

Engagement and Data Gathering Sessions

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

Top Strengths

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

Top Weaknesses

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

Top Opportunities

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

Top Threats

- Low faculty/staff salaries
- Poorly prepared students from high school
- Increased competition
- Legislative oversight

Other Strengths mentioned multiple times (at least 4 times):

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

Other Strengths listed:

- 200+ student organizations
- College of Business
- Good student facilities (rec center, student center)
- Music program
- One-on-one attention
- Professors take roll – know their students
- Quality programs
- Residential campus
- Safe community
- School spirit
- Student involvement with community
- Students can know their instructors
- ASL program
- Basketball success
- Campus housing – RLCs
- Charter school (only researched base)
- Contiguous campus
- Corporate business connections
- Ethic of care – overall campus attitude
- Focus on high impact practices

- Free laundry on campus
- Gear Up
- Generation Jacks
- Increased focus on faculty and student research
- International programs
- Jack camp program
- Not part of a system
- OMA – diversity conference
- Opportunities for students to get involved/become leaders
- Partnerships with local schools
- Safe campus
- Scholarships
- SFA listens to students' wants (recreation, lighting, food, movie theater)
- Student travel funds
- Undergrad research opportunities

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

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

Other Weaknesses listed:

- Age and shape of academic buildings; crumbling at the expense of new rec center, dorms, etc.
- Alumni participation is low
- Combined computer services (SSB, INB, SSC, Imager, Grades 1st, D2L)
- Competitive pay (lack of)
- Convenience of classes; classes offered in evening for working or non-traditional students
- Development – need to attract more outside partnerships or private funding
- Early intervention practices for 1st year students – beyond ICARE
- Enrollment struggles
- Faculty/staff demographics so different from student population
- Housing costs
- Lack of centralized advising processes
- Lack of centralized student services
- Lack of large endowments
- Leadership
- Limited resources in technology
- Location away from large markets

- Low faculty salaries
- Low grad assistant support
- Market swag in other cities (Dallas, Houston: hats, t-shirts, cups)
- Married housing not available
- Need to reach more freshman and make them feel like they belong sooner
- No computer lab big enough to hold my class
- No continued outreach to students after freshman year
- No free printing (limit, locations); no printing at all in COB labs
- No integrity policy requirements
- No mentoring program
- Non-relationship oriented faculty (some are just plain mean)
- Not being part of a System
- Overloading high-paid administration who are not responsive to academic needs
- Perception as a "2nd choice" school
- Possible alumni network
- Previous negative impressions of SFA (party school)
- Relationship between Academic Affairs and rest of the university
- Retention issues
- Scholarship money – need more
- Staff/faculty buy-in
- Student attitudes
- Student perception of no help from Financial Aid
- The second we get a new system or procedure in place, we replace it with a different new initiative
- Under graduate research needs more advertising
- Unsophisticated marketing (not reaching key audience)

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

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

Other Opportunities listed:

- Advertise the smaller one-on-one connection students can make at a school the size of SFA
- Attracting students outside of our region
- Build on relationship with city
- Build unique ways to support faculty and staff--draw in more qualified/diverse staff
- Campus-wide advising/support center

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

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

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

- Unfunded state mandates (more reports required for faculty equals less time for research and lower quality of teaching)
- Uphill battle competing for urban students

Other Threats listed:

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