

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Seventy-Five



August 31, 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.

TEXAS A&M TO BUILD FACILITY AT NASA's JOHNSON SPACE CENTER IN HOUSTON

By Rusty Surette – KBTX TV - Aug. 16, 2023



Figure 1 - A&M at NASA

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (KBTX) - The members of the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System on Wednesday approved the creation of the Texas A&M Space Institute and the construction of a Texas A&M facility next to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

The board's action follows a \$350 million investment from the Texas Legislature. Earlier this year, State Rep. Greg Bonnen, who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, authored House Bill 3447 to create the Texas Space Commission, the Space Exploration and Aeronautics

Research Fund and the Texas Aerospace Research and Space Economy Consortium.

The measure also allocates \$200 million to Texas A&M for the construction of the facility at the Johnson Space Center.

Texas A&M says the purpose of the resource in Houston is to ensure that Texas remains a leader in the field of space exploration.

As for the institute, A&M says the vision involves expanding Texas's role as the leader in the new space economy.

"It would leverage Texas A&M's existing expertise and resources to make new discoveries, technological developments, health advances and workforce growth. It will depend on partnerships with public and private entities in a variety of sectors from across the country," said the Texas A&M University System in a news release.

"The Texas A&M Space Institute will make sure the state expands its role as a leader in the new space economy," John Sharp, chancellor of the Texas A&M System, said. "No university is better equipped for aeronautics and space projects than Texas A&M."

Texas A&M University, a Space Grant university, employs four astronauts on the faculty. Also, scientists and engineers from Texas A&M have participated in all NASA rover missions to Mars with two scientists active on NASA's Perseverance Rover Team. Plus, more than 280 faculty and investigators from Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station and Texas A&M AgriLife Research are involved in space-related research.

Interdisciplinary space-related research occurs in more than 12 colleges/schools across Texas A&M University in College Station, and other System universities, including Prairie View A&M University and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, have subject matter experts in space-related research, according to the news release.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/08/17/texas-am-build-facility-nasas-johnson-space-center-houston/>

PRESIDENT WELSH BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS A&M



Figure 2 - Texas A&M University Interim President Mark Welsh.

In a piece written in The Eagle by Alex Miller on August 24, 2023, Interim President Mark Welsh discussed the steps he is taking to build bridges and relationships across the entire Texas A&M family.

"It's been a pretty tumultuous summer," A&M interim President Mark Welsh said in a sit-down Q&A with two faculty members on Aug. 15. "And there's some things we need to learn from this summer, correct, and then move on and get back to being who we're supposed to be, which is the greatest university in this country."

While many questions still remain among staff, faculty, and former students, President Welsh chooses to move forward positively to establish trust and confidence in his office. His first goal is establishing clear lines of communication with all parties and to provide

complete transparency in goals, plans, and actions to be taken. His second goal is to revisit The Path Forward, the master plan formulated by President Banks.

Miller's piece reported "Honest assessments of The Path Forward is needed, Welsh said. He's tasked Joe Pettibon, A&M's vice president and deputy CFO, to review The Path Forward's initiatives and divide projects into camps like those on track that should move forward, ones that need rescaling, rescoping or even a new direction, and ones that need to stop."

Welsh met with the Faculty Senate and answered questions for 90 minutes. Welsh noted that there are currently unfilled positions for 16 deans, and he will be working with faculty to fill those positions. Several questions addressed the role of the president in the hiring of deans and department heads. He noted that there is a lot of work to be done in communicating the proper hiring protocols and in getting the right people in proper positions.

Welsh was asked about by several faculty members about Academic Freedom and he referred them to A&M's published rules on the matter. The other matter which seems to be a concern for faculty is the issue of Shared Governance. Miller's piece reported the following:

"Faculty Senate speaker Tracy Hammond said during an Aug. 14 meeting that shared governance requires four things: faculty to truthfully share their concerns to administration without fear, administration that listens to faculty's concerns and takes them into account, a rationale be provided when decisions are made against faculty's wishes, and for decisions to be made with transparency."

Welsh concluded with the following remarks, "You can't reestablish trust just by snapping your fingers and saying, 'Trust me,'" Welsh said. "It doesn't work that way. So, I think my job is to prove that I am trustworthy in this job. I think every other administrator's job is to prove they are trustworthy in their job. I think our faculty's job is to prove to our students that they're trustworthy. If we can do that, which I think we can do just by showing it every single day, then I think we'll be fine in this regard."

To read more click on the link below:

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STUDENTS CRACK DOWN ON COUNTERFEIT AGGIES RINGS



By Anna Maynard - KBTX News 3 at Six -
Published: Aug. 26, 2023 at 8:34 AM CDT

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - The Association of Former Students and Texas A&M University said it's not going to stand by and let counterfeit Aggie rings stay on the market.

The Aggie ring, which takes a student 90 credit hours to earn, has been a longstanding symbol of academic achievement for over a century. As a result, vice president of The Association of Former Students Scott Walker said the Aggie ring is frequently targeted by counterfeiters looking to cash in on its significance.

The fake rings have been found on websites like Amazon and eBay, listed for a fraction of the price of a genuine Aggie ring.

According to a press release from The Association of Former Students, the ring is protected by a federal trademark, and counterfeit listings are violating it.

Illegal products aren't going to get past us because we have more than half a million set of eyes out there watching for and reporting people, companies and websites who try to profit dishonestly off the Aggie Ring. Scott Walker, The Association of Former Students Vice President.

The Sul Ross Group strongly supports the effort by the Association and urges the harshest possible penalties against all perpetrators. If anyone knows of a violation, please report it to the Association of Former Students.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/08/26/texas-am-university-association-former-students-crack-down-counterfeit-aggie-rings/>

TEXAS A&M ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS SHARED WITH THE BOARD OF REGENTS

August 22, 2023 - WTAW - Bill Oliver – August 22, 2023



Another record number of students at Texas A&M have started classes.

A&M chief operating officer Greg Hartman shared enrollment projections during a board of regents committee meeting.

This fall's headcount on the flagship campus is about 72,000. Hartman says the number is 78,000 when adding the health science center and the Galveston campus.

Hartman said there was a record 60,000 freshman applications that led to a class of 15,000.

The regents were also told that the enrollment ceiling five years from now was projected to be around 85,000. Hartman said that was a number before former president Katherine Banks resigned.

<https://wtaw.com/?s=A%26M+freshman+enrollment>

CORPS OF CADETS WELCOMES LARGEST CLASS IN LAST FIVE YEARS

Texas A&M Today - By Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets AUGUST 17, 2023



As one of the nation's most unique leadership programs, the Corps of Cadets is home to students from all majors, interest, and backgrounds. The class of 2027 represents a 20-percent growth in size over last fall's incoming cadet class.

As the 2023-24 academic year begins in Aggieland, the Corps of Cadets welcomed 858 new cadets to campus for Fall Orientation Week (FOW). The incoming class is

comprised of students who've transferred into the Corps and incoming first-year students to Texas A&M University.

The Corps' newest class of cadets is the largest in the last five years for Texas A&M's oldest student organization. The class of 2027 represents a 20% growth in class size over last fall's incoming cadet class. Cadet-led efforts in recruiting and retention will be key factors to continued growth, say Corps officials. Last year, the Corps achieved a retention rate of 82%, an 11% increase over the previous year.

As one of the nation's most unique leadership development programs, the Corps of Cadets is home to students from all majors, interests, and backgrounds. Though the Corps experience is deeply rooted in its iconic, military-based cultural model, the skills that cadets develop in the program are applicable in every environment. This is proven regularly by the 60% of cadets who go on to lead in the public and private sectors after graduation, and the 40% of cadets who pursue a military commission, helping Texas A&M uphold its reputation as the largest producer of officers outside of the service academies.

"The Corps of Cadets provides every student, no matter their goals, with a developmental experience that's like no other. While we do leverage our military structure to foster the holistic growth of each cadet, we are preparing our students to lead at every level, whether that's in the public, private, military or non-profit sectors," said Brigadier General Patrick Michaelis '93, commandant of the Corps of Cadets.

"From day one of FOW to the time our cadets walk the stage at graduation, they are receiving the tools they need to tackle any obstacle in life. The value of this experience, especially when paired with our growth priority, will have significant impacts on our communities, our state, and our nation."

https://today.tamu.edu/2023/08/17/texas-am-corps-of-cadets-welcomes-largest-class-in-last-five-years/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Corps%20Of%20Cadets%20Welcomes%20Largest%20Class%20In%20Last%20Five%20Years&utm_campaign=today_08-23-2023



COACH GARY BLAIR IS INDUCTED INTO THE NAISMITH HALL OF FAME.

BRAD TOWNSEND Dallas Morning News – August 12, 2023

UNCASVILLE, Conn. — One by one, members of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2023 took the stage Friday and, for a while, the 2011 national champion with deep Dallas ties stole the show.

Dallas native and former Texas A&M women's coach Gary Blair charmed reporters in the Mohegan Sun's Cabaret Theater with his folksy wit and stories from his high school coaching days. At South Oak Cliff, to be precise. That's where he coached golf, taught physical education,

where for three straight years he had a kid named Dennis Rodman who didn't even play basketball, and where he originally made \$7,000 per year.

Blair only began coaching girls because South Oak Cliff High was starting a girls basketball program. Three girls knocked on boys P.E. teacher Blair's gym door and asked if he would coach them.

"So, think about this," said Blair, who was inducted into the Hall of Fame on August 12. "I was a JV basketball player. I didn't score a point for the varsity basketball team at Bryan Adams and Dennis Rodman didn't score a point in high school. "Sometimes you find a calling in a different way."

Blair took South Oak Cliff to five straight state tournaments, winning three state titles and 105 of his last 106 games. Blair initially turned down the chance to coach at Louisiana Tech under Leon Barmore and Sonja Hogg. He was making \$22,000, but Tech offered \$500 more and a 6-year-old, brown station wagon. "It was the best move I've ever made," Blair said.

Blair didn't become a Division I head coach until age 40, at Stephen F. Austin in 1985 and wound up becoming one of the most successful women's basketball coaches in history.

Blair retired after Texas A&M's 2021-22 season, having earned 444 of his 852 career college victories while coaching the Aggies, including the 2011 NCAA title game victory over Notre Dame.

Mind you, before Blair's arrival, Texas A&M was 22-90 in Big 12 play.

“That team was special,” he said of the 2010-11 Aggies. “They believe in each other and all of a sudden, we’re in Indianapolis, playing for the whole can of worms.

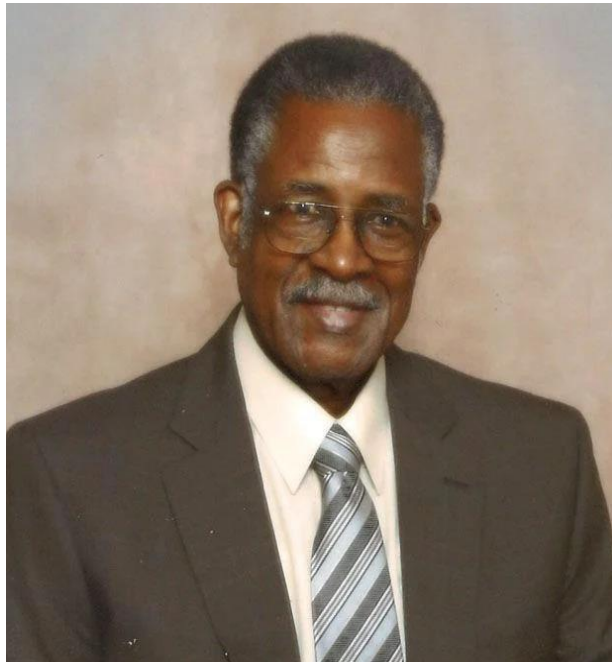
“You had a new team win besides your normal six blue bloods that had been winning most of the championships.”

Thank you, Coach Blair.

https://theeagle.com/eedition/page-a1/page_834a6503-a61e-5f36-9910-8fa9d5b951dd.html

LEROY STERLING, ONE OF TEXAS A&M's FIRST BLACK STUDENTS DIES AT AGE 84

EAGLE STAFF REPORT – August 19, 2023



Leroy Sterling of Bryan was one of the first Black students to enroll at Texas A&M University, passed away on Aug. 8 at age 84.

By 1963, a year before the Civil Rights Act, three Black students quietly enrolled in a summer session as “special students,” becoming the first to attend Texas A&M, according to a February article by the school’s Division of Marketing & Communications.

“Among them was Leroy Sterling, who took classes during two summer session before going on to graduate from Texas Southern University and earn a master’s degree in French and English from the University of

Houston,” the article states. “Sterling served in the Army and enrolled at Texas Southern University prior to taking summer classes at Texas A&M.”

Sterling was born in Bryan on March 15, 1939. He was inducted into the Bryan Independent School District Hall of Honor in 2011. “While he took pride in his accomplishments and enjoyed the honors afforded him, he also knew that no man walks alone. A lifelong Christian, he was an active member of Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church. Those who knew him knew that the music closest to his heart was Negro Spirituals,” Leroy’s obituary states. “These songs reminded him of our ancestors who paved the way, and whose faith transformed adversities into exquisite

melodies.” He was a professor at Texas Southern for five years before working for Dow Chemical Company for 17 years. He went on to teach at Alabama A&M University.

Texas A&M President Michael K. Young awarded Sterling the Pioneer Medal in 2019, which honors African Americans admitted to the university between 1963 and 1970.

“Leroy Sterling is counted among Texas A&M University’s most esteemed former students and will always be a treasured member of the Aggie family,” Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, interim president, said in the Friday press release. “Mr. Sterling first served his country and then went on to serve our university by forging a path for all students to achieve their goals in higher education. We wish his family comfort during this difficult time, and peace in knowing their loved one had such a positive impact on Texas A&M and the world around him.”

“He described his experience at Texas A&M as positive overall, noting his fellow students were ‘really nice’ and befriended him,” the article states. “Sterling visited the A&M campus last August and spoke about the school’s recent addition of a statue honoring Sen. Matthew Gaines, who played an integral role in the founding of Texas A&M.”

https://theeagle.com/eedition/page-a4/page_78c83a31-887c-570d-9152-3fd284d94650.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**

If you wish to comment to those who decide:

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