

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Seventy-Four (74)



August 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 leadership. The SRG is a nonpartisan organization. Our intention is in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution's purposes, to keep the Sul Ross Group membership informed on pertinent topics and occurrences at TAMU in a timely manner and enlist their support when required.

REGENTS NAME MARK A. WELSH III INTERIM PRESIDENT OF TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

By Texas A&M University System Marketing & Communications JULY 30, 2023



Figure 1 Interim President Mark A. Welsh III

Welsh brings experience as an Air Force general, dean of Texas A&M's Bush School of Government and Public Service.

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents unanimously approved Mark A. Welsh III as the interim president of Texas A&M University in a special-called meeting Sunday.

Chancellor John Sharp previously named Welsh on July 21 as the acting president of the university. The board's action was needed to place Welsh into a longer-term role to lead the university. Welsh replaces M. Katherine Banks, who stepped down earlier this month.

"I cannot think of a better person than Mark Welsh to lead Texas A&M right now," Sharp said. "He has experience running a large

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organization, but he also is widely respected and universally well-liked in the Aggie community. General Welsh has earned a reputation as a smart, thoughtful, and collaborative leader. We are lucky to have him in the president's office."

Welsh has been dean of the university's Bush School of Government and Public Service since 2016, but his time in the academic realm came after a long and decorated career in the United States Air Force.

Starting as a cadet in the United States Air Force Academy, Welsh spent a total of four decades serving the country in the military. Early in his career, he was a pilot with experience flying storied U.S. aircraft, including F-16s and A-10s. But his responsibilities changed, and he became one of the top generals in the Air Force. Welsh ultimately retired from the Air Force in 2016 as the 20th Chief of Staff of the Air Force, a position in which he was responsible for 664,000 active-duty Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and civilian forces serving in the U.S. and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he and other service chiefs functioned as military advisers to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council and President.

Welsh also commanded the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and NATO's Air Command at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Additionally, he served as associate director of military affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency and as commandant of the United States Air Force Academy.

"I am grateful to the Board of Regents and Chancellor Sharp for their confidence in me to lead this great university during a time of transition," Welsh said. "As interim president, my primary focus is to ensure our faculty and staff have the resources and support they need to continue their critically important work. I'm deeply committed to Texas A&M, our core values, and traditions, and to an environment that values the voice of every member of our faculty, staff, and student body. I pledge to every Aggie that I will work tirelessly to represent this great institution in a way that reflects your pride in it."

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/07/30/regents-name-mark-a-welsh-iii-as-interim-president-of-texas-am-university/>

TEXAS A&M SIGNS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH NOBEL LAUREATE ORGANIZATION

By Brandon V. Webb, Texas A&M University Office of Provost Communications JULY 12, 2023



Figure 2 -Dr. Alan Sams, Texas A&M provost and vice president for academic affairs; Countess Bettina Bernadotte af Wisborg, president of the Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings; and Dr. Jürgen Kluge, chairman of the board of the Foundation Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings

Texas A&M University announces the establishment of a prestigious partnership with The Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings. This esteemed collaboration elevates Texas A&M as the U.S. university provider of students for the annual world gathering that

brings Nobel Laureates together with enterprising scientists.

Through lectures, small gatherings, and informal conversations the Nobel Laureates seek to educate, inspire, and connect with these students. It marks a significant milestone in Texas A&M's pursuit of transformative education and academic excellence as a leader in scientific knowledge and innovation.

The four-year agreement names Texas A&M as the designated patron for 20 exceptional scientists per year — 10 will be Aggies — to attend the lectures, Agora talks and panel discussions that take place each year in Lindau, Germany. Texas A&M will select 10 students from other universities to participate in the meetings, travel to College Station to visit the Texas A&M campus, meet the members of their cohort and prepare for the symposium in Germany. The partnership also includes the participation of Texas A&M faculty as well as a representative from a research-driven company partner. Through these broader relationships, Texas A&M University will elevate its faculty and students as well as expand its network of collaborations and impact on the global stage.

“The unparalleled potential of sponsoring gifted students for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings is to inspire rising-star scientists to return to Texas A&M to pursue advanced degrees and consider serving the university in the future as faculty,” said Dr. Alan Sams, provost, and vice president for academic affairs. “The Office of the Provost is honored to partner with the Division of Research, Office for Faculty Affairs, the Hagler Institute for Advanced Study and University Distinguished Professor Joerg Steiner to make this exciting opportunity possible.”

“This agreement demonstrates Texas A&M University’s commitment to participating actively on the international stage,” said Dr. Jack G. Baldauf, vice president for research. “We look forward to enhancing the careers of our scientists, engineers, and researchers as well as those of top scholars from across the United States. The Nobel

Laureate Meetings will provide these students with unique opportunities to learn directly from the world's greatest minds."

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/07/12/texas-am-signs-partnership-agreement-with-nobel-laureate-organization/>

BALLISTIC, AERO-OPTICS, AND MATERIALS RANGE

Bush Combat Development Complex – Nathan Tichenor – ntichenor@tamu.edu - 2023



Figure 3 - BAM Construction

Ballistic, Aero-optics, and Materials (BAM) Range at the George H.W. Bush Combat Development Complex will be a large-scale, fully-enclosed multi-disciplinary research and development facility capable of evaluating high energy laser propagation, hypersonic aerothermodynamics, and hypervelocity impact response of materials and structures. This is accomplished within a fully characterized test channel that can achieve controllable atmospheric conditions. Once completed, the BAM Range will be the largest and most fully instrumented facility of its kind

in the United States.

There are two central features of the BAM Range that will allow this facility to bridge a gap in U.S. research existing between lab-scale experiments and open-range testing. The first feature includes novel diagnostic equipment and techniques that will enable precise measurements in a well-controlled and well-characterized environment. The second feature is the extended scale – eventually up to a kilometer in length – which will allow for large-scale prototype testing before advancing to more expensive full-scale system testing. As research security is a top priority, the BAM teams have incorporated the appropriate security protocols and measures in the facility's design and operation.

The BAM Range will help researchers investigate the influence of weather effects, like precipitation, particulates, and air turbulence, on the transmission of high-energy lasers and battlefield communications. It will also enable researchers to characterize the impact of these weather effects on realistic hypersonic vehicle materials and geometries. The hypervelocity impact capability will facilitate the development of new armor and other protective materials systems.

<https://bcdc.tamus.edu/facilities/bam/>

EXCLUSIVE: DAN PATRICK BREAKS HIS SILENCE ON A&M PROFESSOR (OPINION)

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

Aug. 2, 2023 Houston Chronicle Updated: Aug. 2, 2023 2:54 p.m.



Figure 4- Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

As a conservative public official whose actual words have often been ignored and distorted by opponents and the media, I understand the critical importance of free speech, both on college campuses and off. Academic freedom helps ensure Texas students are exposed to a range of ideas and learn how to critically evaluate and challenge those ideas.

But “academic freedom” is not a shield for employees of state-funded universities to hide behind to escape any criticism of what they

say and do. Many professors seem to believe they should have total control of all aspects of campus life, from curriculum to the hiring and firing of campus employees. They run off university presidents and chancellors who institute policies they don’t like.

Over the past few weeks, I have sat quietly as a group of professors at Texas A&M have flailed away with overheated rhetoric about my supposed interference with their “academic freedom.”

In March, I received a call from a University of Texas Medical Branch student’s parent, Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, about a statement allegedly made about me by a visiting A&M professor in her daughter’s class. What was told to me wasn’t a criticism of policy. That is part of being an elected official and doesn’t bother me. However, if what I heard was correct, it was a false and inappropriate personal attack on me.

I phoned Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp and simply asked him to look into the matter and determine what was actually said. I would do this on behalf of any student or parent who called our office with a similar complaint. My conversation with the chancellor lasted about a minute. Later I received a text from him saying the inquiry was proceeding. I never talked to him again about the inquiry, as it was ongoing.

It’s been reported that the professor has said that she had no issues with the inquiry and that her comment was taken out of context and misunderstood. It has also been reported that UTMB issued a censure and offered a public apology for any harm professor Joy Alonzo’s comment may have caused members of the community. She was put on paid leave but not fired. I accept the outcome from both UTMB and Texas A&M on this matter.

What followed is what concerns me the most. It is the ongoing outrage by the professors and their official “faculty senate” and, to some extent, the media. The A&M Faculty Senate has launched an investigation into, among other things, Texas A&M’s

handling of Alonzo's suspension. Their outrage seems based on the belief that anyone who dares ask a question about what is being taught or said in a classroom at a state university is somehow challenging their "academic freedom."

Every student, parent, university booster, regent, chancellor, school president or legislator has the right to ask a question about campus conduct. Professors, who are largely funded by Texas taxpayers and students, are not above being held accountable.

Campus employees who coach sports understand what being held accountable means. A losing record will draw questions and criticism, often leading to their termination. Sports and academics are different, but all should be subject to a level of accountability.

This isn't the first time a "faculty senate" has pushed back at me for holding them accountable. Last year, the University of Texas Faculty Council bluntly stated they are not accountable to the Board of Regents (appointed by the governor) or the Legislature. They affirmed their belief that no one can question them on any matter. In short, their position is to tell taxpayers and students: Give us your money (billions of taxpayer dollars), then shut up and stay out of our business.

In response, I helped lead the Legislature to pass a tenure reform package (Senate Bill 18) addressing the guaranteed-for-life jobs many professors enjoy. We also passed legislation to stop the destructive and discriminatory diversity, equity and inclusion offices on Texas campuses (Senate Bill 17). It is important to remember that Texas A&M failed to include white and Asian men in a list of underrepresented minorities who could be hired using a special recruitment fund. A&M is now being sued over the policy, including the director of what was the DEI office.

In the real world, outside the boundaries of a university campus, everyone is accountable at some level to someone — whether it's their customers, employer, employees, or shareholders. Professors should be no different.

Dan Patrick is the lieutenant governor of Texas.

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/dan-patrick-a-m-texas-university-academic-freedom-18272598.php?cmpid=gsa-chron-result>

TEXAS LEGISLATURE SETS US APART ON COLLEGE TUITION



Figure 5- The University of Kentucky Student Center.

As Texans we have many things for which to be thankful. One of those is the far-sighted leadership of our legislature and governor.

“Across Texas, resident undergraduate tuition and fees will be frozen for the next two years at A&M and all other public higher education institutions in the state, thanks to a \$700 million investment in the new state budget.”¹

“The state legislature approved a record \$1.19 billion in new spending across the Texas A&M University System, with over

\$373 million allocated to Texas A&M, including its Galveston campus and Health Science Center.”²

In a piece written by Melissa Korn, Andrea Fuller, and Jennifer S. Forsyth on August 10, 2023, for the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) entitled “Colleges Spend Like Ther’s No Tomorrow. The Places Are Just Devouring Money”. The subheading for the article says, “Students foot the bill for flagship universities that pour money into new buildings and programs with little pushback.”

The authors report that, “The nation’s best-known public universities have been on an unfettered spending spree. Over the past two decades, they erected new skylines comprising snazzy academic buildings and dorms. They poured money into big-time sports programs and hired layers of administrators. “

“Then they passed the bill along to students.”

To put this matter into perspective, according to the Texas A&M University web page, undergraduate tuition for the fall and spring semester for a Texas residents living on campus is \$11,550. Housing and food add an estimated \$13,154. When all expenses including books and supplies, travel, and personal expenses are added in, Texas A&M estimates the total cost for an in-state resident to attend the fall and spring semester is approximately \$31,158. These figures are close to the medium for public universities nationwide.

At Texas A&M University, the median federal loan debt among borrowers who completed their undergraduate degree is \$18,265. The median monthly federal loan payment (if it were repaid over 10 years at 5.05% interest) for student federal loan borrowers who graduated is \$183.

A key point in the WSJ article compares the rate of growth in college and university spending with the growth in student enrollment. The piece described its methodology:

¹ Texas A&M Advocacy Network, A Program of the Association of Former Students.

² Ibid.

“To examine public university spending, the Journal collected data from audits, archived budget websites and documents received through public-records requests covering expenses in fiscal 2002, 2012 and 2022.”

The report found that the median flagship university spending rose 38% between 2002 and 2022. “The schools paid for it in part by pulling in tuition dollars. The median flagship received more than double the revenue from undergraduate and graduate tuition and fees it did 20 years prior. Even accounting for enrollment gains, which amounted to a 64% price increase for the average student, far outpacing the growth in most big household expenses.”

Certainly, Texas A&M is no stranger to new buildings and amenities such as student recreation facilities and classroom buildings. However, it is important to remember that t.u. and Texas A&M share the funds produced by the Permanent University Fund (PUF). The Available Fund is the income derived from the PUF and can be used only for permanent facilities and is shared by all universities in the Texas A&M University System.

The authors point out that “The spending is inextricably tied to the nation’s \$1.6 trillion federal student debt crisis. Colleges have paid for their sprees in part by raising tuition prices, leaving many students with few options but to take on more debt. That means student loans served as easy financing for university projects.”

“Students do not have the resources right now to continue to foot the bill for all of the things that the university wants to do,” said Crispin South, a 2023 Oklahoma graduate. “You can’t just continue to raise revenue by turning to students.”

The point we wish to make in this article is that as Texans and Aggies, we are immensely fortunate to live in a rich state with good leadership and by keeping tuition costs moderate, we help ensure that we create a well-educated citizenship and workforce. Moreover, it is equally important that Texas A&M continue to use its resources wisely and in the best interests of the people of Texas.

To read the entire article, click on the link below.

[Colleges Spend Like There’s No Tomorrow. ‘These Places Are Just Devouring Money.’ - WSJ](#)

TEXAS A&M RECOGNIZES HONOR OF BEING HOME TO STATE'S LIBERTY BELL REPLICA



Figure 6 - Liberty Bell Replica - TAMU

By Lesley Henton, Texas A&M University
Division of Marketing & Communications
JULY 5, 2022

Most of the U.S. Treasury replicas hang in state capitols, but the Texas Governor gifted the state's bell to the Aggies for their enormous wartime sacrifices.

One of Texas A&M's most popular attractions is the Texas Liberty Bell, which hangs in the rotunda of the Academic Building. It's one of 55 full-size U.S. Treasury Liberty Bells given as gifts to U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia in 1950 to ring on patriotic occasions.

The bell was presented to Texas A&M on July 5, 1950 by Texas Gov. Allan Shivers, who in choosing the university parted ways with most states, which had their bells placed in state capitols.

"The campus of Texas A&M College is a logical depository for this relic," Shivers said at a ceremony at The Grove, a gathering place on campus at the time, where Cain Garage stands now. "In that statement lies no reflection upon the rest of our colleges and public institutions that are fully worthy of such consideration. But Texas A&M, with its military background, is particularly deserving."

It is said Shivers also stated, "No one has suffered more than the Aggies, so we will give it to them."

And in fact, scores of Aggies had fought and died in the two World Wars by the time the bell came to campus. The Texas Historical Commission states, "More than 2,200 Aggies served [in WW I, with at least 62 making the supreme sacrifice from a dedicated community of students, faculty and citizens during a time of war." In 1918, almost half of the university's students were serving in the military, more than any other college or service academy. In March 2022, the university announced the discovery of 15 additional Aggies killed in the First World War.

In World War II, more than 20,000 Aggies fought – over 14,000 as officers – with seven receiving Congressional Medals of Honor, and 953 paying the ultimate price.

Shivers said the bell should serve as an incentive to guard, defend and extend the freedoms Americans cherish. "It has been truthfully said that the fight for freedom never ends," he said. "In wars and between wars, the fight goes on against foes from without

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and within. This liberty bell is a symbol of our faith in the cause for which we fight. Its clear tone will remind us that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.”

Accepting the bell on behalf of A&M was President Marion T. Harrington, himself an Aggie, class of 1922 and the first former student to hold the office. “As a loyal A&M man, naturally I feel that Gov. Shivers has made a wise choice in selecting A&M College as a location for the bell for many other schools and cities requested it,” he told the crowd that day. “We feel that this college and its loyal sons have done much to preserve and defend our liberty, in war and peace.”

The Aggies, Harrington vowed, would “preserve and protect this great heritage.”

The one-ton Texas Liberty Bell and its sisters across the nation were created by Paccard Foundry of Annency-le-Vieux, France, as part of the “Save For Your Independence” savings bond drive held in the summer of 1950, sponsored by the Treasury Department.

The original Liberty Bell resides in Liberty Bell Center, across from Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and bears the famous inscription, “Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof.” Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly Isaac Norris ordered the bell for the state house tower in 1751 from the Whitechapel Foundry in London. It cracked on the first ring and was subsequently remade by two Philadelphia foundry workers, John Pass and John Stow.

According to the National Park Service, no one knows how the bell again was cracked, but it’s guessed a narrow split developed in the early 1840s after nearly 90 years of use. The wide crack that can be seen today is a result of a failed job at repair that caused a second crack to develop, rendering the bell silent forever.

[Texas%20A&M%20Recognizes%20Honor%20Of%20Being%20Home%20To%20State's%20Liberty%20Bell%20Replica%20-%20Texas%20A&M%20Today.html](#)



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

In order to maintain independence of thought and communication with our membership, the SRG board has decided to communicate directly through bulletins sent by email to the Class Agents and then shared with those in their Classes. Anyone is free to pass these bulletins to any Aggie, friends of Aggies, or just friends. The Board plans to maintain our policy of complete transparency and that is the reason we have inserted the disclaimer on the front page of this bulletin. **You can contact us at: SRGbulletin@gmail.com**

The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD) are solely 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 on pertinent topics in a timely manner.

To access information about us as the elected SRG Board of Directors, and our Constitution and By-Laws, and the SRG's history and what we are about, please refer to our new "**SRG Tab**" (Under "**Programs**") on The Association's website, at: **aggienetwork.com**.

Mark your calendar - Sul Ross '24 Reunion will be March 5 – 7, 2024 in College Station

The Hilton Hotel room block is open and ready to book room nights. The Group Code is ROSS24 and the cut-off date to make reservations is February 12, 2024.

**Hilton Hotel - 801 University Dr E, College Station, TX 77840
Phone (979) 693-7500**

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If you wish to comment to those who decide:

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