

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 and Dr. David Payne

Monday, November 17, 2008

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.

- A student from Bryan/College Station indicated she is a student with a disability, and SHSU was willing to work with her. She sees Kelley Osborn from the Disability Services office weekly.
- A student who was accepted at Texas A&M selected SHSU because a family friend working with NASA suggested SHSU for a dual degree. SHSU staff and faculty are very helpful, people really want to help, the classes are small and extra help is available.
- A student transfer from Texas A&M baseball came to SHSU with Dr. Dean Lewis' help and is pleased with Coach Rupp. The business school is constantly growing. Student would like to see more school spirit.
- One student came to SHSU because of FFA. The student likes the smaller atmosphere and scholarships, which impacted the final decision. SHSU reminds the student of home.
- Large classes would cause SHSU to lose small school atmosphere.
- A student came to SHSU for music theatre program. SHSU is one of few institutions that offer the music, dance and theatre combination. The student wanted the college experience and the ability to maintain a passion for art. A conservatory can punish that passion. The student expressed excitement about the construction of the new performing arts building.
- Students would like to see more school pride and increased advertising of school events. Suggestions include using flashing information boards on campus, Facebook, and e-mail. For e-mail, the subject line is important, because students will ignore and/or delete those that appear redundant or automated. A quick poll of the 19 students present showed that 3 read The Houstonian thoroughly, about 12 scan it, and at least 4 never pick it up.

- Students get excited about athletics like SHSU vs. Texas Tech basketball and big wins, even in other sports, but few know about successes in track and field, for example. The key is to get first year experience students to buy in and support and develop traditions at SHSU. A large number of transfer students and students who live off campus makes it harder to instill school pride late in the college career. Transfer student orientation is one day in the theater with just a presentation on screen. This does not instill pride. Organizations have to step it up and get school spirit to start and grow. A rally on the mall with music could be planned by organizations.
- Some view SHSU as a small school, which may keep the spirit low.
- The Mass Communication department could partner with the advertising or marketing group on campus to dedicate to publicizing events.
- Texas State University – San Marcos has school spirit shirt day on Fridays.
- Word of mouth may be the best way to get information out.
- From the perspective of the international community, the opinion of a school is impacted by university rankings, research opportunities available, and availability of medical or law schools. Athletics is not as big at international schools. For example, the job market evaluates the quality of the individual based on the reputation of the school. SHSU is ranked higher in certain disciplines than other larger institutions.
- A student indicated his support of spending significant funds to seek out a larger athletic conference as an investment in the future of SHSU.
- Students stressed the delicate balance of tuition and its impact on first generation college students. SHSU students graduate with less debt than others.
- A student explained he saved money for college while attending community college, but he would not come to SHSU if tuition were higher.
- Alumni can create pride and inspiration in student body.

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

A total of 19 students attended the luncheon, and 17 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 – 8
Somewhat Agree – 6
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 3

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

Response: Completely Agree – 11
Somewhat Agree – 4
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1
Completely 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 – 12
Somewhat Agree – 3
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1
Completely Disagree - 1

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

Response: Completely Agree – 15
Somewhat Agree – 1
Neither Agree nor Disagree – 1

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

Response: Completely Agree – 15
Somewhat Agree – 1
Completely 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...

...the administration recognizes what they need to do to bring change to SHSU.

...some important information regarding SHSU priorities.

...different issues that students are concerned about and that our staff do care about our opinions and ideas about this campus.

...the factors that come along with making this campus a much more well-known campus.

...about our attempt to get our name out there and really get pride in who we are and where we came from.

...about steps to advance our university in different areas.

...that we are taking the steps to become an even better university.

...the steps the administration is taking to improve the university's school pride and national recognition.

...about how what conference we are in affects how we are viewed. (The people we rub shoulders with.)

...that as an individual student at Sam I can promote school pride through word of mouth and student involvement.

TO IMPROVE THIS PROGRAM, I WOULD...

...implement an advertising department that will create campaigns to boost school spirit.

...encourage the administration to hand out surveys on campus every once in a while.

I do not see a way directly off-hand to improve it. The discussion and luncheon ran very smoothly.

...have the students know what this is about so that they come prepared with issues to talk about.

I just want to thank you for this time together.