

# Brand Research Report

January 2019

Prepared by

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Director of Research





interact

# SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE

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## BRAND REPORT

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Purpose

### Identify Brand for South Texas College

South Texas College hired Interact Communications to research their brand. This report is a summary of the process that identified the brand through research and creative processes.

## Introduction

### A Brand: What it is Not

- It is NOT a new “theme” or tagline
- It is NOT disposable
- It is NOT shifting
- It is NOT “The Emperor’s New Clothes”

### A Brand: What it is

- The “best self” of South Texas College
- The perception of South Texas College in the minds of the public
- It is the link between how South Texas College is perceived now... and how you want to be perceived in the future

### Why a Brand?

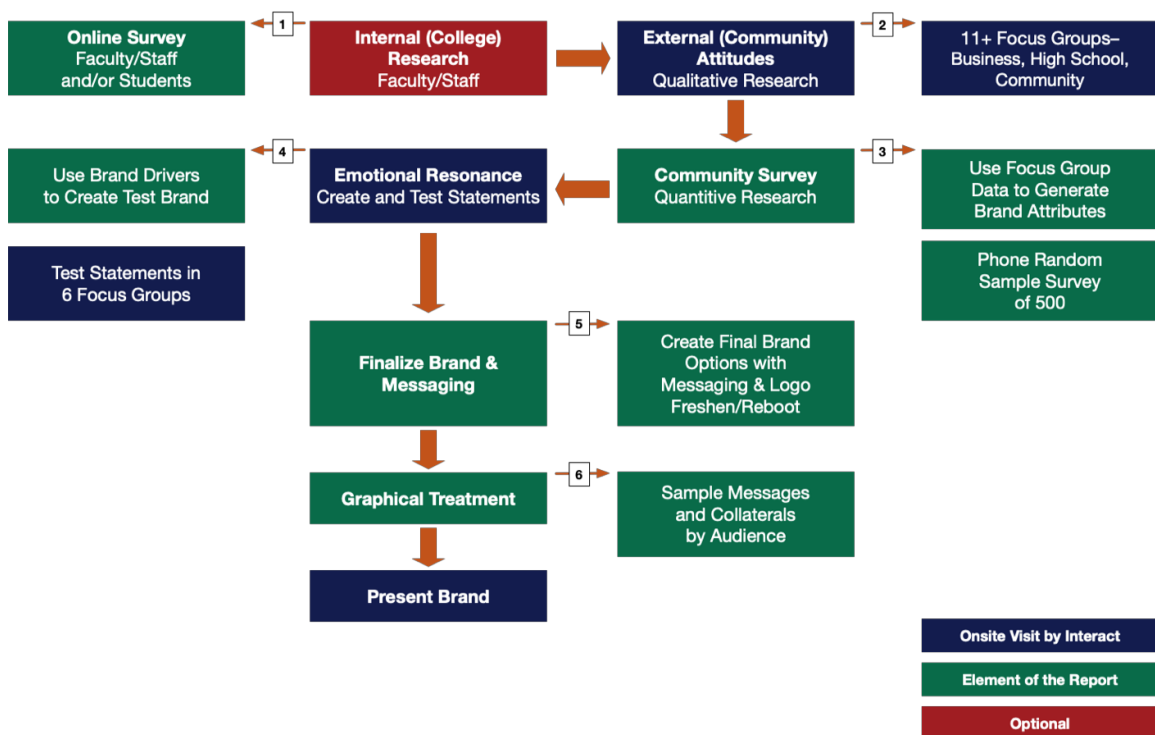
A strong brand creates, maintains, or extends:

- A strong sense of purpose, of identity and of expectation with the public
- An emotional “bank account”
- A leadership position in the battle for students and funding
- A desire for others to experience your brand

# BRAND PROCESS

## Research Goals

- Uncover a brand for South Texas College that differentiates it from competitors
- Position South Texas College as a leader in higher education
- Uncover a brand that unifies all of your programs and services under a single umbrella
- Define a campaign approach and language that represents what South Texas College is to all audiences: students, lifelong learners, parents, the community, and business, as well as graduates, faculty and staff



## Attribute Discovery: Phase 1 Qualitative

### Attribute Discovery Focus Groups (11) and Interviews (5)

- Business and Industry Professionals - Palm Valley Golf Course
- Community Members and Student Ambassadors - Starr County Campus
- Current Students - Pecan Campus
- Current Students - Mid-Valley Campus

- Faculty and Staff - Pecan Campus
- High School Counselors - Pecan Campus
- High School Dual Credit Students - Jimmy Carter Early College High School
- High School Dual Enrollment Students - Starr County Campus
- High School Students - Sharyland High School
- Parents (Spanish Language) - Hidalgo High School
- Parents - Pecan Campus
- 5 interviews with Board Members

## **Attribute Testing: Phase 2 Quantitative**

### **Attribute Test Phone Survey**

- 500 community members via phone survey
- Distributed over South Texas College area within Hidalgo and Starr Counties

## **Brand Testing: Phase 3 Qualitative**

### **Brand Test Focus Groups**

- Continuing Ed Students
- Current Students
- Community and Business
- Faculty and Staff
- High School Students
- PR and Marketing Staff

## **Integrate Findings: Phase 4 Creative**

### **Using Combined Data from Focus Groups and Phone Survey**

- Create a statement that “rings true”
- Create a statement that targets both beliefs (logical) and wants (emotional)
- Create a statement that will work with your diverse audiences

## Develop and Test Attributes

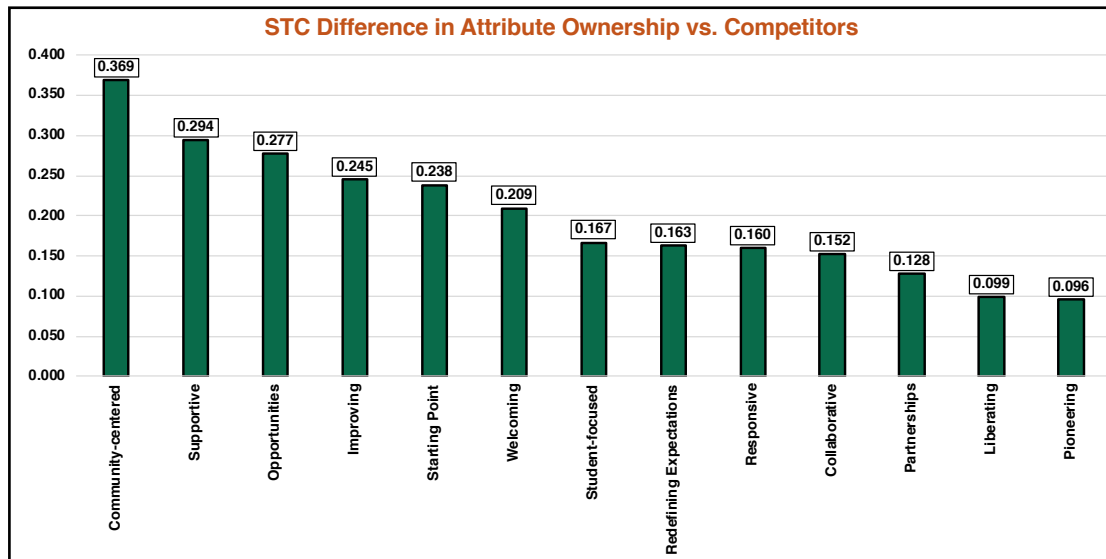
### Themes and Ideas Discovered in Focus Group Feedback

- Building local economy
- Positive impact on economic and social mobility of community
- A sign of progress in the Rio Grande Valley (though UT-RGV owns the RGV identity)
- Targeting the needs of the community
- Empowering community residents with knowledge
- Networks of people; Connections to jobs
- Pioneer in Education in South Texas
- Challenging and intentional curriculum to prepare for future
- Access to free services to help them be successful (including counseling, transportation, computer labs, library, tutoring)
- Catalyst for change
- STC helps students and families move forward
- Breaking barriers; creating a college-going culture

### Attributes Developed for Testing from Audience Feedback

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Collaborative      | • Redefining Expectations |
| • Community-centered | • Responsive              |
| • Improving          | • Starting Point          |
| • Liberating         | • Student-focused         |
| • Opportunities      | • Supportive              |
| • Partnerships       | • Welcoming               |
| • Pioneering         |                           |

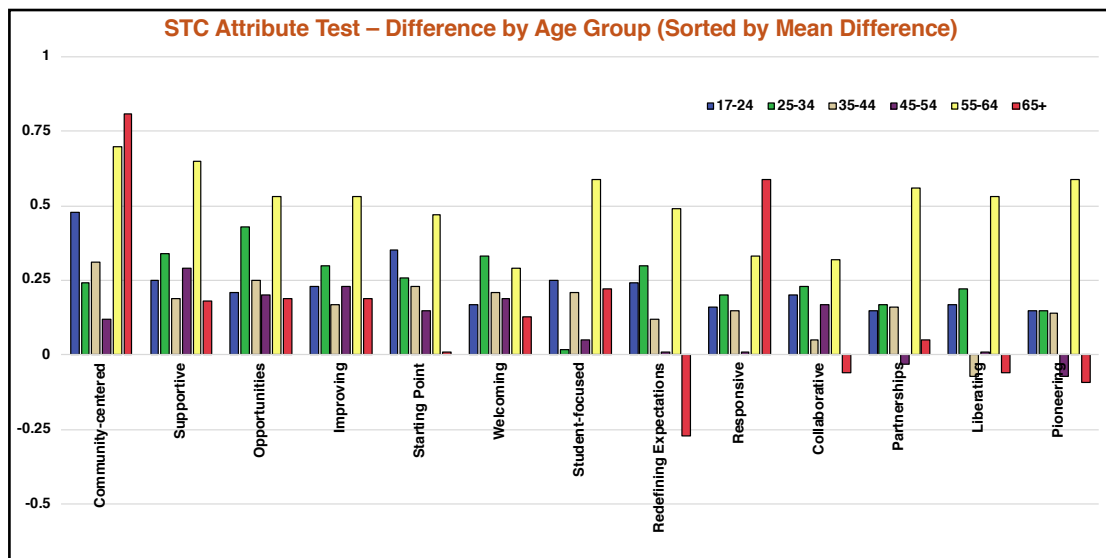
## Tested Attributes - Ownership



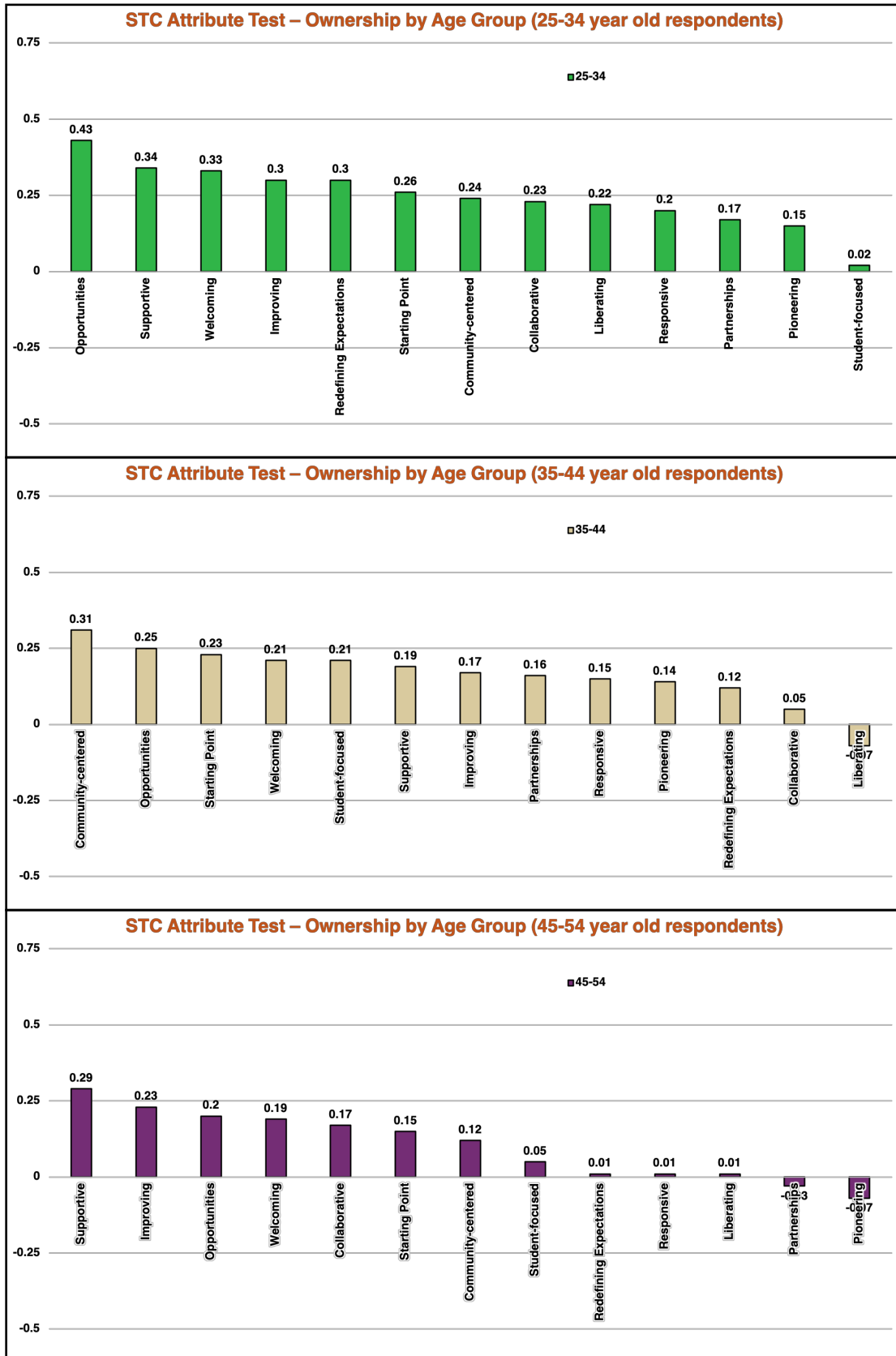
- This graph shows the attribute ownership, or how much STC “owns” the attribute in relation to their competition
- The higher the number, the more the concept was attributed to STC instead of their competition, meaning they “owned” it
- Attributes were developed from the first round of focus groups and tested in the phone survey
- Overall, STC averaged positive scores in all attributes we tested, which is a very positive result

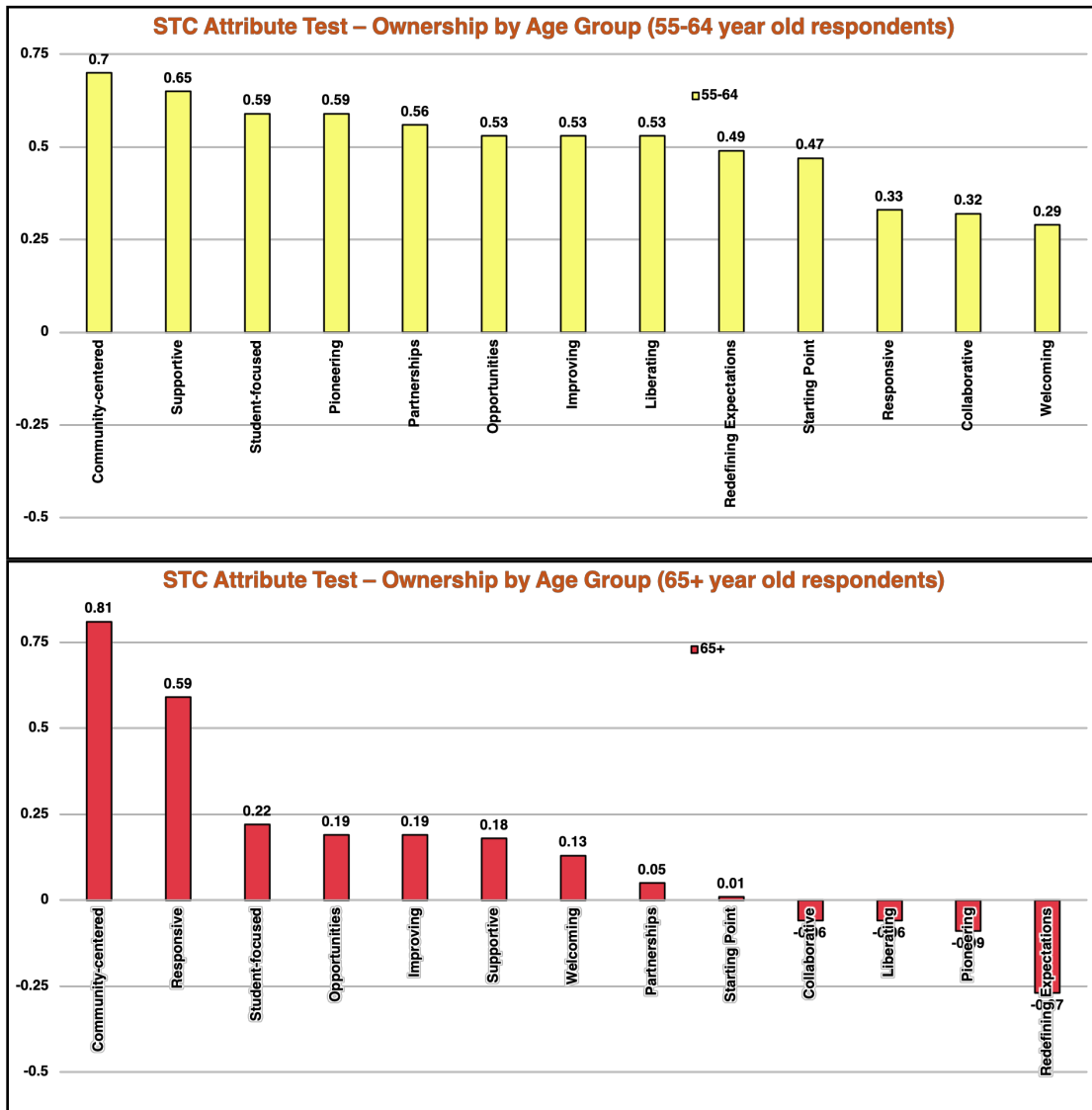
## Tested Attributes - Ownership By Age Group

- This graph shows how the attribute ownership differs by age group
- Each color bar relates to how a specific attribute was “owned” by STC in the opinions of the corresponding age group

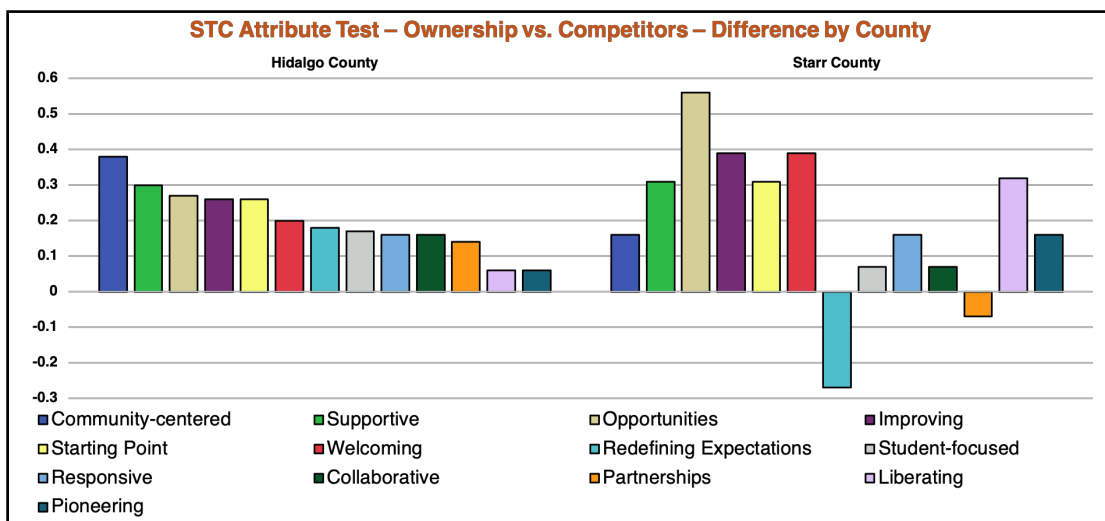


- Negative ownership scores indicate that for those attributes, STC's competition owned the attribute more than STC did
- Each attribute is rated by age groups, which may be used in fine-tuning messaging for specific audiences



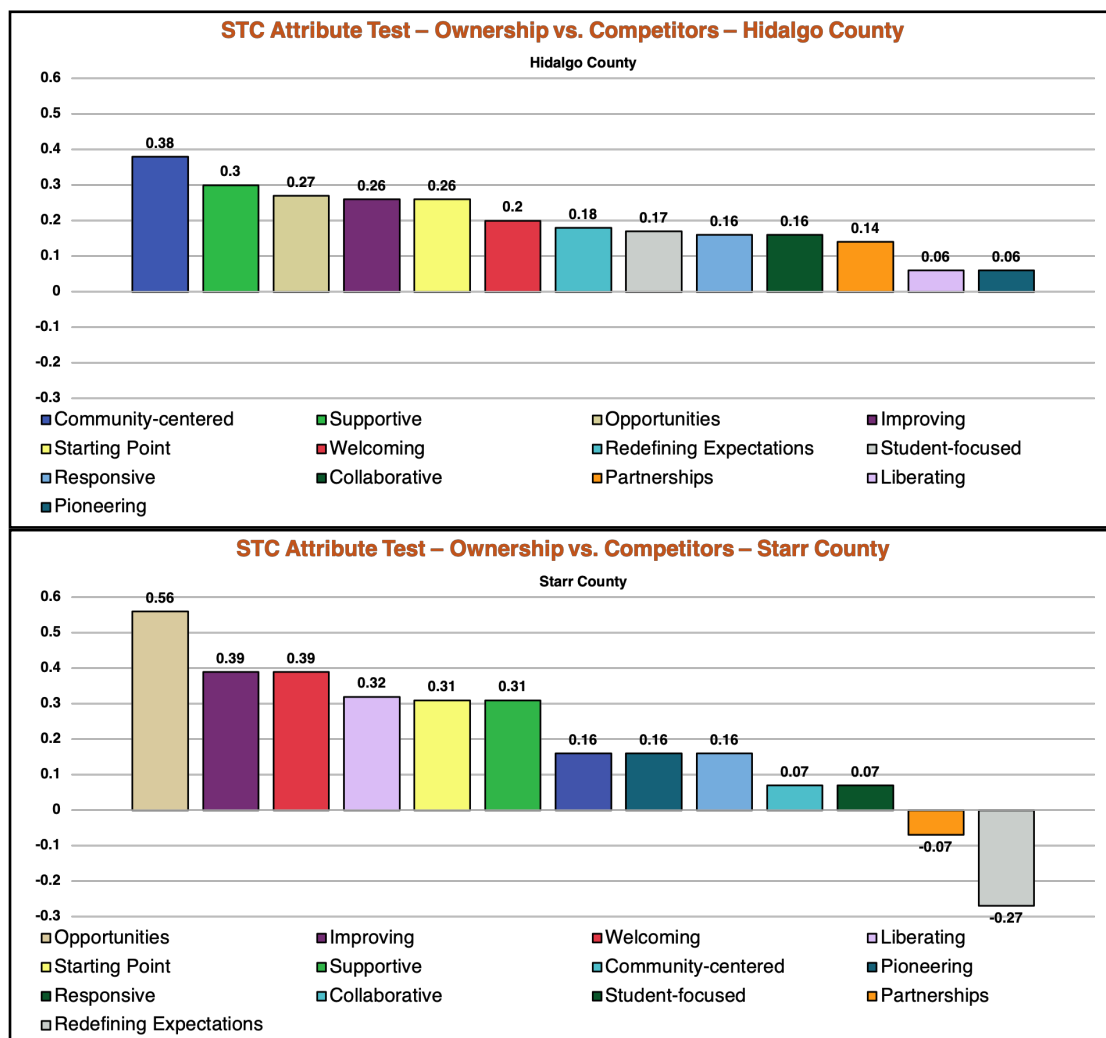


## Tested Attributes - Ownership By County





- This graph shows how the attribute ownership differs by county
- Each color bar relates to how a specific attribute (by color) was “owned” by STC in the opinions of the corresponding county residents
- Negative ownership scores indicate that for those attributes, STC’s competition owned the attribute more than STC did
- Each attribute is rated by county, which may be used in fine-tuning messaging for specific audiences
- Starr County respondents valued positive attributes differently than those in Hidalgo County, though five of the top six attributes ranked as the highest attribute differences overall in both counties (supportive, opportunities, improving, starting point, and welcoming)
- There are only two negative results in Starr County, which only indicate that those two attributes were ranked as owned by a competitor instead of STC. However, the overall ranking of ownership between both counties was still positive, so these opinions are likely held by a small minority of respondents that skewed the results when the results were isolated into specific counties.



### **Best-Tested Attributes on Ownership by South Texas College**

- Community-centered (0.369)
- Supportive (0.294)
- Opportunities (0.277)
- Improving (0.245)
- Starting Point (0.238)
- Welcoming (0.209)

### **Ownership, But Not Strong**

- Student-focused (0.167)
- Redefining Expectations (0.163)
- Responsive (0.160)
- Collaborative (0.152)

### **Little Differentiation With Competition**

- Partnerships (0.128)
- Liberating (0.099)
- Pioneering (0.096)

### **Well-Tested Attributes Become the Core Concepts and Are Building Blocks for Test Statements**

- Community-Centered
- Opportunities in a Welcoming and Supportive Environment
- Improving / STC is Growing with the Region

## Develop Test Statements Using Core Concepts

### Purpose of Test Statements

- Test statements are simple
- They are disposable
- They test the emotional components of words
- Meant to be imperfect

### Core Concepts and Statements Built Around Them

Community-Centered	Opportunities in a Welcoming and Supportive Environment	Improving / STC is Growing with the Region
• A College Community	• Experience Opportunities	• Empowering Growth
• South Texas Proud	• Here for You	• Expects More
• STC Guaranteed	• Promise	• Involved Beyond
• Together	• We're Family	• Stepping Up

### Statements Tested Using Focus Groups

STC Brand Test Part 1 Ranking		
Chosen Brand Concepts By Overall Audience		
Overall Rank	Statement	Mean Rating 1-6 scale (>3.500 = positive)
1st	<b>Empowering Growth</b>	5.073
2nd	<b>Experience Opportunities</b>	4.992
3rd	<b>Here for You</b>	4.967
4th	<b>South Texas Proud</b>	4.953
5th	<b>We're Family</b>	4.716
6th	<b>A College Community</b>	4.562
7th	<b>Together</b>	4.496
8th	<b>Promise</b>	4.266
9th	<b>Involved Beyond</b>	4.203
10th	<b>STC Guaranteed</b>	3.976
11th	<b>Stepping Up</b>	3.877
12th	<b>Expects More</b>	3.662

## **“Power Words” - Identified Throughout Research Process**

- |                 |              |               |                 |                  |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| • Accessible    | • Community  | • Friendly    | • One-on-one    | • Respectful     |
| • Advantage     | • Connection | • Future      | • Opportunities | • Responsive     |
| • Augment       | • Convenient | • Growth      | • Options       | • Results        |
| • Benefit       | • Customized | • Hands-on    | • Partnerships  | • Sharing        |
| • Beyond        | • Elevated   | • Helpful     | • Pathway       | • Solid          |
| • Caring        | • Empowering | • Hospitality | • Personal      | • Stepping Up    |
| • Careers       | • Engaging   | • Inclusive   | • Practical     | • Succeed        |
| • Challenging   | • Enjoyable  | • Integrated  | • Prepared      | • Supportive     |
| • Choice        | • Expanding  | • Inviting    | • Promise       | • Together       |
| • Connection    | • Experience | • Involved    | • Prosper       | • Underestimated |
| • Collaboration | • Family     | • More        | • Quality       | • Understanding  |
| • Comfortable   | • Flexible   | • Motivating  | • Resource      | • Welcoming      |

## **Brand Provenance**

### **Focus Groups**

- |                      |                           |                   |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Collaborative      | • Partnerships            | • Student-focused |
| • Community-centered | • Pioneering              | • Supportive      |
| • Improving          | • Redefining Expectations | • Welcoming       |
| • Liberating         | • Responsive              |                   |
| • Opportunities      | • Starting Point          |                   |

### **Survey**

- |                      |                  |              |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| • Community-centered | • Opportunities  | • Supportive |
| • Improving          | • Starting Point | • Welcoming  |

# SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE BRAND

## Brand Concept

While survey and focus group data echoed the usual two-year college attributes in many ways, it is clear that STC holds an undeniable reputation for quality in the community.

All stakeholder categories gravitated toward emotional, future-focused, and family- or community-based concepts such as “Empowering Growth,” “Experience Opportunities,” and “Here For You”.

STC has the community’s trust because it is versatile and is a proven engine for opportunity for the uniquely diverse communities it serves.

Sometimes we struggle to find unique attributes to distinguish our clients from their competition...

...what differentiates STC is its feeling of community and family – that supportive and welcoming attitude that guides a person to aim higher.

## Top Attribute Areas

### Community-Centered

- Creating a new standard, serving all facets of the community

### Opportunities

- Student success, student involvement

### Supportive

- Welcoming, with many layers of services to help students and families succeed



## South Texas College is Many Things to Many People

To the 70% of STC students who are **first-generation college students**, it's an entirely new frontier – a bold, uncharted experience, and a chance to **begin a family tradition of excellence in education**.

To the **working professionals** who power the region's exceptional workforce, it's a way to **stay current**.

For the **industries that employ those grads**, it's a way to stay **relevant**.

South Texas College is these things and more... An outstanding – and **constantly improving** – destination for career education, training and transfer; A warm and **welcoming college community**; A place that **connects** businesses with tech-savvy talent, and communities with **unprecedented opportunities**.

Above all, South Texas College represents a **unique and empowering experience** – a one-of-a-kind institution for a diverse and extraordinary community.

To experience STC... is to Experience *Exceptional*.

## An Exceptional Institution

**Your communities know STC, and even more critically, they trust STC.** This is a partnership **built by 25 years of hard work**, savvy **fiscal stewardship**, and **responsiveness** to community and industry needs.

Stakeholders at all stages of Interact's research gravitated toward general concepts of **opportunity, community, growth and pride**. STC is a welcome presence in South Texas – not so much a collection of campuses and classrooms as **a living, breathing agent of academic, career, and family success**.

## Experience *Exceptional*.

"Experience" is an intriguing, versatile concept with broad relevance to overall college attendance, as well as the individual endeavors, events, practices and struggles of a college student. It represents the **"action" half of the wordmark**, while providing an engine for dynamic messaging.

Meanwhile, "Exceptional" combines the attributes of "originality" and "excellence" in an **elegant, versatile word that pairs well with the preceding verb**.

### Why it Works

Together, **Experience *Exceptional*** forms a strong, “built-in-call-to-action” kind of wordmark that builds on the idea that **STC is more than a place to earn college credits** – it’s a customizable experience, much more akin to **a community of higher learning** than a continuation of high school.

In **Spanish**, the analogous phrase “**Una Experiencia *Excepcional***” forms an elegant wordmark, should the college choose to translate. The word mark is similar enough in Spanish that it can also be left in English and understood.

Substituting (or appending) the acronym “STC” in the wordmark (i.e. “**Experience STC**”) makes it a **dynamic call to action**, and leaves no doubt as to the college’s ownership of the brand.

### For Prospective Students

For **prospects**, it conveys both **quality and individuality**. Your potential students need to know they are welcome, and that South Texas College is a true college experience.

### For Business and Industry Leaders

For **business and industry leaders**, it’s precisely what they’re looking for: **Experience *Exceptional*** – the kind delivered by an **outcome-focused institution**, featuring the very best in custom, tech-forward workforce training.

### For Faculty and Staff

“**Experience *Exceptional***” gives **faculty and staff** credit for their crucial role in the college experience, and in shaping and supporting their students’ outstanding destinies... when we say “**Experience *Exceptional***,” **you’re speaking to the quality (and experience) of the instructors and support staff**.

### For the Community

For the **community**, South Texas College is exceptional **because South Texas communities are exceptional**.

### From the Research

“**Experience Opportunities**” tested very well during the brand statement round.

South Texas College showed strong ownership over community-centric attributes (such as “**welcoming**,” “**supportive**” and literally, “**community-centered**”) compared to its competition.

When asked to “fix” the high-ranking test phrase “**Experience Opportunities**,” all six stakeholder groups retained the word “**Experience**.”

### Finally...

- No one else has it
- It is simple
- It encompasses STC's unique attributes
- It's infinitely flexible, lending itself to multiple campaign directions and tones

## Launch Treatment

- This simple yet distinct concept lets the wordmark stand on its own in general messaging.
- We use the wordmark's two **"power words"** to tell crisp, concise stories, with as little copy as possible.

## Algorithms

**Exceptional** \_\_\_\_\_

and

**Experience** \_\_\_\_\_

## Logo Variations



**Experience  
Exceptional**



**Experience Exceptional**



# SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE SAMPLE ADS

## Prospects



## Prospects



## Employers (Business & Industry)





## Employers (Business & Industry)



## Internal (Faculty, Staff, and Leadership)

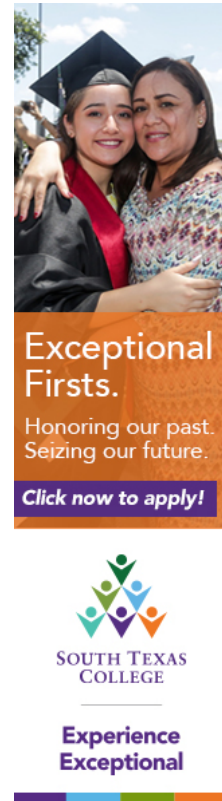


## Community





## Community (Web)



## Community (Web)





## Spanish



# CAMPAIGN CONCEPT

**“Experience \_\_\_\_\_”**

We fill in the blank with a noun (often a workplace- or occupation-specific challenge) relevant to the subject and target audience.

- **Experience** STC (Student Life)
- **Experience** Bigger Paychecks (General)
- **Experience** IT (IT-related fields)
- **Experience** Innovation (STEM-related fields)
- **Experience** Life in 3D (Advanced Manufacturing)

**“Experience \_\_\_\_\_”**

“Experience \_\_\_\_\_”



# LAUNCH TREATMENT

**Exceptional** Faculty

**Exceptional** Futures

**Exceptional** Training

**Experience** Success

**Exceptional** Graduates

**Experience** Support

**Exceptional** Facilities

**Experience** Opportunity

**Exceptional** Support

**Experience** Inspiration

**Exceptional** Families

**Experience** High-Tech

# ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGN CONCEPTS

**“Experience *Exceptional*” is endlessly flexible and customizable**

The following represent just a few ideas for post-launch campaigns advancing the “Experience *Exceptional*” brand.

**#1: ” \_\_\_\_\_ **Exceptional** \_\_\_\_\_ ” or “ \_\_\_\_\_ an **Exceptional** \_\_\_\_\_ ”**

- Build an **Exceptional** Life
- Secure an **Exceptional** Career
- Live an **Exceptional** Life
- Discover **Exceptional** Opportunities
- Gain **Exceptional** Skills
- Do **Exceptional** Work

**#2: ”I am **Exceptional**”**

## **For Prospect Students**

I am **ready** to meet my career’s unique challenges.

I am **fast, focused**, and unfailingly **confident** in my skills.

I am **experience-tested, workforce ready**, and **recession-proof**.

I am **Exceptional**.

## **For Employers/Industry Leaders**

I am **a leader** in my industry, and in my community.

I am **a mentor** to my employees.

I am **an engine for economic success** in our region.

I am **Exceptional**.

### #3: “Experienced \_\_\_\_\_”

- **Experienced** Rhymer (Education)
- **Experienced** Rockstar (Construction Trades)
- **Experienced** Superhero (First-responder/Healthcare professional)
- **Experienced** Hitmaker (Audio Engineering)
- **Experienced** Firebrand (Culinary)
- **Experienced** Design Diva (Fashion or Graphic Design)

This concept portrays individual student as “experienced” experts within their chosen fields. Clever language is used to conjure fun and unique associations that make readers “pay attention.” Imagine authoritative images of students, facing the camera with their arms crossed, in the uniforms of their chosen profession.

### #4: “The STC Experience”

A broad concept used to tell individual student and alumni success stories, and to introduce focused pieces on individual aspects of STC (programs, people, student life, facilities/equipment, cultural events, etc.).

## Next Steps

1. Finalize the Graphical Treatment for brand statement
2. Finalize the campaign treatment with graphical framework, photography and message algorithm
3. Prepare for the January rollout
4. Make it happen!

# APPENDIX A

## BRAND ATTRIBUTE

## FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS

### Protocol for External Focus Groups

#### INTRODUCTION

Good [morning/afternoon/evening], I want to thank all of you for taking time to participate in this focus group. We really appreciate your willingness to assist us. [Today/tonight], we are asking you to help us by giving your opinion about issues having to do with South Texas College.

While I will be recording these sessions, you and your opinions will not be identified in our report. Your honesty and candor are very much appreciated. The information you are providing will help us identify issues and make plans for the future. (Proceed with QUESTIONS)

#### QUESTIONS

1. Have any of you had direct experience with South Texas College?
  - a. (If any respond positively) What do you remember about your experiences?
  - b. Have any of you had family or friends that had experience?
  - c. (If any respond positively) What did they tell you about their experiences?
2. What else have you heard about the college?
  - a. Who did you hear that from?
  - b. How long ago?
3. What is your general impression of South Texas College?
  - a. Why do you think that? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - b. What positive things have you heard? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - c. What negative things have you heard? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
4. Who are South Texas College' main competitors?
  - a. Why do you think that?
  - b. How well do you think that South Texas College competes with them?



- c. In your opinion, are there specific ways in which South Texas College is superior to its competitors?
- 5. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your community in general?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to the community?
- 6. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your local high school students?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to high school students?
- 7. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your local working adults and non-traditional students?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to working adults and non-traditional students?
- 8. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of the businesses and industries in your community?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to businesses and industries in your community?

Tell me about your “level of confidence” in South Texas College. Do you think that it is headed in the right direction to prepare for the future?

- a. Why do you think that? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
- 9. Where do you get most of your information about what’s going on at the college? (Follow up by asking about methods used if they are not specific.)
  - a. What could be done to improve communications?
  - b. Are there ways that the college is communicating with you that you like or dislike?

(Continue with AFFINITY PROCESS)



# Protocol for High School Student Focus Groups

## INTRODUCTION

Good [morning/afternoon/evening], I want to thank all of you for taking time to participate in this focus group. We really appreciate your willingness to assist us. [Today/tonight], we are asking you to help us by giving your opinion about issues having to do with South Texas College.

While I will be recording these sessions, you and your opinions will not be identified in our report. Your honesty and candor are very much appreciated. The information you are providing will help us identify issues and make plans for the future. (Proceed with QUESTIONS)

## QUESTIONS

1. Have any of you had direct experience with South Texas College?
  - a. (If any respond positively) What do you remember about your experiences?
  - b. Have any of you had family or friends that had experience?
  - c. (If any respond positively) What did they tell you about their experiences?
  - d. Does South Texas College affect your life directly or indirectly?
  - e. (If any respond positively) How would you say it affects you?
2. What else have you heard about the college?
  - a. Who did you hear that from?
  - b. How long ago?
3. What is your general impression of South Texas College?
  - a. Why do you think that? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - b. What positive things have you heard? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - c. What negative things have you heard? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
4. What do your parents say about South Texas College?
  - a. Why do you think they say that?
  - b. Do you agree or disagree with them?
5. What do your friends say about South Texas College?
  - a. Why do you think they say that?
  - b. Do you agree or disagree with them?

6. Who are South Texas College's main competitors?
  - a. Why do you think that?
  - b. How well do you think that South Texas College competes with them?
  - c. Are there specific areas in which you believe that South Texas College is superior to its competitors?
7. Where do you get most of your information about South Texas College? (Follow up by asking about methods used if they are not specific.)
  - a. Do you remember any specific messages from the college?
    - i. What were they?
    - ii. When did you see them?
    - iii. What did you think about them?
  - b. Do you remember any other advertisements or commercials about the college?
    - i. What were they?
    - ii. When did you see them?
    - iii. What did you think about them?
  - c. Are there ways that South Texas College should be communicating with you or people you know that it isn't doing now?
  - d. Are there ways that South Texas College is communicating with you that you like or dislike?
  - e. Are there ways that South Texas College is communicating with you that you would like to see more?

(Continue with AFFINITY PROCESS)

## Protocol for Internal Focus Groups

### INTRODUCTION

Good [morning/afternoon/evening], I want to thank all of you for taking time to participate in this focus group. We really appreciate your willingness to assist us. [Today/tonight], we are asking you to help us by giving your opinion about issues having to do with South Texas College.

While I will be recording these sessions, you and your opinions will not be identified in our report. Your honesty and candor are very much appreciated. The information you are providing will help us identify issues and make plans for the future. (Proceed with QUESTIONS)

### QUESTIONS

1. How is South Texas College perceived within the community in general?
  - a. Why do you think that? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - b. What positive things have you seen or experienced? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
  - c. What negative things have you seen or experienced? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
2. What image would you like to see South Texas College have within the community?
  - a. Who is your competition?
  - b. How would you like to be perceived in relation to your competition?
  - c. What sets you apart?
  - d. What could be done to set South Texas College apart more?
  - e. Why do you think students choose South Texas College over competitors?
3. Are there any issues that you believe could enhance the college's image, or build its reputation and draw students?
4. Are there any issues that you believe could hurt the college's image, or its ability to draw students?
5. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your community in general?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to the community?
6. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your local high school students?
  - a. Can you give me an example?

- b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to high school students?
- 7. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of your local working adults and non-traditional students?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to working adults and non-traditional students?
- 8. How well is South Texas College meeting the needs of the businesses and industries in your community?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
  - b. What should South Texas College be working on to improve their service to businesses and industries in your community?
- 9. Tell me about your “level of confidence” in South Texas College. Do you think that it is headed in the right direction to prepare for the future?
  - a. Why do you think that? (Follow up by asking for examples and sources of the opinions.)
- 10. Where do you get most of your information about what’s going on at the college? (Follow up by asking about methods used if they are not specific.)
  - a. What could be done to improve communications?
  - b. Are there ways that the college is communicating with you that you like or dislike?

(Continue with AFFINITY PROCESS)

## **AFFINITY PROCESS**

Now, we are going to do what is called an “affinity” process. Using the Interact sticky notes in front of you, and writing only one idea per one sticky note, write down the strengths, positive things, or things that should not change that you know about South Texas College and circle the plus sign on each note (wait a few minutes until most of the people have stopped writing).

Now, I would like you to take a few minutes and write down the weaknesses, negative things, or things that should change that you know about South Texas College and circle the minus sign on each note (wait a few minutes until most of the people have stopped writing). Note that if you are not sure if your idea is a strength or weakness, you may circle the question mark instead of the plus or minus sign. (If time permits, continue with the following exercise; if not, collect the notes and proceed to CLOSING)

Now, please put them on the wall under the “strengths” and “weaknesses” sticky notes I have put up. Group the attributes into concepts that are similar. For example, if a note says “faculty” is a strength, and another note says “teachers,” they are considered similar concepts. (Ask the group to divide into two, and have one group do strengths, while the other does weaknesses; ask them to describe what concept is in each group and place a title sticky note over each group; when finished with grouping, ask them to sit down before they vote to prioritize the concepts)

First, we will look at the strengths and vote on which ones are the most important (read the title out loud if they cannot see them clearly). Each of you should pick the three that you believe are the most important. You can vote for any that you want, but only three times total. How many of you think “X” is the most important strength? (Repeat this for each strength, and record the number of votes for each on the title note; ask the group to break all ties with a show of hands)

Now, look at the weaknesses. Each of you has three votes for the concepts that you believe are the most critical to address. You can vote for any that you want, but only three times total. How many of you think “X” is the most critical weakness? (Repeat this for each weakness, and record the number of votes for each on the title note; ask the group to break all ties with a show of hands)

## **CLOSING**

Is there anything else that you would like to say or note about South Texas College?

Thank you all for coming. Your help is very much appreciated.

# APPENDIX B

## BRAND ATTRIBUTE TESTING

### PHONE SURVEY PROTOCOL

#### Community

#### INTRODUCTION

We are conducting a survey for a local college. Would you please take a few minutes to answer a set of questions? It would be greatly appreciated.

- If yes... continue
- If no... move on the to the next call

#### TOP OF MIND AWARENESS

1. When you think colleges in your area, what colleges come to mind?

#### UNAIDED RECALL

2. What you may have seen or heard about South Texas College?

#### PERCEIVED FAMILIARITY WITH THE COLLEGE

3. Regarding South Texas College, how familiar are you? (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

VERY UNFAMILIAR	UNFAMILIAR	SLIGHTLY UNFAMILIAR	SLIGHTLY FAMILIAR	FAMILIAR	VERY FAMILIAR
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Regarding South Texas College, how experienced are you? (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

VERY INEXPERIENCED	INEXPERIENCED	SLIGHTLY INEXPERIENCED	SLIGHTLY EXPERIENCED	EXPERIENCED	VERY EXPERIENCED
1	2	3	4	5	6

5. Regarding South Texas College, how knowledgeable are you? (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE AT ALL	NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE	SLIGHTLY NOT KNOWLEDGEABLE	SLIGHTLY KNOWLEDGEABLE	KNOWLEDGEABLE	VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE
1	2	3	4	5	6

## ATTRIBUTES

[READ AND ROTATE ATTRIBUTES PER CALLER, NOT PER LINE OF QUESTIONING]

Q6 - 18\_1) Next we are going to list attributes associated with South Texas College. Please tell us how important this attribute is when choosing a college or program. (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

[SCRIPT] Using the same attributes how much do you associate them with South Texas College?

I will now reread the attributes. Please use a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is “not associated at all” and 6 is “strongly associated.”

Q6 - 18\_2) How much do you associate this attribute with South Texas College? (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

[SCRIPT] Using the same attributes how much do you associate them with the competition?

I will now reread the attributes, please use a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is not associated at all and 6 is strongly associated.

Q6 - 18\_3) How much do you associate this attribute with the competition? (99 = DK/NO ANSWER)

	Importance	Associate with South Texas College	Associate with Competitor
	1 Not Important at All	1 Not Associated at All	1 Not Associated at All
	2 Unimportant	2 Not Associated	2 Not Associated
	3 Slightly Unimportant	3 Slightly Not Associated	3 Slightly Not Associated
	4 Slightly Important	4 Slightly Associated	4 Slightly Associated
	5 Important	5 Associated	5 Associated
	6 Very Important	6 Strongly Associated	6 Strongly Associated
Collaborative	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Community-centered	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Improving	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Liberating	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Opportunities	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Partnerships	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Pioneering	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Redefining Expectations	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Responsive	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Starting Point	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Student-focused	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Supportive	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
Welcoming	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, a few questions about yourself.

20. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ (ACTUAL AGE) (CODE ONLY) (99 = NO RESPONSE)

21. What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Gender 1 - Male 2 - Female (Do not read; CODE ONLY)

23. What is the last grade of school you completed? (do not read responses; CODE ONLY) (99 = REFUSED)

1. Some high school but did not graduate
2. High school graduate
3. GED or High School Equivalency
4. Some two-year or technical college, but did not graduate
5. Two year college or university graduate
6. Some four-year college or university, but did not graduate
7. Four-year college or university graduate
8. Post-graduate work
9. Post-graduate degree

24. What is your race or ethnic background? (do not read responses; CODE ONLY) (99 = REFUSED)

1. White (not Hispanic)
2. Black or African American
3. Hispanic/White
4. Hispanic/Black
5. Asian/Asian Indian/Pacific Islander
6. Native American or Alaskan
7. Hispanic (unspecific)
8. Middle Eastern
9. Other
10. Don't Know

Thank you for your time. It is greatly appreciated!



## **PHONE SURVEY PARAMETERS**

Research Type: Quantitative

Research Approach: Community Opinion Survey - Brand Attributes

Population: General Adult Population

Sample Size/Completes Needed: 500

Sample List Provided by: Vendor/Contractor

Dates in Field: October 5, 2018 to October 16, 2018

Sampling: Random; Cell phones and landlines if available, web programming if not; Registered Voters

Output: Excel - per Interact coding

Required: ZIP Code Required

Balancing Factors:

a. Gender - (M/F 50/50)

b. No more than 15% of total sample age 65 and older

c. Texas County Geography - Primarily Calling in Hidalgo County and Starr County, Texas

Zip Codes to Include: at least 5% of calls completed in Starr County zip codes

Other Factors:

- Daily call or email from vendor contact to Interact contact to update project
- Files available for viewing/listening via FTP site nightly
- Vendor to provide list of names and phone number or address for survey participants IN THE FILE so data/responses can be checked; ZIP Code MUST be provided for each call

### **Hidalgo County, TX - Standard ZIP Codes**

78501 | 78503 | 78504 | 78516 | 78537 | 78538 | 78539 | 78541 | 78542 | 78557 | 78560 | 78563 | 78569 | 78570  
| 78572 | 78573 | 78574 | 78576 | 78577 | 78589 | 78595 | 78596 | 78599

### **Hidalgo County, TX - PO Box ZIP Codes**

78502 | 78505 | 78540 | 78543 | 78549 | 78558 | 78562 | 78565 | 78579

### **Starr County, TX - Standard ZIP Codes**

78360 | 78536 | 78563 | 78582 | 78584 | 78588 | 78591

### **Starr County, TX - PO Box ZIP Codes**

78545 | 78547 | 78548 | 78585

# APPENDIX C

## BRAND TEST FOCUS GROUP

### PROTOCOL

#### All Audiences

#### INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome. I would like to thank you for coming today and agreeing to participate in our research. While I will be recording this session, you and your opinions will not be identified in our report to the college. Your honesty and candor are therefore very appreciated.

Now, turn your handout sheet to the side titled "South Texas College Brand Survey Part One." Please fill in the year of your birth, but do not write in your name or any other personal information. This information is used for demographic purposes only.

#### PART ONE INSTRUCTIONS

I am about to show you a series of twelve statements labeled A through L. What I would like you to do is silently read each statement as I show them, and then write down your reaction to that statement, particularly when you think of it specifically in relation to what you know about career and technical educational programs at your local community colleges. On the part one side of the form I have given to you, record your reaction on the scale as strongly liking it, strongly disliking it, or any place on the 1-6 scale that mostly closely identifies your opinion.

In addition, as you see on the form, there is a space to the right of the statement where you can put your 'top of mind' reaction to the statement. What this means is when you first read the statement, does it make you think of something else? Or, how does it make you feel? That is your 'top of mind' reaction. Now I will show you the statements one at a time. Please read them and write down your opinions first without talking among yourselves. When we are done with this section we will talk about the statements as a group. Are you ready to begin?

This is Statement A [B, C, etc.].

#### DISCUSSION

For the last few months we've been doing research for your local community colleges around what people value about them and what makes it unique in relationship to its competitors. From that research came concepts based on what people said about the college, both the core things people value and what make it unique.

With our research today, we are trying to narrow these concepts down by identifying words and ideals that describe three things about the college:

1. Words that resonate as the most true or intriguing statements describing South Texas College,
2. Words that create a call to action for people currently working at South Texas College, and
3. Words that describe how students, business professionals, and the rest of the community feel about South Texas College.

These are our goals, but we are not there yet. The statements that I have just shown you are close to the final statement that will become the brand for these programs, but we need to find out which idea is the closest. Therefore, we need your help to fix them. To do this we will go through each one, talk about what you like and dislike, and try to change each statement so that it sounds better.

For example, imagine that one of the original statements said, “A Legacy of Learning.” You may decide that it might sound better if it said “A Legacy of Education,” “A Tradition of Learning,” or even just “Traditional Education.” You may also decide that the statement is not an accurate description of the way that you feel about the college. In that case, we may want to throw the original statement out completely and come up with another statement that means something completely different. The only rule that we need to follow in coming up with new statements is that we must end up with the same number of statements that we started with.

{Question 1} Let’s start by talking about your first impressions to the statements. Which statements do you feel strongly about, positive or negative, and why?

{Question 2} Which statement do you believe is the worst or best, and why?

{Repeat the questions below with each of the statements. They do not need to be done in letter order. Start with the ones that people have strong opinions about, then work through the rest of the list to each of the others systematically. Ask any and all that seem appropriate based on their comments.}

{Question 3} Why don’t we talk about Statement {Letter} for a few minutes?

- What does it make you think of?
- Are you tired of looking at it already?
- Is there anything intriguing about it?
- Does it feel inappropriate?
- Does it resonate positively with anyone?
- Is there another word that would work better?
- What do you think about the statement in relationship to South Texas College?

{Question 4} Which statements would you like to throw out completely?

{Question 5} Of the statements remaining, which do you think are the best?

{Question 6} Which of these best statements would make you feel the most proud to be affiliated with South Texas College?

{Question 7} Are there any words you can think of to describe South Texas College that we have not included in any of the statements?

## **PART TWO INSTRUCTIONS**

Now that we are finished fixing all of the original statements, I would like you to turn your handout sheet to the side titled "South Texas College Brand Survey Part Two." I would like you to rate each of the twelve new statements as you rated the original statements. Write down your reaction to each new statement as strongly liking it, strongly disliking it, or any place on the 1-6 scale that mostly closely identifies your opinion.

In a similar way to the original statements you rated, also record your top of mind reaction. Again, does it make you think of something else? Or, how does it make you feel?

When you are finished with part two of the survey, you may leave after handing the completed survey sheet to me, or you may leave it behind and I will pick it up.

## **CLOSING**

On behalf of South Texas College, I would again like to thank you for your assistance with our research.

# APPENDIX D

## SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

### Negative Words

Though not a typical part of our brand process, we were asked by South Texas College about what negative words came up during the focus groups. Though we focus on using positive and “power” words to identify the brand, these negative words nevertheless may give the college insight as to their flaws and shortcomings as perceived by their various audiences. Please note that these words may be misconstrued easily when taken out of context, though we listed what we considered the most negative words as requested.

#### **MOST NEGATIVE WORDS MENTIONED DURING FOCUS GROUPS**

- Challenges
- Difficult
- Disorganized
- Fail
- Horrible {comments related to parking}
- Issues
- Lacking
- Limitations
- Missing
- Only {quote from student to respondent: “Well, I’m only going to STC.” “What do you mean ‘only’?”}
- Sloppy
- Small-town Mentality
- Unresolved

