

Office of the Vice President for Student Services
Sam Houston State University
Mr. Frank Parker

Vice President for Student Services Information Exchange Luncheon

with Dr. James Gaertner
Wednesday, April 8, 2009
Lowman Student Center, Room 304

Discussion Notes:

Students were asked to share their experiences at SHSU, explain why they chose SHSU, and discuss those things about the University that they would change or improve.

- Reasons why students came to SHSU:
 - Math program
 - Called to inquire about enrollment opportunities and spoke with a person
 - Friends enjoyed SHSU
 - Close to home, not too far, convenient to Huntsville residence
 - School spirit
 - Love atmosphere and small community feel, felt right to be here, not too small or too big, personal feel, beautiful scenery
 - Journalism and connection to Dan Rather
 - Multicultural experience is positive
 - Education degree program, reputation for training teachers
 - Love to act, came with friends
 - After a visit to uncle's home in Huntsville, student was convinced by his mother not to go to university in Sydney, Australia and enrolled at SHSU.

- Changes students would make at SHSU:
 - Do not want Friday classes
 - Emergency buttons on campus are not realistically going to help a student who is fleeing an attacker because she could not stay in one place, waiting on help. Other universities, such as Spellman, have manned security guard booths, which the student prefers.
 - Bring student involvement back into Athletics. It takes an effort by all students, and University can only do so much.
 - Need better Athletic Department soccer field, where all students would come instead of Pritchett Field.
 - Would like to see larger number of international students. Falling value of US dollar makes foreign students more interested in US education and travel.
 - International students benefit significantly from classroom experience, but those in the College of Education have a large number of online classes. For international students this type of communication is difficult. Group projects, for example, suffer in quality.
 - The University needs more graduate programs in general, and existing programs

need to be expanded with more class sections.

Dining hall and food service/food court hours should be improved, especially during weekends. South Paw and Paw Print are closed most of the weekend, and Belvin is undesirable.

SHSU has longer academic semesters than other Texas universities.

- Surprises students experienced at SHSU:

Faculty is more than qualified compared to experiences at Texas A&M with teaching assistants and faculty, who are primarily researchers and not communicators/teachers. SHSU faculty members are able to transfer knowledge to students effectively.

History department and Dr. Olsen are excellent beyond expectation.

Boldness of squirrels on campus

Long walk down the hill from parking lot requires tennis shoes

Prison museum tour and recent awareness of immense amount of historic value in Huntsville

Large number of resources offered to students for free: tutoring and Career Services

International Programs is fantastic. Staff arranges shopping trips and made accommodations to pick up a Chinese student at Intercontinental Airport after long flight delay resulted in the student arriving at 2 am.

Friendliness of locals and professors

One of the best musical theatre programs in the country

Campus environment and squirrels, small town, campus job (research assistant) and subsequent discount in tuition, activities

- **VPSS Luncheon Follow-up Questionnaire Results**

A total of 27 students attended the luncheon, and 27 responded to the anonymous questionnaire. The group was comprised of freshman, sophomore, junior, senior and graduate students who participate in social and academic organizations on campus.

Scale

- 1 – Completely Agree
- 2 – Somewhat Agree
- 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 – Somewhat Disagree
- 5 – Completely Disagree

Statements

A. *My questions and concerns were addressed OR I was provided information to follow up with an appropriate faculty/staff member or department to resolve an issue.*

Response: Completely Agree – 21
Somewhat Agree – 3
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1
No Answer - 2

B. *The topics discussed at the luncheon were relevant to me and/or my student organization.*

Response: Completely Agree – 20
Somewhat Agree – 3
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 3
Somewhat Disagree - 1

C. *I was able to share my opinions openly and thoroughly with students and the administrator(s) at the luncheon.*

Response: Completely Agree – 24
Somewhat Agree – 2
No Answer – 1

D. *I believe the opportunity to meet Sam Houston State University administrators is a benefit to students.*

Response: Completely Agree – 25
Somewhat Agree - 2

E. *I would attend another student/administrator luncheon.*

Response: Completely Agree – 25
Somewhat Agree – 1
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1

Guest Comments: *Students were asked to complete the following sentences and offer any additional comments. In general, the student comments are typed below as they were written.*

AT THIS LUNCHEON, I LEARNED

...that there are other intellectual students on campus that care about the betterment of Sam Houston State as I am. Great luncheon!!!

...about administration policy and planning.

...about the International Program and all the other programs on campus.

...issues that other students have about SHSU.

...more about other departments' concerns and interests.

...how to improve diversity of school activities.

...SHSU administrators care for all students.

...how our President and Student Services care about students' concerns and truly care about them.

...the programs and facilities that are being built around campus.

...the many opportunities and advantages we have at SHSU.

...that this idea is great, allowing the interaction with the actual student body.

...a lot about the international impact of Sam Houston.

...that the Sam Houston administration is really interested in the concerns of the students. I also learned some of the other struggles other students are dealing with.

...about different student organizations and the needs of each organization. Also, future plans for SHSU.

...that the school wants to know what I want fixed or adjusted in the school.

...about the school and why we have a longer school semester than the other universities in Texas.

...that they actually care what the students think about the school.

...I learned that a new cafeteria is coming because I despise Belvin.

...the staff and faculty actually care!

...faculty and administration really care about making this a better school.

...about the plans for improving the Athletic department student participation at Athletic events.

...the administrators really care.

TO IMPROVE THIS PROGRAM, I WOULD

...have this event in a bigger room. However, being in a small setting was beneficial to conversation.

...have name tags.

...change nothing.

...keep it the same.

...join more activities on campus.

...tell more people about our school and different programs.

...play an "ice-breaker" to get to know everyone in the group.

...everyone should speak even if that means calling them out.

...have steak for lunch? This was a really good idea.

...talk a little bit more about problems or improvements.

...sports and student involvement.

...probe everyone to talk.

...if it had to be something, maybe invite more faculty.

...make a comment box available in every department.