

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Sixty-Three



January 17, 2023

The opinions expressed in this bulletin are those of the Board of Directors of the Sul Ross Group and do not represent the opinions of The Association of Former Students, its officers, or its Leadership.

NEW INDOOR FOOTBALL PRACTICE FACILITY UNDERWAY



Figure 1 - Out with The Old, In with The New.

Texas A&M's new football practice building is underway starting with the demolition of the old fabric covered facility. The permanent football practice building is one part of a comprehensive program which includes the new football facility, a new permanent indoor track building, an additional outdoor grass football practice field, completion of the Bright Complex and an enlarged Academic Center. The comprehensive construction program will cost \$210 million and was approved by the Board of Regents last year. The indoor track building is located on the site of the old

outdoor track on the west campus adjacent to the new Edward B. Cushing outdoor track stadium. The new indoor football facility is planned for completion in time for the 2023 football season, but not spring training.

WHO WAS EDWARD BENJAMIN CUSHING '80

Edward Benjamin Cushing was born November 22, 1862, in Houston, TX. After attending A&M College from 1877 to 1879, where he left in the second class with honors, he became a surveyor for Ashbel Smith. He then went to work as an ax man for Southern Pacific Railroad and eventually achieved the post of Superintendent of Maintenance and Way of the Sunset line between New Orleans and El Paso.

He established the Alpha Phi ex-students fraternity in 1879 that was the forerunner, and which eventually merged with the Association of Former Students. He earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1879 from A&M College.



Figure 2 - E.B. Cushing. 1862 - 1924s

In 1909, the governor of Louisiana awarded him the rank of colonel for his extensive work with the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Houston Light Guards.

Col. Cushing was appointed to the Board of Directors of A&M College in 1912 and elected chairman. When the legislature refused to fund A&M, he was instrumental in ensuring the future of A&M College by guaranteeing the school's debts and personally signing its bonds. Since t.u. was trying to have A&M shut down, its programs moved to Austin and the buildings converted to an insane asylum, Cushing ordered a train to bring members of the state legislature to the A&M College to see the students and work in progress firsthand. The legislators returned to Austin and voted to provide funding to prevent closure. He also later rescued Prairieview A&M in a similar manner. He literally saved A&M.

Cushing prevented the lynching of an African American man accused of assaulting a white woman in Trinity County by providing a train to transport the Houston Light Guard to Trinity to rescue the prisoner from a lynch mob and transport him to Huntsville where he could be protected until trial.

Cushing chaired the committees that were responsible for the construction of the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue and the Y.M.C.A.

When In World War I broke out he was 54 years old and was rejected by the army when he tried to enlist. He appealed directly to the White House and was accepted. He was initially assigned to General Pershing's staff as a major with the 17th Engineers at Fort Benning. He was sent directly to France and was given the assignment of building the railroads to transport the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) consisting of over two million men and an equal number of horses from the disembarkation port at Le Havre to the Western Front. The French said it would take at least two years to construct the five parallel tracks; Cushing did it in about nine weeks and was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for his services. When asked by General Foch, Commander of the French Army, how he did it, Cushing replied, "That's the way we do it back in Texas!"

Upon his death, he bequeathed his collection of engineering texts to A&M College with a request to build an official library; A&M College built the Cushing Memorial Library in 1930. Cushing may be considered one of the greatest Aggies of all time.

FACULTY OUTRAGED AS PENN STATE BACKTRACKS ON DIVERSITY CENTER

As reported by Fox News in a piece by Nikolas Lanum on December 24, 2022, Penn State University cancelled a planned \$3.5 million Center for Racial Justice. Lanum's report said, "Penn State University's new administration, led by President Neeli Bendapudi has backtracked on several racial justice policies installed under previous leadership." In 2020 the Land-Grant College's then-President Eric Barron convened the Select Penn State Presidential Commission on Racism, Bias and Community Safety

and tasked them with studying how university resources could be used to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Lanum reported that “The research led Penn State to announce three subcommittees, The DEI Infrastructure Inventory subcommittee, the Truth and Reconciliation Process Subcommittee, and the Anti-Racism Institute subcommittee”.



Figure 3 - Penn State University

Spotlight PA, an investigative journalism publication, reported that “The vast array of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives spawned at Penn State in 2020 was met by skepticism by some members of the school’s Board of Trustees, according to documents it unearthed. The documents questioned whether “teaching America’s exceptionalism remains a core objective at Penn State and raised concerns that mandating anti-racism

classes at Penn State would only further ‘politicized college education.’”

A letter signed by 400 faculty members penned to the university expressed their objection to the decision.

Penn State’s concerns about the fixation of academia on DEI is being shared across the nation.

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/faculty-outraged-penn-state-backtracks-diversity-proposals-cancels-massive-racial-justice-center>

BOBBY PETRINO HIRED TO BE NEW FOOTBALL OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR



Figure 4 - Offensive Coordinator Bobby Petrino.

As reported in a press release on January 6, 2023, by the Texas A&M Athletic Department, Head Football Coach Jimbo Fisher has hired Bobby Petrino to be the Offensive Coordinator.

The release stated that “Petrino most recently served as the head coach at FCS Missouri State (2020-22) and also adds FBS level experience as the head coach at Louisville (2003-06, 2014-18), Western Kentucky

(2013) and Arkansas (2008-11), compiling a 119-56 record through 14 seasons. He took 11 of the teams to bowl games and finished in the top 25 seven times, with three top-six finishes (2004, 2006, 2011). Petrino tutored 2016 Heisman Trophy winner Lamar Jackson.

While coaching at Arkansas, Petrino’s teams beat the Aggies all three years they played his teams at AT&T Stadium in Arlington from 2009 -2011.

Petrino's teams are noted for their prolific passing offenses. He is a graduate of Carroll College where he played quarterback, twice earning NAIA All-American honors and helping lead his team to three straight conference championships. He was named the leagues MVP in 1981 and 1982.

We welcome Coach Bobby Petrino to Aggieland!

Texas A&M set to hire UNLV's Bobby Petrino as offensive coordinator | TexAgs

TEXAS LEGISLATION STRIKES BACK AGAINST UNIVERSITY-BACKED DISCRIMINATION



Figure 5 - Texas State Capitol, Austin, Texas

As reported in an article written by Tony Kinnett in The Daily Signal on December 17, 2022, "Texas State Representative Carl Tepper, R-Lubbock County, has introduced legislation to abolish 'diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)' departments and programs in public universities. The two-page piece of legislation removes the universities' ability to fund, promote, sponsor, or support any department, program, or office that 'funds,

sponsors, or supports an initiative or formulation of diversity, equity, and inclusion' beyond what is necessary to uphold the equal protection of the law under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution."

Tepper's bill comes in the wake of cancellation of conservative speakers on college campuses across the nation while trying to enforce a version of orthodoxy heavy on identity politics that foster their notion of diversity. Kinnett's piece says that "Campus surveys find DEI offices and their vast bureaucracies fail to improve the campus climate for students. Instead, they contribute to ever-growing college administrative bloat, funded by taxpayers."

Rep. Tepper told The Daily Signal that the time for a bill that fights back against state-funded discrimination is now. "Departments are running amuck practicing 'reverse racism'," Tepper said.

Tepper pointed to one example from Texas Tech University, in which the college's Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion encouraged students to "understand [their] personal relationship to white supremacy and anti-Black racism." The "#Academics4BlackLives" program encourages black students at Texas Tech to withdraw into black communities, blaming other cultural groups for societal issues.

Tepper warned, "It's one thing to understand the different experiences we all have - that's obvious, but encouraging *more* racism doesn't help any situation." In 2021, the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion staff at Texas Tech held an "anti-racism" training in which students were forcibly segregated by color. When asked what the role

of activism on college campuses was to be in light of this piece of legislation, Tepper responded, “Students should feel free to form any group they want, but I don’t believe in [Texas] funding segregation.”

DEI <https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/12/17/texas-legislation-strikes-back-against-university-backed-discrimination/>

NCAA CHANGES FOOTBALL RULES FOR SECOND-TIME PORTAL TRANSFERS



Figure 6 – NCAA Field Logo.

After creating chaos four years ago by allowing football players to transfer to other colleges and receive immediate eligibility, the NCAA has voted to modify the rules to bring some sense of stability to college football. Under its previous rules, the NCAA had essentially created unlimited free agency for college football players. Combined with the more recent Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) court ruling which allows players to

receive compensation from sponsors, coaches lost control of their rosters. The NCAA had years to prepare for NIL since it was widely assumed that the U.S. Supreme Court would rule the players had a right to be compensated for their services but did nothing. Between the NIL and Transfer Portal, the result has been chaos with players believed to be shopping NIL deals to facilitate multiple transfers to schools where they can immediately play.

As reported by CBS Sports in a press release written by Shehan Jeyarajah on January 11, 2023, the NCAA Division 1 Council voted to limit waivers for second-time transfers. “Now, undergraduate players who transfer will have specific guidelines they must meet in order to be eligible for immediate playing time starting with the 2023-24 season or risk sitting out a year in between transfers.”

The piece further reported, “The new rules are an attempt to rein in the number of players using transfer portal, which has exploded since it launched four years ago. Nearly 2,000 players in FBS alone entered the portal in the first transfer window following the 2022 regular season. At least 120 quarterbacks alone have entered the portal, including a handful that were expected to enter the 2023 NFL Draft and opted for new starts at the college level instead.”

One quarterback, J.T. Daniels, has transferred three times and is now at his fourth college.

One can only hope, the NCAA will further come to its senses and develop regulations for the NIL which is now little more than the Wild West.

<https://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/ncaa-council-votes-to-limit-eligibility-for-second-time-transfers-to-curb-ballooning-portal-usage/>

WHO, WHY, AND HOW TO RECEIVE THE SRG BULLETINS?

It was previously The Association of Former Students' policy that anyone could "opt in" (register and grant permission) to receive the 56 SRG produced Bulletins which began in 2020. In mid-April 2022, the policy guidance was changed so that only SRG members can now receive them. The "opt in" system was rescinded by The Association so that now, non-SRG persons no longer can be recipients. That rescission and change in policy also included three conditions: (1) that SRG can no longer express opinions or include "opinion-based" material in the bulletins, (2) that the SRG can only issue one bulletin each month, and (3) that our "bulletins" be simply typical SRG newsletters. Accordingly, in order to maintain our independence of thought and communication with our membership, the SRG board has decided to abandon the email service of The Association, known as "ListServe", and to communicate with you directly through bulletins sent by email to the Class Agents. The Board intends to maintain our policy of complete transparency and that is the reason we have inserted the disclaimer on the front page of this bulletin. To communicate with the SRG address your emails to SRGPresident@gmail.com

The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD) are responsible for producing the SRG Bulletins. We do so in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution's purposes, which is to ensure our represented SRG Membership is kept informed in a timely manner.

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER SUL ROSS GROUP REUNION March 7-9, 2023

A block of rooms is available on a first-come, first-served basis, for the 2023 Sul Ross Group Reunion. Make your reservations by calling the College Station Hilton directly before Feb. 13, at 979-693-7500, or by booking online. Be sure to reference the group code **ROSS23** to receive the rate of \$129 per night, plus tax.

For more information, go to the Sul Ross Group web page link below:

<https://www.aggienetwork.com/events/2023/sulross.aspx>

IF YOU WISH COMMENT TO THOSE WHO DECIDE:

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