

## Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Tradition

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TODAY'S VISION, TOMORROW'S TRADITION

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors Committee of

Texas State University-San Marcos

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements

For Graduation in the University Honors Program

By

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## Abstract

Texas State continues to gain recognition as one of the top public universities in the state. However, it is also one of the only schools its size in the country to still have a Football Championship Series, FCS (formerly known as Division I-AA) football program. In an effort to move the athletic program to the most competitive level, Football Bowl Subdivision, FBS, (formerly Division I-A), a public relations campaign was planned and then implemented by the Associated Student Government in spring of 2008. The goal of the campaign was to inform the student body about the potential of such a move, and to garner support for the athletic service fee increase that would be essential to taking the first step toward FBS.

# TODAY'S VISION TOMORROW'S TRADITION



The campaign for passage of the Athletic Service Fee/FBS  
Football Referendum at Texas State University-San Marcos

Dedicated to the students, faculty and staff who make every day  
a great day to be a Bobcat

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## **INTRODUCTION: Why this initiative became my honors thesis**

As my undergraduate years at Texas State University come to a close, I cannot help but reflect in amazement at my time here. During the last four years, I have

proudly watched as this school has continued to grow into an impressive, major public university. Many great changes have transformed the culture of the campus. Admission standards have risen to the third highest in the state for public institutions; Texas State has received recognition by nationally-known entities such as the Princeton Review and U.S. News & World Report for the quality of academics and new buildings and new programs continue to be added each year. Texas State is clearly on the path from a regional “party school” to a major university.

In the face of great academic progress, however, one department at Texas State has lagged behind the momentum achieved by all other programs. The success of the athletic program, specifically football, has remained stagnant. With 28,400 undergraduate students, Texas State is now one of the only universities of its size in the country to still have a Division I-AA (now known as Football Championship series, FCS) football program.

While our academic programs are competitive with other major universities in the state, people outside of the Texas State community do not associate the school with other major Texas universities. Because we play schools such as Stephen F. Austin and Nicholls State, we are naturally aligned academically with the Division I-AA schools we meet on the athletic field. Many alumni and students at Texas State believe it is time we take our place among the other Division I-A (Football Bowl Series, FBS) institutions we resemble in all other areas, such as Texas Tech, Baylor and Texas A&M.

While students attend Texas State for academics, one cannot underestimate the importance of a good athletic program to a university. In an article in the Austin

American-Statesman titled “The state of the union for Texas State,” sports columnist Kirk Bohls wrote, “A move to Division I would drastically raise the school’s profile, encourage larger donations and bring the exposure that most doctoral research institutions enjoy.” When you think about it, the universities that have name recognition across the country are either Ivy League schools or those that have football teams that play on television or in bowl games.

Former Texas State football coach Jim Wacker once said, “When you go to Division I in football, it elevates everything — every program at the university.” A competitive athletic program is often the front door to a university. It not only attracts new students, but can also attract better faculty, major donors and keep alumni connected and involved. When your athletic team is visible, it draws visibility to the entire campus.

Going to Bobcat football games was never the defining moment of my college career. I enjoyed them, but often did not even stay for the entire game. Playing better schools like Baylor or Rice University would probably have enticed me to attend more games, but that is not the reason this campaign was conducted. The benefits of moving to FBS transcend the reality of just having a better overall athletic program. Moving to FBS has the potential to elevate the visibility of our entire university, benefiting all current, former and future students of Texas State.

There are many great things happening at Texas State, but they are often limited to a particular college or department and therefore do not unify and excite the entire student body. After visiting friends at other major universities, I am convinced that the excitement surrounding the athletic program fosters a huge amount of pride



and tradition within a university. Pride and tradition are what build community, unite the student body and make students want to be involved in the university beyond simply attaining their degree. For years, Texas State has fought the stigma of being “a suitcase college.” When students feel connected to a university they stay in town. Involved students remain active as alums and invest in many ways to a university.

The last time there was potential for such monumental change at Texas State was in 2003, when the debate was waged over the name change from Southwest Texas State University to Texas State University. Simply changing the name has immensely improved perceptions about the university during the last five years.

An opportunity for pivotal change at Texas State is once again within our grasps. The final report of the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee outlines a five-year plan in which Texas State will position itself to become an FBS football institution. To be successful, it will take the combined efforts of the student body, the administration, alumni, donors and the community. Another chapter is beginning at Texas State that will allow us to rise and stand out for years to come.

Today’s Vision is Tomorrow’s Tradition. It’s a great day to be a Bobcat!

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The necessity for an information campaign about the move to Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) developed shortly after the final report of the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee was approved by President’s Cabinet in November of 2007. In

the report, a series of benchmarks were laid out as steps to prepare Texas State to make the move to FBS once the current four-year NCAA moratorium is lifted. The first benchmark called for a commitment by the student body to vote to raise their athletic service fee from the current \$8 per semester credit hour to \$20 per semester credit hour incrementally during the next five years. The new fee increase would take the current student contribution of between \$5 million and \$6 million, and double it to \$11 million to \$13 million by 2013.

The problem primarily centered on student apathy on campus, inflated by the need to have a large voter turnout to get the fee increase approved by the Texas State University System Board of Regents. To inspire such a turnout, a widespread informational campaign was needed to alert the student body of this initiative.

Planning began in December 2007, and following the passage of ASG legislation calling for the athletic service referendum on Jan. 21, a major informational campaign was launched. The main objectives were to promote widespread awareness of the referendum, pass the referendum by at least 60 percent of those voting and have between 4,000 and 5,000 students turn out to vote.

Many tactics were used, including promotional materials, Quad booths and speakers to student organization meetings to get the positive messages out about the fee increase.

The referendum took place Feb. 12 and 13, 2008. Nearly 6,000 students turned out to vote and roughly 80 percent of them voted 'yes' to the fee increase, a virtual mandate.

The Board of Regents approved the fee increase on Feb. 23, 2008, officially checking off the first benchmark in attaining FBS status.

## **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

The conversation about Texas State's readiness to move the football program to FBS is one that has resurfaced at various times since the late '90s. While it has primarily been a student-led initiative, in 1999, President Supple conducted a feasibility study to determine then Southwest Texas State University's readiness to become Division I-A (now FBS). After receiving approval from the Board of Regents to move to Division I-A, the university was forced to reconsider the decision when the NCAA changed eligibility rules in 2000.

The NCAA rules changed back in Texas State's favor during the fall of 2005. Combined with the 2005 Bobcat football winning streak, there was renewed excitement and enthusiasm about moving to FBS. However, no actions were taken to sign the NCAA paperwork and begin the re-classification process.

The Associated Student Government elections of spring 2007 were a catalyst to revisiting the issue about moving to FBS Football. Both ASG presidential candidates incorporated a vision for athletics into their campaign platform that supported a move to FBS football. The dialogue that resulted across the campus and throughout the community spurred the "D1 by June 1" movement by alumni and community members, with the hope of pressuring the administration to sign NCAA documents by June 1, 2007. The action would begin the two-year review process of transitioning Texas State into an FBS institution.

Despite pressure from alumni, students and community members, University President Denise Trauth did not sign the paperwork by June 1. However, as a result of the renewed fervor over the issue, Dr. Trauth appointed an Athletics Strategic Planning Committee in May of 2007 composed of students, administration, alumni and the community. Its task was to determine the feasibility of Texas State moving to FBS and to make a recommendation about the vision for the future of the Texas State athletic program.

The committee met four times beginning in July 2007. Shortly after the initial meeting, the NCAA placed a four-year moratorium barring any teams from reclassification for the next four years. Despite this announcement, the Athletics Strategic Planning Committee continued to meet to determine what needed to change to make Texas State competitive at the FBS level when the moratorium was lifted.

During the final two meetings, a draft of the final report was compiled by Dr. Robert Gratz, special assistant to the president, and presented to the committee members. The report contained proposed recommendations of the committee as well as a plan of the stages to move to the FBS level. In order to support an FBS program, the budget for the athletic department would have to increase from the current \$10 million per year to a proposed \$22 million. Half of the budget increase would have to come from an increase in student fees and the other half from ticket sales and fundraising. A series of benchmarks was devised to clarify the steps required to prepare Texas State for a successful transition.

The first step of the plan called for a commitment by the student body to vote for a raise of the athletic service fee \$2 a year for five years, going from the current

\$8 per credit hour to \$20 per credit hour. It was determined that if the students did not vote in favor of the fee increase, the plan would not be carried out and Texas State would not pursue a transition to FBS.

As vice president of the Associated Student Government, I had the opportunity to sit on the Athletic Strategic Planning committee along with ASG President Reagan Pugh. A referendum was required to increase student fees, and a large, positive voter turnout was needed for the fee increase to be approved by the Texas State University System Board of Regents. As representatives of the study body, it became the major initiative of ASG to educate the student body about the fee increase as well as the move to FBS football.

After talking with many students, we discovered that most were in favor of such a move, even if it entailed a fee increase. However, expressing support for something and actually voting for it were two very different things. Students were notorious for not being active voters. Out of roughly 8,000 students registered to vote in San Marcos, fewer than 800 voted in the last election. In the last referendum held independent of an ASG election, where all 28,000 are eligible to vote, fewer than 1,000 students turned out. A substantial number was needed to convince the Board of Regents that students were willing to increase their fees for FBS football. A major information campaign was essential to make at least 4,000-5,000 students passionate enough about the initiative to vote in the referendum.

Because the campus is centralized, the ability to target students and spread the message would be manageable. In addition to mounting a strong offense, the campaign strategy had to allow for a strong defense. We had to anticipate possible

opposition by organized groups and the student newspaper, *The University Star*.

Many students at Texas State work to pay at least for part of their college costs. As part of our awareness campaign, we would have to be prepared to answer the critics.

## RESEARCH

### Secondary Research:

#### Final Report of the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee:

- ***Statistics***  
The Committee recognized that Texas State's fall 2006 enrollment of 27,485 made it the seventh largest university in Texas, and the 63rd largest public university in the nation. In fact, 25 states have no public university as large as Texas State. All but 14 of 62 larger universities in the nation have FBS football programs. Of those 14, 11 have no football program, two (California State-Sacramento and the University of California-Davis) have FCS programs, and one (Wayne State) has a Division III football program. Within the Southland Conference, only three universities enroll more than 17,000 students, and Texas State is the only one of those three with a football program; five universities in the Southland Conference enroll fewer than 10,000 students.
- ***Benchmarks***
  - See addendum

#### Division 1 by June 1 Report:

- ***Current NCAA rules:*** Texas State must maintain an average of at least 15,000 in actual or paid attendance for all home football games.  
Texas State must have a minimum of six male sports and eight intercollegiate varsity sports.  
Texas State must play at least 60 percent of the scheduled against Football Bowl Subdivision opponents in year two of the probationary reclassification.  
Texas State must provide an average of 90 percent of the permissible maximum number of overall football grants-in-aid per year over a rolling two year period and annually offer a minimum of 200 athletics grants-in-aid or expand at least four million dollars on grants-in-aid to student athletes in the athletics program.
- ***Past NCAA rule changes***
  - 2000, shortly after the Texas State University System Board of Regents approved Southwest Texas State University to make the move to Division I-A. The new stadium size and attendance requirements placed D I-A football out of reach for several years.
  - 2005, requirements were changed back to current requirements.
- ***Recent moves of DIAA (FCS) moves to DIA (FBS)***

Central Florida, Middle Tennessee, Troy State, Connecticut, South Florida, Boise State, Louisiana-Monroe, Alabama-Birmingham, Marshall University, and North Texas.

**Internet articles (see addendum)**

- ESPN article on Western Kentucky State University
- “The State of the Union for Texas State.” Austin American-Statesman editorial by Kirk Bohls.

**Primary Research:**

**Statistics:**

- Examples of statistics from past referendums
  1. Referendums not in conjunction with an ASG election:
    - 923 people turned out for last year’s spring referendum.
  2. Referendums paired with ASG elections:
    - 3201 voted in the 2005 referendum for the Campus Recreation Center Fee

**Professor Larry Carlson’s Mass Communication Class Focus Group:**

- Focus group was held prior to the campaign.
- Out of 45 students, four had heard about the FBS initiative, and two of those were senators in Associated Student Government.
- The FBS initiative was explained to the class. At the end of class we asked students to raise their hands if they would vote yes in the referendum. The response was nearly unanimous.
- We asked the class to give us the top points we should address when explaining the initiative. They responded:
  - 1) Give a little history with the report of the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee and explain the terminology: D1A vs. FBS.
  - 2) Breakdown the fee and explain how it is incremental over the next five years and what that does for our athletic operating budget.
  - 3) Explain where the fee money will go- a new baseball/softball complex, bowling-in stadium, more athletic scholarships, etc.
  - 4) Commitment from the administration to do their part- President’s cabinet visiting ASG.
  - 5) Most frequently asked question — If we aren’t winning now, how will we win at a more competitive level?
  - 6) Explain how elevating the athletic program elevates the entire university.
  - 7) Talk about how easy it is to vote and get involved.

**TARGET AUDIENCES**

- A) Primary
  - a) Residence Hall Students
  - b) Student Organizations
  - c) Student Athletes
- B) Secondary
  - a) Students in the Quad
  - b) All other Texas State Students
- C) Tertiary
  - a) Texas State University System Board of Regents
  - b) Administration at Texas State University
  - c) San Marcos Community
  - d) Alumni
  - e) Media

In a university of 28,400 students, it is virtually impossible to reach every student about a particular issue, so we concentrated our focus and resources on three specific areas: students in residence halls, students in organizations and student-athletes. We proactively sought to reach out personally to each of those groups by sending members of ASG and volunteers to speak with them.

However, we did not want to ignore all other students. To reach them, we posted publicity throughout the campus and had people in the Quad handing out information. These students were exposed to our message, but would have to proactively read the material or visit our Web site to acquire all the facts.

Our tertiary target audience consisted of people we wanted to influence with the results of our campaign. The University administration, to show that students were serious about meeting them halfway in the endeavor to move toward FBS football; the Board of Regents, to show overwhelming support from students so they would approve the fee increase; the media, to help us get the word out about the changes taking place at Texas State; and the San Marcos community and alumni so that they would see the opportunity to get involved. While we were working for



thousands of student voters, campaign organizers knew ultimately that we would need and want all of these targets moving forward on this plan together.

## MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

Part of the goal of public relations is to highlight the benefits of a group or idea without hiding the facts. Our goal was to make it clear that students were voting on a fee increase, but that it was in the larger context of moving to FBS football. Many ideas were considered, but in the end we chose “Today’s Vision, Tomorrow’s Tradition,” with the subtext of “Vote for Vision.” Not only was the theme catchy, but it meant everything we wanted it to mean.

We wanted students to know this was a long-term investment that would not come to fruition for several years. We wanted them to know that right now they were committing to the abstract vision, but one day, when Texas State is competing at the next level, we would have tangible tradition.

## GOAL:

To pass the referendum with a wide enough margin and with a large enough turnout that it would be obviously clear that the student body supported the fee increase, and the Board of Regents would be mandated to approve it.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & TACTICS

**Objective 1: Create widespread awareness of FBS initiative.**

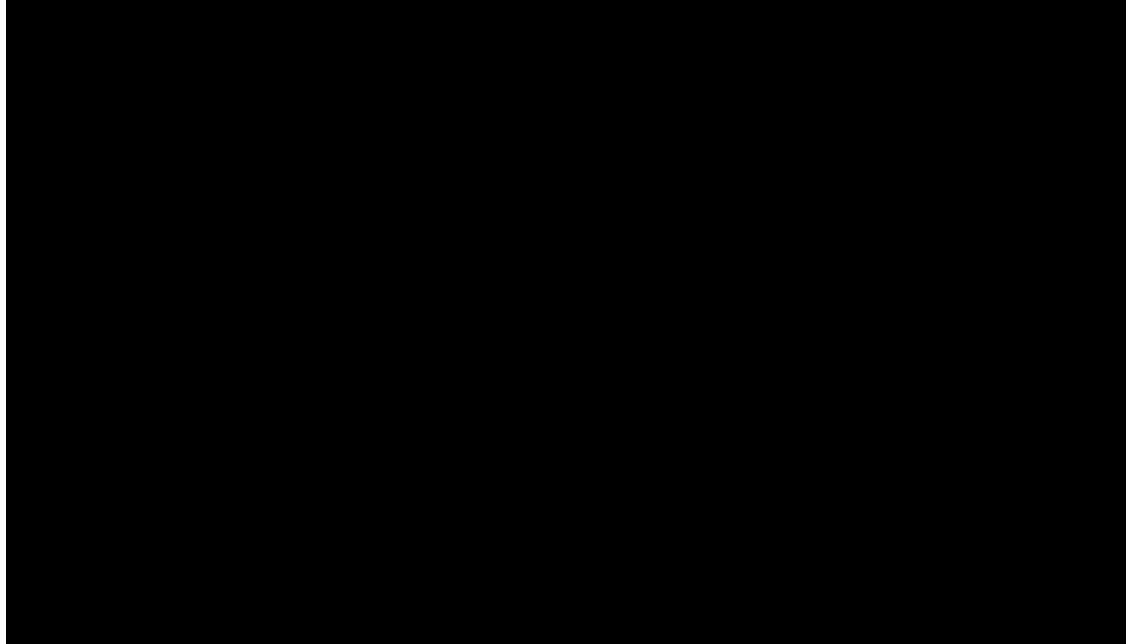
While preparing for the campaign, we discovered when people were informed about the fee increase as a means of moving to FBS Football, they became passionate about the cause. We knew people would support the cause, but were up against a predominantly apathetic student body. A widespread informational campaign was essential for drumming up the necessary support to turn out the needed number of voters. We knew how important it was for the legitimacy of the results that we widely publicized all facts so there could be no suspicion that this fee increase was secretly forced on students.

**a) Strategy 1: Provide easily accessible information about the athletic fee increase as well as the move to FBS.**

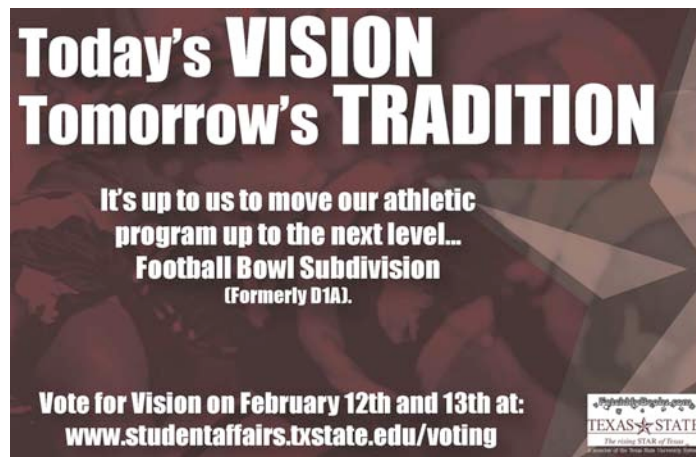
- a. Tactic — Have a link devoted solely to information about FBS and the athletic service fee referendum on the main ASG homepage.
- b. Tactic — Create a Facebook group “Bobcats for FBS Football” to spread the word among the student body. Include a link to the ASG webpage where people can find out more information.
- c. Tactic — Print the address of ASG homepage on all promotional materials.
- d. Tactic — Create a large, visible informational display to place in a high-traffic area where students can get more information about the referendum and the bigger FBS picture. The final location was the third floor entry in the LBJ Student Center where students come and go from the buses.
- e. Tactic — Submit articles to BobcatFans Magazine and The University Star to educate students about the initiative.

**b) Strategy 2: Canvass the campus with information pertaining to the athletic service fee referendum.**

- a. Tactic — Catch students’ attention everywhere across campus by putting up posters in all buildings and handing out push cards in the Quad.



*Poster for Vision Campaign*





*Front of Vision Push Card*



*Back of Vision Push Card*

- b. Tactic — advertise the referendum to off-campus students by putting up bus ads in all university buses.
- c. Tactic — Reach on-campus students through posters in all residence halls, “toilet talk” information posters in all residence hall restrooms, table tents in the dining halls, and push cards in student mailboxes.

<p><i>“When you go to D1A in Football it elevates everything- every program at the university.” - Jim Wacker</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">It's up to us to move our Athletic Program to the next level...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Football Bowl Subdivision (Formerly D1A).</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>ASG</b> ASSOCIATED STUDENT GOVERNMENT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS</p> <p><a href="http://FetchMyBooks.com">FetchMyBooks.com</a></p> </div>	<p><b>Today's VISION Tomorrow's TRADITION</b></p>  <p>Vote for Vision on February 12th and 13th at: <a href="http://www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting">www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting</a></p>	<p><b>How We Turn Vision into Reality</b></p> <p><i>Commitment From Students:</i> Voting “Yes” in the referendum on February 12th and 13th at <a href="http://www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting">www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting</a> is the first step in bringing Texas State to Division 1A (FBS) Football status. Your vote means that over the next five years the Athletic Service Fee will increase two dollars per year to allow us the operating budget required for top tier athletic excellence.</p> <p><i>Commitment From Administration:</i> The President's Cabinet approved the recommendations of the Athletics Strategic Planning Committee on November 26, 2007. Among the recommendations is a list of benchmarks that outlines the five year time line that the Administration and Athletic Department will follow to make our vision a reality once we as students vote “Yes!” (See Benchmarks at <a href="http://www.asg.txstate.edu">www.asg.txstate.edu</a>)</p> <p><i>What Vision does for Texas State:</i> Over the next five years voting “Yes!” on February 12th and 13th at <a href="http://www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting">www.studentaffairs.txstate.edu/voting</a> will allow us to build better baseball/softball facilities, improve the football stadium, and increase student athlete scholarships. When Texas State is at the Division 1A (FBS) level, national recognition will only boost pride, traditions and the value of your diploma. Be a part of history in the making!</p> <p>Go to <a href="http://www.asg.txstate.edu">www.asg.txstate.edu</a> for more information</p>
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*Tri-Fold Table Tent for Vision Campaign*

- c) **Strategy 3: Send speakers to all student organization and athletic team meetings to educate students about the initiative.**
  - a. Tactic — attend Athlete Advisory Council meeting to brief team leaders about speaking with their teammates during a practice.
  - b. Tactic — send out e-mail to all student organization presidents about addressing their members.
  - c. Tactic — attend RHA to solicit help for reaching students in residence halls.

- d) **Strategy 4: Hold on-campus events that students can attend to ask questions and get more information**
  - a. Tactic — Hold “D1 Crash Course” where students hear all information about the move, where their fee money will go, what is the timetable, and get questions answered.
  - b. Tactic — Hold a “D1 Panel” made up of members of the Athletic Strategic Planning Committee to answer the questions about how the plan to move Texas State will be implemented, assuming the students approve the fee increase proposed by ASG in the referendum.

**Objective 2: Pass the referendum by two-thirds (66 percent of the total votes)**

For such a historic, monumental issue, it was important that the referendum was a decisive victory. A simple majority would fail to deliver the much-needed mandate.

- a) **Strategy 1: Hold a focus group to see what students know and how they feel about the initiative prior to the campaign.**
  - a. Tactic — use information to plan what points to hit on when speaking to student organizations
  - b. Tactic — use information to create a FAQ sheet to distribute. (See Addendum.)
- b) **Strategy 2: Show widespread support for initiative**
  - a) Tactic — Have a large presence in the Quad during voting days and days leading up to voting.
  - b) Tactic — Have athletes, cheerleaders and Boko in the Quad to show that athletes are behind the move to FBS.
  - c) Tactic — Order 250 shirts to give to volunteers to wear around campus as walking billboards on and before voting days.



*Front of T-shirt*



*Back of T-shirt*

**c) Strategy 3: Get the community involved to show widespread San Marcos support for the initiative.**

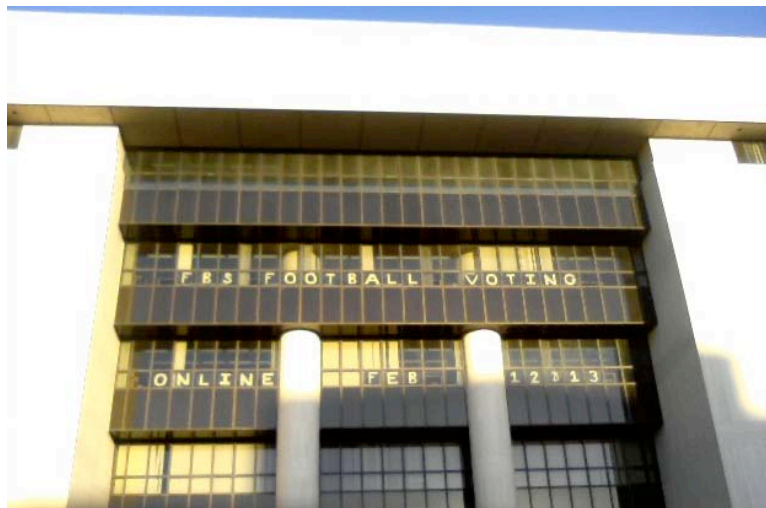
- a. Tactic — Give local businesses close to campus posters to put in their windows to promote the referendum.

**Objective 3: Turn out between 4,000 and 5,000 students to vote in the referendum.**

In order to show that the students are truly in favor of increasing their athletic fees as a step to moving to FBS, it is critical that the referendum not only passes, but passes with a large voter turnout and a large margin.

**Strategy 1: Make students aware of the days of voting**

- a. Tactic — Publicize voting dates with the voting link on all publicity materials
- b. Tactic — Put voting reminder message on scrolling marquee in Quad
- c. Tactic — Submit stories and information to KTSW and The *University Star* to sustain campaign momentum. (See Addendum)
- d. Tactic — Put up giant letters in the library windows to brand the message in a creative, attention-getting way.



*Poster board letters in Alkek Library Windows advertising the dates of the referendum*

- e. Tactic — Have a booth in the Quad to advertise the referendum starting the Wednesday before the week of voting.
- f. Tactic — Handout push cards in the Quad starting Monday the week of voting.



Students handing out push cards at quad headquarters of the Vision Campaign

**b) Strategy 2: Make voting easy for students**

- a. Tactic — Put voting link on Texas State home page
- b. Tactic — Send VPSA e-mail with voting link
- c. Tactic — Send reminder message from Facebook group
- d. Tactic — Order “Facebook Fliers” to flash on computers with a direct link to the voting Web site.
- e. Tactic — Create ‘dorm storming” teams within each residence hall to remind students to vote the first night of voting.
- f. Tactic — Have a point person within each willing student organization to bring a computer to their Tuesday night meeting to give students the opportunity to vote.
- g. Tactic — Rent laptops from the library for the Vision Campaign booth in the Quad to give more students access to voting.
- h. Tactic — Rent laptops from the library for “satellite voting booths” that volunteers can take to a particular part of campus off the beaten path to give other students access to voting.

## CALENDAR/TIMETABLE

The following is the final calendar of events before the launch of the campaign. Several items were cut for reasons that will be explained in the evaluation section of this report.

### **Pre-Campaign Calendar: November 2007 to January 2008**

- Two months for research, planning and preparation.
  - November
    - Begin planning phase.
  - December-January
    - Identify, contact sponsors; create budget.
    - Develop campaign themes and messages.
    - Begin construction on ASG FBS website.
    - Design fliers, posters and table tents.
    - Contact Dr. Trauth, Dr. Teis and Coach Wright for D1 panel discussion.
    - Draft and send e-mail to solicit student organizations for volunteers to work tables in the Quad.
    - Get fliers, posters, etc., approved by campus activities.
    - Order T-shirts.
    - Contact BobcatFans magazine about possible articles.
    - Plan scheduled information events (D1 panel, etc)
    - Create job list: (example)
      - Daily Quad Volunteer Coordinators
      - Speakers for Student Organizations
      - Volunteers to hang posters
      - Voting booth workers



## Campaign Calendar: January-February

# Vision Campaign Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Legislation passes Facebook group launched ASG D1 site online BobcatFans Magazine out with three articles about FBS	Letter to student orgs sent out. Article in University Star Speaking at Student Athlete Advisory Council	Posters up in all aca- demic buildings around campus Speaking at Organiza- tions D1 Crash Course		<i>February 1</i> Posters and table tents up in the dining halls	<i>2</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Bus ads go up LBJ Information dis- play set up	<i>5</i> Speakers to stu- dent org meetings Article in University Star	<i>6</i> Quad Table 9-3 Speakers to student org meetings D1 Panel	<i>7</i> Quad table 9-3	<i>8</i> Library Letters ad- vertising referendum go up	<i>9</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> Quad table 9-3 Voting info starts on flashing Quad mar- quee	<i>12</i> Polls open 8am Quad table 8-5 VPSA voting email Facebook Fliers Student org votes Dorm storm 7:30-10 Satellite voting booths Article in Univ. Star	<i>13</i> Quad table 8-5 Student org votes Article in University Star Satellite voting booths Polls close 5pm Results announced 5:30pm	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21 Board of Regents</i>	<i>22 Board of Regents</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	

## BUDGET

Since our goal was to influence student opinion in favor of a fee increase, ASG could not use its state-funded budget to carry out the campaign. One of our first initiatives in the campaign was to seek outside funding.

We found a sponsor in a new business called “Fetchmybooks.com,” a company owned by a Jim Harrelson, an alum of Texas State. We were happy to find a company that was also helpful to students. In return for a \$2,000 donation, we advertised the company name on our promotional materials. An itemized budget follows:

250 Vote for Vision T-shirts.....	\$803.75
5 Campaign Banners.....	\$368.05
6 Foam Core Prints for LBJ Display .....	\$ 90.00
250 FBS Football Posters.....	\$208.27
5,000 Push Cards.....	\$361.75
Poster board for library letters.....	\$ 53.81
Bus Ads.....	\$ 65.00
 TOTAL.....	 \$1,950.63

## EVALUATION

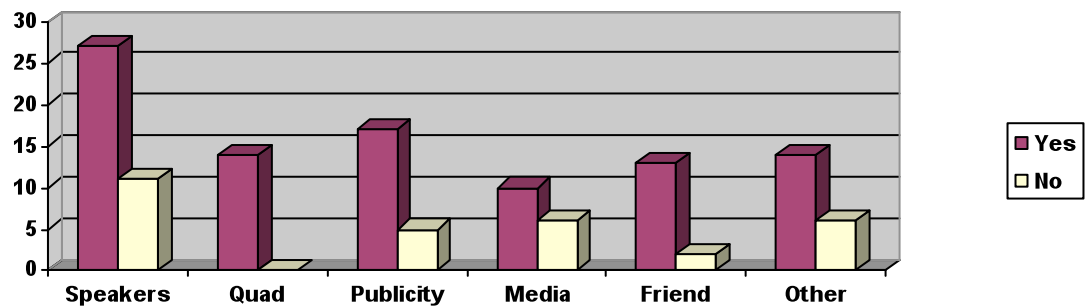
### **Outcome for Objective 1: Achieved.**

To gauge the success of the different tactics, a survey was distributed to 240 students of varying classifications. The survey questions were as follows:

1. What is your classification? F/S/Jr./Sr.
2. Did you vote in the Associated Student Government Athletic Service Fee Referendum?
3. Did you vote yes or no? Why?

4. What influenced your decision? Circle any of the following:
- a) A speaker to my class or organization
  - b) A person in the quad
  - c) Information from the ASG website, posters, push cards, table tents, bus ads or the information display in the LBJ Student Center.
  - d) Information I read in BobcatFans magazine or the University Star
  - e) A friend
  - f) Other:\_\_\_\_\_

- Statistics:
  - 146 of respondents did not vote the referendum.
  - 93 voted in the referendum. Of those who voted, 84 percent voted yes and 16 percent voted no.
- Chart depicting what influenced students voting yes or no in the referendum.



All tactics for Strategy 1-3 were successfully carried out. We had plenty of places where students could access information about FBS. Many student organizations got involved or were supportive of the initiative after ASG's presentation. Posters and table tents promoting the event were visible throughout the campus. BobcatFans Magazine even published three articles about FBS and the student initiative, including a cover story.



*Cover of BobcatFans Magazine Jan-Feb 2008*

Strategy 4 — Holding events on campus presented huge challenges. Student turnout for on-campus events is historically low. With momentum in favor of the FBS initiative riding high, we wanted nothing to harm the momentum of the campaign.

We decided to intentionally avoid involving the administration because we did not want anyone to get the idea that the campaign was anything but 100 percent student-driven. ASG didn't want to create a perception that the administration was trying to influence the student vote to force a fee increase. Thus, we canceled the campus events. Unfortunately, dates for these events were already published in the February issue of BobcatFans Magazine, but our rationale for canceling was validated when only one student contacted us about an announced event.

## **Outcome for Objective 2: Exceeded.**

When votes were counted, the results were overwhelming. A total of 79.6 percent of the students voted “yes” to the fee increase (see addendum).

In evaluating the tactics used to meet this objective, we successfully carried out most of what we set out to accomplish. Senators and volunteers staffed a booth in the Quad at all times on days leading up to and during voting. Athletes as well as the entire cheerleading squad showed up in uniform to hand out push cards and promote the referendum. Volunteers wearing vision shirts could be seen all over campus.

However, tackling the promotion on campus was such a huge undertaking that we dropped strategy 3 which sought to get the community involved.

One crisis occurred during the campaign that could have had a disastrous effect on our educational campaign. An article in *The University Star* on Tuesday, Feb. 12, the first day of voting, stated that the fee would increase \$20 per year instead of \$2 (see addendum). Several students addressed us in the Quad to verbalize their valid concerns. As soon as the error was brought to our attention, we contacted the Star, and staff members immediately began looking into how they could fix the mistake. On Wednesday, notes were tacked on all newspaper stands to alert the public about the error. The entire opinions column, titled “FBS FAUX PAX,” was also devoted to clearing up the mistake. Everyone handled the mini-crisis very well, and in the end it seemed to have virtually no effect on the final outcome (see addendum).

### **Outcome of Objective 3: Exceeded.**

We chose our goal of 4,000-5,000 voters to exceed the highest turnout of any ASG election or referendum — last year’s Associated Student Government elections with 4,200 voters. Because referendums not in conjunction with ASG elections have typically had especially low voter turnout, we ran the campaign for this referendum

like a political campaign. The result was an increase in voter turnout by 33 percent, with just 48 people shy of 6,000 voters.

In evaluating our work, we successfully pulled off the tactics of Strategy 1 and most of the tactics for Strategy 2. We no longer needed to purchase Facebook fliers because we were close to the end of our budget and we seemed to find other ways to accomplish the same results.

ASG also decided to scale back its efforts for “dorm storming.” The Residence Hall Association, composed of leaders from each residence hall, passed legislation allowing us into the dorms to inform and encourage students to vote. However, on the day of dorm storming we received an e-mail from the Department of Residence Life telling us we were not allowed to visit the halls to promote the campaign. We complied with the order, as we did not want to do anything that might jeopardize the results of the referendum.

We also halted use of library-rented computers at our quad booth and satellite voting booths on the second day of voting. It was brought to our attention that there may be concerns about using University equipment to solicit votes for a student referendum. We moved our library computers to the official ASG voting booth, which had a 50-foot buffer on either side where there could be no advertising one way or another for the referendum. Thus, there would be no problem using the university computers.

## CONCLUSION

Although we exceeded all expectations for our campaign, the larger campaign is not over. We as students cannot let the feeling of success lead to complacency.

The picture below shows ASG President Reagan Pugh and me checking off the boxes of completed benchmarks to prepare Texas State for FBS status. There are many more boxes on that chart, and it will require unyielding diligence on the part of the administration, support from community and alumni, and commitment and vision from the students to make this plan a reality.

## Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Tradition



*ASG President Reagan Pugh, ASG Vice President Alexis Dabney and University President Denise Trauth checking off the boxes of completed steps in the move to FBS after passage of the athletic service fee referendum*

## SPECIAL THANKS

This is probably one of the most important parts of my thesis because this campaign would not have been so successful without the collective efforts of a large group of people.

- Reagan Pugh, my co-executive on this campaign whose passion and dedication made our success possible.
- Brett Baker, ASG chief of staff who got everything done Reagan and I couldn't and mobilized voters.
- Laramie McWilliams, our friend in the Dean of Students office. Nothing would have been printed if it were not for her.
- Lindsay Braun, our design intern who designed most of the FBS publicity materials.
- Sean Wardwell, ASG executive assistant who helped with message development and organization.
- Richard Lopez, our premier senator on this campaign who worked with athletics to get the information we needed.
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- Fetchmybooks.com for making our campaign possible with funding.
- And all members of ASG who came before us and had a hand in this initiative.



# Addendum

Included in the hard copy version of this thesis.