Engagement and Data Gathering Session

Group engaged with: Strategic Planning Team

SPT Partners: Sanaghan, Cooper & Westbrook

Date: September 18, 2014

Design: A carousel meeting design was used to identify perceived institutional strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O), and threats (T)

Attendees: 37

Top 5 Strengths

- Beautiful campus
- Independent/less bureaucracy
- Caring, talented faculty and staff
- Size – ability to interact with other departments
- Genuine interest in students – their growth and future success - students can create memories

Top 5 Weaknesses

- Salaries
- Tough to recruit and retain faculty and staff
- Need for additional scholarships to attract and retain students
- Slow to flat enrollment growth
- Need for more cross-campus communication/dialogue

Top 5 Opportunities

- Grow the number of articulation agreements with community colleges and establish teaching centers in other locations
- Increase engagement with alumni to generate additional support
- Take advantage of the flexibility due to our independence – we are not constrained by a system
- Capitalize on our enhanced regional and national profile stemming from success in athletics, introduction of new academic programs, and marketing campaign
- Growth in graduate education

Top 5 Threats

- Continued inadequate state funding
- Growth of unfunded state and federal mandates
- The impact of growing on-line programs on our residential culture
- Insular thinking
- Declining enrollment and competition for students

Other strengths listed:

- Many long-term employees (lots of history/experience)
- Community support
- Alumni network
- Some leadership from outside with different perspectives
- Class size and faculty/student ratio
- Traditions
- Cross-campus interaction
- Size (big enough; not too big)
- Reputation of "flagship" colleges (Education, Forestry)
- State-wide (and beyond) distinction
- SFA 101
- Enthusiastic Board of Regents
- Individual student mentoring
- Conveniently located – serves east Texas area well
- Tutoring facility (AARC)
- ECH Lab/Charter School
- Lots of field experiences

Other weaknesses listed:

- Lack of diversity in the faculty to reflect the student body
- Lack of recognition of the university
- Sabbatical needs to encourage passion in professionals
- Capital equipment replacement to encourage competitiveness
- Lack of strategic/deep partnerships
- Not enough support for outcomes related to research
- Lack of external experience (support to engage externally)
- Centralized recruitment/retention plan
- Diversity of faculty
- Courage to face/talk about "real needs"
- Growth in faculty and staff without corresponding growth enrollment
- Need more campuses
- Resources to support recruitment and retention of students
- Minority of faculty that are deadwood but tenured
- People get defensive/complacent
- Publicity of research
- Nepotism (hiring your own)
- More graduate degrees offered in College of Education
- A graduate degree offered in Nursing
- Don't look outside SFA to guide processes enough
- Support for online degree programs
- Tough for students to get around town (no bike lanes, bus system, etc.) – Access
- Emphasis on risk and compliance
- Silos of all departments
- Vague promotion and tenure guidelines
- Determine who we are - establish an identity
- Institutional silos

- Lack of communication – where does the data we collect go?
- Location

Other opportunities listed:

- MSN (Nursing)
- Grant writing and more research
- Congruence in academic standards university-wide
- Right-sized for collaboration
- Lots of school districts close by to work (partner with)
- We can change if we want to change
- International students here and our students there
- Capitalize on new engineering program to recruit
- Growing population of students from across the state and country
- Small class size, faculty/student ratio
- Room to grow
- International recognition in the Arts
- Build on current "identity"
- Right size to be nimble/adjust quickly
- Opportunity to change the technology environment
- Leverage/support growing academic program
- Gain good publicity due to engineering program
- Partnerships – diverse, vital
- Grow graduate programs with research opportunities
- Can capitalize on economic growth in Texas (our state is growing, so should we)
- Strategic comparison with comparable institutions

Other threats listed:

- Competition
- Real concerns/ideas will go unheard
- Unbundled learning opportunities
- Losing academic focus
- No money for capital equipment replacement
- Online courses
- Growing bureaucracy
- Competition for research dollars
- Insular thinking
- Group think stalls progress
- Unmanaged accountability assessment
- Lower faculty/staff salaries
- Isolation in east Texas – results in many challenges
- Increased corporate influence on higher ed
- Decreased emphasis on scientific research outside of higher ed
- Pay scale/retention of faculty
- Community colleges allowed to grant BSN instead of ADN
- Community colleges being allowed to grant Bachelor degrees
- Global changes in higher ed
- State funding changes (higher funding for higher grad rate not quality)

- Dependence on tuition increases
- Cost passed on to students
- Competition in relation to graduate degrees
- Class size growing – losing small ratio of teacher/student
- Student loan bubble
- Outcome-based funding
- Social media/perception
- Artificial brain programming