

- 1. Name up to three environmental factors that positively impact student learning at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) and that you believe should be celebrated and supported.**
 - a. Student exposure to effective professional/leadership training and experiences (professional conferences, student leadership activities, etc.)
 - b. Direct student mentoring and nurturing from faculty to prepare students to compete effectively in gaining entrance to graduate education and employment positions
 - c. Promoting and financially supporting opportunities for students to interact and network effectively in a global society (study abroad, internships, etc.)

- 2. Name up to three factors that negatively impact student learning at PVAMU and that you believe need urgent attention and support.**
 - a. Lack of (some) faculty commitment to attending and starting scheduled classes on time and providing a full class session for which the students and tax payers have paid**
 - b. Lack of students being challenged with opportunities to utilize critical thinking skills in the learning environment
 - c. Faculty apathy (lack of desire to expect excellence in self and/or students and absence of desire to perform “beyond the call of duty”)

- 3. For each of the factors cited in item 2 above, describe the strategies you would propose to effect change and thereby improve student learning.**
 - a. Empower the students and hold them more accountable for holding the faculty members more accountable. Students should not feel disempowered or threatened by faculty to think that they cannot demand and expect excellence from the faculty members. Students also should be “educated” to know and believe that they are being shortchanged when a faculty member does not provide at least the minimum level of service and instruction for which students and taxpayers have paid. Administrators, faculty, staff and students must strive to move beyond the “CP time” mentality of “waiting for the crowd to show up” before beginning a scheduled activity. Faculty should establish a climate among their co-workers to strive for and EXPECT excellence in all things, especially as it relates to student learning. Administrators, faculty, staff and students need to hold each other accountable for excellence so that the slogan “Prairie View Produces Productive People” is not just an empty statement, but that individuals outside of our institution will see that excellence is our trademark.
 - b. When feasible, faculty should provide opportunities, through exams, quizzes, experiential activities, etc., for students to develop and utilize critical thinking skills. For example, use essay questions instead of non-challenging, multiple choice questions when feasible or provide practical opportunities for students to APPLY knowledge. This yields more effective learning. Provide the opportunity and challenge students to reach beyond material taught in class. Such opportunities might include

study abroad experiences and leadership development activities outside of the classroom.

- c. Administration should provide some incentives to faculty who perform above and beyond the call of duty. Implementation of the Outstanding Faculty Award is a good initiative. The University also should provide (more or continued) financial support for faculty who desire to perform “beyond the call” through faculty development, conferences, flex time, etc. Establishment and implementation of documented, fair, objective standards regarding tenure, promotion, merit raises, etc. (this issue apparently is being addressed by the Faculty Senate in moving toward a Faculty Handbook).

4. For each proposed strategy outlined in item 3 above, describe the evidence that could provide proof that student learning improved.

- a. Improved student learning could be evident through increased student retention and graduation. Empowered students often are more likely to persist to graduation. Some areas (such as education) may require students to take certain exit exams or certain professional exams. Higher score performance on these types of assessments could provide proof of enhanced student learning and better preparation. The increased admission of PVAMU graduates into highly competitive graduate or professional schools and hiring by competitive employers would be further evidence that student learning has improved.
- b. The reality of having more students pursuing and accepting challenging leadership and professional activities beyond PVAMU (while they are students) may provide evidence of enhanced student learning and a better prepared student. These activities provide additional opportunities for students to APPLY knowledge which is very important in producing a well-rounded student.
- c. Decreased faculty apathy leads to enhanced faculty morale. Enhanced faculty morale could lead to enhanced student morale because students would feel more empowered and believe that faculty care about them. This enhanced relationship among students and faculty would lead more students to pursue and accept more educational challenges and to pursue excellence which could be seen through higher expectations of themselves and higher expectations from faculty. This may seem theoretical, but the effects of increased morale and empowerment can be seen through the productive actions of students and faculty.

Comments presented by:

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