

## Student Town Hall Meeting Notes

October 21, 2019

### Notetaker Number 1

#### Thoughts on 5:

- Price is a major concern as tuition continues to increase each year; need to look at creative ways to reduce costs
- Switch to open source textbooks; concern with some classes never using the book or has public information that could be accessed for free
- Rural communities are going to vo-tech schools because the payoff is immediate and are not looking at the long term benefit of a college degree; see college as a way to take on debt and leave for a minimum wage job; need to offer clear career base path
- Need a focus on sustainability and teach it within curriculum
- Like the focus on meeting the labor needs; top industries include solar and renewable energy resources
- Do not need to have strict focus on Arkansas or delta region, but include nationwide and international focuses to increase diversity and culture
- One way to give back to the community would be through teaching safe agriculture practices and being environmentally friendly
- Look at implementing a welcome week for freshmen before classes start to focus on team building and creating connections; some students come to the University not knowing anyone and activities like this could help build lasting connections
  - University of the Ozarks has a welcome week and team building exercises, as well as, trips where the upperclassmen are assigned to freshmen; builds a strong bond with other students and feels as if they are part of a family

#### What do you consider to be most important?:

- Optimized student recruitment; the passion on campus should be funneled through to our community and those surrounding us (Delta specifically)
  - Focus on strengthening the arms that reach out
  - Delta has viewpoint of either you work in agriculture or you leave
  - Student from a small school in the Delta only knew of one other student from her hometown; not much representation
- See the passion at ASU first, then focus on showing that passion
  - Students find clubs/organizations to dive into to feel connected and involved
  - When students feel connected, they go home and talk about it
  - Finding their passion here creates a desire to go home and invest in their own community
  - ASU offers opportunities and leadership skills that students can take back home
  - Alumni and students should share their passion within their communities
  - Everyone making you feel welcome will carry forward throughout the entire state

- Majority of Jonesboro students are going elsewhere for the “experience”; need to find ways to market A-State as an “adventure”, “own community”, “redefine yourself”, “can be your own person” (even though you are close to home, you can still have the college experience)
- Expand recruitment on the national level and need to include people from all over
  - One way to do this is to focus on what we offer compared to other schools
  - Go beyond what other schools offer to attract more
- Need more interdisciplinary groups/clubs/classes
  - Example is speech and occupational therapy students joining together for meetings because they will work close together in the workforce
  - Offer practical experience
- A lot of students are not aware of what A-State has to offer
  - Welcoming faculty/staff
  - Example, staff member went out of their way to find a tutor for a student to work with her work schedule
- Need to find better ways to showcase resources
- Advertise smaller programs that aren’t offered at other places (CD & Hospitality mentioned)
  - Programs such as these will draw students from central AR to NEA
  - Create a focus on tailored/specific programs
- Focus on services that help students, specifically career services
  - Students were not introduced to career services until their senior year
  - Feel there is a mentality of “graduate and get out”
  - Need to focus on the connections A-State has for students and connect with specific jobs
  - Mentioned lack of staff within Career Services
- Need a focus on job shadowing/internships within the community
  - Students have sought out positions themselves only to be told the organizations do not offer
  - Focus on building relationships within the community to increase these opportunities
  - Consider every major having internship credits
  - Provide education to community and local businesses of the benefits of job shadowing and internships as it helps students find what they want to pursue
  - Students found opportunities outside of Jonesboro
- Students are searching for the location before the job because they are focused on the experience

#### Is anything missing?

- Diversity of ASU should be showcased
- Sustainability- green initiatives are essential to the future and are applicable to all Colleges
- Need a focus on national goals to align with national level
  - Waive more out of state tuition
- The number of students at ASU can be intimidating especially if the student is coming from a small town, so there needs to be a focus on the fact it feels like family
  - Students feel extremely comfortable with faculty and staff and need to find a way to project this

- Large school with personalized touch
- Students never feel like just a number
- We are a family
- One of the biggest concerns for a student, especially those from smaller communities, is how to pay for school
  - UCA sent financial aid representatives to talk to students about options available to them
  - Need to reach out to high school students to give aid options and explain how the overall process of paying for school works
  - Mentioned problems obtaining transcripts
  - Feeling lost on campus, but had a staff member help (remembers that experience and the impact it made)

### **Notetaker Number 2**

Thoughts and opinions in general about the five goals:

- Recruitment and enrollment: many students in Arkansas are concerned about price. Although tuition increases may be necessary the university should find ways to decrease the cost of attending college in other ways, such as encouraging open source textbooks.
- The university should build career based paths like vocational schools, so students are set for a specific job direct out of college.
- The university should incorporate sustainability and environmental impact into all five points.
  - This could include an emphasis in preparing students for careers in renewable energy as well as more environmental research.
- Require a welcome week for freshman before school starts.
  - Include teambuilding exercises.
  - University of the Ozarks does something similar.

What stood out the most to you?

- Map of Arkansas with the lack of degrees along the delta. Make people passionate about A-State and then reach out to people in the delta. Encourage them to invest in their hometowns but also be willing to leave their hometowns to come to A-State.
- A student from Jonesboro saw the majority of his high school class go elsewhere for college. A-State needs to redefine itself and make itself more exciting for local students.
- A-State needs to expand recruitment nationally to increase the culture on campus. A-state must also make sure we catch up to and surpass other universities' offerings.

What stands out as most helpful for student success?

- Emphasize relationships with professors, closeness of classmates.
- More interdisciplinary activities would be beneficial.
- Some people aren't aware of what A-state can do to help you – assistance with academics and tutoring flexibility. We need to better showcase our resources.

- The university needs to push its smaller programs that aren't offered a lot of places such as Communications Disorders.
- The university needs to push the services it already offers more. Career services needs to be expanded.
- There aren't a lot of opportunities to job shadow locally.
  - A-State should build more connections with local companies and small businesses.
- Every major should have an internship credit.
- Market the experience of A-State and improve it for all students.

Is anything in the five goals missing?

- Diversity – show that there is diversity here.
- Sustainability and green initiatives
- Look at national goals instead of regional goals
  - Waive more out of state tuition to attract more out of state students.
- A-State has a welcoming atmosphere – broadcast it. Show that students are comfortable. There's not need to feel intimidated coming here. You feel like family.
- Educate high school students on opportunities to pay