

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

Vice President for Student Services Luncheon
with Dr. David Payne and Dr. Genevieve Brown
Wednesday, September 19, 2007
Lowman Student Center, Room 307

Discussion Notes:

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

- A guest describing herself as a non-traditional student and single parent indicated she chose SHSU and Huntsville due to the lower cost of living and the quality education available to her. Her family home is relatively close to Huntsville, yet it is far enough to give her a sense of independence from her own parents.
- Several students agreed the SHSU student body and campus are large enough to find many activities and programs but also small enough not to feel lost. Some students, including those who were born in Huntsville, were pleasantly surprised to find the enrollment is significantly larger than their first impressions. Many who have permanent residences in Huntsville did not utilize SHSU facilities while they attended K-12, except for various competitions such as debate tournaments or agriculture contests or to use the library resources. A recent Huntsville High School graduate confirmed the high school allows the distribution of flyers advertising University-sponsored events, but in his opinion most students are interested in leaving the area once they graduate to separate from parents and experience new things. Another student supported this opinion and explained that many locals view SHSU as similar to a community college.
- A student related his experience working on the Texas A&M campus. He indicated after nine months he was still no better acquainted with the A&M campus due to its overwhelming size. After attending a Saturdays@Sam event in Huntsville, he enrolled at SHSU and has come to know places and people with ease.
- A student from Huntsville indicated he chose SHSU for convenience. He lives with his parents while attending the University.
- After being accepted to Penn State before graduating from high school, one student explained the difficulty she encountered in securing sufficient financial aid to attend the out-of-state institution. Her financial aid award did not cover her expenses, so she enrolled at SHSU with the intention of transferring to Penn State

as soon as she was able. Two years have passed since that time. The student indicated because she likes SHSU she no longer wants to transfer to another university.

- Students expressed the need for a formal auditorium on campus that would provide a venue for functions similar to those held in the University Theatre Center, but it would offer more than just theatre programs. Dr. Payne briefly discussed the Performing Art Center plans the University has developed. He indicated the facility's auditorium is expected to have a capacity of approximately 850 seats.
- Students expressed concern regarding the lack of advertising for Athletics programs. They are afraid many students are not aware of the existence of many sports on campus. Students are also concerned about low attendance at volleyball and tennis contests. Suggestions to improve advertising include flyers, e-mail, text messages, giveaways and promotional incentives. It was agreed that commuters do not usually return to campus for sporting events, making the incentives necessary. Other recommendations include posting competition schedules on bulletin boards listed by sport, and keeping the boards tidy and uncluttered. It was suggested that the issuance of student tickets for football helps to generate student interest and promotion in advance of the football games, and this technique might be successful with other sports as well. A student who reads the regular Student Services e-mail delivered to student e-mail addresses suspects many students delete the e-mail without reading it first. It was suggested a special Sports Edition could be compiled and the subject line of the e-mail could alert students to the all sports theme.
- A student is concerned the Foreign Languages department does not offer much more than Spanish, although he agrees there are steps being taken to improve the department. The student would have chosen German as a minor if it had been available. He noted the availability of Arabic, Sign Language and Chinese are positive changes. Dr. Payne advised the group the Foreign Language department is now offering free English as a Second Language classes to SHSU staff.
- Dr. Brown inquired who was actively participating in service projects on campus and in the community. Approximately one-half of the students indicated they participate to some degree. Dr. Brown encouraged each to pursue involvement in a service project for personal and professional development.
- After the discussion, a student expressed her concern the parking lot color restrictions are not being enforced in certain areas. She indicated she reserved her comment for afterward due to her timidity in the group setting.
- After the discussion, an international student described her frustration with the dirty conditions she sees at Belvin cafeteria. She indicated the trash is allowed to fall out of and pile up around waste bins in the hallways, and the tables are

frequently dirty. She expressed concern eating her meals in such an environment and frequently avoids Belvin to eat off campus, although she lives on campus. She indicated she was not comfortable speaking to the group as a whole at that time.

VPSS Luncheon Follow-up Questionnaire Results

A total of 15 students attended the luncheon and 14 responded to the anonymous questionnaire. The group was comprised of freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students who participate in social and academic organizations on campus. International students from Japan, Australia, and Mexico attended.

Scale

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

Questions

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 my issue.*

Response: Completely Agree – 12
Somewhat Agree – 1
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1

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

Response: Completely Agree – 8
Somewhat Agree – 5
Neither Agree nor 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 – 14

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

Response: Completely Agree – 13
Somewhat Agree – 1

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

Response: Completely Agree – 12
Somewhat Agree – 2

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

AT THIS LUNCHEON, I LEARNED...

...that the administrators do sit down and talk with the students regarding the campus.

...additions to the language dept.

...that people do care and want to hear my voice.

...we have a tennis team.

...that this luncheon exists. I didn't know there was anything like this. I felt that the Faculty really listened to me. A very good program.

...that sports should be more widely advertised.

...that we have very approachable administrators here at SHSU.

...that not only are the professors (sic) open minded, the admins are as well.

...I feel very appreciative to be able to represent the student body at this luncheon.
Thanks.

...how students are welcome to give our ideas openly and our voice is actually heard. I am very concerned about cafeteria, the food quality is really bad and I also wish it could be kept cleaner since it is the place where we go and eat.

...about the administrators and the effort they put into making SHSU a better university than it already is.

...that the administration cares enough about the ideas and experiences of their students to take time out of their days to ask for our input in a personal setting.

...that there are lots of different people in our school. We can also learn many things from each other.