).

5. What system integrations would be required for operational infrastructure? Please provide a list of internal and external software packages related to academic affairs that are used system-wide.

No system integrations are required. However, a number of TSUS institutions recently collaborated to voluntarily deploy an updated version of their learning management system, Blackboard Ultra and Genius, along with a 24/7 technology support desk, video hosting service, ADA and 508 compliance, and online course instructional design support. Although not required, academic leadership across TSUS also have access to an extensive digital repository of market research and reports (Hanover Research) to inform discussions and strategy with faculty on program review and development.

6. Will we be able to choose our preferred learning management system? Or is this chosen system-wide? SFA currently uses Brightspace.

This is an institutional decision. Six of the seven current TSUS institutions use Blackboard and one uses Canvas.

Structure and Hierarchy

7. Please describe the relationship between marketing, advertising, and enrollment management across system universities and how do they mutually support each other?

There is a collegial relationship between marketing, advertising, and enrollment management across TSUS institutions, with leadership, advice, and added-value support available at the System Vice Chancellor level. Stakeholder groups meet both formally and informally to share best practices, discuss trends and challenges, etc.

8. Please provide examples of system wide collaboration between undergraduate and/or graduate programs and mentorship of graduate students.

TSUS's Student Advisory Board meets on a quarterly basis at the Board of Regents meetings, has discussions with peers and staff across system institutions, meets for breakfast with the Chancellor, Presidents, and the Board of Regents, and publicly reports on key issues impacting the student body.

9. What autonomy does SFA retain regarding staffing, faculty, and future programmatic decisions? Please provide examples of any restructuring or changes to programs that have occurred when institutions have joined your system.

SFA will retain similar autonomy to what it currently holds.

The Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making to our institutions. However, System Administration does work in close partnership with our institutions to provide personalized, value-added leadership and guidance in the areas of academic, health, and student affairs, finance, marketing and communications, government relations, institutional research and data analysis, audit, compliance, and legal services.

TSUS is governed by our Board of Regents, whose members are appointed by the governor. System Administration is led by a board-appointed chancellor. TSUS presidents report directly to the chancellor and are given the authority to manage and lead their institutions independently, working within TSUS system policies and procedures, with support and guidance from System Administration to achieve their unique vision, mission, and goals, while maintaining their distinct culture and traditions.

No institutions have recently joined our system.

Questions Submitted by the Faculty Senate

General System-Interest questions (possible category):

1. Why is your institution interested in the potential addition of SFA to your system? What do you see as the joint advantages of such a move? For instance, what are the three most significant ways you believe that SFA would benefit from joining your specific system—and you from SFA's participation in your system? [Feel free to discuss any specific programs, initiatives, general infrastructure, or human capital particularly informing this response.]

Top 3 Ways SFA Benefits from Joining The Texas State University System:

- 1) ***Best Cultural Fit*** - SFA would receive immediate support and expert guidance from the oldest system in Texas, who was founded with other state teachers colleges, possesses similar student demographic and unique histories, and operates as the only system in Texas not beholden to a flagship institution, while maintaining SFA's name and unique student-centered culture and identity.
- 2) ***Legislative Acumen and Strength*** – SFA would receive an immediate boost in affiliation by joining TSUS, with sister institutions located from the Gulf in Southeast Texas to the Big Bend area of West Texas, and a headquarters located in Austin, Texas, which is available for strategic use by SFA and its key stakeholders. TSUS has a strong and proven track record partnering with executive and legislative leadership to advance institutional and regional priorities.
- 3) ***Strong Ally, Partner, and Collaborator to Help Achieve SFA's Vision, Mission and Goals*** – TSUS is well known in the state and nationally as an efficient and effective system, with a seasoned and respected chancellor and an experienced system administration. TSUS is able to attract and retain high-quality presidents to manage and lead our institutions to higher levels of performance and uses a value-added approach to supporting its diverse students, faculty, and staff, while striving for excellence in teaching, research, and service.

Top 3 Ways TSUS Benefits from SFA's Participation in Our System:

- 1) ***Strong Ally, Partner, and Collaborator in East Texas to Help Achieve TSUS's Vision, Mission and Goals*** – TSUS's vision is to become the premiere university system in the country for serving first-generation and historically under-served students, transforming lives, and in the process helping to fulfill critical state and national needs in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Located in the

amazing community of Nacogdoches, in the beautiful region of East Texas, SFA will serve as a strong East Texas partner with similar culture, traditions and values, in moving forward TSUS and statewide goals of increasing access, student success, excellence in faculty, research, and fundraising, inclusion, and affordability.

- 2) ***Economies of Scale*** – *TSUS currently employs approximately 10,000 faculty and staff, 5,000 student workers, and enrolls over 87,000 students. Adding an additional, 1,700 faculty and staff, as well as an additional 12,000 students would increase the size of TSUS by over 10%, thus providing additional economies of scales in purchasing, contracts, technology, licenses, and a host of other programs and services to enhance the educational experience and improve student access and success.*

 - 3) ***A Family Reunion: Another Historical and Unique Texas University and Community to Become Part of the TSUS Family*** – *Nacogdoches is the oldest town in Texas, with an historic and unique university in SFA that serves as an anchor institution to the region. As the oldest university system in Texas, TSUS’s Board, Chancellor, System Administration, and the leadership of its institutions recognize the privilege and honor for TSUS to play a role in re-uniting a former state teacher college with its original system to become a united and stronger university family as a result. We look forward with great pleasure on making new friends, colleagues, and strengthening alumni networks to create a new and better Texas and a brighter future.*
2. How do the programs at SFA fit into your strategy for serving the population of Texas?

For nearly 100 years, SFA has served the higher education needs of East Texas extraordinarily well, founded as a state teacher college and now a comprehensive university with many high-quality academic programs and services. As an anchor TSUS institution, SFA’s academic programs will continue to evolve and grow to meet the educational, economic, community, and workforce needs of the region and the state.

3. In which programs or initiatives at SFA do you anticipate additional investment (either in terms of personnel and/or non-human infrastructure)?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration are not involved in the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. However, TSUS system administration works closely in partnership with our institutions to provide personalized, value-added leadership and guidance in the areas of academic, health, and student affairs, finance, marketing and communications, government relations, institutional research and data analysis, audit, compliance, and legal services.

TSUS is governed by our Board of Regents, whose members are appointed by the governor. System Administration is led by a board-appointed chancellor. TSUS presidents report directly to the chancellor and are given the authority to manage and

lead their institutions independently, working within TSUS system policies and procedures, with support and guidance from System Administration to achieve their unique vision, mission, and goals, while maintaining their distinct culture and traditions.

4. How would an affiliation between our universities likely impact SFA enrollment, in your view, if any? What is the reasoning for that conclusion (for instance, based on prior affiliation experience)?

Over the next ten years, SFA will be the beneficiary of strategic and sustained growth, balancing the need for additional students and faculty, with the resources required to enhance the university's student-centered culture and traditions. Over the past 12 years, TSUS has grown by 14,600 students or 21%, from 72,200 in 2010 to more than 87,000 students in 2022. If SFA grew at the same rate as the TSUS system since 2010, its current enrollment would be about 15,500, or on par with SHSU and LU.

5. Which institution in your system seems closest in mission, scope, strengths, and weaknesses to SFA? Why do you say that?

Like SFA, three of TSUS's four universities, Sam Houston State University (SHSU), Sul Ross State University (SRSU), and Texas State University (TXST), were founded as state teacher colleges and were all part of the original State Teachers College System. In terms of mission, scope, and strengths, SFA may be the closest to SHSU given its enrollment trajectory, its regional affiliation, its strong connection to community, its student-centered and service-oriented mission, its ability to transform students and enhance their social mobility, its comprehensive academic program mix, its sense of culture, and its strong athletic traditions. In terms of enrollment challenges, SFA and SRSU are similar given their rural locations, the similar demand for technology-enhanced course and program innovations, and the need to draw a larger percentage of their students, faculty, and staff from larger urban metros other areas of the state.

6. What programs at SFA do you view as differentiators relative to other regional state universities in your system? Why?

Given its nearly 100-year history, there are numerous ways that SFA and its academic and student support programs help differentiate it from similar regional universities in TSUS. For example, based upon total degrees conferred, SFA continues to show strength in its historical roots of education at the undergraduate and graduate level, in addition to business, health professions (enhanced by the new STEM Research and Learning Center), visual and performing arts (enhanced by its expansion initiative), kinesiology, forestry and agriculture sciences (leveraging the longstanding management of SFA Experimental Forest and the high percent of Texas graduates produced in Forestry and the only Ph.D. in Forestry), consumer sciences, in addition to many other high-quality programs.

Various state and national rankings also help provide evidence of various program strengths including: US News top performer for social mobility, ranked programs business and nursing, elementary charter school, undergraduate engineering programs at schools with no doctoral degrees, NICHE rankings for College of Agriculture Sciences, Kinesiology and PT, and Fraternity and Sorority Life, and College of Distinction for equity and inclusion, career development, impactful business, nursing, and engineering programs, and military support, its large student observatory, its strong international initiatives, its increasing number of online programs, its social media engagement and school spirit rankings, its rodeo program, its Army ROTC Ranger Challenge Team, among many other differentiators.

Institutional Identity questions (possible category):

7. Would an affiliation between our institutions require an institutional name change? If so, why?

No. TSUS operates as the only system in Texas without a flagship institution and desires that SFA maintain its name and unique culture and identity.

8. What changes might you envision concerning the manner in which SFA is marketed and recruits its students in the event that SFA were to become a member of your system?

A routine and minor acknowledgment of system membership will be included in various marketing materials and publications. More significant changes would only be expected in select strategies where institutional leadership believes it is advantageous, for example, in recruiting SFA into Sam Houston State University College of Medicine.

9. If SFA were to become part of your system, would its mission change to become more focused on research (instead of teaching) than it currently is?

These are president and institutional decisions that TSUS Administration and the Board of Regents do not dictate.

System v. Affiliate Operations & Governance questions (possible category):

10. In your system, what is the management and governance structure put in place to oversee an individual affiliate?

TSUS is governed by our nine-member Board of Regents appointed by the governor. A non-voting student regent is also appointed annually to the board. The System is led by a board-appointed chancellor, and institution presidents report directly to the chancellor.

11. Will there be an external or internal post- affiliation review process of current programs with regards to performance and/or need after the affiliation? Who would conduct that review process, if one would be required?

There will be no special external or internal post-affiliation reviews as part of the transition to TSUS. As a new TSUS institution, SFA will have immediate access to high-quality faculty and academic peers from other TSUS components to assist and support one another to conduct program reviews as needed or requested.

12. What would be the status of any open lines and/or personnel searches in progress if our universities were to merge?

Open lines and personnel searches are institutional President and academic leadership decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents are not involved with on a day-to-day basis.

13. How much autonomy do universities in the system have regarding establishing their own administrative hierarchies and setting university policies?

TSUS component institutions retain almost exclusive authority in establishing their administrative hierarchies and the adoption of institutional policies. This is evidenced by the varying organizational structures of TSUS components today.

14. In general, what operational areas are impacted by system-wide policies, as opposed to affiliate-specific policies?

From a day-to-day operational perspective, TSUS Administration anticipates minimal changes to institutional specific policies. TSUS and SFA are subject to the same state and federal laws, so it is anticipated policies will be similar.

15. If SFA were to join your system, what process would be followed to search for and select the new president?

According to TSUS policy, the chancellor shall recommend to the Board a candidate for the presidency of each component. The board, by majority vote, shall appoint component presidents.

By practice, when presidential vacancies occur, a presidential advisory search committee is named by the chair of the board of regents with representation from key stakeholder groups including faculty, staff, administration, students, alumni/community members, and at least several members of the board, one of which will serve as search chair.

The system engages an executive search firm to help develop a presidential prospectus (which includes conducting feedback sessions with campus stakeholders, as well as an online survey), conduct a national solicitation of applicants, and coordinate narrowing the candidate pool to a small number of highly qualified individuals who are recommended to the chancellor for consideration. The chancellor interviews candidates and selects a sole finalist to be recommended to the board for approval. The chancellor may also, on an interim basis, fill a presidential vacancy, until a permanent president is approved by the board.

16. What role would the Faculty Senate have in expressing the needs/concerns of faculty within the system?

The Vice Chancellor of Academic and Health Affairs meets two times each year with the TSUS Council of Faculty Senates, comprised of faculty senate leadership from all institutions. System and campus updates are provided, and faculty senate leadership is given the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions of System Administration in all areas, including legal, budget, marketing/communications, and governmental relations. In addition, the president of the faculty senate is usually chosen by the Board chair as a member of a presidential advisory search committee.

17. What similar role would the Staff Council be able to occupy, if any?

In a similar fashion to the Faculty of Council Senate, leadership from Staff Councils are welcome to meet with System Administration. A possible benefit of SFA joining the system is System Administration support to help make this a regular and recurring activity. In addition, it is not unusual for the Board chair to select a staff council representative to become a member of a presidential advisory search committee, as needed.

Employment stability, compensation, and benefit-related questions (possible category):

18. Will you commit to keeping intact all current SFA academic programs (and their personnel) for at least three years? For five years? [Understanding that programs could be reduced or eliminated during that period by SFA's management team itself.] Why or why not would you agree to these timeframes?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. However, System Administration works closely in partnership with our institutions to provide personalized, value-added leadership and guidance in the areas of academic, health, and student affairs, finance, marketing and communications, government relations, institutional research and data analysis, audit, compliance, and legal services.

Thus, any decisions related to SFA academic programs should follow best practices, with proposals moving from department to school (if applicable), to college, to university, to

System Administration, to the Board, and eventually to THECB and the appropriate accrediting body, as needed.

19. Does the system perform a regular review (and potential right-sizing) of administrative and staff positions? If so, please describe that process.

In order to appropriately support institutions in securing resources to advance excellence and achieve institutional vision, mission, and goals, System Administration remains informed as to the relative size and scope of peer institutions in Texas and nationally. System also tracks and reports various institutional data and financial ratios, including the Financial Composite Index, to the Board of Regents. System Administration routinely works with institutional leadership to review institutional data and financial ratios to ensure institutional leadership has the broadest perspective on institutional operations. However, TSUS does not make directives regarding specific staffing levels.

20. Can faculty (or staff) move between universities within the system, as and when employment needs change?

Given the similarities in benefits, it is possible for faculty and staff to easily move between institutions in the system. This is more common in Southeast Texas given the geographic proximity of our TSUS institutions in the region. However, there is no system coordinated program or approach to any movement. All such decisions are made by individual employees and their respective employers.

21. If SFA were to become a part of your system, would existing faculty and/or salaries be adjusted to become compatible with other campuses in your system?

These are president and institutional decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not dictate. However, competitive salaries and benefits are critically important for SFA, and for all TSUS institutions, in recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty and developing and maintaining strong academic programs. TSUS System Administration works in partnership with presidents and institutions to critically assess institutional performance, market competitiveness, and management's ability to secure resources from all sources to support these efforts.

22. Would system-wide salary guidelines be put in place for new hires at SFA (post-affiliation)?

As mentioned previously, this is a presidential and institutional decision rather than TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents directed. However, TSUS recognizes that competitive salaries and benefits, and the ability to recruit the best and the brightest are key attributes for TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

23. If there are positions where an SFA employee's pay is currently higher than, say, a system-wide standard for that equivalent position, is there a possibility of affected employees facing a salary decrease?

Not applicable.

24. Will employee benefit programs like LEAP remain in place in the event of an affiliation, or are benefit programs standardized across all affiliates?

TSUS components have unique LEAP based upon institutional preferences and desires. Where customizable and permissible, employee benefit programs are president and institutional decisions rather than TSUS System Administration and Board of Regents directed, provided the programs adhere to state statutes and system policies and procedures.

25. Are job titles and descriptions required to be standardized across members of the system?

No. The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Job titles and descriptions are under the purview of each president.

26. Is there a standard telecommuting policy that would be enforced within the system, and if so, what is that policy?

No. The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Telecommuting policies are under the purview of each president.

27. What is your process for establishing salary consistency across faculty and staff serving within different system affiliates?

Competitive salaries and benefits, and the ability to recruit the best and the brightest are key attributes within TSUS. While no system-wide guidelines are published, TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

28. What is your process for determining merit increases for faculty and staff serving within different affiliates?

Merit increases are presidential and institutional decisions not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, it is not uncommon for leadership to

consider faculty and staff salaries across the system, the state, and the nation to remain competitive, given resource availability and strategic priorities.

29. What is your process for determining annual salary increases for faculty and staff serving within different affiliates?

Salary increases are presidential and institutional decisions that are not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, competitive salaries and benefits are key attributes affecting the ability to recruit the best and the brightest within TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

Ongoing Academics operations questions (possible category):

30. What evaluation criteria are used (on an ongoing basis) to determine the viability/retainability of academic programs? How does this assessment process affect annual funding levels for those programs?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Evaluation criteria and funding levels for academic programs are under the purview of each president.

31. Does the system actively monitor duplicate programs and seek, if possible, to minimize system-wide duplications? If so, how does that process work?

TSUS monitors program offering, however, there is no expectation to minimize duplication of programs.

32. What is the process for proposing/creating new programs?

The process for proposing/creating new academic programs is faculty driven, following a best practices approach. Creation and movement of a proposal through the review, approval, and/or revision process flows from faculty member(s), to department, to school if applicable, to college, to university, to System Administration, to the Board, to the THECB, and to any necessary accrediting body.

33. What system-level funding sources would be available for pilot programs, if any, in the event that a promising pilot could not cover its initial costs?

Historically, TSUS System Administration has funded various pilot grants for faculty development and other student success related initiatives. Recently, a number of smaller grants have been awarded to components to support innovative student access and success strategies.

34. What is the system's standard level of funding for research and graduate studies at its affiliates, or is this budget amount determined by each affiliate?

The level of funding for research and graduate studies is determined by presidential and institutional leadership.

35. Are librarians an integral part of the learning infrastructure in your system? To what extent, and in what roles?

Yes, librarians are integral at both the institution and system levels. As needed, System Administration will engage in discussions, phone calls, etc. with institutional librarians to address critical issues (e.g., cost of databases, educational resources, Elsevier, access to OER materials, etc.) and related matters.

36. The number of librarians at SFA has been drastically reduced in the last 10 years as open positions were not filled, thereby resulting in fewer research/subject librarians to assist students, instruct classes, perform collection development, etc. Is this something that might change if we were to join your system, or would each affiliate determine those needs?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Staffing decisions are under the purview of each president.

37. Do faculty who teach online receive a stipend? If so, at what rate?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Compensation decisions are under the purview of each president.

38. At what stipend rate is development or redevelopment (total revision) of online courses compensated?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Compensation decisions are under the purview of each president.

39. What centralized technological support is provided for faculty who teach courses at night, or is this determined by each affiliate?

There is no system level centralized technological support for faculty teaching at night as this is an institutional decision.

However, a number of TSUS institutions recently participated in an effort coordinated by Sam Houston State University (SHSU) to voluntarily deploy an updated version of their learning management system, Blackboard Ultra and Genius, along with a 24/7 technology support desk, video hosting service, ADA and 508 compliance, other online faculty learning materials, and dedicated online course instructional design support. SHSU also hosts an annual Digital Summit, with faculty participation from across TSUS, to encourage and promote the sharing of high impact teaching and learning practices.

Curricular- and Accreditation issue questions (possible category):

40. How does your system deal with the issue of standardized curriculum within duplicative programs across campuses? Must the programs, for instance, feature identical curriculums?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Curriculum decisions are under the purview of each president.

41. How about system-wide accreditation: For instance, is it necessary that external accreditation be performed on all similar programs at once across the system? If accreditation is performed individually, to what extent is the system involved in an affiliate's accreditation exercise regarding a common program?

Institution and program-specific accreditation is coordinated and managed at the institutional level, although there is a systemwide group of institutional effectiveness directors that, as needed, will share information regarding standards language and best practices to assist any institutions in its accreditation process.

42. For programs facing discipline-specific accreditation, what type of support (administrative and/or financial) will be provided for them to retain accreditation?

Program-specific accreditation is coordinated and managed at the institutional level, although there is a systemwide group of institutional effectiveness directors that, as needed, will share information regarding standards language and best practices to assist any institutions in its accreditation process.

43. What additional financial support (if any) is provided to program coordinators for accreditation or other needs?

Funding decisions, like this, are under the purview of the Institution's leadership.

44. Are there system-wide meetings (either at the program, college, or university level) to share pedagogical best practices and/or subject knowledge?

Yes, TSUS encourages and supports system-level meetings and discussions of best practices and sharing subject knowledge. It is not uncommon for various groups, including the Council of Faculty Senates, various college deans, Chief Academic Officers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, Chief Business Officers (including TSUS Business Officers Meetings), Directors of Institutional Research, Directors of Online Learning, Directors of Information Technology, diversity, equity and inclusion groups, librarians, or enrollment management teams, among others to meet for this purpose.

45. Are the system-affiliate's students offered preferential admissions at flagship or other system-affiliates' graduate programs?

TSUS does not operate with a flagship institution. All institutions are treated equally and fairly. Sam Houston State University, with the recent addition of a new College of Medicine and a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree program, is just now beginning to create special admissions pathways for TSUS students interested in attending medical school. So the timing of incorporating SFA and its students into this discussion is most beneficial and welcome.

Resource Allocations & Resource Sharing questions (possible category):

46. How does the system determine how to allocate state funds (example: PUF or HEF funds) across affiliates in the system? Or are these applied for by each institution...and awarded individually?

Like SFA, TSUS institutions receive HEF funds. HEF funds are allocated by the State directly to respective institutions.

47. What is the process for affiliates to lobby for funding in Austin? Is this permitted? Discouraged? Performed at the system level?

TSUS has experienced great success utilizing a system-level governmental relations approach. In close collaboration with institutional leadership, System Administration provides leadership and guidance and advocates for the unique vision, mission, and goals of each institution.

48. What would be the disposition of SFA's endowment funds and its fund reserve balance in the event of an affiliation with your system? Where would those funds be located and managed?

Ownership of the institutional endowment assets remains with the institution. Assets are invested in a centrally managed, system-wide investment pool to achieve the highest rate of return possible. Asset allocations for the pool are approved by the Investment

Advisory Committee (IAC), in accordance with the Board approved Investment Policy. The IAC is comprised of each institutional Chief Financial Officer, or their designee.

49. Do all affiliates in your system share the same bond rating, or are they measured individually?

Bond ratings are assigned by rating agencies at the system level based on the overall financial strength of the system. TSUS' bond rating is higher than the existing rating for SFA.

50. What mid- to back-office support services or infrastructural elements (ex: library and research resources; legal; human resources; accounting; IT; and so on) are shared across system members?

Most university operations are managed locally, except for legal services, governmental relations, audit and certain business functions, such as construction, debt management and investment management. The governmental relations function is based in Austin, just four blocks from the State Capitol. General Counsel and Audit staff, while administratively managed at the system level, will remain on the campus of SFA.

51. To what extent are research resources, particularly academic and research databases, made available to all system members (if at all)? Or do these remain the responsibility of each affiliate to arrange for?

No academic or research databases are coordinated at the system level. However, TSUS faculty and institutional leadership have access to a system level contract with The Normandy Group, who meet regularly with system Chief Research Officers, faculty across the system, and System Administration to increase awareness of and access to research grants and recurring research funding opportunities at the state and national level. SFA faculty and leadership will have immediate access to this valuable resource as part of the TSUS system.

52. Is grant funding regularly sought at the system level (and then allocated to affiliates), or does grant funding remain an affiliate-driven initiative? Or do both types of initiatives occur in your system?

Over the past several years, TSUS has experience increased partnership and collaboration on soliciting grants, especially when the grant criteria emphasize this will increase the probably of success. However, the vast majority of grant funding and solicitation is initiated at the institutional level.

Budgeting questions (possible category):

53. How are budgets balanced and managed in this system? More specifically, at what level of an organization's operations are budgets balanced (e.g., program, department, college, Cabinet or VP-level, holistic university, across multiple affiliates, at the macro system level, etc.)?

Annual operating budgets and necessary interim adjustments are approved by the Board of Regents on a regular basis. Budgets are reviewed by System Administration and presented to the Board, delineated by funding source. Given the unique budgetary environments each institution may be in, institutional discretion (with system oversight) is delegated to each president. However, System Administration and the Board of Regents monitor long-term financial health and would intervene should it be necessary.

54. What actions are taken, and at what organizational level, when spending is projected to exceed revenue?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Budgetary decisions are under the purview of each president, subject to System Administration review and Board approval.

55. Are the percentages of budget allocations required to be similar across all affiliates (i.e., the % of budget that goes to divisions like academic affairs, student affairs, athletics, etc.?) Why or why not?

Budget allocations are based upon the unique history, operations, mission, and goals of each component institution. While we look at similarities between institutions when reasonable and appropriate, there is no system level policy to dictate uniformity.

56. What percentage of the budget is directed towards academic affairs/instruction across the system? Or is this figure determined within each affiliate?

Budgeted amount or percent is recommended by the president and institution, reviewed by System Administration, and approved by the Board. Please refer to Deans Council Question 3 for breakdown.

57. How are your library, cultural heritage departments, and other primary resource areas funded? What is the level of that funding, aggregated at the system level?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Budgetary decisions are under the purview of each president, subject to System Administration review and Board approval.

58. What campus groups are typically involved in annual budget developments—or is this left up to each affiliate? What is the typical timeline and set of informational flows related to the budget development (both pre- and post- budget finalization) within your system?

Stakeholder involvement in the institutional budget development is at each institution's discretion. However, System Administration encourages the use of best practices including a strong connection to strategic plan, institutional goals, and achieving key performance indicators, with clear and regular communications, transparency at all levels, and campuswide participation.

Research collaboration questions (possible category):

59. Can you provide examples of significant or noteworthy research-based program collaborations across affiliated members in your system?

The Texas Invasive Species Institute (TISI) is a system level research collaboration comprised of faculty across the system. TISI was the first comprehensive effort in Texas focused on research and coordinating the effective early detection and rapid response to multiple new invasive species that currently impact, or have the potential to impact, ecosystems and produce major economic effects.

60. What process would be followed to initiate, say, a shared research project or program initiative with other affiliates in the system?

TSUS faculty and institutional leadership have access to a system level contract with The Normandy Group, who meet regularly with system Chief Research Officers, faculty across the system, and System Administration to increase awareness of and access to research grants and recurring research funding opportunities at the state and national level. SFA faculty and leadership will have immediate access to this resource as part of the TSUS system.

61. How does system affiliation influence the development of research centers, clinics, and lab spaces?

TSUS has a system level institute on invasive species, as well as a 9,300-acre property called Christmas Mountains, adjacent to Big Bend National Park, which are used by faculty and students across the entire system. A new field station is being built at Christmas Mountains that SFA faculty and students will have immediate access to for research, teaching, and service activities.

Otherwise, research centers, clinics, and lab space are almost exclusively president and institutional operations that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not direct.

Tenure and Promotion questions (possible category):

62. Do you use a single set of tenure and promotion criteria across the system? Perhaps within specific disciplines taught across multiple affiliates in the system? Or does each affiliate manage its T&P processes itself?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration delegate the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. Tenure and promotion decisions are under the purview of each president, subject to recommendation to and approval by the Board of Regents in accordance with TSUS System Policies and Procedures.

63. If a system-wide T&P process is in play, can you provide that policy/process description?

Tenure and promotion decisions are made at the institutional level and then are recommended to and approved by the Board of Regents. TSUS does have a number of TSUS System Policies and Procedures in place to support and protect this process.

64. Would existing tenured faculty be grandfathered in as tenured—and with credit given for their elapsed-time in current position—in the event of an affiliation? What about the time-in-role conditions relative to tenure-track (yet not-yet-tenured) faculty?

TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents will not direct any changes to faculty with tenure or those in tenure-track positions. These are president and institutional decisions.

Questions Submitted by the SFA Staff Council

Governance/Policies and Procedures

1. Which of the following policies and procedures will remain local and which will be adjusted to merge with system expectations following affiliation:
 - a. contracting/purchasing, *Institutional and System*
 - b. information technology applications, *Institutional*
 - c. software purchases, *Institutional*
 - d. emergency management, *Institutional*
 - e. construction management, *System*
 - f. insurance and risk services, *System*
 - g. hiring procedures, *Institutional*
 - h. holiday and academic calendars, *Institutional*
 - i. scholarship procedures/deadlines, *Institutional*
 - j. property inventory/management, *Institutional*
 - k. payroll, *Institutional*
 - l. accounts payable? *Institutional*

Please address each item.

Please see responses incorporated within the Question.

2. SFA is currently without a permanent president. The selection of our next leader will be critical to our success, and our institutional commitment to shared governance means that many stakeholders will want to be part of the selection process. How will the system approach the presidential selection process?

According to TSUS policy, the chancellor shall recommend to the Board a candidate for the presidency of each component. The board, by majority vote, shall appoint component presidents.

By practice, when presidential vacancies occur, a presidential advisory search committee is named by the chair of the board of regents with representation from key stakeholder groups including faculty, staff, administration, students, alumni/community members, and at least several members of the board, one of which will serve as search chair.

The system engages an executive search firm to help develop a presidential prospectus (which includes conducting feedback sessions with campus stakeholders, as well as an online survey), conduct a national solicitation of applicants, and coordinate narrowing the candidate pool to a small number of highly qualified individuals who are recommended to the chancellor for consideration. The chancellor interviews candidates and selects a sole finalist to be recommended to the board for approval. The chancellor may also, on an interim basis, fill a presidential vacancy, until a permanent president is approved by the board.

3. What level of autonomy will SFA retain regarding its institutional shared governance practices? Will there be any changes to representative bodies such as Staff Council? How will the system actively facilitate staff representation in system-level and university-level conversations?

TSUS components operate very independently and autonomously within system policies and procedures. Shared governance and representative bodies will see no adverse impacts from affiliation with TSUS. Leadership from Staff Councils are welcome to meet with System Administration. In addition, it is not unusual for the Board chair to select a staff council representative to become a member of a presidential advisory search committee, as needed.

System Resource Investment & Affiliate Accountability

4. Please provide specific examples of how system affiliation will benefit SFA with respect to:
 - a. legislative representation,
 - b. resource allocation,
 - c. employee benefits, and
 - d. vendor relations.

Please see responses to previous related questions.

5. What will the system gain by affiliating with SFA?

Top 3 Ways TSUS Benefits from SFA's Participation in Our System:

- 1) ***Strong Ally, Partner, and Collaborator in East Texas to Help Achieve TSUS's Vision, Mission and Goals*** – *TSUS's vision is to become the premiere university system in the country for serving first-generation and historically under-served students, transforming lives, and in the process helping to fulfill critical state and national needs in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Located in the amazing community of Nacogdoches, in the beautiful region of East Texas, SFA will serve as a strong East Texas partner with similar culture, traditions and values, in moving forward TSUS goals, which are connected to the statewide goals of increasing access, student success, excellence in faculty, research, and fundraising, inclusion, and affordability.*
- 2) ***Economies of Scale*** – *TSUS currently employs approximately 10,000 faculty and staff, 5,000 student workers, and enrolls over 87,000 students. Adding an additional, 1,700 faculty and staff, as well as an additional 12,000 students would increase the size of TSUS by over 10%, thus providing additional economies of*

scales in purchasing, contracts, technology, licenses, and a host of other programs and services to enhance the educational experience and improve student access and success.

- 3) ***A Family Reunion: Another Historical and Unique Texas University and Community to Become Part of the TSUS Family*** –Nacogdoches is the oldest town in Texas, with a historic and unique university in SFA that serves as an anchor institution to the region. As the oldest university system in Texas, TSUS’s Board, Chancellor, System Administration, and the leadership of its institutions recognize the privilege and honor for TSUS to play a role in re-uniting a former state teacher college with its original system to become a united and stronger family as a result. We look forward with great pleasure on making new friends, colleagues, and strengthening alumni networks to create a new and better Texas and a brighter future.

6. In what ways will the system assist with increasing SFA’s enrollment? Describe how the system addresses potential enrollment competition across member institutions.

Growing institutional enrollment is an increasingly complex and complicated goal that requires a sophisticated and integrated strategic enrollment management plan. It will require vision and leadership, it will require additional federal, state, tuition and philanthropic resources to recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff, it will require resources to continue to maintain college affordability and strengthen programs and services to increase student persistence, while at the same time being strategic about new innovations and programs to attract an even more diverse student population of students to the region and to the institution, and it will require an accountability framework that networks all levels of the organization so that all key stakeholders are engaged in this mission critical goal.

If history provides at least some indicator of future success, with increased legislative, financial, regional, leadership, and accountability support from TSUS over the next ten years, SFA will be the beneficiary of strategic and sustained growth, balancing the need for additional students and faculty, with the resources required to enhance the university’s student-centered culture and traditions.

Over the past 12 years, TSUS has grown by 14,600 students or 21%, from 72,200 in 2010 to more than 87,000 students in 2022. If SFA grew at the same rate as the TSUS system since 2010, its current enrollment would be closer to 15,500, or on par with SHSU and LU.

Given the low levels of educational attainment rates in many regions of Texas, combined with the needs and goals outlined in the statewide strategic plan, Building a Talent Strong Texas, there is more than enough traditional and non-traditional student prospects for all institutions of higher education to grow their enrollment significantly over the next decade.

7. Describe system expectations of institutional performance and accountability. How will performance objectives be set and measured? What happens when expectations are not met?

TSUS is governed by our Board of Regents, whose members are appointed by the governor. System Administration is led by a board-appointed chancellor. TSUS presidents report directly to the chancellor and are given the authority to manage and lead their institutions independently, working within TSUS system policies and procedures, with support and guidance from System Administration to set, measure, and achieve their unique vision, mission, and goals, while maintaining their distinct culture and traditions.

The Chancellor has regular communications and meetings with presidents on various aspects of institutional performance and utilizes a comprehensive annual review process, which includes an annual meeting with the Board and an accountability system with key performance metrics in the areas of enrollment/access, student success, diversity, excellence in faculty, fundraising, and research, and college affordability. Strategic changes and corrective measures are expected when performance objectives are not met. Presidents are responsible for establishing and utilizing their own unique processes and procedures to measure and assess campus performance, with value-added support and guidance from system administration.

Human Resources

8. Will system affiliation require adjustments to current employment benefits, such as:
- retirement,
 - insurance,
 - worker's compensation,
 - employee assistance programs,
 - leave accruals,
 - compensatory time accruals, and
 - employee and dependent tuition assistance?

Please provide a comparison of each of these current (SFA) vs. future (system) benefits, specifically noting potential reductions.

None of the above listed items will be impacted by affiliation with TSUS.

9. Will the system allow ERS years served at SFA to count toward the 10-year minimum rule for insurance at retirement?

Insurance eligibility at retirement will not be impacted by affiliation with TSUS. Employees and retirees of TSUS component institutions participate in ERS's insurance program.

10. There is significant concern about the impact of system affiliation on job security. Please describe how you will address positions at SFA that overlap with positions at the system level (e.g., general counsel, Title IX, audit services, human resources) as well as positions that may be currently outsourced at other institutions affiliated with your system (e.g., financial aid verification, groundskeeping, custodial services, and skilled trades work).

System affiliation with TSUS will not have an impact on job security. Legal services, governmental relations, audit services, and certain business office functions will be transferred administratively to TSUS System Administration, but the employees will remain employed on campus.

11. In recent years, Hanover conducted salary studies for staff and faculty positions at SFA. (Detailed findings are available here and here; in short, most salaries at SFA are below average compared to peer institutions and market.) What specific actions will the system take to
- close the gaps between SFA employee salaries and salaries at peer institutions and
 - address salary equity, compression, and disparity concerns?

Competitive salaries and benefits, and the ability to recruit the best and the brightest are key attributes within TSUS. When an institution determines there is a need for material adjustment in the compensation structure, System Administration works with institutional leadership to devise a strategy to address compensation inequities. There is no singular, uniform solution to addressing these issues.

Organizational Structure/Institutional Alignment and Identity

12. How will SFA's organizational structure change as a result of system affiliation?

Apart from SFA's President reporting to the TSUS Chancellor and the areas of legal services, audit, governmental relations and certain business services being administered by System Administration, there are no planned changes to the SFA organizational structure.

13. Describe the criteria that will be used to evaluate potential department realignments and position reallocations.

These are presidential and institutional leadership decisions. However, TSUS System Administration is an available resource to support institutions as they routinely review, strengthen, and modify new and existing academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges.

14. In what ways does the system's mission align with the values of our local and regional communities? Please provide evidence of how the system will support the growth, health, and continued success of both our local and regional communities.

TSUS's mission is to meet the critical teaching, research, service, and workforce needs of Texas and the regions our colleges and universities serve. All TSUS institutions serve as respective anchor institutions for their local and regional communities including: a well-resourced employee base that supports and stimulates local business and industry, student workers to meet local business needs, actual graduates to fill critical jobs in the region, culture, arts, sporting, and other campus events and programs that attract visitors and economic development to the region, as well as new construction and development to attract even more industry and external interest.

TSUS is the oldest system in Texas and has a proven record of community and regional support. TSUS employs about 15,000 workers, enrolls over 87,000 students, and enhances local and regional economic development in regions all of the state, many of which are run similar to Nacogdoches, including campus locations in West Texas (Alpine), in the Middle Rio Grande Region (Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde), in Central Texas (San Marcos and Round Rock), in North Houston (Huntsville, Conroe, and the Woodlands), and in Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Orange, and Port Arthur). All of these cities and regions are thriving due in part to the historical and ongoing support of TSUS, its Board, its system administration, and the amazing work of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni in these regions.

15. Describe how the system aligns with and will further support SFA's current commitment to non-discrimination and diversity in addition to equity, and inclusion practices.

TSUS has a long-standing commitment of strengthening and supporting a diverse and inclusive environment at all levels of the organization and for all of its faculty, staff, and students. For example, over the past decade, minority growth in enrollment, degrees, and faculty headcount has outpaced overall growth in these areas, as highlighted in the table below:

TSUS Performance Metrics	2010	2021	% Change
<i>Total Headcount</i>	<i>72,200</i>	<i>87,100</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Hispanic Enrollment</i>	<i>13,200</i>	<i>27,400</i>	<i>107%</i>
<i>African-American Enrollment</i>	<i>10,100</i>	<i>15,100</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Degrees & Certificates Awarded</i>	<i>15,100</i>	<i>21,400</i>	<i>42%</i>
<i>Degrees Awarded – Hispanics</i>	<i>2,500</i>	<i>5,900</i>	<i>142%</i>
<i>Degrees Awarded – African-American</i>	<i>1,400</i>	<i>3,100</i>	<i>118%</i>
<i>Degrees Awarded to Low Income Students</i>	<i>4,100</i>	<i>8,000</i>	<i>98%</i>

Total Faculty	3,300	4,400	32%
Minority Faculty	570	1,250	122%

TSUS is a minority serving system, with about 54% of its student enrollment reported as non-white, including a large percent of African-American students (17% of undergraduates) and Hispanic students (31% of TSUS's undergraduate students). In fact, four of our seven institutions are federally designated Hispanic Serving Institutions (TXST, SRSU, LSCPA, SHSU) and two others (LIT and LU) are emerging HSIs, and about 40% of TSUS undergraduates are Pell eligible.

In terms of equity and fairness, TSUS is the only university system in Texas with no “flagship” institution. Thus, all TSUS institutions are treated equally by our Board and by system administration, which reinforces the importance of helping all employees and all students be successful. For example, TSUS academic leadership have done a great job of increasing minority faculty hires over past 10 years, increasing 122% since 2010, or four times the overall growth of faculty (32%) during this same period of time.

Other recent TSUS system and institution efforts in this area include: revamped DEI offices at a number of our institutions, including new Chief DEI officers, new toolkits and development programs for faculty, staff, and students, a new Diversity Enhancement Program at the system level to support the recruitment and retention of minority faculty, as well as TSUS's participation in equity work with other university systems across the country involved in the National Association of System Heads Equity Action Framework.

With all this being said, TSUS's DEI efforts continue to be a work in progress, and we continue to strive for excellence and inclusion in all ways.

16. To what degree are member institutions allowed to maintain their traditions and unique identity? Will SFA keep its name, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring? Would local traditions and/or institutional identifiers be expected to change over time?

System Administration and the Board of Regents are not involved in the day-to-day brand development and institutional identity activities. TSUS prides itself on having diverse, non-homogenous institutions, with each controlling their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring. We do not merely accept the diversity of our institutions; we embrace and celebrate that diversity. Further, TSUS recommends the enabling legislation to join SFA to TSUS maintain a prohibition on a name change without legislative approval.

17. SFA is a current NCAA Division I member of the Western Athletic Conference. Will system affiliation result in divisional membership changes? Will the system require changes to SFA Athletics' visual intellectual property?

Affiliation with TSUS will require no changes to either SFA's divisional membership or the athletic visual intellectual property.

Finance

18. What level of financial autonomy will SFA retain with respect to:
- local holdings, - *Institutional*
 - investments, - *Institutional and System*
 - construction, and - *Institutional and System*
 - the procurement of goods and services. - *Institutional*

Please address each item. Please discuss how financial autonomy has been addressed during previous affiliations.

TSUS institutions maintain a high degree of financial autonomy, with system involvement in day-to-day functions only for efficiency or due to conformity with state or federal law. Choice of banking partner is delegated to TSUS presidents; however, system wide banking and merchant services contracts exist. Procurement of goods and services are also delegated to TSUS presidents to the extent allowed under state law. Investments are pooled and managed centrally to reduce costs and realized efficiencies, but oversight and decision making is delegated to the Investment Advisory Committee comprised of each institution's Chief Financial Officer or their designee. Contract management and oversight of construction projects is managed centrally, however, the needs assessment and design of the facility is predominately managed locally by the institution.

19. Please detail any costs that member institutions are required to pay to the system for support services. What benefit does SFA yield from these payments?

TSUS Administration is primarily funded through General Revenue and an assessment to member institutions. The current assessment is based on 0.65% of actual revenues of our member institutions. The estimated assessment for SFA would be \$1.4 million per year. However, this cost would be offset by transferring cost currently paid by the University to the System, including Board Office, Office of General Counsel, Office of Internal Audit, Governmental Relations and select cost within Business Services, that support functions such as construction, debt management, investment management and insurance. The net cost of membership in our system would effectively be zero or negative.

20. How does the system allocate assets between member institutions?

Each TSUS component institution has equal access to and support from System Administration and the Board regardless of size.

Each component's financial resources are intended to directly benefit the component rather than System Administration or the Board. Accordingly, financial resources are derived and maintained at the component level. TSUS does not reallocate institution assets between component institutions.

21. Will funds raised by SFA's capital campaign or SFA Alumni donations be retained as local resources, or will they be absorbed as system revenue? Please provide specific examples from a previous affiliation with your system

Institutional resources are retained under the control of the president and institutional administration.

Questions Submitted by the SFA Student Government Association

Student Life and Culture

1. Will we have to change our university's name?

No. TSUS prides itself on having diverse, non-homogenous institutions, with each controlling their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring. We do not merely accept the diversity of our institutions; we embrace and celebrate that diversity. Further, TSUS recommends the enabling legislation to join SFA to TSUS maintain a prohibition on a name change without legislative approval.

2. What can your university system offer to our students?

At the most basic level, with increased legislative, financial, regional, leadership, and accountability support from TSUS, SFA and its students will benefit from strategic and sustained growth that will further enhance the university's student-centered culture and traditions and help achieve its vision, mission, and other strategic goals.

To highlight this success, most TSUS campuses reported record number of first-year students and transfer this past fall unlike many institutions in Texas who reported declining enrollment. In addition, TSUS institutions continue to recruit, retain, and develop high quality and award-winning faculty, staff, and leadership from across Texas and the nation, who have helped enroll more than 87,000 students, award more than 21,000 degrees and credentials annually, while generating over \$85 million in total research expenditures, all with significant economic impact on their respective communities and regions. All serves as evidence that TSUS has a proven and well-tested methodology for helping maintain and development academic excellence in teaching, research, and service.

TSUS is also unique in its involvement of student leaders in an advisory capacity to our Board, through the work of the TSUS Student Advisory Board (SAB). Student SAB members get to travel across the state to our Board meetings, interact and network with students from our system institution, have breakfast with our Board, Chancellor and institutional presidents, and provide valuable feedback on the student experience.

SFA will also have the opportunity to help TSUS develop its 9,300 acres Christmas Mountains property, pristine Chihuahuan desert, near Big Bend National Park in West Texas,

3. Will we have to change our university's colors?

No. Each TSUS institution controls their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring.

4. Would e-sports and other student clubs merge with joining a larger system?

The independence of e-sports and student clubs will not be impacted by affiliation with TSUS.

5. Will this change the 100-year anniversary of Stephen F. Austin State University?

No. Each TSUS institution controls their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring.

6. What is the process and/or timeline for joining your university system?

Legislation is required and the timeline will be dictated by the legislative process. Although planning will begin immediately, the transition would occur after the effective date of the legislation. The current SFA Board of Regents, the TSUS chancellor, TSUS System Administration, and the TSUS Board of Regents will work together closely to develop an anticipated timeline.

7. Will this affect student employee salaries?

No. Each TSUS institution sets its own salaries.

8. What will students have to give up in exchange for joining your university system?

Students will give up nothing! However, they will gain opportunities for educational exchange, partnerships, and collaboration. Student leaders will become part of TSUS Student Advisory Board, who meet with TSUS leadership on a quarterly basis and provide valuable feedback to the Board of Regents and System Administration on the student experience.

9. Will we have to change our university's mascot?

No. Each TSUS institution controls their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring.

10. Will Stephen F. Austin's traditions still be supported if we were to join your university system?

Absolutely! TSUS prides itself on having diverse institutions, with each controlling their own unique identity, mascot, colors, and traditions.

Academics, Faculty/Staff

11. Will there be any changes in current employee wages such as health insurance?

Employees of TSUS component institutions participate in ERS's insurance program, so no changes would occur to SFA employee health insurance program.

12. Will joining your university system affect academic programs and/or guidelines?

Only positively. SFA's academic programs and guidelines are consistent with many TSUS institutions so the transition should be easy and only beneficial to faculty, staff, and students. At the academic program level, these are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not direct.

13. Will faculty/staff be cut or downsized if we join your university system?

These are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not direct. With the exception of SFA's President reporting to the TSUS Chancellor and the areas of legal services, audit, and governmental relations reporting to System Administration, there are impacts from SFA joining TSUS.

14. How will affiliation with your university system support academics and student success in the classroom?

System Administration works in partnership with institutional leadership and the Board of Regents to review, request, and approve an annual operating budget, a legislative appropriation request, tuition and fee charges, research grants, and philanthropic support. Collectively, these support adequate and appropriate compensation to recruit, retain, and develop high-quality and diverse faculty and staff, who in turn drive and support academic and student success inside and outside the classroom.

TSUS also leads the state in the percent of fulltime students that are 100 percent online. Although not mandated, SFA will have access to a menu of shared services to enhance teaching and learning. For example, a number of TSUS institutions recently collaborated to voluntarily deploy an updated version of their learning management system, along with a 24/7 technology support desk, video hosting service, ADA and 508 compliance, and online course instructional design support.

In addition, although not required, academic leadership across TSUS also has access to a full-time market research firm (Hanover Research) and an extensive digital repository of higher education reports to inform teaching and learning discussions and strategy with faculty on course and program review and development.

TSUS also has been actively engaged in various faculty development initiatives including an annual digital summit to showcase best practices in use of technology by faculty coordinated by SHSU, a TSUS Chancellor's Faculty Fellow Program designed to promote student success across the system, and various institutional grants to support faculty participation ACUE's Effective Teaching Certification, among others.

15. Will affiliation with your system help us with reducing Stephen F. Austin's financial challenges?

SFA's membership in TSUS will strengthen its financial position. TSUS is the oldest and third largest system in Texas and has an outstanding relationship with our partners in the Texas Legislature, Texas executive branch, and the federal government. TSUS is the only university system in Texas with no flagship institution; therefore, all of our institutions have equal access to and support from System Administration and the Board to assist in securing financial resources needed to achieve institutional goals and priorities. Through these efforts, our system has experienced a 20% increase in enrollment over the past decade and has seen significant gains in state support and state supported capital projects. SFA will also have opportunities to participate in various system level shared services that result in savings to the institution.

16. How will joining your university system affect the average tuition costs for students?

The TSUS Board of Regents seeks to keep tuition costs affordable and student debt levels manageable. System Administration works with the presidents and institutional leadership to set tuition at levels balancing student success, achieving institutional goals, and maintaining college affordability.

17. If we join your university system, will our projected graduation date(s) and/or requirements change?

These are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not direct.

18. How will joining your university system affect faculty and staff at Stephen F. Austin?

SFA faculty and staff will gain 10,000 new colleagues and peers to exchange ideas, partner on research, and explore ways to better serve and support students at SFA and TSUS institutions.

19. How will affiliation with your university system affect the library at Stephen F. Austin?

No impact based on affiliation with TSUS.

Questions Submitted by the SFA Alumni Association

Identity

1. To what level will the university retain its identity - name, mascot, branding/logo, spirit, colors, traditions, culture, etc.?

TSUS prides itself on having diverse, non-homogenous institutions, with each controlling their own unique identity, mascot, traditions, colors, logo, and ring. We do not merely accept the diversity of our institutions; we embrace and celebrate that diversity. Further, TSUS recommends the enabling legislation to join SFA to TSUS maintain a prohibition on a name change without legislative approval.

2. How will affiliation with the system preserve the integrity of the degree?

TSUS is the oldest university system in Texas and the third largest in Texas with over 87,000 currently enrolled students. SFA's alumni, will join over 525,000 alumni currently in our system who are proud of and actively celebrate the value of their degrees in their jobs, as community members, and as Texans. Affiliation with TSUS will provide the valuable support to immediately and permanently address operational inefficiencies that threaten long-term viability of institutions of higher education.

Resources

3. What would be the impact of affiliation on resource allocation?
 - a. Do we gain more funding?

It is a key objective of TSUS to increase financial support to SFA, specifically to address any structural budget issues and address equitable compensation of faculty and staff.

- b. Will joining a system stabilize the university's financial situation?

Most definitely. Affiliation with TSUS will have a positive impact on SFA's future financial health.

4. What resources will SFA gain?

SFA will gain unrivaled support from TSUS System Administration, including shared services and valuable system peers to share with and learn from to the benefit of SFA faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

5. What services would likely be outsourced if we were to join the system?

There are no services that would be outsourced beyond TSUS. SFA's President will report to the TSUS Chancellor, and the areas of legal services, audit, and governmental relations will move their reporting lines to System Administration. However, those employees remain on campus.

6. How will joining a system effect ongoing, and planned, capital improvement projects?

SFA will gain the expertise of TSUS System Administration's assistance with capital construction contract management and oversight of construction projects. Otherwise, there is little to no impact based on affiliation with TSUS.

Personnel

7. What would be the impact of affiliation on personnel management?

SFA's President will report to the TSUS Chancellor, and the areas of legal services, audit, and governmental relations will move their reporting lines to System Administration. However, the employees remain on campus.

8. Are current staff and faculty reassured their jobs (job security)?

Affiliation with TSUS has no impact on faculty and staff employment.

9. Do they plan to right-size our budget by cutting people and/or programs?

Budgets and staffing are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents do not direct.

10. How would SFA staff members' employee pay and benefits be impacted?

Salary and some benefits are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that are not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, competitive salaries and benefits are key attributes affecting the ability to recruit the best and the brightest within TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

11. What is the likelihood of staff reductions/layoffs/consolidation with system departments?

No impact based on affiliation with TSUS.

12. Will SFA faculty and staff be brought up to the salaries of the current system?

Salaries are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that are not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, competitive salaries and benefits are key attributes affecting the ability to recruit the best and the brightest within TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

13. Are the preferred systems aware of the compressed salaries?
a. Will they be able to address the disparity?

Yes, salary compression is not unusual within higher education and is an ongoing challenge to be addressed. The goal is to address as quickly as possible. Competitive salaries and benefits are critically important for SFA, and for all TSUS institutions, in recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty and developing and maintaining strong academic programs. TSUS System Administration works in partnership with presidents and institutions to critically assess institutional performance, market competitiveness, and management's ability to secure resources to support these efforts.

14. How would current pay inequities among faculty and staff be addressed?

Salaries are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that are not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, competitive salaries and benefits are key attributes affecting the ability to recruit the best and the brightest within TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

15. Will there be any changes in current employment benefits/wages such as health insurance, LEAP employee scholarship, raises in pay for faculty and staff, retention of staff as opposed to layoffs, things of that nature?

Salaries and benefits are presidential and institutional leadership decisions that are not directed by TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents. However, competitive salaries and benefits are key attributes affecting the ability to recruit the best and the brightest within TSUS. TSUS System Administration, the Board, and institutional leadership work collaboratively to ensure adequate and appropriate pay.

No layoffs are associated with TSUS affiliation.

16. What will happen to insurance benefits when an employee retires, if we are part of a system?

Insurance eligibility at retirement will not be impacted by affiliation with TSUS. Employees and retirees of TSUS component institutions participate in ERS's insurance program.

17. Will any current standings be overturned (tenure...)?

TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents will not direct any changes to faculty with tenure or those in tenure-track positions. These are president and institutional decisions.

Academic Programs

18. What would be the likelihood of elimination of academic programs if SFA should join the system?

Affiliation with TSUS has no impact on the potential for elimination of academic programs at SFA. TSUS System Administration has in the past and will continue to serve as an expert resource to support institutions and academic leadership as they routinely review, strengthen, and modify new and existing academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges. Changes to current programs originate at the campus level, follow well established best practices, and are ultimately approved by the Board, as outlined in TSUS System Policies and Procedures.

19. Will any changes be required to current programs?

No changes are immediately required due to affiliating with TSUS. TSUS System Administration has in the past and will continue to serve as an expert resource to support institutions and academic leadership as they routinely review, strengthen, and modify new and existing academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges. Changes to current programs originate at the campus level, follow well established best practices, and are ultimately approved by the Board, as outlined in TSUS System Policies and Procedures.

20. What programs, schools and departments would the interested parties be able to grow, improve and elevate?

TSUS will work in partnership with SFA and its academic leadership to support and add value to its current academic review and development process, aligned with its strategic goals and academic priorities. The size and scope of TSUS's current academic operations include:

- 7 component institutions from the Big Bend area of West Texas to the Gulf Coast in Southeast Texas
- 13 campus locations
- 30+ colleges and schools
- 150+ academic departments
- 600+ degree and certificate programs
- 4,500 faculty members
- 10,000 staff (including student workers)
- 15,000 course sections taught by award winning and accomplished faculty and instructors
- 72,000 undergraduate students and another 15,000 graduate students
- 21,000+ degrees and credentials awarded to our graduates annually

In short, the quality and breadth of TSUS's academic enterprise is strong and continues to improve, which certainly has not been easy over the past couple years. This progress and positive momentum are due in large part to the strength and persistence of the system's faculty, the leadership of its chief academic officers and their respective teams, as well as numerous support offices and staff across our institutions that work with our students to produce these amazing results.

Tuition

21. How will joining a system impact tuition?
 - a. Would tuition/fees go up or down for students?

There are no material changes in the short-term. Managing tuition and fees growth at level affordability for SFA student and families is critically important, as is the case for all TSUS institutions. College affordability is a key performance indicator that TSUS tracks closely. Over the past decade, the percent of fulltime students receiving financial aid has grown from 54% to 76%, while percent of TSUS graduates with absolutely no debt has remained steady at about 40%.

Athletics

22. Will the athletics program still be under the NCAA restrictions from the win with Duke?

Affiliating with TSUS would have no impact on any current NCAA restrictions.

Systems

23. How will this change the size of the campus for the future?

Although there is no purchase, sale, or exchange of property in conjunction with joining TSUS, a key strategic objective will be to grow enrollment and academic offerings. TSUS has experienced a 20% increase in enrollment over the past decade and has seen significant gains in state support and state supported capital projects. Over the next ten

years, SFA, as part of TSUS, would be the beneficiary of strategic and sustained enrollment growth, balancing the need for additional students and faculty, with the resources required to enhance the university's student-centered DNA, culture, and traditions. Over the past 12 years, TSUS has grown steadily by about 2% per year, totaling an increase of 14,600 students or 21%), from 72,200 in 2010, to more than 87,000 students in 2022. If SFA grew at the same rate as the TSUS system since 2010, its current enrollment would be over 15,500.

24. Will student press freedoms continue to be supported on our campus? If yes, how?

Yes. Similar to SFA, TSUS universities maintain vibrant student newspapers with a strong and independent voice.

- *Lamar University – University Press*
- *Sam Houston State University – The Houstonian*
- *Sul Ross State University - Skyline*
- *Texas State University – The University Star*
- *Stephen F. Austin – The Pine Log*

25. Will the system come in and tear down all of the residence halls?

No. Rather, System Administration will partner with institutional leadership in evaluating opportunities to improve SFA residential life.

26. What benefits will this provide to SFA, the most impactful benefit?

SFA Benefits from Joining The Texas State University System:

Best Cultural Fit - *SFA would receive immediate support and expert guidance from the oldest system in Texas, who was founded with other state teacher colleges, possesses similar student demographic and unique histories, and operates as the only system in Texas not beholden to a flagship institution, while maintaining SFA's name and unique student-centered culture and identity.*

Legislative Acumen and Strength – *SFA would receive an immediate boost in affiliation by joining TSUS, with sister institutions located from the Gulf in Southeast Texas to the Big Bend area of West Texas, and a headquarters located in Austin, Texas, which is available for strategic use by SFA and its key stakeholders. TSUS has a strong and proven track record partnering with executive and legislative leadership to advance institutional and regional priorities.*

Strong Ally, Partner, and Collaborator to Help Achieve SFA's Vision, Mission and Goals – *TSUS is well known in the state and nationally as an efficient and effective system, with a seasoned and respected chancellor and an experienced system administration. TSUS is able to attract and retain high-quality presidents to manage*

and lead our institutions to higher levels of performance and uses a value-added approach to supporting its diverse students, faculty, and staff, while striving for excellence in teaching, research, and service.

27. What will SFA lose in this acquisition?

Nothing. The enormous benefit of affiliating with TSUS is that SFA receives all the benefits of participating in a system, including expert support and guidance on its academics and business enterprise, while remaining in control of its unique identity, colors, traditions, and academic offerings.

28. Will some services be consolidated, resulting in a less duplication of similar functions?

TSUS institutions maintain a high degree of financial autonomy, with system involvement in day-to-day functions only for efficiency or due to conformity with state or federal law. SFA will also have opportunities to participate in various system level contracts and shared services that result in savings to the institution.

29. What are the dollar ramifications for affiliating or not?

While unquantifiable, SFA will see a positive financial impact from affiliation with TSUS.

30. What is in it for the other University systems to acquire SFA?

We can't speak to the motivations of other systems, but we welcome the opportunity to support SFA's unique identity, history, traditions, and student-centered culture.

31. What are the top reasons [xxx system] believes their organization is the right fit for SFASU?

SFA Benefits from Joining The Texas State University System:

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32. Why is each system interested in acquiring SFA? What does each system consider as major benefits of SFA joining their organization?

For nearly 100 years, SFA has served the higher education needs of East Texas extraordinarily well. Founded as a state teacher college, it has evolved into a comprehensive university with high-quality academic programs and services. SFA's academic programs will continue to evolve and grow to meet the educational, economic, community, and workforce needs of the region and the state.

TSUS's vision is to become the premiere university system in the country for serving first-generation and historically under-served students, transforming lives, fulfilling critical state and national needs in the areas of teaching, research, and service. SFA will serve as a strong partner with similar culture, traditions and values, advancing TSUS's goals of increasing access, student success, excellence in faculty, research, and fundraising, inclusion, and affordability.

33. Will existing honorific building naming's be dismissed and sold by the system?

No. TSUS prides itself on having diverse, non-homogenous institutions, each controlling their own unique identity and traditions. There would be no impact from affiliation with TSUS.

34. What parts of our current processes will we lose?

SFA only stands to gain from joining TSUS. With access to and support from TSUS System Administration and the Board of Regents, SFA has strong advocates in Austin and beyond with unwavering support when critical issues requiring immediate and intensive system engagement arise.

35. Would SFA become essentially a feeder school for students who aren't initially accepted to the flagship institution, resulting in many students enrolling for just one year before moving on?

TSUS does not operate with a flagship institution. All TSUS institutions are treated equitably. However, affiliation with TSUS presents opportunities for SFA. A unique

feature of the TSUS System are the three Lamar State Colleges in southeast Texas. These two-year institutions offer associate and degree programs. SFA may have opportunities to enroll students from one of the LSCs seeking to complete a 4-year degree. Additionally, Sam Houston State University recently added a College of Medicine awarding a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree. SHSU is now beginning to create special admissions pathways for TSUS students interested in attending medical school. These opportunities would be available to SFA students as a member of TSUS.

36. Does assimilation with [xxx system] provide a wider range of faculty and student teaching and learning resources? If yes, how?

Yes. For example, a number of TSUS institutions recently collaborated to voluntarily deploy an updated version of their learning management system, Blackboard Ultra and Genius, along with a 24/7 technology support desk, video hosting service, ADA and 508 compliance, and online course instructional design support.

Although not required, academic leadership across TSUS also has access to an extensive digital repository of market research and reports (Hanover Research) to inform discussions and strategy with faculty on program review and development.

In addition, in a similar way that faculty, students, and the general public benefit from SFA's 2,560-acre experimental forest, TSUS owns and operates the largest outdoor classroom in Texas – a 9,300-acre property called Christmas Mountains that is adjacent to Big Bend National Park and used by faculty and students across the entire system for teaching and learning activities. A new field station, including indoor class, lab, and bunk space, is also being built at Christmas Mountains that SFA faculty and students will have immediate access to for research, teaching, and service activities in all disciplines, from ecology, biology, and geology to photography, painting, music, and creative writing.

37. Will SFA benefit from expertise, experience, and "buying power" of the system in terms of software that the university uses to conduct business, enrollment/recruitment practices, advertising/marketing? If yes, how?

Yes. In addition to the previous responses, affiliation with TSUS will allow access to Systemwide agreements that are more competitive due to size.

38. What will SFA give up -- although I'm sure a system cannot thoroughly answer the question of what functions, student programs, and academic programs and jobs may cease to exist until a thorough analysis of the university is completed, are there some initial thoughts?

By affiliating with TSUS, SFA will be relieved of numerous administrative burdens, allowing the institution to focus on its core mission. While some functions would be transferred to System Administration, those are not related to student programs/jobs or academic programs/jobs.

39. How will the system help make SFA more academically competitive compared to other universities?

The TSUS Board of Regents and System Administration are not involved in the day-to-day operations and decision making of our institutions. However, TSUS System Administration works closely in partnership with our campuses to provide personalized, value-added leadership and guidance in the areas of academic, health, and student affairs, finance, marketing and communications, government relations, institutional research and data analysis, audit, compliance, and legal services.

At the most basic level, TSUS will help attract the legislative and financial resources needed to achieve the institution's vision, missions, and strategic goals, using a well-established and data-informed presidential review and institutional accountability system.

To highlight this success, most TSUS campuses reported record number of first-year students and transfer this past fall unlike many institutions in Texas who reported declining enrollment. In addition, TSUS institutions continue to recruit, retain, and develop high quality and award-winning faculty, staff, and leadership from across Texas and the nation, who have helped enroll more than 87,000 students, award more than 21,000 degrees and credentials annually, while generating over \$85 million in total research expenditures, all with significant economic impact on their respective communities and regions. All serves as evidence that TSUS has a proven and well-tested methodology for helping maintain and development academic excellence in teaching, research, and service.

40. What changes do they believe need to be made?

SFA, like many institutions in TSUS and across Texas, will need to consider necessary changes in all aspects of its academic and business operations to:

- *Maintain and enhance the quality of its academic programs,*
- *Strategically grow enrollment while supporting an increasingly diverse student body,*
- *Strengthen its student-centered culture and traditions while exploring news ways to engage the campus and community,*
- *Utilize technology to help drive academic innovation and business efficiencies, and*
- *Secure the necessary state support, tuition and fee revenue, and private support needed to recruit, retain, and develop high-quality, equity-minded faculty and staff, who in turn will help deliver a transformational experience for all students.*

41. What do they feel are SFA's strengths and weaknesses? Why?

Strengths – Student-centered and focused on student success, high-quality, passionate faculty, culture of unity and traditions, community and alumni support, robust athletic program.

Alumni Association

42. What happens to the Alumni Association? Will it remain independent?

TSUS alumni organizations remain independent from the institutions they support.

43. How does the system view alumni relations for system institutions?

TSUS recognizes that alumni play an important role in serving as ambassadors for the institution. Alumni financial and non-financial support is a critical component to achieving the institution's mission, vision, and goals.

44. What type of changes, if any, would be made to the Office of Alumni Relations?

No adverse impact would result from affiliation with TSUS.

45. Do you allow for an interdependent alumni association?

Yes, TSUS alumni organizations are independent

46. Would the system recognize standing MOU's between the University and Alumni Association?

Yes.

47. Would the system make changes to the current administration (cabinet level positions)?

With the exception of SFA's President reporting to the TSUS Chancellor and the areas of legal services, audit, and governmental relations reporting to System Administration, any structural decisions will be at the discretion of the president.

48. Will the system allow the university to partially fund salary and benefits for alumni relations staff members?

Yes, that is an allowable expense within TSUS.

49. How can the system bring value to the 115,000 living alumni (more than 60,000 email addresses) and how to engage with alumni?

Affiliation with TSUS would provide SFA the necessary support (elaborated on previously) to ensure long-term viability and success, while maintaining the unique identify of SFA.

SFASU Foundation, Inc.

50. Can the foundation remain fully independent? If yes, are we required to use the system's investment managers or select our own? Or will the system absorb the university foundation assets?

Yes, to the extent allowed by federal and state law. Assets owned by the foundation are managed by the foundation, including the selection of investment managers.

51. Describe the structure in which the foundation will operate within the system. Based on the response, do you allow for the distribution of funds from a foundation to support operations of an alumni association?

There is no impact on the structure of the foundation, or the distribution of funds based on affiliation with TSUS. Each TSUS component related foundation has a unique organizational structure, and the distribution of funds is based on donor agreements and management discretion.

52. Will funds raised in the "Elevate SFA" capital campaign remain with our campus? Would scholarships established for SFA students continue to benefit only SFA students?

Yes, and yes. Funds raised either directly by the institution or by a foundation supporting the institution are for the exclusive and direct benefit of the institution and their students.

53. Does the system dictate endowment spending policies? If yes, how?

The System does not dictate endowment spending policies. These are presidential and institutional leadership decisions.

54. What will happen to scholarships started by alumni and friends?

Funds raised either directly by the institution or by a foundation supporting the institution are for the exclusive and direct benefit of the institution and their students.

55. Would the system recognize standing MOU's between the University and the foundation?

Yes.

City

56. What, if any, consideration has been discussed concerning changes to Nacogdoches who has been generous both financially and graciously?

TSUS, as the oldest university system in Texas, views Nacogdoches, as the oldest city in Texas, as an amazing new partner and friend of the system. Our Board of Regents, the TSUS Chancellor, TSUS System Administration, and leadership from our other institutions would welcome the opportunity to visit local hotels, restaurants, and businesses and begin experiencing the local treasures and traditions. TSUS Board meetings are rotated on a quarterly basis among our component institutions, ensuring opportunity to do so. Each TSUS institution serves as an anchor institution to their respective communities, and our relationship with each community is valued, respected, and developed for mutual benefit, community engagement, and economic return.