

A Strategic Planning Process to Increase Student Engagement

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Context

- Strategic planning process implemented in August 2013 among SHSU ag business faculty
 - Initiative- program development and faculty mentoring
 - Program relevancy for the 21st century and a changing student demographic
 - Faculty stability
- NLGCA ag business student enrollment
 - 2nd- Texas
 - 6th- NARRU
- Strategic planning process- faculty are involved, but is there value in engaging students in the process?

Research Question

Can we increase classroom engagement among students and learn from them by capitalizing on their unique perspectives and involving them in the strategic planning process for the SHSU ag business program?

Objectives

- Learning- ask students in an advanced agricultural marketing course to develop a composite picture of the university's ag business program using the SWOT approach
- Information- identify the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats expressed collectively by students
- Engagement- observe students' engagement in the academic activity

Review of Literature- SWOT

- SWOT Analysis- Albert Humphrey, Stanford Research Institute is credited with devising the model
- Internal environment
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
- External environment
 - Opportunities
 - Threats

Review of Literature

- Al-Darmaki et al. (2012)- evaluation of counselor education program based on feedback from faculty and students
- Yelken et al. (2012)- outcomes analysis on distance education program involving students and lecturers in Turkey
- Gross (2005)- doctoral students evaluated counselor education program
- Buttles (2006)- personal assessment in preparation for student teaching
- Rudzki (1995)- internationalization of curriculum

Review of Literature

However,

- Minimal literature on student participation and engagement in strategic planning process (including SWOT) in a university setting
- A virtual absence in the literature on agricultural curriculum development

Methods and Procedures

- AGRI 4363- Agricultural Sales and Consulting
 - Fall 2012 (n=35)
 - Spring 2013 (n=35)
- High skills development- “Put in Practice (PIP)”
- SWOT concept reviewed
- Students informed that collective perspectives would assist faculty with program planning

Methods and Procedures

PIP- SWOT Process

- Team-based learning class (<http://www.teambasedlearning.org/>)
 - Students assigned to team by instructor-based criteria
 - Exercise fourth week of semester after initial team-building opportunities
- Step 1- each student formulated their own factors
- Step 2- recorder selected
- Step 3- each student in circular order reported to recorder until all ideas were transferred to large, posted easel pad sheets—no comments allowed

Methods and Procedures

PIP- SWOT Process

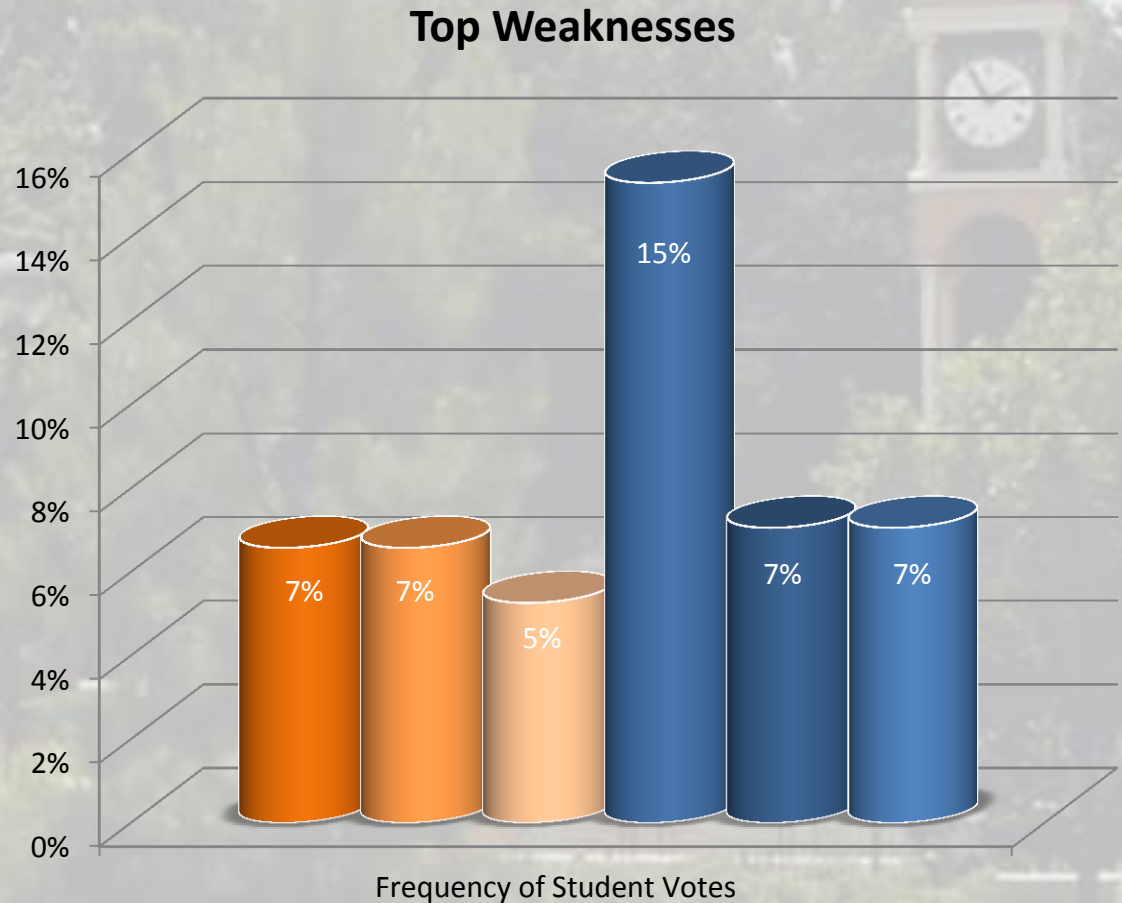
- Step 4- iterative process using voting technique to identify most important factors by team
 - A- each student allocated two votes on initial factors (stacking allowed)
 - B- top factors identified for each team
- Step 5- students discussed top responses

Team processes were visible to all although discussion among teams occurred only after factor generation and voting was completed

Methods and Procedures

Data Analysis

- Excel 2010 data analysis package used for statistical investigation - frequency distributions



Results and Discussion

- Composite picture developed by students
- Top SWOT factors identified
- Faculty observation of engagement

Composite Picture

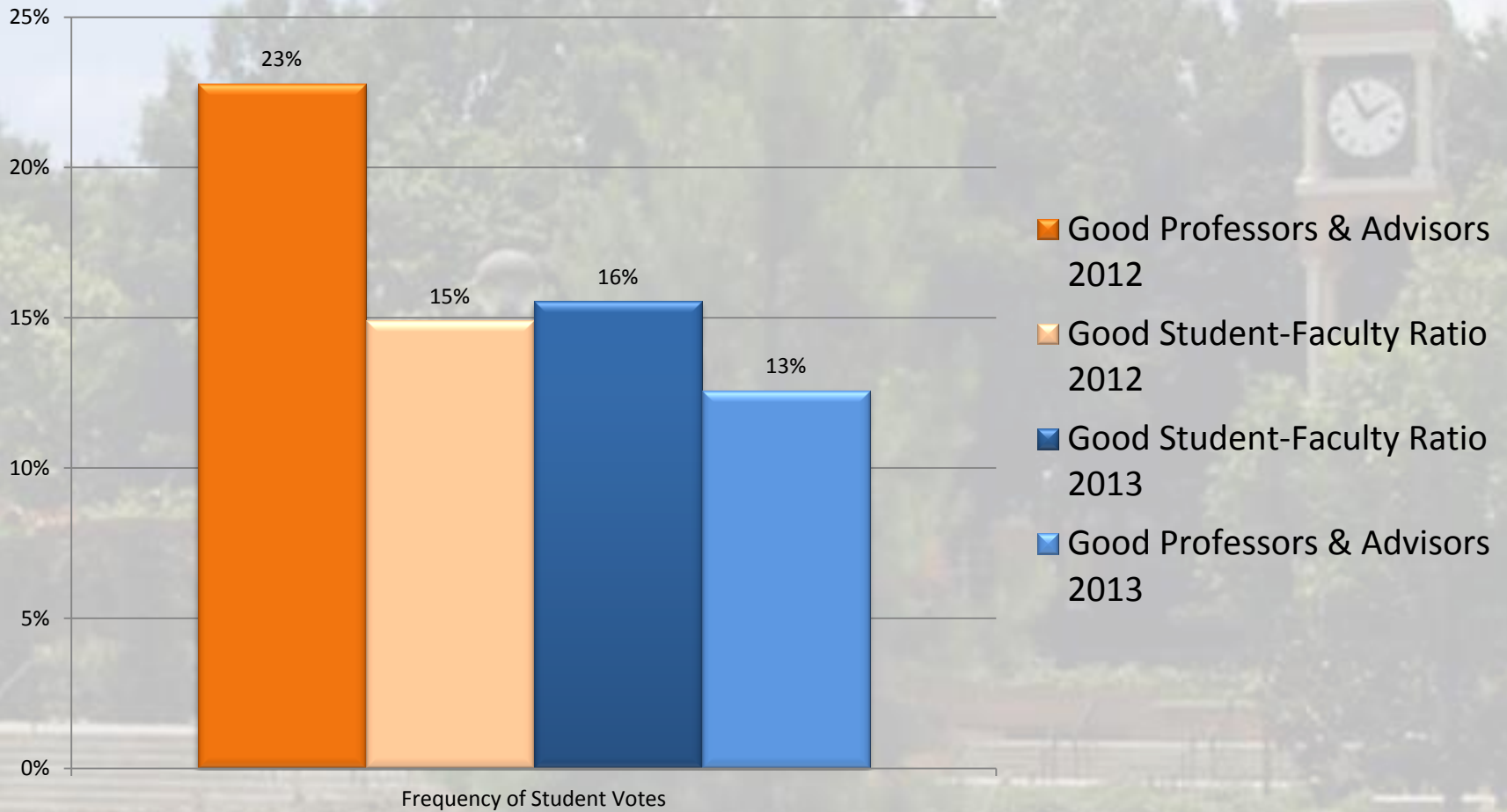
<p>S <u>Student-prof ratio</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proffs care about future willing to spend time 1 on 1 Knowledge of topics Comprehensive courses Exceptional club activity Same classmates 	<p>W unclear communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diff teaching styles Some proffs don't fit in area they teach Lack of involvement Proffs take other teaching styles + don't use their own
<p>O increasing student body size</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> job + opportunity Alumni connections <p><u>Increasing school reputation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Fair Network Connections <p><u>Increasing need for agriculture</u></p>	<p>T <u>Disconnect from Agriculture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large competition <p><u>Location + suitcase college</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volatility of Ag Industry

<p><u>Knowledgeable professors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good student to teacher ratio <p><u>Large network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> common background (students) good relationships between faculty and students Variety of clubs (AgBusiness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classes in other buildings few professors teaching one subject few time slot choices sometimes professors too busy to help Old facilities
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong-will people Quality education at an affordable price improving facilities ENDLESS 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall perception of Ag close proximity to other big schools other schools have more se

Top SWOT- Strengths

- Overwhelmingly, students in both semesters agreed on **Strengths** factors
 - In Fall: 56% of all votes to 4/31 factors
 - In Spring: 48% of all votes to 4/40 factors
- Two factors stood out
 - Good professors/advisors
 - Good faculty-student ratio

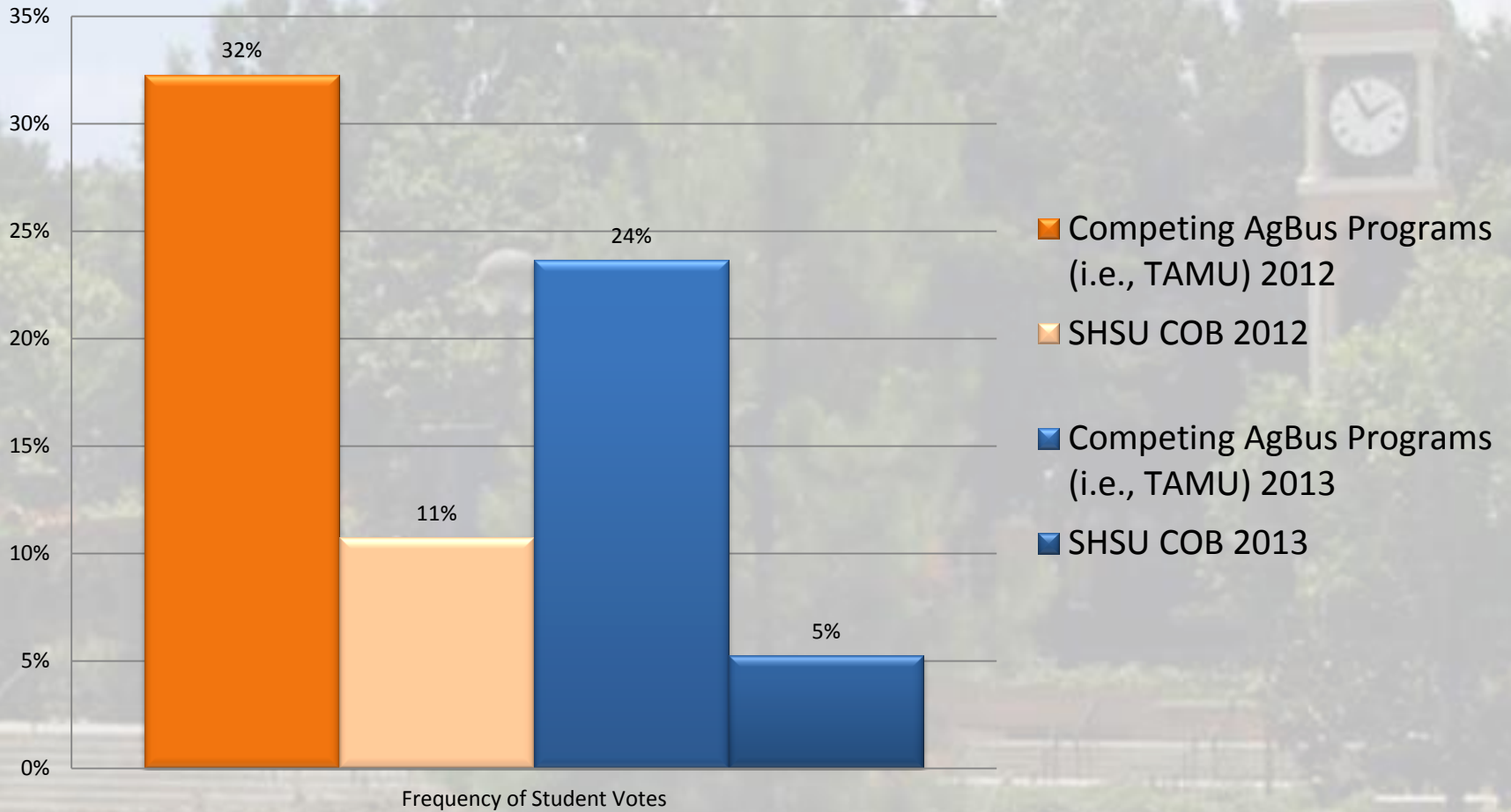
Top Strengths



Top SWOT-Threats

- Overwhelmingly students both semesters agreed on Threats factors
 - In Fall: 43% of all votes to 2/24 factors
 - In Spring: 37% of all votes to 3/27 factors
- One factor stood out
 - Competition with other ag business programs, primarily TAMU (also referenced SHSU COB)

Top Threat



Top SWOT- Weaknesses and Opportunities

- However, factors relevant to weaknesses and opportunities much more divergent
 - Weaknesses
 - Top factor, nothing exceeding 7% of the votes, except for facilities/limited space with 15% in Spring
 - In Fall: 19% of all votes to 3/43 factors
 - In Spring: 29% of all votes to 3/33 factors
 - Opportunities
 - Top factor
 - Recruitment- 14% (Spring) of votes
 - Program expansion- 8% (Fall) and 12% (Spring) of votes
 - In Fall: 22% of all votes to 3/42 factors
 - In Spring: 36% of all votes to 3/28 factors

Student SWOT Summary



Faculty Observations

- Students verbally expressed appreciation for the ability to engage in the program's planning process
- Subsequent comments (referral) by students following semester in another course where SWOT application was discussed

Summary

- Learning- students developed a composite picture of the university's ag business program using the SWOT approach- skills development
- Information- students identified the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from their viewpoint (which was very similar to an ag business faculty exercise completed in August)
- Engagement- appeared achieved via faculty observation and student comments during and after academic activity

Areas for Additional Research

- Preliminary nature-access or develop assessment tool for measuring (i.e., quantify) engagement
- Measuring perspectives of incoming students compared to continuing students



A photograph of a clock tower at Sam Houston State University, partially obscured by lush green trees. The tower is white with a dark roof and a clock face. The scene is set against a blue sky with white clouds.

Thank You



Sam Houston State University