

## Town Hall Meeting- Alumni

October 30, 2019

### Notetaker #1

#### What are your overall thoughts?

- What is the overall objective you are trying to accomplish with the goals? If you don't know what you are trying to create and the end result, you can't set goals. The goals should drag everything through to the end result.
- Like seeing that the Delta is important and should be a focus
- Would like to know the diversity plan and which goal it fits into; would like to see it shown within the strategic plan
- Will we be investing more in TAs and RAs if one of the goals is research? In the past the number of grad assistants were cut in half, but they do a great amount of work for professors and assist in research. What colleges will be included in research?
- Like to see that improving spirit and culture is a focus. ASU is a big University with the small town feel and doesn't want that to be lost as it is one of our strengths
- Like the holistic approach to admissions and culturally responsive
- The Delta has a view that college is too expensive and not attainable. We should be sending representatives (faculty, staff, alumni) to visit schools, starting with sophomores, to give plans of how they can afford college and the importance of grades.
- Overall very proud to be alumni of ASU and feel people are beginning to know who we are. It is important for faculty, staff, alumni to wear ASU apparel and promote the school (word of mouth marketing). Alumni should be recruiting and would like to see involvement.
- Would like to see the museum used to its full potential (Goal 3). We should be partnering with community to bring visitors in to use facilities.
- The campus layout is confusing and visitors have a hard time getting around or figuring out where to go. It can be very intimidating and confusing. Should increase signage and improve directions.
- Is part of the plan to partner with schools that have low enrollment?
- Students not attending college is a concern, we should work with counselors and offer resources, including information of what college can do for them, and start earlier than the senior class
- Work with alumni to go back into delta communities to motivate and guide students to ASU
- Like the 870 Plan and think it is a good step in the right direction

- Research in the agri areas could be in fields within the delta region which would help the delta area but also recruit for ASU

#### Which goals do you support?

- Goal #5- A large number of students work either part time or full time and it is hard for them to immerse themselves in the college experience, how can we get them involved?
- Goal #3- important, not just in this community
- Overall liked all goals
- How can we change the perception of ASU? Need to focus on why people should attend. Does the local perception match the perception of target students? There should be an effort to improve quality then get it out there. Seen as “a town with a college in it”
- Graduates should be instilled with pride when they leave here and should promote/market the stories of outstanding graduates to show what can happen when you go to ASU
- Competing with tech schools, should have programs where they can go into high tech fields

#### What would you add?

- Partnerships with businesses/emerging technology- businesses should be lining up to recruit our students and they should have a job when they graduate; have programs that we can put students in partnering with businesses
- Recommended looking at Town and Gown by Dr. Gates
- People in AR don't know what is in Jonesboro, should be a collaborative effort between Jonesboro and ASU to get people here
- Students need to know what all there is to do in Jonesboro and the cultural experience it has to offer so when they leave they talk about it
- Think convention center will be a game changer
- Recommended A Framework for Understanding Poverty by Ruby Payne
- Faculty should be more prominent in the community
- Should be a focus on bringing both ASU and Jonesboro to a different level
- Should focus on having more full time professors; like the partnering with schools/organizations for concerts
- Fowler center events are poorly attended- how do we improve it?

## Notetaker #2

### What is your overall impression of the five goals?

- What is the overall objective that the five goals are to accomplish? If we accomplish the goals what does that result in? It's hard to put together a plan with goals if you don't have an objective in mind.
- I would like to see us walk the talk that the delta is important. A diversity plan also needs to be important in this plan.
- One of the goals talks about investing in research and scholarly activities. Where is this research going to occur? Will history and liberal arts be included? Are you going to invest in graduate assistants and teaching assistants?
- I really like to goal to improve A-State culture. A-State has all the advantages of a major university with a small town feel. We don't need to lose sight of that.
- I'm excited to take a more holistic approach to admissions.
- When we talk about the delta and diversity, these kids talk about not being able to afford to go to college. We need to start sending representatives to schools in the delta early on with a plan to tell these kids how they can afford to go to college.
- People are beginning to know who we are and we need to build on it.
- On goal three – how will it benefit the museum by bring the community to the museum?
- It's difficult to find your way around campus. It's intimidating. We need to improve way finding.
- Signage would be useful.
- Is part of the plan to partner with these schools that have low college enrollments?
- Have we thought about getting people from these areas to go back and show what they've done?
- The 870 plan is a good step.
- Agriculture is very important to this area. With agricultural research, we can show people how we help to make their crops grow better and maybe we can recruit some of these people from the field.

### Which goal can you support the most?

- I think we can support them all, but very much five just by being here today.
- I think goal three is very important.
- On goal five, do you know how many work part time? It's hard to immerse these students in a campus culture when they're so busy. It's an important place to start looking.

- Everyone assumes I went to Fayetteville. How do you get people to realize that A-state is more than they perceive it as? Does our perception of what the school is give with our local target of students or a national group of students? How do we get this message out?
- People look at us as the other school in Arkansas. We aren't a college town but a town with a college in it.
- I turned down several schools to play football at A-state. We have to have an identity that people can identify with. Like people think of Georgia Tech and they think of engineers. I can't tell you how much pride I have that I graduated from this school. We need to highlight successful graduates to be our spokespeople. We need a degree program where people can get good jobs in a high tech field right after graduation.

Is there anything you would add to the five goals?

- I hear a lot about recruiting, retention, and growth. I'd love to see more about partnerships with local companies and technology. I want to see that businesses are looking into A-state for recruitment.
- Are these goals geared towards undergraduate on campus students or are we still going to recruit the online students just as aggressively?
- I've heard town and gown more than once. There was a report done in 1985 on it that may still apply.
- In 1999 we held the HR state conference in Jonesboro. It was our lowest attendance for a conference. Logistically it was not good. People don't know about what is in Jonesboro now. We've got to do things to get people to come here.
- Do our students even know what there is to do here?
- We now have the hotel and convention center that will help.
- Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* will enlighten and help to reach out to people in the delta.
- I would like to see more faculty involved on city commissions and in the community. We're very siloed and we need to work together.
- In the music department and fine arts there are too many adjuncts, temporary, and part-time instructors. We need more full-time professors. The new choir director is partnering with outside partners and I think it's great. We have good performances in the Fowler center but they're poorly attended. What can we do to get people more interested in the arts?
- A-State is hosting the Arkansas Summit on African American Males. We have 48 local high school students who are getting to attend.

### Notetaker #3

#### Overall thoughts?

- What is the overall objective that the five goals are to accomplish? What do we hope to see with the accomplishment of these goals? It's hard to achieve these goals if there isn't a very concrete mission.
  - What is the identity of Arkansas State University? These goals represent our vision for the future; who we want to be, and who we say we are. At the end of this process, we are hoping to reflect our attempts to be a better university.
  - We are trying to come up with the answer to this question. We have struggled for a while with the issue of our identity. The strategic plan will hopefully culminate the answer to the question of "Who are we?" This process is the beginning part that will ultimately lead us to our identity.
- Alumni would like to see evidence that the Delta is important. Additionally would like to know about the diversity plan within this strategic plan.
  - During the initial phases of this process, "diversity," "delta," etc. appeared many times. Though the actual words aren't there, the overall goals do consider these things.
  - Are you going to increase the number of graduate assistants, teaching assistants, etc. and invest in them?
- This will be included in the notes and revisited later.
- Loving "Every Red Wolf Counts," but hoping not to lose sight of that environment.
- Excited that we are taking a more holistic approach to admissions.
- A lot of the kids who believe they cannot afford college could benefit from hearing from representatives. If there was some type of program developed where alumni visit those delta schools, that could really help encourage students to attend college.
- Wondering how goal #3 might benefit the visibility of A-State's museum?
  - Making sure Jonesboro and the surrounding communities can have access to our high-class facilities. What we are looking for is ways we can partner with the community, but it is also a two-way street.
- Many people won't come to campus because people feel intimidated or unfamiliar.
- The map that Dr. Damphousse had shown us and there were not many students who are going to college. What is the plan to help this?
  - The population of people who do not go to college is not something that happened overnight. Representatives are there and visiting high schools, but it can be tough to show these students that college is right for them. The 870 plan is not just for Jonesboro, but also for this population of students who come from low-income

families. If we don't start planting the seed early, then there's not a good chance of reaching these students by the time they are seniors. Also, many students leave these areas, get degrees, but do not return to live in those counties.

- Have we thought about working with the alumni group to go back to those lower-income areas and meet with these students? It's very encouraging for these students to see successful alumni from their exact areas and to be able to visit with them.

#### What goals could you really support?

- We support all of these goals, but especially goal #5. Alumni wouldn't be here if they didn't support goal #5.
- On goal #5, do you know how many students attend school as well as work? When you're trying to immerse students in campus culture, it's difficult to reach these people in goal #5 because they don't have the time.
- How are we going to get the message out that Arkansas State is something different than what people who perceive it as? If we can really clear up the "Who are we" question, that would benefit us greatly. Does our perception of what the school is match the rest of the state's and the nation? A lot of people look at Arkansas State as "the other school" in Arkansas, and that we are a town that happens to have a college, rather than a college town.
  - We are having this conversation so that we can figure out who we are, then really market that identity.
- One alumni commented that he turned down several schools' offers to play football, and the difference of Arkansas State for him was that the football coach sat down with him and talked for an hour and a half about his goals beyond playing football. We have to have an identity that people can relate to, and we need our graduates to be very proud to hold a degree from Arkansas State.
- If we want to improve our enrollment here, we need to become more competitive with these technical programs and fields that don't require a college degree.
- Why Arkansas State? Why should kids choose to come here?

#### Is there anything you would add to the draft?

- The one thing that people would love to see is more partnerships with the community, and more people from the community reaching out to recruit these students to stay here and work here.
- Are these goals geared towards graduates or current students?

- These goals are created to affect everyone, not just one type of student. What kind of recruiting are we doing for our online programs?
  - There are two different markets. A lot of the online students are graduate-level, so they are concerned with cost and convenience. Since the cost of our programs are very affordable, we are receiving national attention. In a way, we are recruiting them, but these students are also finding us.
- There is a perception that there is nothing to do in Jonesboro. We have to do some things that make people want to come here. Do our students even know what there is to do here?
- Would like to see more faculty being more prominent in city commissions, in the community, etc. We need to be thinking about the future; if Jonesboro prospers, so does the university.
- Would like to see more full-time professors rather than adjunct, part-time.
- We have great programs in the Fowler Center, but poor turnouts. Would like to see more efforts to increase attendance.
- Let's look at creating more opportunities for high school students to get on campus.

#### **Notetaker #4**

##### What are your overall thoughts?

- Overall Objective that 5 Goals are to accomplish?
- Ultimately identity, what do we want to do, and what are we actually doing?
- Result in? "Better" University, metrics that will meet individual goals will hopefully be able to quantify goals.
- What is end result? Fulfillment of Mission, plan is hopefully going to culminate in answer to question: "Who Are We?" And what is important to us as a University
- Begin further reach out to Delta, a focus needed to incorporate the region and its students and Where is Diversity in the Plan?
- Diversity and Delta did appear over the entire goal set, and while the words are not outlined directly YET, they will be encompassed over the goals.
- Increase in GAs, TAs, RAs, etc with an increase in research emphasis, these assistants are ultimately responsible for doing the work that faculty are not doing. Will they be involved directly in the research process? Invest in increase in roles and money to them?
- Improving A-State Campus Culture when all similar students are present at a time to build smaller communities in a larger university setting.

- Begin reach out to potential high school students (especially in Diverse schools and in the Delta) to educate students on how college can be affordable. Build on A-State spirit and recognition throughout community and beyond
- Dr. Terry has started initiative to use Alums to recruit
- How to benefit on-campus services (for instance the museum) by making them available to community as a whole. Making sure Jonesboro and its surrounding communities aware and partner with those outside of the University to broaden the reach and scope of our services.
- Campus inaccessible if unfamiliar, especially for those who are not former college students. Improving signage
- Schools that are not sending students to college, has there been reach out to these schools, students and parents?
- We have reached out, but “white counties” have not been created overnight and there is a sense of getting a job immediately is more important than attending college.
- Group is also low-income, 870 plan is specifically for this population to ensure that money is available for them. Emphasis on making this information available early sets expectation of bringing more students in. Also losing population in area because people do not return to underserved areas.
- Do we have representatives from underserved areas who are alums that can reach back out to those still in the area from whence they came.
- Agriculture is still a large contribution to our community.

#### Which Goals can alums support the most?

- By being here all goals are supported, but goal 5 is of particular support for alums
- How many students that work part/full time jobs, but can be particularly hard when they are working this much.
- Perception of A-State needs to be improved by getting message out about who we are; some schools in the state give an immediate reaction to those around the state, ours may be a little more “hazy”; reach needs to be improved beyond Arkansas as well
- If we can better define who we are, we are able to better market to groups who would be attracted to us.
- Sometimes perception is still we are the other school in Arkansas and we are not a college town, but a town with a college.
- Reaching out to students to make sure that they know what A-State can do further than being in school.
- Advances in Technological offerings have to improve to draw students for workforce needs

- Partnerships with community members/businesses to recruit and offer internships for a steady pipeline of community members
- Are these goals only geared toward traditional undergraduate students, or is this all-encompassing for students who are online, graduate, non-traditional?
- Goals intended to include ALL.
- What kind of marketing is being done to grow the online, that we are not doing for traditional undergrads? It's two different groups being recruited, admitted and retained, and strategies don't naturally translate.
- Town and Gown - bridging the gap with local government report from 90s
- People do not realize what is in Jonesboro and a collaboration between all constituent groups to bring people on campus needs to be done.
- Students don't even realize what is offered around town off-campus
- We need reach out from Faculty on-campus to those off-campus, to bridge the gap as much as vice versa
- A goal of having full-time professors and less adjunct, temporary faculty to improve the quality of teaching and learning. One example of partnering with those off-campus is new Choir Director has partnered with local schools and other organizations to bring people on campus particularly in the Arts.
- Arkansas Summit of African American Males, college and high school seniors; HS students stated that they are excited to come on