

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Eighty (80)



January 18, 2024

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.

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**

Note To all Class Agents:

For the class hospitality suites for the Reunion, the AFS will provide coolers, ice, cups, and napkins. Each class will be required to furnish ANY and ALL beverages that the class may wish to have in the hospitality suites.

For all evening meals at the Reunion, the seating should be by seniority of classes, starting with the classes of the 1940s and by the mobility impaired. Please respect the most senior classes in front of you and let them enter the dining room first.

The link to the Online Registration webpage is tx.ag/SulRoss24 and will go live the week of January 15th.



Figure 1 - Campus overview

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

**GENERAL (RET.) MARK A. WELSH III,
PRESIDENT**

President's Brief – December 13, 2023

Members of the Aggie Family,

As the semester draws to a close and we begin to wrap things up for the holiday break, I can't help but smile. Collectively, we've accomplished so much in just a few short months. We've come together to acknowledge our missteps, supported one another through change and transition, and taken time to celebrate our achievements and milestones. We are a family, one big Aggie Family, and I'm grateful to the Board of Regents and Chancellor Sharp for their confidence in my abilities to lead this family into the future.

I've lived what I consider a blessed life with many highs along the way, both personally and professionally, but being named president of Texas A&M University — a university I've loved since I was 6 years old — is truly humbling and one of the greatest honors of my life. This place is incredible, and I hope you know that it's incredible because of each of you.

I look forward to working with you to map out the road ahead for Texas A&M. Thanks to your efforts, there is already great momentum, and I'm excited to see what the new year will bring.

In the spirit of keeping the momentum going, here are three important things you should know before you head out for the holiday break:

- **QUICK-LOOK ASSESSMENT:** Our leads continue to make progress on the quick-look assessment decisions. Below are a few highlights:
 - The quick-look assessment report for Texas A&M University at Galveston was recently made available online. Now through Jan. 5, the university community is invited to provide feedback and input on the report to help inform my decisions. As you may recall, similar reviews are underway for Texas A&M University at Qatar and the Higher Education Center at McAllen. Those reports are expected to be shared for feedback in early 2024.
 - The space allocation study has been split into two parts to better address the needs of our university community. As the survey unfolded, it became apparent that some areas simply needed more time to review and propose alternative plans to accommodate different units and their respective teams. Part one, which includes proposed solutions for student study space on West Campus, was shared with the president's cabinet and

deans for comment last week, and I anticipate receiving part two later this month.

- While the capacity and student experience studies were slated to begin in January 2024, work is already underway to support these efforts before the new year. Participants will be solicited from deans, the president's cabinet and respective faculty, staff and student groups prior to the university closing for the holiday break.
 - I have received recommendations from Jack Baldauf, vice president for research, regarding the decision to allow School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences researchers the choice to use either the university or AgriLife Research for processing grants. I'll be reviewing this memo and associated recommendations over the holidays and will share decisions in the new year.
 - The Enrollment Management unit was recently recreated within the Office of the Provost to realign student-facing services from application to graduation within the same area. Specifically, this unit now includes Admissions, Recruitment, the Visitor Center, Registrar, Scholarships and Financial Aid, and Aggie One Stop.
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- **ACADEMIC FREEDOM COUNCIL:** Texas A&M faculty, librarians and students have a fundamental right to academic freedom. This freedom is essential for discovering, developing, communicating, and applying knowledge in academia. Protections for academic freedom must be based in policies and procedures, not just statements of value. The task force has identified that the most efficient way to meet this need would be the creation of an Academic Freedom Council consisting of faculty, at least one librarian and one research scientist. University rule 12.01.99.M1 has been revised to include the council and will be available for feedback soon. I'm also currently reviewing the task force's proposed official statement reaffirming our commitment to academic freedom and look forward to being able to finalize that soon.
 - **S.B. 17 COMPLIANCE BY JAN. 1, 2024:** I want to thank and recognize the important work happening across the university to ensure compliance with Senate Bill 17, which prohibits diversity, equity and inclusion offices and initiatives at public universities, effective Jan. 1, 2024. Thanks to all your hard work, we will be in full compliance by the new year when the bill goes into effect on Jan. 1. It will remain incumbent upon all of us to ensure continued compliance with this law, as with all federal and state laws. If you ever have questions about federal or state laws, please reach out to your supervisor or work through our Division of Risk, Ethics and Compliance.

In closing, later this week, I have the honor of celebrating the accomplishments of our fall graduates through several commencement ceremonies. It's always such a special time as we send Aggies across the stage to earn their diplomas and join the ranks of our expansive Aggie Network. And before we know it, the holiday break will be upon us. Regardless of your traditions or how you celebrate this season, I hope you can spend

time with those you love and come back rested and recharged for an exciting year ahead. For full article please read the following URL: [Messages from the Office of the President | Office of the President | Texas A&M University \(tamu.edu\)](#)

Happy holidays, and Gig 'em!

r/mark - General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III, President



Chancellor's Century Council

COUNCIL NEWS

Letter from John Sharp:

I thought it important that you be aware of President Mark A. Welsh III's message to the campus, correcting misinformation circulating on social media and several websites.

As always, thanks for your support.

John Sharp

Correcting Misinformation About Our University

January 7, 2024

Members of the Aggie Family,

Several websites and social media sources recently have published inaccuracies and erroneous assumptions about Texas A&M University and its branch campus in Qatar. With the speed at which misinformation can travel today, it's important that you have access to accurate information about our university.

Texas A&M University at Qatar opened its doors in 2003 with the purpose of facilitating education and research in chemical, electrical, mechanical and petroleum engineering in a major oil and gas region, while enhancing American educational and cultural diplomacy in the area. As the No. 1 petroleum engineering university in the United States, Texas A&M is one of six American universities in Doha's Education City supporting the education pillar of the U.S.-Qatar bilateral relationship. Scores of U.S. businesses operate in Qatar, which has strong ties to Texas-based energy companies. And, of course, Qatar is home to our country's largest military base in the Middle East.

Since A&M classes started two decades ago in Qatar, we have graduated more than 1,500 engineering students and currently serve over 730 students. Many of these graduates are taking leadership roles at major energy companies in Qatar and around the world. The endorsement of academic programs and student activities by many U.S. and multinational companies underscores the campus's significance in shaping the future

generation of engineers. A&M's Qatar campus also achieved a significant milestone in recent years as women now constitute half the student population.

Despite what recent online reports have stated, Texas A&M at Qatar does not offer a nuclear engineering program or any classes on the subject.

The research conducted at this campus focuses on energy, water and environment, carbon capture, smart manufacturing, artificial intelligence and machine learning, data science, and data analytics in the energy sector. Contrary to what these articles have implied, no nuclear technology, weapons/defense or national security research is conducted at this campus. Nor does the Qatar campus have any connection to nuclear reactor research done in Texas or the Los Alamos National Lab. The insinuation that we are somehow leaking or compromising national security research data to anyone is both false and irresponsible.

As part of The Texas A&M University System, Texas A&M complies with all U.S. laws and agency regulations that govern how we manage and report international engagements. All research and its funding at the Qatar campus is reviewed and managed through the same A&M research compliance offices as the main campus. All A&M campuses, including Qatar, follow the same policies related to research and funding, which means each abide by state and federal research and export control regulations. Furthermore, the U.S. federal government has repeatedly recognized The Texas A&M University System for being a national leader in counterintelligence and protecting sensitive information and technology from foreign actors through its robust counterintelligence operations and research security controls. We consistently uphold this high level of security by actively overseeing all our systems, processes, and facilities.

Many of the recent public reports that call into question our security measures, intentions or motivations are simply wrong and based on false information and assumptions. We will continue to maintain our high standards for security, our commitment to our core values and our belief that education is essential to the advancement and betterment of society.

Texas A&M remains vigilant in monitoring developments in the region, especially since early October. We will continue to engage Chancellor Sharp and the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on this matter, and will keep our faculty, staff and students informed if/as the situation changes.

Thank you,

r/mark,

General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III, President



Letter from John Sharp – January 9, 2024:

Texas A&M University was selected today to help the United States Space Force's Space Strategic Technology Institute with critical research worth nearly \$50 million.

This honor comes after commanding General B. Chance Saltzman visited the Texas A&M REllis campus, where we are building the nation's biggest hypersonic test tunnel. Gen. Saltzman was impressed with what he saw.

"This opportunity, pursuant to the In-Space Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing National Strategy, will focus on procurement of technologies relating to spaceflight experimentation and space-related signal, energy, and transportation technologies," the U.S. Space Force announced in a press release.

Texas A&M will facilitate applied research in the areas of In-Space Operations, which includes Space Access, Mobility, and Logistics. The University of Cincinnati will also collaborate on the effort.

This summer, Texas A&M University Regents 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.

Today's announcement is just more evidence that Texas A&M will make sure that Texas not only maintains but grows its role as a leader in the new space economy.

No university is better equipped for aeronautics and space projects than Texas A&M.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Sharp".

In conjunction with this announcement, it should be noted that The United States Space Force is establishing Space Strategic Technology Institutes to address space Science and Technology challenges through a network of partnered universities. Space Force envisions the institutes will facilitate and focus joint applied research on transformational space domain technology breakthroughs and developments that lead to the advancement of capabilities that can be transitioned and integrated into current and future USSF and U.S. government space capabilities. It is highly desired for the research to lead to testbeds, high fidelity modeling and simulations, demonstrations, and prototypes. The research is expected to transition technology to higher technology readiness levels throughout the period of performance, and out years will be awarded based on an evaluation of this ability. To read the full story, go to: www.spaceforce.mil

DEI BAN AT TEXAS COLLEGES STARTS JANUARY 1



Figure 2 - Texas A&M University, Jack K. Williams Building.

How lucky we are! Texas Senate Bill 17, the law banning diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, known as DEI, took effect on January 1, 2024, at Texas public colleges and universities. Texas and Florida are the only two states to ban the scourge of DEI so far while several other state legislatures are planning to follow suit. The question remains whether the dedicated DEI proponents can be constrained from their goal of continuing the conversion of colleges and universities to favoring ethnic and cultural groups they favor at the expense of those they do not favor by stealthy means.

In his President's Brief on December 13, 2023, President Mark Welsh reported that "Thanks to your hard work, we will be in full compliance by the new year when the bill goes into effect on Jan. 1. It will remain incumbent upon all of us to ensure continued compliance with this law, as with all federal and state laws." It is important for Texas A&M to be a leader in purging DEI from all aspects of our university.

To the DEI proponents, "diversity" means racial preferences and affirmative action. "Equity" is a neo-Marxist concept that means "to each according to his need, and from each according to his ability." "Inclusion" means including those the proponents such as African Americans and LGBTQ folks, and excluding those they do not like such as Asians, Jews, and white males. These are not Sul Ross Group definitions. The affirmative-action component as practiced by Harvard and the University of North Carolina was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court last year. The definition of "equity" was plainly stated by Michelle Obama when she said, "Our goal is that everyone ends up in the same place regardless of where they started." Finally, "inclusion" is clearly defined in the ACES program adopted by Texas A&M several years ago. It is the opposite of the American merit-based society.

In a piece by Heather Mac Donald published in the Wall Street Journal on December 6, 2023, entitled *DEI Drives Campus Antisemitism*, DEI Drives Campus Antisemitism - WSJ, she says "The real issue on campuses isn't antisemitism but the anti-Western ethos that has colonized large swaths of the curriculum. Elite schools once disdained Jews because they were seen as outsiders to Western civilization. Now they are reviled as that civilization's very embodiment. Students explain that their hatred comes from what they learn in class—that the West is built on white supremacism and oppression. Israel is cast as the Western settler-colonialist oppressor par excellence."

Due to the exceptional quality of our student body, Texas A&M has experienced little to no demonstrations that reflect antisemitic attitudes on other campuses.

In another piece in the Wall Street Journal by James Freeman published on January 5, 2024, entitled "*Merit Is No Longer Evil*" (subtitled: Is DEI vulnerable to sudden collapse?), 'Merit Is No Longer Evil' - WSJ, he speaks about "**preference falsification**".

He quotes Duke economist Timus Kuran from his book *Private Truths, Public Lies*. Kuran says, “**preference falsification** has been central to the trajectory of DEI. He goes on to say “A common effect of **preference falsification** is the preservation of widely disliked structures. Another is the conferment of an aura of stability on structures vulnerable to sudden collapse. When the support of a policy, tradition, or regime is largely contrived, a minor event may activate a bandwagon that generates massive yet unanticipated change.”

“In distorting public opinion, preference falsification also corrupts public discourse and, hence, human knowledge.”

To paraphrase Kuran’s meaning, DEI is the perfect example of conferring an aura of the fairness, stability, and benefits brought by its adoption. By implying its widespread acceptance, people are afraid to disagree for fear of being ridiculed and ostracized.

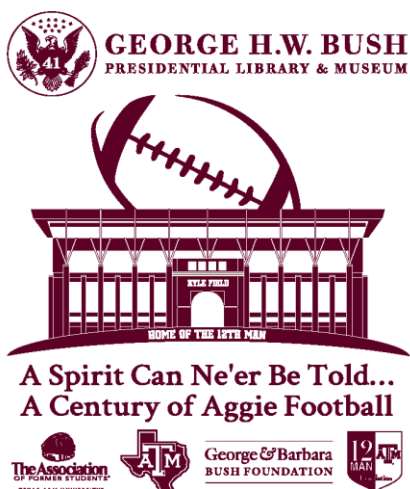
Freeman further explains, “Most professors watched in concealed horror the transfer of enormous powers from themselves to rapidly growing DEI bureaucracies. In countless contexts, they endorsed policies they considered harmful, participated in the defamation of scholars they admired, and sheepishly submitted to DEI training—all to be left alone, to avoid being called racist, to advance their careers. But the resulting equilibrium was self-undermining. In emboldening DEI officials, it increased privately felt anger and resentment. The stage was set for a preference cascade in reverse.”

DEI has been exposed for fraud that is its true goal. But the fight to dismantle it has only begun. A well-known quote by Jan Masaryk is, “Dictators are rulers who always look good until the last ten minutes.” We’ll see.

To read more, click on the links below:

DEI Drives Campus Antisemitism - WSJ

‘Merit Is No Longer Evil’ - WSJ***



The Bush Presidential Library is showing an event from August 28, 2023 to April 28, 2024, “A Spirit Can Ne’er Be Told ...A Century of Aggie Football showing from the 1890s to 2023”. The exhibit will be open during the Reunion and those that choose to do so, will have an opportunity to go to the Library to view it.

COACH ELKO ROUNDS OUT COACHING STAFF



Figure 3 - Texas A&M Head Football Coach Mike Elko.

Texas A&M football coach Mike Elko has rounded out his new coaching staff with a prominent group of proven coaches from across the country. During the past two months since he was hired, Coach Elko has had to juggle his schedule with managing a host of important activities. He has had to focus on retaining the existing scholarship players, completing the 2024 high school recruiting class, hiring a new coaching staff, filling holes in the exiting team with new players from the transfer portal and addressing the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) financial arrangements with incoming and existing players, which involves solidifying donor relations.

Key staff positions have been filled with Colin Klein from Kansas State, as Offensive Coordinator, Jay Bateman, from Florida, as Defensive Coordinator, Tommy Moffit, from LSU, as Director of Strength and Conditioning, and Derek Miller, from Duke, as General Manager of Recruiting.

Here is the staff thus far.

- Mike Elko - Head Coach
- Collin Klein - Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks
- Trooper Taylor - Associate Head Coach/Running Backs
- Adam Cushing - Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line
- Holmon Wiggins - Wide Receivers
- Jay Bateman - Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers
- Sean Spencer - Defensive Line
- Tony Jerod-Eddie - Defensive Line
- Ish Aristide - Defensive Backs
- Patrick Dougherty - Special Teams Coordinator/Tight Ends
- Tommy Moffitt - Director of Strength & Conditioning
- Derek Miller - Recruiting General Manager

Now that the bowl game is finished and the holidays are nearly over, the staff will go to work. The first order of business will be Coach Tommy Moffit starting the new off-season strength and conditioning program to build a culture, work ethic, and to prepare the team for Spring Football.

NEWS FLASH:



Figure 34 - Ross Bjork - A.D.

On January 16, 2024, it was confirmed that Texas A&M Director of Athletics Ross Bjork has been hired by Ohio State University in a similar role. Bjork will succeed Gene Smith, who is retiring on June 30, 2024. Per Ohio State, Bjork's tenure in Columbus will officially begin on July 1. Bjork also helped A&M athletics bring in new coaches such as Mike Elko, Jim Schlossnagle, Joni Taylor, Trisha Ford and Gerrod Chadwell, as well

as elevating Brian Kortan from interim status.

With Bjork moving to the Big Ten, Texas A&M now begins searching for its fifth athletic director since 2012. For more information go to: [Texas A&M AD Bjork to become Ohio State's next AD \(theeagle.com\)](https://www.theeagle.com)



Figure 4 - Reveille X – April 2021 – Texas A&M Today – Jesse Everett/Texas A&M Marketing & Communications

Reveille X

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

To provide our thoughts and communication with our membership, the SRG board has decided to communicate directly through bulletins sent by email to the Class Agents who will then share 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**.

If you wish to comment to those who decide:

Chancellor John Sharp: **chancellor@tamus.edu**

The Board of Regents: **vickie@tamus.edu** or **jbell@tamus.edu**

President TAMU: **markwelsh@tamu.com**

Provost Alan Sams: **asams@tamu.edu**

Athletic Director Ross Bjork: **rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu**

VPSA Joe Ramirez: **jramirez@vpsa.tamu.edu**

Commandant Patrick Michaelis: **pmichaelis@corps.tamu.edu**
