

## Group #1: Student Success

**1. Are we recruiting students who will be most successful at A-State and where should we concentrate our future efforts?**

- Create a recruitment plan that includes the whole state. Determine key areas of focus but allow for visits to smaller communities/areas with smaller yield to increase the brand of A-State.
- Utilize faculty, staff and students as recruiters. Encourage A-State employees/students to serve as ambassadors when visiting “home”. Provide these individuals with appropriate materials to market the campus.
- Develop a plan to expand the A-State brand outside of Arkansas and beyond the border states.
- Discussion regarding what factors determine if students are successful at the institution. Factors mentioned: ACT, high school GPA, student persistence (grit), yield data, graduate rate or completion. Is there a correlation between these factors and specific high schools/regions?
- Develop a strategy to recruit high achieving students of color. What attracts these students? Many tend to select HBCU instead of state schools. Why?
- Develop a strategy to recruit International students from a variety of countries. This may be difficult with the current political climate. Develop a strong financial package to attract various countries. A-State is more rural than big cities, so the extra incentive may be more enticing to international students.
- Evaluate the use of ACT as an admission standard. Is this the best predictor for success? The ACT often excludes students from certain campus resources (i.e. Honors).
- Recruit students to a specific degree program and not just simply to the university.
- Define the A-State story and tell it. What makes us unique? Why A-State? What is the gain?

**2. How can we group students into sub populations to better serve them?**

- Mix the students in classes, residence halls, FYE, Honors, Greek life, student organizations, and majors. Allow the students to form groups based on interests and not traditional identifiers (like major).

- More collaborative learning opportunities. Create interdisciplinary classroom experiences. For example: merge graphic design, computer science and physics to allow students to be creative in apply practical concepts of the discipline.
- Re-examine the Making Connections course. Possibly sort by interest or a blend of students or assign based on residence hall instead of major. Student majors may change but the student still needs campus connections.
- More in depth New Student Orientation program. Create opportunities for connections. Build residence hall communities that allows for integration of student classification, interests, majors, etc.
- Offer flexibility on academic policies and requirements when appropriate to assist special populations.
- Create appropriate support groups/organizations/courses for sub populations. Example: non-traditional student course designed to help navigate the campus, study skills, connections, and life skills.

**3. How can we maintain our focus on the non-traditional/ online students while also enhancing the campus life of traditional students as well?**

- Offer Study Abroad opportunities to more students. Consider a requirement for certain degree programs. Define the value, market the opportunity, and enhance exposure by promoting student testimonies.
- Increase the number of student activities.
- Demonstrate the commitment to “every red wolf counts” but offering quality services/programs with a caring touch.
- Examine the program course sequence. Make it interesting and attainable in an appropriate timeline.
- Define the connection to the community. Why Jonesboro? What is the benefit while enrolled in classes and as alumni?
- Offer student excursion experiences. Explore Arkansas or surrounding areas.
- Define our point of pride. What makes this the best choice for traditional students, online students, or non-traditional students? Spread the message to all faculty/staff for consistency.
- Develop a strong alumni network offering internships/careers for various subgroups.

**4. How can we group students into sub populations to better serve them?**

(This question became—Final thoughts from the group)

- A-State is a global experience. That is the mission. The student body and programs/services should reflect this mission.
- Highlight popular or unique programs. This is a unique identifier.

- Offer interdisciplinary classes. This requires a lot of planning but could be impactful and offer a new level of interest to students.
- Host Preview Days in key recruiting areas. Take the show on the road—meet prospective in their hometown.
- Support the growth of the international student population.
- Define the story—what makes A-State great. Tell the story in a larger footprint both in state and out of state.
- Further develop the Study Abroad program. Students/parents can be fearful but the impact is immeasurable.
- Begin to emphasize the total student not just the potential defined by the ACT score. Match student interests to opportunities at A-State.
- Create campus involvement opportunities that lead to lasting connections. The accountability may lead to better retention/completion rates.

#### Group #2: Distinct Academic Programs

- 1. Question: How and where do we determine and boldly invest in our institutional identity as reflected through our degree programs? Who do you think we are?**
  - We are very community driven and people around us that we touch develop the heart for A-State
  - Initiate early experiences that will help retain students
  - If you come to a-state you are going to touch the community and beyond
  - Trying to move forward Creative Commons that will allow students to focus on service-based, community, and involvement-based programs
  - Allow students to engage with each other as well as the community so they can get a feeling for what A-State is really like
  - A-State is a place where I can go and make things happen (students)
    - Personal touch—when students come for tours, they meet with people and feel like they know them and are a part of the campus
    - When students come they are not just as a number, not lost in a swarm of students
    - Students feel like they get to know people and people know them
    - A-State gets the student to where they want to go, by being approachable with achievable programs and goals
  - Jonesboro and A-State are synonymous—important to capitalize on that

- A-State needs to be a place where events can be hosted; really highlight that Jonesboro wouldn't be what it is without A-State
- Now A-State is branching out into the region and the state
- That is what really makes students love this place and stay here
- Amazing to watch A-State grow over time
- Encourage people who haven't been here in a while to return and see the growth and changes
- A lot of the arts are focused here as well
- Many activities in the community for college students
- Although the general community is fully engaged with A-State, some minorities and international students don't feel that connected (Jenny). Not born here, another culture, etc., but by working with kids in the community you have an opportunity to be a part.
- After five years not really an identity, it is just a part of my life (Shivan)
  - When you are not born in America and are from a different culture, it is more difficult to fit in; thus, these students don't tend to have a strong connection with A-State—they don't invest
  - When students of color and international students come to A-State they are expecting to get an education and then find a job
    - These students don't typically attend parties, functions, mingle, etc. (They typically don't show up even when are invited)
    - This behavior comes from within, it is not a problem we can solve
    - If a student has a perception that they are not welcome, whether it is correct or not, that is their perception or feeling
  - We need to encourage these students to mingle more and become involved so they will begin to increase their connection
    - This is what I want to do
    - This is where I want to live
    - This is where I want to have a family and raise children
  - By working with students and others in the community, it helps you to begin to feel a part of the community
  - This is also why we have a hard time retaining professionals in Jonesboro

- When English is a second language—students don't feel professors make them feel welcome
- Southern culture here is different from other southern areas (southeast, etc.)
- If not from this region, students miss that culture is co-mingled with faith. People not from this region don't automatically get that. To help cultural adaptations for students, perhaps A-State helps their cultural fitness—create more of a cultural bridge
- Faculty/chair perspective—parents want to know what kind of job their child will be able to obtain upon graduation
  - Parents want A-State to tell them about the programs and what will their children take from this program
  - Need to discuss that A-State is all about teaching and learning
  - Diversity experience
  - Research component
- From a faculty/chair perspective, A-State must decide are we the best teaching institute or research institute, or even some meaningful mingling of the two?
  - Need to determine how we want to be and spell it out in black and white to enable faculty to know what is expected
  - Need a healthy balance and must be in concrete terms for clarity
  - Allow individuals to excel in their areas of excellence, but also find a way to communicate that we have a healthy balance/blend of all these things.
  - Lose the belief that we have to be either a teaching institute or a research institute only, or that one is better than the other
- Determine what industries want and prepare students so they can be engaged by the community industries
- Research—consider using the word scholarship instead
  - We need to be who we are, can use learning and scholarship in the products that we produce, which are the students
  - Sending too many messages to our faculty that are not the right messages
- Students want to see the value within A-State's programs to prepare them for their future

- They are looking for those areas that are showing a focus that will set them apart from other individuals--prepping them for future employment in the career they are seeking
- Sometimes two-year graduates from some universities can do more than a four-year A-State student with twice the debt—this is a problem

**2. How do we reimagine our General Education program in an integrative and forward-looking manner? What will success look like?**

- Service learning—get involved from day one
- Many students can't see the value of general education toward their chosen career
- A lot of transfer credits to avoid taking general education classes at A-State
- Students feel like they are only doing the general education courses because they are required for the degree
- Some students (concurrent) feel they were cheated because it is really at high school level and not college level
  - One day it will click—when students have a job, they will use the information learned from general education classes taken
  - There is a big difference between general education courses and major-specific general education courses
- We have some latitude to change general education courses—what can we do?
  - Sell it better—this is why this can be important to you
  - A-State does need to make some changes to general education courses and this is being looked into at this time
  - As a digital society, there are some things that need to be incorporated into general education courses
  - Need to catch up our general education courses to match the digital world in which we live
  - There is a reason for making people more well-rounded, it is thinking creatively with “sound quality” psychology/sociology/philosophy—logical development and arguments need these
- Interact modular experience from many different perspectives – how it can be applied in all different disciplines/colleges

- Simplistic approach—students say professors don't tell them why these classes are important and in which areas of their life this will affect them
  - Real world application and how it will benefit you for the rest of your life—it will be remembered
  - Learning communities—co-taught, or relate materials from one course to another (may be complicated due to time)
  - Discuss ways to relate the topic in a different manner between faculty members
  - Success:
    - Students have something relevant to take with them for a lifetime
    - Take it into their job and make it useful
    - Students have something in common with others that they can use because of a class
    - Student walks away feeling value for having taken the class
  - If faculty are doing something and can't say why they are doing it, then there is a problem
  - Must provide students with a reason that general education courses are needful if A-State wants to elevate their general education courses
3. **How do we create and fund distinctive and dynamic degree programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, without compromising the integrity of our programs?**
- Large donors needed
    - Innovation in higher education—many different dynamics than we dealt with years ago
    - Need to do things differently, but some people are afraid of change
    - Program created 15 years ago is not as relevant today, how do we change?
      - Consistent change over time
      - We influence, motivate, create a culture of change
      - To help remove the fear of change, provide oversight and advisory committees that meet regularly
      - Create good relationships with business/industry to help prepare everyone for change
    - Adding a distinctive and dynamic degrees—easy to do with resources at our disposal

- Need to evaluate which programs may suffer by getting the programs too thin to handle the new ones
- With this change comes difficult decisions
  - Some programs need radically changed or removed from the books—this is very tough
  - Ultimately, we either decide how to change or the change will be decided for us

### Group #3: Communicate A-State's Economic Role and Impact

- In discussing “what A-State’s economic impact” is on the community, both community members and faculty quickly focused on employees produced (graduates) by A-State. A burgeoning tech industry exists only because we produce many computer science graduates as one example. The push-pull of industry was also a topic – we create a lot of health care graduates because there is a significant health care industry in the region. Toward the end there was a loop back to this in discussing how does A-State impact the work force in the region.
- Students as an economic impact was the other focus of this discussion point. Not only their direct purchasing impact, or renting of property to attend school, but that they have the potential to fuel population growth. Measuring this impact beyond the traditional economic models was discussed – notably ways that students volunteer or intern. How A-State’s diversity drives the communities diversity, both in ethnicity and point of view. The examples included traditional minority numbers (student body percentages of minority groups higher than the local population percentages) but also faith-based and cultural diversity that comes from students, particularly from international students.
- The group thought a local annual report of economic impact was important to communicating this. The past economic impact report was discussed, but the group members were not aware of it. Improving website navigation (particularly agreeing that different front page views for different groups – an internal vs external) and campus physical navigation (wayfinding signage) was part of the discussion.
- In the communication area, finding ways to show the impact of student choices to stay home and how business owner scholarships can help recruit and retain these students was discussed.
- More publicity for academic and cultural events was intertwined with discussion of the need to break down the “barrier” between the campus and community. Faculty members in particular discussed the need for small

groups to become better informed (example: music faculty involving themselves more in the community would let the community know what services/events/advantages come from having the university in the community). At the end, this returned with the idea of some kind of event that celebrated connections like a town and gown day or a community fair. On the community fair, not what already exists as the town/vendors come to campus to show students what the city has to offer, but one where A-State shows the community what it has to offer.

- The new partnerships took off down this type of person-to-person role – more connection with religious groups, local arts groups like Foundation of the Arts (The Forum is their building), interaction with K-12 schools, more internships (academic connections to local business). Pushing involvement in entrepreneurship from the college and department level rather than at the top level was discussed.

#### Group #4: Research Enterprise

**1) What do you see at A-State’s most promising areas for research growth based on our current strengths and/or opportunities associated with our regional location (Delta/NE AR)?**

A major theme for any research area centered around interdisciplinary teams (including students—graduates and undergrads) with multifaceted areas of focus

Rural communities and the associated problems and strengths (aging population/workforce, homelessness, food insecurity, poverty, community health, heritage/tourism, etc.)

Environmental/Occupational Health (Agriculture impact, injury prevention)

Health and Wellness/Educational research/Behavioral research

**2) How much effort should be put into establishing research centers with specific focus on thematic research areas (examples might include a center for data science and artificial intelligence) or a center for surface water research?**

What would students have interest in and create

Rural Revitalization Research Center (RC)

Material Science RC

Social Science RC

Environmental Science RC (surface water as topical area)

Health Care/Service Delivery RC

Data Science RC

Faculty Center should include research skill development

### 3) What graduate studies would support RC development?

Data/Computer Science/Actuarial/Logistics

Interdisciplinary Rural Studies

Interdisciplinary Forensic (or at least a more comprehensive array of forensic areas like forensic accounting)

Biochemistry

Manufacturing

Behavioral Science

Women's Studies

Bolster Engineering/IT programs

Entrepreneurship

How do we grow PhD workforce?

International Studies (not just business)

Parking lot issues:

Students need core skills to build research skills sets (gen ed??)

Recruit second career students

Have a vet school

Need an airport and an aviation program

Internships/clinics embedded in industry

PhD programs in SW and Rehab Science

Group #5: Global/Regional Markets

#### 1. What is the balance between Global and Regional Positioning? During the next 5 years where should we be focused?

- It was mentioned we should continue focusing on the Delta region, while also expanding internationally. There should be a balance.
- On-campus, 65% of students are from Arkansas, and 35% are out-of-state or international students. Most out-of-state are from bordering states that receive in-state tuition.
- It was mentioned that the government has been cutting funding, and local students are unable to afford expenses. There should be some focus on raising international student numbers are 1 international students is equal to around 2.5 in-state students, tuition-wise.
- International agreements will help bring diversity to campus, and we should show that A-State is open to diversity to increase popularity with students.

- There should be a focus on efforts to reach students in central/southern portion of the State. We should expand from NE Arkansas.
- It was discussed that perhaps we should survey current students at the university to determine why they chose A-State to help with recruitment.
- It was discussed what balance we should have between in-state, out-of-state, and international students. What is our main focus on recruitment? We should push recruiting efforts toward the greatest market.
- Currently losing students to other universities in the area. Students seem to be attracted toward thriving universities. Students are receiving collateral from other schools.
- We should describe on-campus experiences in marketing materials.
- We should reach out to states in distress for students. It was mentioned that University of Alabama was heavily recruiting from Illinois.
- We should advertise job placement rates to help show students how many students are hired after college.
- It was mentioned that the recruitment from two-year colleges was behind other 4-year institutions in the state, specifically UCA. UCA would send recruiters/advisors to schools in the ASU system and work with admitting and registering students on the spot. Some system schools favor UCA over A-State due to how the students perceive them and how closely they worked with the system school. They system schools sometimes feel neglected by A-State.
- There was talk about more system collaboration.

## **2. Should we leverage our current global positioning in Mexico to expand to opportunities in Malta, China, Japan, etc.?**

- It was mentioned that some reason that international students come to A-State was for safety and affordability. Parents want a safe environment for their kids
- Some international students transfer from A-State due to financial reasons, or want to move to a bigger city.
- We should grow our international student base selectively, and be more selective on which schools we do international agreements with.
- A-State needs to do something different from other competitors in the market, and to grow strategically to keep ahead of competitors.
- We should generate more revenue from international partnerships.
- It was mentioned we should not try to accomplish this like how the ASU Mexico campus was done.
- There should be No Franchising.
- Should focus on benefits that Jonesboro has, and advertise this. We should try to show students that Jonesboro is not “Jonesboring”.

### **3. Should study abroad be a key component of every ASU graduate's education?**

- Resounding YES! From the group.
- The group was worried about the non-traditional student (such as the older student, out-of-state, online, etc.).
- Study Abroad should not be a requirement but should be encouraged.
- It was discussed that students may not necessarily travel abroad, but could do things at home to enrich their international experience such as Skype, etc. However, this was also discussed that it would not be as good of an experience.
- It was mentioned that students could work for an international company, or participate in international experiences on campus.
- We should utilize our international partner schools for study abroad.
- Have study abroad over a shorter time period, such as spring break, or have shorter courses.
- Start introducing the students to study abroad earlier in their college career, such as freshman year, since when they are Junior or Seniors their courses are more focused and schools may not have the courses they need to graduate, it would just be electives that may not be needed for their degree.
- It was mentioned that perhaps A-State could work with and organize short learning trips abroad with local high schools to get HS students interested in international travel which would then make them more interested to participate in study abroad once coming to A-State. This would be a recruitment tool.
- There should be more interaction between domestic and international students which could help generate more interested in study abroad.
- Expand the study abroad fair to 2 days.
- If the university is subsidizing costs, it will lead to more students that are interested. The cost of \$3500 or more for a trip was too high for most students.

### **4. How can the university better reflect the Delta Region?**

- It was mentioned that this was difficult to answer as the delta region was so diverse.
- Looked at NYIT Presents Health in the Delta as one example of reaching to the region
- There should be more community interaction
- Some issues in the region were cyclical poverty, and college not being the goal for many people. We need programs in place to address the issues.
- A-State needs to show that we have something to offer all students, and not just the students in the 18-24 age range. Our marketing materials currently seem to only cater toward the general perception of a college student, and not the non-

traditional students (transfer, adult learners, online, etc.). Many of our students are career focused and not wanting the “college-life”.

- Summer camps could help bring many people to campus. What resources can A-State offer?
- There should be more partnerships with business in the area for certifications. Partnerships with factories or manufacturing.
- We should speak with industries to gauge their educational needs, and what skills they are looking for in workers.
- Determine how we can serve the needs of the community.
- Start informing students early about non-local opportunities, so they don’t graduate and then think they can’t find a job as there are no local jobs in their field.

Two-Year Transfer issues and Continuing Education seemed to be highlights of the discussions.

Group #6: Cultural Leadership

**1. When we say “community” what do we mean geographically?**

**A. Jonesboro, B. Northeast Arkansas, C. The Region, D. The State**

Community is for the touching point between the university and the community. Should allow for better quick touch points and better first impressions. First impressions mean a lot and that is where our community struggles with recruiting.

- The concept of community is one in which the impact should be not only to Jonesboro, but also should have an impact on the state.
  - If they come from 2 hours away and then they are returning home, what is the impact on their fortunes to increase their socio-economic status?
  - What are those lasting changes to the students’ lives?
  - For instance, if they come down Red Wolf Boulevard it gives off a great image of our university...if they come down Johnson, is that the image that we want them to remember?
- We should be able to utilize the whole town/community when it comes to recruiting geographically.
- Some cities are considered to be “college towns” we feel that we are in an age of “towns with a college”

- 2. How is A-State viewed as a cultural leader in our community? Where are the gaps and how should we contribute in the future to the quality of life, including events and activities that contribute to the culture?**

What is our role in the larger community?

- a. We need to have a good relationship
- We need to be “creative” leaders, not just “cultural”
  - Creative leadership is a philosophy and an act: it develops and realizes innovative ideas through the shared ambition of improving the world through enterprise formation.

- 3. Is the “Town-Gown” relationship important? What can A-State do to improve it and create more relevance for our contributions?**

Economic Development to the Community

- a. In research the top things that can affect the community in regards to the university are:
  - i. Level of Educational Attainment
  - ii. Attracting (Quality of Life)
  - iii. Retention
  - iv. Talent Development (Going back to education)
- b. 75% of studies show that students recently graduated chose where they want to live first, THEN where they work.

Students at Arkansas State are the future of the market

- a. Jonesboro or Jones-boring
  - i. There is not a lot for students to do especially those between the 18-20 range
  - ii. Commuter campus with everyone going home instead of sticking around
  - iii. Need more creative student events that do not involve alcohol to keep the freshmen engaged and excited
  - iv. More local businesses to do outreaches to the students instead of the students having to track down businesses
    - 1. Like the Recovery Room doing Poetry Slams
  - v. Places off campus that are within walking distance
    - 1. Helpful for International Students
  - vi. More college pride outside of the immediate area
    - 1. Chamber of Commerce area?

- vii. No options for students to be downtown
  - 1. If they want to go to an event, they have to drive

#### What areas should be more highlighted?

- More opportunities for internationals and the community to be involved
  - Take the Jonesboro Bred to be more Engaged with these outreach groups
    - Big Brother / Big Sister
  - We need to bring the City to Campus
- Welcome Week feels more like the businesses expecting the students when it should be the other way around
- Food Fair Downtown highlighting different areas
- More utilization of Jet and the Shuttle Services
- There is a lack of communication between the city and the chamber
- Need more connecting events like the A-State and Downtown Association Block Party
- The need for Student Marketers
  - There are parts of Jonesboro that students never even heard of or know about. (i.e., City Water Light Park)
- Community is not promoting A-State's offerings. (i.e., BAM, Delta Symposium)
- Creative Writing Units
  - More Girl Sports promotions (i.e., Women's Soccer)
  - More focus on bringing in popular groups/singers/performers to campus (i.e., we used to have Taylor Swift, Luke Bryan, etc.)

#### Other Areas of Interest

- Do Businesses or Jonesboro Citizens even consider or think about the college students or the overall livelihood of Jonesboro?
  - If not involved in a church or the university, tend to be lost
  - A&P Committee outreach
- Need a place to hang out that isn't a "bar scene"
  - Gyms
  - Malls
  - Not the library
- Jonesboro "Greenway"
- The potential of Differentiated school offerings
  - Culinary
  - Vet

- Dental

#### Food for Thought

- a. What would Jonesboro look like if Arkansas State wasn't here?
- b. What is the value of each student to Arkansas State and Jonesboro?
- c. Starts from the top down. THANK YOU to Dr. Damphousse for being so open and reachable to students and the public.

#### Things that We are Not Doing that We Should Be

- a. Food truck park on campus
  - b. Trolley system for parking and transportation
  - c. Bigger or another parking garage
  - d. Community service and outreach to the other groups other than the leading non-profits (bettering our neighborhoods)
  - e. Areas for students to learn to how to make the community better
- i. Garden Centers
  - ii. Curriculum Requirements
  - iii. Afterschool Care Programs

#### Final Questions

- a. How do we get students to COME?
- b. How do we get students to STAY?
- c. How do we get students to CONTINUE TO CHANGE JONESBORO?