**Increasing Connections**

**With Business and Industry**

Applicable Vision Statement Elements

In order to provide the transformative educational experiences for SFA students, we must look outside the confines of our campus and build relationships with constituents who can help the university fulfill its academic, research and service missions. Mutually beneficial business/industry partnerships may increase corporate funding opportunities, expand corporate recruitment on campus, cultivate additional internships for SFA students, and provide insights that strengthen the curriculum and better prepare SFA students for productive careers.

The chair of this committee determined that the most straightforward path to outlining relevant steps toward increasing connections with business and industry was to partition the task into two phases:

1. Conduct a targeted inquiry/discussion with committee members from the business sector to investigate business/industry needs regarding SFA graduates, and
2. Engage SFA committee members to examine academic and co-curricular offerings designed to better meet the needs of corporate businesses and industries.

Strategy #1: Increase Fundraising Activity with Business and Industry

Rationale: Educational costs are rising. Due to economic pressures, state and federal resources are declining and, unfortunately, this environment is not likely to change in the near future. Tuition costs have rapidly outpaced inflation for many years and the burden of increased costs should not solely be shifted to students via tuition increases. Maintaining strong connections with alumni and other external constituents increases the likelihood of receiving private funds and is essential for growing and maintaining a quality public university.

Action Step: Identify academic and co-curricular programs, research, and/or other university initiatives that corporate business/industry entities will support.

Task #1: Build relationships with key corporate/business individuals and seek donations supporting programmatic needs, operational support, capital improvements and endowments.

Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Task #2: Invite corporate business/industry leaders to engage with students in small group discussions, seminars, research experiences and/or course delivery.

 Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Strategy #2: Expand Business/Industry On-Campus Recruitment

Rationale: Developing relationships with businesses and industries that may employ SFA students is a critical external connection. Facilitating the hiring of SFA graduates will potentially strengthen the corporate/higher education relationship, build a base of support from within businesses and industries, and engender a sense of loyalty and appreciation. Engaging and tracking alumni will lead to more efficient and productive data collection, producing relevant internships and employment opportunities for SFA students/graduates.

Action Step: Collaborate with various department chairs/directors and deans concerning established and existing relationships with businesses and industries and work to identify ways to expand the connection to include hiring more SFA graduates. Build relationships with new business/industry partners and develop plans to facilitate recruiting at on-campus job fairs.

Task #1: Build connections with key alumni within various businesses and industries that facilitate new on-campus recruitment and internship opportunities.

Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Task #2: Visit with academic departments regarding existing business/industry relationships and identify methods of expanding connections to include additional on-campus recruiting and internship opportunities

Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Strategy #3: Develop Business and Industry Strategic Partnerships

Rationale: Strong business/industry connections are advantageous in providing access to students who are notably prepared within discipline and to faculty who are engaged in current, relevant research. Authentic SFA/corporate partnerships may influence programmatic design applicable to the current business/industry, increasing the university’s visibility and presence in the corporate community.

Action Step: Deliver courses and/or degree programs in metropolitan areas that target business/industry needs.

Task #1: Work collaboratively with corporate partners to identify higher educational opportunities that potentially benefit current employees.

Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Action Step: Partner with business and industry in identifying specific research needs.

Task #2: Build relationships with key corporate individuals and identify areas where businesses and industries may outsource research opportunities to SFA faculty and students.

Resources Needed: TBD

Immediate Targets: TBD

Long-Range Targets: TBD

Impacted Departments: TBD

Committee Members:

Rick Baty, President, Baty & Associates

Scott Boyer, Commercial Bank of Texas

Wade Jones, President, Infinity Hydrocarbons, LLC.

Gil Staley, CEO, The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership

Mike Taff, CFO, CB&I

Trey Turner, Executive Director of Development (Team Leader)

John Branch, Associate Director of Athletics

Tim Bisping, Dean, Nelson Rusche College of Business

Kimberly Childs, Dean College of Sciences and Mathematics

Buddy Himes, Dean, College of Fine Arts