

**VIA Committee Focus Groups
Summary Report
May 7, 2010**

Background

The VIA committee determined that there should be five groups within the University who would participate in the process of evaluating VIA goals and next steps. These included faculty, staff, students, graduate students and alumni/parents/community. Recommendations for participants came from deans, staff members, and the alumni association. Those who participated were a representative sample of their areas. Some participants overlapped and had multiple perspectives for their focus group (ex. an alumnus who now works at TCU, an employee who has also been a parent of a TCU student).

Committee members conducted seven focus groups representing people from each of the five segments of the University affiliates. Each focus group was conducted and moderated by Lisa Albert, John Tisdale, or Bill Moncrief in a neutral location on campus for up to 90 minutes. Each session had a note-taker, who kept notes during the session and typed them up after. Focus groups were asked the same questions for consistency.

Each group opened discussion with everyone giving their name, discipline, rank, and when they arrived at TCU. The questions that followed included:

1. Give me one word that first comes to mind when thinking of TCU. You may not duplicate a previous answer.
2. Why did you choose to work/study at TCU?
3. What did you expect from TCU when you came to work/started as a student?
4. How has TCU met, exceeded, or fallen short of your expectations?
5. What is missing from TCU? What would you change in the next five years?
6. What is good and should be built upon?
7. How do you experience TCU?

Results Summary

1. Across the focus groups, several words came to mind when thinking of TCU. Some of the most prominent words include: community, family, friendly, changing, welcoming.
2. The group participants chose to study or work at TCU for varying reasons. A few themes arose in each group.

Students chose to study here because of the location in Fort Worth, the beautiful campus, the positive attitudes here, and the feel of a small university with the spirit and resources of a larger institution.

Graduate students largely chose TCU based on the strengths of their individual programs. They generally felt disconnected from the university as a whole and have

more affinity to their particular programs. They were also attracted to the facilities, the personal attention, and faculty.

The staff members chose to work at TCU because of the available benefits, stable and friendly environment, and the feeling of a small college with the resources of a larger institution.

The faculty chose TCU because of the location in Fort Worth, what it has to offer, and the positive reputation of TCU. Many mentioned an initial hesitation because of the affiliation with the Disciples of Christ church, but did not feel it was a problem once they arrived.

3. The group participants expected different things from TCU when they arrived, but a few themes were present throughout.

The staff expected a conservative institution with high ethical standards, a friendly and family/community oriented place, greater job security, and the chance to build a program from the ground up.

The graduate students expected a community environment that is well integrated. They also expected spoiled, rich, white kids, but were pleasantly surprised this is not (always) the case. They did not expect it to be as rigorous in their program as it is, but were pleasantly surprised.

Many faculty did not know what to expect when they came to TCU, but have been pleased with the support from the university and colleagues, opportunities to do “fun, cool things,” and that all promises made have been fulfilled. Some reported disappointments in how academically prepared some of the students seem. The alumni/community/parents expected quality academics and friendly professors/environment. They expected close interactions with faculty/students, which they reported receiving.

4. TCU received mixed reviews on how it met, exceeded, or fell short of the expectations.

The graduate students believe TCU has exceeded expectations because of the professional student involvement in the graduate programs, TCU’s support to make things/ideas happen, its nurturing environment, and the availability and dedication of the professors. They believe it has fallen short of their expectations in that

- they encounter “red tape” sometimes in creating change,
- they are isolated from other student groups,
- they do not have a role in a student government organization,
- there is no campus orientation session to teach them about resources and connect them,

- alums from their programs are not very involved with current grad students,
- there is no common eating area in the BLUU to mingle with other students,
- there is not enough stipend money or tuition waivers for grad students to be competitive,
- and websites are not updated and make the University seem behind the times.

The staff believes TCU has met or exceeded its expectations by

- having a “can-do” attitude
- and a shared perception of an outstanding University.

It has fallen short of their expectations because

- there is no childcare facility,
- everyone is being asked to do more with less,
- there is no space for staff to connect with students (no lounge/hangout area),
- the University sends mixed messages (ex. admissions says we have small classes, but that is less often true in Nursing),
- and the growth in students has not been matched by increases in staff resources.

They think that the quality of our product is being sacrificed for the quantity of students we’re bringing in. They believe that there are no priorities in direction and that to be a top-tier school doesn’t necessarily mean we need to be big.

The faculty think that TCU has met their expectations in terms of

- the quality of research being conducted here,
- the quality of the grounds and facilities,
- the quality of people here, the sense of community expected,
- the collaboration between departments,
- the quality of the athletics programs,
- the small class sizes which allow for more personal interaction,
- the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere,
- the “financial health” of the University,
- support for research and resources,
- Campus Life’s support of students,
- the flexibility to be innovative,
- and a presence of collegiality.

The faculty think that TCU has fallen short of their expectations in

- terms of parking availability,
- the lack of grad student stipends to retain quality students,
- the lack of salary growth for faculty,
- follow through on becoming a “greener” campus,
- the library facility
- the limited resources and funding for certain programs,
- and the lack of a faculty center for inter-collegiality.

The students believe that TCU has met or exceeded their expectations in terms of

- the resources available,
- involvement and care for students,
- the first-year experience (retention of students),
- and challenging classes with encouraging professors.

TCU has fallen short of their expectations in terms of

- the “red tape” involved in creating change,
- inconsistencies in course requirements,
- and the challenges with the plus-minus grading system.

5. The segments had varying answers on what is missing from TCU and what they would like to see changed in the next five years.

The alumni/community/parents think that

- the Chancellor should be a Disciple of Christ minister,
- that TCU should do a better job of showcasing its quality academics to the Fort Worth community,
- and that TCU should consider mini-campuses in the community – especially in NE Tarrant County.

The students think that TCU

- is missing a parking garage,
- lacks a quality basketball program,
- needs more freedom to plan events in the Union they way they want (restrictions on food, etc create challenges),
- needs a common place to hang out in the Union (lounge),
- needs a more student-friendly Union space,
- needs a daycare facility
- and needs technology to meet the changes in the medical field for nursing students.

The faculty think that TCU

- is missing a research infrastructure
- is not faculty-oriented,
- needs true dedication to “greening” up campus,
- needs a faculty center,
- needs increased funding for graduate programs,
- needs a cap on undergraduate enrollment,
- needs an equal commitment to teaching and research from faculty,
- needs more quality university-wide speakers,
- needs greater socio-economic diversity in students.

The staff thinks that TCU should be

- more of a teaching university to be distinctive,
- more financial aid to retain students,

- increased staff resources and growth among staff to keep up with new demands
- and TCU should improve interdepartmental communication to breakdown silos.

6. The group participants found many positive things about TCU they thought should be built upon.

The items the graduate students felt positively about include:

- the teacher to student ratio,
- study abroad opportunities,
- the purple bike program and sustainable efforts,
- “breakfast with the Dean” (Neeley initiative),
- community involvement and service learning,
- the construction of great new facilities,
- marketing efforts for events/speakers coming up,
- professional image,
- quality of speakers brought to campus,
- willingness of professors to listen to feedback on teaching styles,
- University website is functional and integrates departments/colleges well,
- graduate student senate,
- library resources
- and encouraging student research.

The staff thinks that TCU has

- a “can-do” attitude,
- quality people,
- people willing to listen,
- a progressive nature,
- close student/faculty relationships,
- quality academics,
- quality athletics,
- a welcoming atmosphere,
- fiscal stability and management,
- and that TCU has a reasonable price for value of education.

The faculty think that

- TCU offers a quality undergraduate education,
- the first-year experience is unmatched,
- on-campus living requirement for freshmen/sophomores,
- Horned Frog “spirit,”
- keep supporting alumni so they keep supporting TCU,
- support for online education,
- study abroad programs,
- increase graduate stipends,

- reach out to FW community to raise funds,
- and the University does well in promoting athletics, but we should do more to promote academics.

The students think that TCU should

- continue to improve software on campus computers to keep up with technological changes,
- winning athletics events that raise the visibility of TCU,
- gain more faculty support of athletic events,
- add more volunteer and service projects for students,
- increase staff to be able to offer more great experience to students, --
- increase student leadership through SGA and IFC,
- increase more connections to the community for internships.

The alumni/parents/community think that

- the community and friendliness of TCU are great and should be maintained,
- the positive and classy and welcoming fan behavior should continue, ----
- athletics is responsible for much of the positive momentum and TCU should stand behind it and gain more recognition,
- TCU should continue hiring quality staff,
- and TCU should continue to work with the city to garner community support like "Go Purple Friday."

7. When asked how they "experience" TCU, the group participants gave a variety of responses.

The alumni/community/parents experience TCU

- by attending games,
- participating on the alumni board,
- and participating in focus groups as asked,
- receiving Facebook posts,
- attending fine arts concerts,
- receiving emails about TCU happenings and alumni events, such as the Easter egg hunts with family and friends.

The students experience TCU through

- relationships they've built on campus,
- Frog Camp,
- Frog Aides (student leadership program),
- Greek system,
- and activities like choir.

The faculty experience TCU through

- the University's relationship with Fort Worth,
- small class sizes and close relationships with students,

- extraordinary opportunities,
- the teacher/scholar model,
- interaction with colleagues,
- participating and/or attending a variety of TCU events,
- seeing students achieve success and sharing it with their professors,
- and seeing graduates feel proud of their TCU degree.

The graduate students experience TCU

- through academic study,
- by immersing themselves into organizations,
- and through study abroad.

The staff experience TCU through

- connecting with students for motivation
- and receiving more than they feel like they give.

Results

1. *Give me one word that first comes to mind when thinking of TCU. You may not duplicate a previous answer. (Items with an asterisk indicate a word used in more than one session)*

Words used include: community*, amazing, learning, involvement, family*, engaging, home, tradition, religion, loyalty, academics, athletics, challenging, friendly*, progressive, changing*, personalized, purple*, developing, encouragement, local, distinguished, pride, private, TCU experience, collegiality, beautiful campus, teacher scholar, classy, quiet, football, world class, intimate, and welcoming.

2. *Why did you choose to work/study at TCU?*

- First-year student said she chose TCU because of Fort Worth, because of the small class sizes, which was unlike the large land-grant institutions.
- FW first-year student—Fifteen members of my family—four generations—“it’s a second home to me all of my life”
- Senior—came to TCU because I had a Chancellor’s scholarship. Questioned why I came here in the beginning. “It has the feel of a small university where I won’t just slip through the cracks. I know I have people who will watch out for me. It also has the spirit and the resources of a large university. We have the resources; we have the money to give you what you need to learn—that’s what I believe.”
- Spanish major: “I don’t think the administration understands how we value sports—we have some really good other teams; we always support the football and baseball teams.”
- FW first-year student. “Growing up here, I went to high school three blocks from campus. Not until this year has the city really supported the football team.”

- Engineering major: “Everything on campus has such a positive attitude. The new union makes it one of the most beautiful campuses in the nation. The upward growth has amazed me in the past three years.”
- TCU was at the bottom of the list of schools to visit but changed his mind after visiting the campus.
- A professor said she knew nothing of TCU before applying. The names “Texas” and “Christian” gave her pause but she is quite satisfied with the school.
- A professor who taught at another Metroplex university said she thought TCU was “world class” before she came to work here; she said she believes the image of TCU is even better.
- A professor said she worried about having to sign an affirmation of faith but she has been pleasantly surprised at the environment.
- A professor said that the faculty and the art museums attracted him to TCU more than a generation ago.
- An associate professor said TCU was chosen because it was connected to a metropolitan area much as his university at time of interview (Florida State); knew nothing about TCU prior to being recruited.
- A professor who taught at Georgia State reported she was recruited to apply at TCU and that visiting the campus convinced her that a career change could be possible even though she was very happy where she was.
- A new assistant professor reported she applied to TCU because she preferred to work in a large metropolitan area (as one of her interests is urban education). She was attracted to TCU because of the courses she would be assigned to teach and she liked the structure of the College of Education. She did not know about TCU but saw the ad in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- A program director reported faculty approached him after going through the program as a student. He had previously served as manager of a ranch. The reputation of the program and TCU as well as the quality of education attracted him to TCU.
- A new assistant professor was contacted by TCU faculty to apply to teach his specialty. He did not know much about TCU. Because he is Jewish, he worried initially about TCU’s affiliation with Christianity. He likes the flexibility at TCU, his colleagues, and the generous offer to join the faculty.
- A professor noted he was happy at UTA and a colleague saw the posting for the TCU position and shared it with him. From his first contact with TCU, he was impressed with the highly respected department faculty and the prestige of the department. The research environment has been great and met his expectations. He believes TCU inspires a higher level of productivity than his previous university. He knew about TCU because he achieved an undergraduate degree at a Texas university.
- A professor from Texas knew about TCU and applied after seeing job postings. First impressions included TCU being a good private school similar to Wake Forest and the University of Richmond.

- Interview made her feel like she would be mentored. She did not feel like an applicant. TCU reached out to her.
- Quick application. Involvement of teaching plus research – a good 50/50 focus
- Faculty also had outside experience
- Great facilities
- Top 10 physics program standing
- Most grad students choose TCU because of the program they were entering
- Benefits, employee tuition benefit
- Combines advantages of private university with full range of “college life” activities.
- I was recruited
- To take advantage of the opportunities and challenges in higher education
- I was recruited and I am an alum.
- Offered a stable and friendly employment situation

3. *What did you expect from TCU when you came to work/started as a student?*

- Highest ethical standards
- No surprises. I researched the job and work environment
- Knew TCU as alum, but did not know what to expect as employee
- Conservative institution, both social and politically
- Moved here from NE and thought it would be big hats and boots
- A friendly place
- A family and community oriented place
- A chance to build a program from the ground up
- Greater job security (vs. previous for-profit employment)
- Spoiled, rich, white kids, BUT not the case
- Thought that it would be bigger
- Not expecting TCU to be as rigorous as it is, but is pleasantly surprised by how challenging TCU is
- Wanted more of a community and more integration
- A professor said he preferred to finish his career at a private university (smaller environment). He noted the quality of students was better than expected.
- A professor commented that he was somewhat skeptical about TCU’s students and feared they would be rich/spoiled. He was happy with the diversity at UTA but has found student quality to be good at TCU. He noted that students, in spite of the affluent lifestyle many enjoy, have the potential to make a difference and seem eager to embrace new opportunities. He reported the support he has enjoyed, as a faculty member has been exceptional. He noted an 8% budget cut was nothing compared to cuts at other universities.

- An assistant professor noted TCU is his first job and he was uncertain about what to expect. He reported he has received notable support from his colleagues who encourage both his teaching and research along with mentoring him.
- A program director stated TCU was his first teaching position and his expectations were uncertain. He experienced a wonderful transition from being a rancher/practitioner to teaching.
- An assistant professor reported she feels she has been supported with both collaboration of her fellow faculty and in her research efforts. She “saw horrors” during the job search and considers TCU a very stable environment. She reported her expectations have definitely been met.
- A professor noted all her expectations were realized. Her desire to have a doctoral program materialize was verbally committed to during her interview and is now a reality. Her hopes for research have also become a reality and she is allowed to continue with her priorities. She came here without tenure (what many considered risky) but now has been granted tenure.
- An associate professor commented he has felt mentored, supported, and groomed to move forward in his professional career. All expectations were met.
- A professor said that he didn’t “know exactly what to expect” but that all the “promises that were made were fulfilled.”
- A new professor said she was concerned about whether she would receive the support needed for research; however, “everyone has been very supportive.”
- A professor said he was concerned about whether he could conduct research and be an effective classroom teacher. He found “extraordinary opportunities...to do fun, cool things.”
- A professor said the students were not as conservative as she thought she would encounter and yet the students are not as academically prepared as they should be. Others in the focus group echoed her sentiment; all believed this was not indigenous to TCU students but to a generation of students.
- A professor said that students have higher expectations of professors for attention.
- A professor said that TCU students are not measurably different.
- A professor said the issues are generational; he said the students at TCU are similar in academic performance as his students at another university.
- A professor said he sees a difference in the students from 30 years ago when he joined the university. He quoted students as saying, “Tell me what I need to do and I will do it.” He said he believed that the honors students today are not as good as the honors students of thirty years ago.
- A college administrator reported expecting quality academics and friendly professors. She was the first residential student in her family and TCU made

her feel welcome. Her professors have become some of her best friends. Her expectations were surpassed.

- A Carolina resident reported having a friendly visit which prompted his enrollment at TCU. His expectations of a friendly environment were met. He also liked that the faculty challenged him uniquely.
- An entrepreneur reported having no expectations because enrolling at TCU was just the right thing to do. He received lots of help from friends and faculty during his enrollment.
- A family engineer (stay-at-home mom) expected close interaction with students and faculty and these expectations were met.
- A businessman expressed having no real expectations. He enrolled undeclared and got into the rhythm of class, but almost left. The TCU Administration reached out him and he decided to stay at TCU.

4. *How has TCU met, exceeded or fallen short of your expectations?*

- An associate professor commented he has felt mentored, supported, and groomed to move forward in his professional career. All expectations were met.
- Exceeded because of professional student involvement in the grad program
- Fallen short because of amount of red tape not allowing change
- Grad student programs tend to make students feel isolated from other student groups
- Fallen short because of lack of grad student role in government/senate organizations
- Met expectations with TCU's support in getting things done (i.e. one student came up with the Farmers Market idea and it was implemented shortly after)
- Met expectations with the nurturing environment
- Met expectations with professors dedication to students and that they are available 24 hours and are very respectful of grad students
- Alumni involvement with grad students. One grad student choose TCU as a way to network, but alumni events are spilt up to where grad students are not invited to attend
- Worried that TCU is changing too fast – want to make sure it keeps its private institution feel. (student made example to co-ed dorms and wanting to keep same sex dorms an option)
- Alcohol policy needs to change. When grad students cannot attend events where mentors are because of alcohol it prevents them from getting to know them in that environment. They are over 21.
- No program orientation – mix all grad programs for one orientation
- Knowledge of campus – grad students feel like they are unaware of what is available to them. For example, insurance, benefits package, no grad student handbook or guidebook, what is available to grad students vs. undergrad students, etc.

- No common eating area in BLUU – required having a meal plan. Prevents grad students who bring their lunch from eating with friends and colleges.
- New marketing to appeal to grad students, not only undergrad
- Not enough money and tuition waiver for grad students. Needs to be more competitive with other schools like Baylor and SMU. TCU pays the least out of both
- No Wellness Committee (besides HR) that offers experts, grad students to train other staff/faculty members.
- Revisit TCU's status as having a family feel – it is overemphasized. Sometimes families need to argue to get things done.
- Individual college Web site need to be updated – some are out of date and will turn off potential grad students
- Create a grad student accomplishment Web site that encourages grad students to see where other grad students have found jobs
- No day care facility
- It is more closed than expected. I learn things about TCU on the news, not from earlier campus communication (i.e., new Athletic Director hired). It is not as close-knit as expected. Staff is not always informed in a timely and considerate manner. I did not know Scharbauer Hall was open until I read it in the class schedule.
- Closed-up management style. Not open discussion
- Last three Chancellors have been more visible and open. We know more about budgets, but there is less community and interaction between colleagues. Too many closed doors. We use e-mail communication, vs. face-to face and personal.
- TCU has a can-do attitude
- Everyone doing more with less time
- Old Student Center is missed. There is no community inter-personal connection possible in BLUU. No lounge area. No place to hang out. No sofas to sit on. No posters about student activities. It is too impersonal. And it is too far from the eastern part of campus. We go to the BLUU for a meeting, not a casual meal. No mixed traffic of faculty-staff-students. It is all students.
- Image. Internally we think we are still trying to get “there.” Externally, we are thought of as “there.” We make a little progress and then regress because of one incident, but externally people see us as great and progressive.
- Mixed messages. Admission says we have small classes, but this is not universally true (I.e. Nursing core courses). This leads to disappointment for parents and students. There are disconnects between what we say and what really happens.
- We need to better manage expectations of parents and students (class sizes)
- Are we having trouble determining our identity? Big or little? Where do we want to be? Decide and commit resources. (i.e., dorms are overflowing, but everyone in first two years must live on campus.)
- Seems to be an unstated desire to grow (Athletic success provides impetus).
- Growth not met with staff resources

- Quality being sacrificed for quantity
- No priorities in direction. We're going all over.
- To be top tier we do not need to be big
- Professor noted that the caliber of people across the board is one of quality with all being classy individuals and committed to TCU. He believes TCU "a great place to be."
- A professor commented that the grounds and facilities at TCU are outstanding. He noted that more faculty are doing "good research," not a huge distinction from other places but still noticeable nonetheless.
- An associate professor reported that it has been easy to develop personal relationships with Administration across the board. He expressed appreciation that raises in travel budgets have been consistent unlike other universities. He noted the sense of community at TCU.
- A professor noted that people are amazing at TCU. She applauded the Green Chair series and what it brings to campus. She noted that overlapping and collaborative efforts between departments are common at TCU.
- An assistant professor praised the facilities and reported she has been able to get required equipment for her classes. She noted that relationship building has been easier than she thought it would be.
- Program director praised the campus environment and noted that success in athletics programs has brought much name recognition for TCU, which is priceless.
- Assistant professor reported parental leave was an option for him when a child was born – a much welcomed and generous benefit. He appreciates his smaller classes, which allow him to cultivate one-on-one relations with his students.
- An associate professor noted he was not allowed parental leave when his triplets were born in 1993 and was glad to hear it's now possible for faculty.
- An assistant professor noted TCU to be a pedestrian friendly campus, which presents issues about street safety.
- A professor reported he was disappointed in that library offerings do not match the overall quality of the campus. The library facility is outdated and too small with inadequate holdings for a school of this size.
- An associate professor commented that "haves" and "have-nots" is alive and well at TCU. It is slow for some programs to find homes and money flows are inconsistent and disappointing.
- Program director noted that parking is an issue for those who must leave campus to visit students off site.
- A professor noted support for research exists if it utilizes main line software but sorely short in audio and video support which has a huge data set. Shared drives with doctoral students are incompatible with firewall crossover issues. The problem is not being solved and we are growing faster than TCU is responding.
- A professor noted the negative impact of PeopleSoft.

- A professor noted that graduate student stipends are lacking and that faculty salaries do not reflect the same commitment to quality and excellence as facilities do. He noted that in recent years a person voted the most inspiring faculty member by a student group was “let go” because funding was not available to retain her.
- An associate professor noted an insincere commitment to growth in stipends and that TCU has failed to address salary issues for faculty members.
- The program director noted that a compression adjustment is not the best approach to salary adjustments.
- A professor noted that, at some private universities and a few state universities, faculty get a satisfactory salary at the front end because it is accepted that raises will remain between 2-3%. He noted that TCU’s practice is common for private schools.
- A professor noted that graduate student stipends are low and makes recruitment difficult.
- An associate professor reported that TCU is sometimes responsive to changes, other times very slow. There is a need to keep campus information better disseminated.
- An assistant professor noted that the green campus declaration needs much follow through to be effective.
- A professor said the collegiality is better than she experienced at another university but that she wishes there was greater intercollegiality.
- A professor described the administration as engaged but that a lot of things [she was not specific] aren’t written. She said that you “have to learn the TCU way.” She also said that the practice of not granting tenure to faculty who had earned tenure at other universities creates a barrier to hiring senior-level faculty. She said the tenure process at TCU is “entrenched [and] not progressive.”
- A professor said that TCU has, generally, exceeded his expectations, specifically in terms of “being given the flexibility to be innovative.” Also, the university has exceeded his expectations in pay and benefits; he cited the funding issues at other universities as an example. He also referred to the support from the “TCU family” that “has blown me away.” He said, “The personal and professional support is extraordinary.” Where the university has not met his expectations is in the area of research because the university has too small of a research-sponsored grant office. He said, “They [TCU] don’t take research seriously.”
- A professor said, “The financial health of the university is amazing” and that she is surprised by how much support is available for junior faculty. In her words, the university has fallen short in the area of grants; she said the university should offer coaching for grant writers.
- A professor said that Campus Life’s support “for students is wonderful.” Her disappointment is that she interviewed with a different dean and that the current dean has a different concept for how the unit should be structured.

- A professor said that “collegiality has exceeded expectations” but that his school doesn’t conduct “hard, three-year reviews” for tenure-track faculty. He believes that this inability to “deliver the bad news” is reflective of the sometimes “overly collegial atmosphere” of the university. He said the university doesn’t take risks to move out globally to challenge us.
- A professor who had tenure at another university said he did not know about the one-year tenure policy until after he arrived on campus. He also said the university should provide parking for faculty. Also, he said that the fund-raising protocol is unusual in that he has to notify development before contacting possible donors.
- A professor said the collegiality is great but that TCU needs a faculty center. He cited the “niceness” factor of the students as an asset and that TCU students are socially adept. The travel budget for the department has not met expectations in the ten years that his unit has supported a graduate program. He remembered that he had low expectations of the library when he arrived on campus but “they have exceeded my expectations. They [librarians] have been very good.”
- A professor said she became an untenured chair in her fourth year, which surprised her. She said that TCU employs a “top-down management style” that needs to be addressed.
- Nursing major: “TCU has exceeded my expectations in the resources they have given me. Their involvement and their care for the students are wonderful.”
- Spanish major: “Consistency (on the part of the faculty). There is very little consistency. There are such professors who are just a—holes. How did they ever get into this school?...There is a contingent of staff members who have a sense of entitlement...What discourages me is when I try to improve the university, if someone here stands in the way.
- First-year student: “The professionalism of the university. The dress of the professors is unusual. One professor who wore Crocs and stretch pants.”
- Spanish major: “I have a problem with someone who doesn’t do their job.”
- Senior PR major: “My favorite professors are the ones who push me the most, as long as its done in a fair way.”
- Nursing major: “One of the biggest things is a core class with several sections not having the same requirements.”
- PR: “The senior seminar class is a joke. My Spanish senior seminar class is really challenging.”
- First-year student: “The plus-minus system where one class has a 93 for an A and the other has a 92 for an A....The first-year experience is excellent, with the skit...it blows me away with how much is put into these experiences...there is a department entirely dedicated to that in helping students.”
- Engineering student said the first-year experience is responsible for the high retention rate at TCU.

- First-year student: “None of my classes have been a blow-off. My professors were there to encourage me and to help the students succeed....I didn’t go to Frog Camp so I had to find other avenues to get involved. I got involved with all the other activities....even if you didn’t make friends all the events helped you get out of your room...I had a professor for the first-semester English class—she is a visiting professor and she is not sure if she is coming back next year. She won’t find out until this summer. For TCU to leave her hanging, this is not right.”

5. *What is missing from TCU? What would you change in the next five years?*

- An entrepreneur said TCU is perfect and a great resource for local businesses.
- A college administrator thought the TCU Chancellor should be a Disciple of Christ minister.
- A family engineer could not identify anything missing in the TCU method of educating young people.
- A Carolina resident expressed TCU should showcase its high quality academics to the Fort Worth community. He visited Duke, North Carolina/Chapel Hill and Wake Forest campuses and TCU exceeds them all in his opinion.
- A businessman would like to see TCU mini-campuses in Northeast Tarrant County.
- Engineering student: “An actual parking garage.”
- FW student: “We need a better basketball team....We were really good with Billy Tubbs. We then hired Neil Doherty....those games used to be a sellout and now it’s just a joke. I don’t want to watch bad basketball.”
- PR student: “I understand that TCU is trying to create a community feel but the biggest drawback is the administration. The union is not a student building yet. I was the co-director of a student group but we wanted to have a big student body event. The Sodexo rules have prohibited us from having events because we have to go through Sodexo. The chancellor paid for our Sodexo food and that’s the only reason we were able to have our event...Student organizations are too restricted by the rules for the student union. The student body officers are not allowed to have anything in their windowsills—like picture frames. It feels like a museum instead of a home...not having outside food in the Commons. There is not a warm, cozy place to hang out in the union. The student union does not have a lot of comfortable chairs; the third floor is hardly ever used—for students. I don’t think the building was planned out well.”
- Spanish major: “The student body feels that the union is not student-friendly.”
- PR student: “The university programming board try to put on events.”
- Spanish major: “It’s a great conference center with a restaurant but it doesn’t build student community.”

- Nursing major: “We do a lot of hands-on stuff in nursing but the technology needs to catch up with the medical field.”
- Two of the focus group members immediately responded that the university needs to provide day-care.
- Another professor said the university lacks a “research infrastructure.”
- A professor said the university is more student-oriented and less faculty-oriented.
- A professor said that the university’s sustainability program is just “lip service” and the university needs to fund the program. He said, “I’m constantly surprised that we get a D- from the Princeton Review; that, to me, is grade inflation.”
- A professor said TCU needs a faculty center; the art professor said he used to eat at the faculty center years ago.
- A professor said the units need to encourage more interdisciplinary but that the university does not have a mechanism for how to credit professors who team-teach classes.
- A professor said the Vision In Action program was “a great way to capitalize” projects.” All the work that was done on VIA—look at what was transformational and support it,” he said.
- Associate professor noted that a master’s degree in social work is needed as well as better-funded graduate programs. He acknowledged that graduate offerings are expensive and that it is easier to grow undergraduate programs. The graduate programs take a more thoughtful and long-term approach.
- A professor reported that *Vision in Action* recommended a cap on undergraduate enrollment, which has not materialized.
- Program director noted more faculty need to be committed to quality teaching than research or at least be balanced.
- Assistant professor stated he is glad political science does not have a graduate program as such programs present their own difficulties. He prefers interaction with undergrads.
- A professor reported that more quality university-wide speakers are needed.
- The associate professor noted that student diversity is lacking.
- The professor noted that more socio-economic diversity is also needed.
- We change directions with each new Chancellor. Ferrari was research and graduate programs; Boschini is undergraduates and buildings
- Be a teaching university to distinguish TCU
- Departments get larger, but not staff.
- Internal communication should be better, especially across silos
- TCU quality depends on adequate staff. We can’t keep doing more with the same staffing
- Big spending on building and equipment, but not staff
- Need to balance growth with maintaining services
- Silos of diversity among students (like kinds of students stay together)

6. *What is good and should be built upon?*

- Teacher to class size ratio
- Keep class sizes low
- Study abroad opportunities
- Purple bike program
- Breakfast with Dean (business school) where Dean meets with 10 students and asks for feedback
- Community involvement and service learning
- Keep building new facilities and maintaining physical appearance on campus
- Great TCU marketing and posters when events are coming on campus
- TCU has a very respectful, professional image
- Quality of speakers that come to campus
- Professors are objective and interested in students' views and have an acceptance for feedback on teaching styles, etc.
- TCU's Web site is functional and does a great job integrating all of the departments/colleges
- Graduate level student senate
- Student research is encouraged and faculty are accommodating in helping make it happen
- Availability of library resources
- Can do attitude
- The people
- Atmosphere
- People willing to listen
- Progressive
- Reputation as a special place
- Students have close relationship with faculty
- High quality academics
- Athletics
- Welcoming atmosphere
- Faculty and staff, VCs, fiscal stability and management
- Value of education, TCU is still reasonable priced.
- Need more scholarships, incl. those for sophomores and juniors who are struggling to stay at TCU
- Associate professor- quality undergraduate education
- Professor- first year experience
- Program director - Campus Commons and the fact that all freshmen and sophomores must live on campus
- Associate professor- we must remain affordable even if a private university
- Program director - my program is very expensive, more than vet school, and is dangerously close to being out of reach for most people
- Professor - Is it ethically responsible for graduates to leave TCU owing \$75,000 in loans? Families fail to understand that loans - even though called financial aid - must be paid back. No more buildings are needed on campus.

It would be hard to justify tuition increases while facilities keep being built. It is a catch-22, however, in that facilities are helpful in attracting students.

- Associate professor– we must keep and nurture the Frog Spirit and “home team” tag. Keep our mascot secure.
- Program director – keep the alumni happy and they will support TCU
- The nursing professor described how the doctoral nursing program is all online and how the Koehler Center support for online education is “excellent. Can’t say enough good things about the support” of the center.
- A professor praised the study-abroad programs, citing a need to “add academic weight to that; we need to strengthen our Latin American presence.”
- A professor said the “undergraduate experience is wonderful” but that the university needs to better support the graduate programs.
- A professor agreed with the psychology professor, adding that the “graduate programs are competitive but we need to increase the stipends to recruit the best.”
- A professor observed that the university does not “leverage Fort Worth in raising money for the university.”
- One professor said the university does well in promoting athletics but that a similar marketing effort is needed for academics.
- FW native: “I think a lot of the software is outdated on the computers. A lot of the Adobe programs are past generations and you can’t use them in class. The PCs tend to be outdated and the Macs seem to have the software updates....The football team sells TCU; we need to push the football team like nothing ever...it is the best form of advertising.”
- PR student: “The value of my degree went up when we went to the Fiesta Bowl.”
- Spanish major: “The faculty don’t always support the football team.”
- First-year student: “I don’t know why the tuition is always going up...we need more community involvement. Volunteer service projects are needed with TCU and Fort Worth working together.”
- Engineering student: “HOPS is a bi-weekly service, which is an offshoot from LEAPS.”
- PR student: “What I got at TCU was the opportunity to get involved with organizations and to develop my leadership skills. I think we need more staff in Student Development Services; I believe that extracurriculars are important and I’ve learned more in my extracurriculars than in my academics. A lot of the opportunities have more helpful than what I have learned in class.”
- First-year student: “We have Neeley scholars in the business school and we don’t have those programs in other colleges/departments. It gives those dedicated to their major an opportunity.”
- PR student: “The top thing is campaigns. There should be a student organization or small group or honor society that each department should have to aspire to.”

- FW first-year student: “Going with Neeley fellows; I’ve had two brothers go through here. The Neeley fellows program is pushed much more than the BNSF leadership program. It’s because the head honchos in the Neeley school push that as their baby...what about the student/staff ratio instead of the student/faculty ratio. We could use extra hands for these positions.”
- Spanish major: “The point of IFC and Student Government is student leadership. Instead of adding faculty in SDS so that the staff could work with the faculty. Some professors are engaged in the community field where the students are then you have a more unified TCU.”
- Nursing major: “TCU needs to make a connection with the community to help students with internships. We need help in those areas.”
- Spanish major: “We need to integrate career services with all the departments on campus...Technology is one interesting thing about TCU. We have pushed for wireless Internet; why don’t we have wireless printing? Probably 80 percent of our students are using the latest technology. Technology resources lags behind the students.”
- FW student: “You have to type in ‘www’ to get to the TCU website. The TCU website is the worst website. There are too many steps to get to where you are going.”
- Spanish major: “I totally agree but I understand that there are other options.”
- A Carolina alumnus said community and friendliness are great and should be maintained. TCU is known throughout the country and the “machine should keep rolling” in academics and athletics.
- A mother of young children said positive, friendly, welcoming fans should be maintained.
- An entrepreneur said positive energy, momentum, and growth should be maintained. Athletics is responsible for some of the positive growth and recognition of TCU throughout the country. TCU makes great hires that aren’t alumni.
- A college administrator reported athletic prominence made the nation aware of TCU. When football games are televised, commercials about TCU the institution run and are an excellent promotional tool.
- A businessman noted the community embraced TCU this year because of football success. It was positive and great to see finally. It was good that Mayor Moncrief declared, “wear purple Fridays” last fall.

7. *How do you experience TCU?*

- An entrepreneur said attending games, participating on the alumni board and focus groups is how he experiences TCU. He would like to see more alumni active in these events too.
- A college administrator receives facebook posts, attends fine arts concerts and participates in the Alumni Association.
- A family engineer receives e-mails from staff about what is happening on campus.

- A mother of young children enjoys attending TCU events such as football/baseball games and Easter egg hunts with her family and friends.
- Engineering student: “I experience TCU by my relationships I’ve developed on campus. TCU encourages you to meet other people. They are all special people. Whether that be faculty or students, I’ve met a ton of people.”
- FW first-year student: “Frog Camp was such an eye-opening experience. The first half of the day I hung out with students from my high school and then I just started selling myself. I had a blast. I was able to meet people. That was such a great experience for me. I tell people to sell yourself—introduce yourself. I took that initial plunge and it has benefitted me.”
- PR senior: “I loved high school. I wasn’t good at selling myself. I rushed and I didn’t get what I wanted. It was a slap in the face, like ‘you really aren’t allowed in our organization.’ ...My relationship at TCU started out rough; I was really close to transferring... what kept me in was Frog Aides (first-year student leadership development program). Thankfully, I didn’t just slip through the cracks; it allowed me an outlet to make me feel part of TCU. I don’t have anything against Greek life. I just we need to be aware that some things can be difficult for students when they come here.”
- First-year student: “Before school even started, we were supposed to go to all these Greek houses. Personally, I didn’t like how that was the first thing that we are thrown into. At Baylor, rush is in the spring and you get to experience the campus before being thrown into (Greek life). You can’t fix that but it bothers me that is an initial experience.”
- Finance major: “Being here, this is my environment. I have lived here my entire life so being around different people—I went to a largely black high school. I had to get involved because I was busy in high school. I try to pick things that I am good at or that I have a passion for. I do overnight housing. Music is my second passion so I got involved in the choir. Though it might be a little scary, if we associate with something we are good at, we need to find that organization. That’s how I personalized it for me.”
- First-year student: “I definitely get the sense of segregation. There are a lot of groups for Hispanics and African American only and that bothers me. I think it is important for everyone to step out of their comfort zone.”
- Spanish major: “How do people who are not involved—how do they connect. We should purposely look into that and see how we are doing.”
- A professor said TCU’s relationship with the community is “really huge.”
- A professor said the experience at TCU is enhanced by the “very small class sizes and I have students in multiple classes and I get to know the students.”
- The environmental science professor said his experience always “hits home; the students talk about the extraordinary opportunities.”
- Professor- through students, colleagues, and on the patio of the College of Education
- Assistant professor- teacher/scholar model
- Ranch Management director – getting to do what I love, interaction with a variety of TCU events

- Assistant professor of political science – interaction with students, colleagues; getting to be a professor which I love
- Professor of communication studies – seeing students achieve success, then wanting to share it with you
- Professor of economics – teaching and writing in the campus environment
- Associate professor of social work – feeling student and colleague pride, seeing graduates feel good about their TCU degree, partnerships with colleagues
- I try to engage with the full gamut of TCU experiences to perform my job more effectively
- Running too much in my job
- Need to connect to students to maintain motivation. It reminds you this is more than a job. We need
- More time to do that. It fuels you to see students' achievements. And students benefit from
- Your interaction with them.
- Through good people
- Receiving more than giving
- Academically
- Immersing self into organization – working with leaders to make things better and doing things outside of the classroom
- Socially – good for team setting
- Use city of Fort Worth as a selling point
- One can experience TCU the way you want too, what you make of it
- Study abroad experience
- High number of student organizations