

ASU Forum

December 4, 2008

The ASU Forum was created as an additional mode of communication between and among administrative and academic units. It builds on the premise of the former Administrative Council.

Thirty-one people attended the Forum.

The information presented below is in the form of a summary of highlights. It should not be considered as minutes of the meeting.

Summary of Residential Campus Task Force

The concept of growing to 10,000 is if nothing else an urban legend.

3,500 beds available. 6,500 students will have to go somewhere.

Residential Campus – consequences affect cultural, financial, way we do business.

Discuss issues of campus consequence. Topic for the day: Retention?

ASU does not have a good retention rate.

Our 1st year to 2nd year retention rate was 55.9% last year.

PBA workshops show that to do what we need to do is related to growth. The reality is “to do well we need to grow”. Growth equals money.

Retention is not just one person’s problem.

Moment of Truth is that you don’t know when the one thing will happen to cause a negative effect.

What does 55% equate to in numbers?

We have 1472 full time freshmen.

There are two approaches we can take. The mass approach that works for all people or an individual basis. If the number of students that we lose is small then we could ask what is wrong...what would it take to keep you here. We have to find a plan what will work with a multitude of students. We might even have to have separate plans to address the different reasons that they are leaving. It could be housing or that they are not prepared, etc. We need to come up with a variety of plans.

We work with students who are withdrawing and their biggest complaint is lack of support from professors. That ASU does not care about them. Veterans’ Affair office also reports that she has lost a lot for that reason.

What does not caring mean?

Not there during office hours. Can’t get and help with academic course.

Responses vary. I have lots of students who say that they are here because Biology faculty helpful. I also know students who say they can’t find their advisor and I ask when did you go to see them and they say two weeks ago, last Tuesday.

Not all students understand how to make an appointment and reach faculty.

One perceived factor is engagement with faculty.

What other things that would cause 700 students to leave?

I have had faculty tell me that they do not feel retention is their problem. Faculty don't feel it is their responsibility.

NSSE surveys show above average with student satisfaction. They are very happy.

The survey could be supporting the people who are staying and not leaving.

NSSE is built off a random sample of students. Shows the ones that are happy.

Do we collect any data as to why they leave? Any type of follow-up?

We ask when they come in to withdraw, but there is not time to really do a survey. It is not written down.

Are we working on a follow up?

Not yet. We need to know why and where they go. There is a clearinghouse where we can track these kids. A lot of them will probably be in a Junior College, another 4-year college, military...it is not always going to be that ASU is such a bad experience that they will never again go to college.

How bad is problem?

National average is about 73% retention.

Problem could be communication related

Students are afraid to talk to instructor or they send out an e-mail and if they don't hear back, they don't follow up.

Problem with younger generation trying to communicate with older generation.

Might help to try and reach them in a way that is familiar to them.

Maybe even a more intrusive or a new way to communicate.

Also, raising standards can make them want to stay. Some students like the challenge.

A New Unit has been established.

A new unit called Associate VP for Student Support and Retention formed.

Four units that report is First Year Experience, Enrollment Management, Center for Academic Excellence, and Student Life.

Part of the things that group is charged with is increasing academic success, thus retention. Retention is a result of stronger academic work.

Create council with the 1st purpose to support academic success.

Student Intramural program can improve academic success. We don't know why, but it does.

We are working on mandatory academic and campus orientation. Make academic orientation mandatory. Campus orientation may not become mandatory within the next two years.

Make academic orientation available at SOAR or on line prior to advising and registration.

Change SOAR name to summer registration

Freshman camp – it will connect freshmen with groups on campus; 1st year experience class, faculty. Go into rambunctious weekend and culminate at convocation.

At a recent conference, there was a leader that was data driven. I asked if we took dozens of types of programs and those programs were exactly the right ones, and we did them well...what could we hope for? He responded 6% to 8% increase. If we are lucky enough to get the 8%, that would only bring us to 65% retention rate. We have to do two things. We have to do all these things we are talking about and improve quality of students that we accept.

Here is the challenge facing this institution—there is the closing the gap challenge, funding comes from growth challenge, and the traditional age population is declining challenge.

Academic planning process is important because we have to identify the programs that will attract students.

San Angelo Community

Is a factor in encouraging or discouraging a student.

NSSE does not rate community high. They are disappointed in weekend activities in the community.

Nothing about ASU displayed in community businesses.

Phil Neighbors at the chamber may need to step in.

Genuine support for education in the community and with the citizens.

There is some foundation work going on to try and give every student in the public schools an opportunity to have tuition paid.

ASU and Howard are involved in a elements of finding some productive level of education for any one coming out of public schools.

There are many successful colleges in smaller towns.

There are college towns, and towns with colleges.

Restaurants employ are students, but ASU is taken for granted.

GAFB gets massive support not there for ASU.

At Los Cruces the student body president was instrumental in rebuilding relationships with businesses by giving them flags to place in their windows, ask them to offer discounts to students. Could help to make ASU more visible...bring out colors. Make more connections with the city.

Kevin, is there anything you need from the campus to be successful

A change in the mindset of the campus about retention. Strengthen academic success by all the things we have talked about...community, residence life, more intramurals, mandatory class if you get on probation...support academic success.

75% can only be achieved by student selection.

Retention and growth are the results and not objective.

A plan is in place by the student body for spring community relations.

Students might put off dropping classes if the drop date was later in the semester.

When are NSSE's taken?

Every other year in the Spring from random enrolled Seniors and Freshmen.

Exiting student survey becomes very labor and time intensive.

Are there any other comments?

Freshman camp good idea.

Weekend activities – student don't know about them. This town offers lots of opportunities.

Annex with community. That is where they are going to live, eat, etc.

National evaluations show that we are above average. This is an outstanding institution, excellent staff, wonderful campus, good administrators.

What is going on in your area that you would like to tell us about?

Library is beginning the planning process of the Learning Commons. Ready for input. Getting together with students in the spring to work with the architectural group.

There are several plans being worked on at the same time. How do the plans work together? The Mission plan goes to TTUS and THECB in Spring. The Academic plan is going to feed the Master Plan and the Strategic plan will be announced to give you all the guidance necessary for zero-based budgeting which is required by Texas Tech.

Texas Tech has its own strategic plan that we have to give targets for 2020 by March.

Residential Task Force will start meeting in January. If interested, let us know.

Tonight presentation about facilities by John Russell.

Column in San Angelo Standard Times written by Lynsey Flage great way to find out about what is happening at ASU.

ASU Fit – we are getting more ift. Good steering team – pilot year – as we move forward with campus community it should help with retention of staff. Keeping the here and healthy important.

Customer service survey just finished and results should be out soon.

Susan Keith opening an on-line fitness assessment.