Stakeholder Engagement Data Summary – Report #

Stakeholder Focus Group Description: Dean’s Circles for COST, COLFA and COBA (comprised of community members and employers) were asked to respond in writing to 8 questions centering on the university’s image, strengths, future, concerns, growth plans, student needs, and student job market preparedness.

UPC/PTF Member(s) Reporting: Dr. Adolfo Benavides and Ms. Alana Hefner

Number of Focus Group Participants: 18

Brief Engagement Activity Description: Dean’s Circles for each college (comprised of community members and employers) were asked to respond in writing to 8 questions centering on the university’s image, strengths, future, concerns, growth plans, student needs, and job market skill sets needed in today’s workforce.

Summary of Feedback*: Across the three colleges, there were some commonalities shared in the responses, but more differences were reported and can be viewed on the actual surveys. The questions and common themes are as follows:

1) What skills does the job market for college graduates require? Are college graduates in general and TSU graduates in particular, entering the job market with those skills adequately developed?
   a. Students/graduates need to have the ability to communicate (written and verbal) clearly as well as how they portray themselves through attitude, appearance, self-confidence, critical thinking and overall professionalism.

2) To what student need should TSU respond?
   a. Bridging professional outside world with in and out of classroom experiences (employment, career placement, etc)

3) How do we become a premier student-focused institution?
   a. Keep low student: faculty ratio and emphasize relationships between students and faculty.
   b. Students must be guided and led to explore employment options as well as their own strengths

4) Should we continue to grow and, if so, how fast?
   a. Controlled without compromising price, standards and quality and factoring in resources (real estate, personnel, and money)

5) What would you change about TSU, and how?
   a. Integration between career field and college experiences

6) What issue do we really need to talk about, but we don’t?
   a. Accepting high school students who are not prepared to do college work

7) Describe TSU in 20 years.
   a. A larger institution known not only for Agriculture but for other programs (ie Business)

8) What is our image?
   a. Regional school

*Note: The very general summary of the feedback by Advisory Board /Deans’ Circle members is skewed towards reflecting the views from COBA Executive Advisors as they comprised the majority of the respondents. Several members of the COST and COLFA Deans’ Circles indicated that they had previously completed a similar survey in an alumni focus group.