

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Eighty-Nine (89)



September 11, 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.

9/11 – Never forget!!

From the Office of the President – Texas A&M University



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTS BRIEF - GENERAL (RET.)
MARK A. WELSH III – August 19, 2024

Welcome back for the start of the fall semester! This is my favorite time of year, when all of our campuses come back to life and students — around 78,000 across our campuses this year.

You've heard me say many times that Texas A&M is a special place. And no matter how long you've been an Aggie, I encourage you to take time to embrace the Spirit of Aggieland and all it has to offer ... attend sporting events, take part in time-honored traditions and look out for one another. This spirit is what makes our Aggie Family so special, and each of us carries it with us. It's shown in the way we take care of one another — through good times and bad; the way we lift each other up and celebrate our shared love for Texas A&M and its people. Being an Aggie really does stand for something.

I hope you are as excited as I am to start another academic year at Texas A&M. Here are a few things you should know:

Budget Allocations for FY25:

As I've discussed previously, with an annual \$2.5 billion budget, the university should operate much like a large business. One of my initial priorities was to establish a Strategic Budget Council that meets with each Dean and Vice President to discuss their short- and long-term initiatives, major challenges and funding requirements, and

then prioritizes the most important efforts for funding allocation. In this fiscal year, I asked the council to focus on two key themes for prioritizing allocations: 1) Does it help “fix the foundation of the university?” and 2) Does it enhance the student experience? I’m happy to share that the council has completed its work in prioritizing the university’s funding allocations for the upcoming fiscal year.

Quick-Look Implementation:

The Executive Facilities Committee has established a new process for all capital projects with an investment at or above \$4 million. The list of projects has grown from the 51 identified during the Quick-Look Assessment last October to 114 potential projects. Soon, we will share an update on how this new process works and which projects will move forward this year.

As you’ll recall, I decided it was important to allow our colleges/schools to determine their own naming preferences. Just last week, the new names took effect. The previous Schools of Architecture, Education and Human Development, Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy and Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts are now officially Colleges.

The new College of Marine Sciences and Maritime Studies at our Galveston campus also launched last week! The creation of this new college positions the university to become the nation’s premier destination for knowledge and education in the blue economy.

Ayers Saint Gross is the firm recently selected to assist in the development of the Higher Education Center at McAllen’s comprehensive master plan with a project completion date of Dec. 6.

Leadership Updates:

Commandant: As announced last week, General Patrick R. Michaelis has transitioned into a new role, serving as a Special Assistant in my office. Lieutenant General (Ret.) Loyd “Chip” Utterback ’75 has agreed to serve as Interim Commandant while we conduct a national search to find a permanent replacement. A search committee, led by Chief of Staff Susan Ballabina, will meet to receive their charge in the coming days.

Dean Searches:

College of Architecture, College of Pharmacy, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and School of Engineering Medicine: As shared in my last update, the Provost will be reopening a new architecture Dean search this fall. The Provost will also launch searches for Deans of the Colleges of Pharmacy and Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and School of Engineering Medicine this fall.

Graduate and Professional School: In July, Fuhui Tong was named Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School. Dr. Tong has served as Interim Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School since August 2022.

In addition to the start of the semester, we’re already looking ahead to the 89th State Legislative Session. You may recall that last session, not only did state funding enable us to freeze tuition for students and fund ongoing efforts, but with the state’s

support, we've launched the Virtual Production Institute, which is set to have new virtual production stages accessible to our College of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts students later this fall. We'll also break ground on the Texas A&M University Space Institute, the world's largest indoor facility to simulate lunar and Mars surface operations.

Please read on for more good news happening across the university. It's wonderful to have you back home. Thanks, and Gig 'em!

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

President's Brief - August 2024 | Office of the President | Texas A&M University (tamu.edu)



Figure 1 - 1894 A&M Football Team

FROM THE PAST ... LAWRENCE SULLIVAN ROSS AND THE "SPHEROID"

The idea of sports for Sul Ross, the old Texas Ranger and country boy, was hunting and fishing. Arriving at the A&M College in early 1891 he noted the only semi-organized sports were baseball and some tennis. However, news of the growing trend toward club sports and collegiate teams appeared in Galveston, Dallas, and Houston newspapers about the growing excitement at east coast Ivy League colleges about the game of – football. Texans read with interest a *Houston Post* feature article on the basics of football to “introduce the tactics and methods of the big northern teams.”

Eager to bring more organization and *esprit d’ corps* to the cadets President Sul Ross was approached by cadets with the idea of the sport of football to A&M. Some say cadet Robert G. Littlejohn ‘92 brought the first pigskin to campus in the spring of ‘91.

Approaching Sully with the idea, he was told the sport would be great form of exercise and physical training for the cadets. One of Ross’ questions on this new sport was how in the world could anyone play with a leather “spheroid ball” that flops around and could not roll in a straight line!

Sully gave the go-ahead. Littlejohn had only one football and began, from knowledge he had from sports accounts in newspapers, to coach the boys in the rudiments of the game. A passing reporter noted, “The cadets took to the rough-and-tumble game like ducks to water.” With no organized college teams in Texas, football was an intramural sport between cadet units in the Corps of Cadets. A loose set of rules

added to both the confusion and excitement of the game. The *Battalion in 1893* announced the first formal A&M team for intercollegiate games would be named “the A. & M. F.B.T.”

The Batt reported that the team had developed excellent skills and “superb talent” in “interfering” [blocking], tackling, and “sprinting the ball.” While there are no known firm details, the first semi-official A&M college game was played on campus on George Washington’s Birthday, February 22, 1893, against a visiting team organized and coached by former student John Carson ‘86 [1886]. Little is known of any other games until the addition of the first coach, Frank Dudley Perkins in early 1894.

Campus excitement grew and was “manifest in the scrappy game.” Attempts were made to play an annual game on Washington’s Birth Day, however in ‘94 the Dallas YMCA team canceled an appearance. Sul Ross substituted the disappointment of the scrubbed game with a grand Corps Trip and parade for the cadets to San Jacinto Battlefield on April 21, 1894. In the fall of ‘94 the A&M Farmers (cadets were not known as ‘Aggies’ until after 1900) opened their two-game season with a victory over Galveston Ball High School and were out-scored by the Varsity team in Austin.

In ‘94 there was no band, no yell leaders, no mascot, no Aggie Ring, and no War Hymn – all of which Sul Ross set the stage for their introduction in next few years. Not to be out done, some energetic cadets in 1894 printed a Yell Book with suggested chants and cadet yells, a sample of which would reappear three decades later in Pinky Wilson’s the *Aggie War Hymn*:

Chick-gar-roo-gar-rem!

Chick-gar-roo-gar-rem!

Rough! Tough!

Real Stuff! Texas A&M

Dr. John A. Adams, Jr. ‘73



Figure 2 - Chancellor John Sharp

CHANCELLOR JOHN SHARP NAMED ‘MAN OF THE YEAR’ IN TEXAS AGRICULTURE

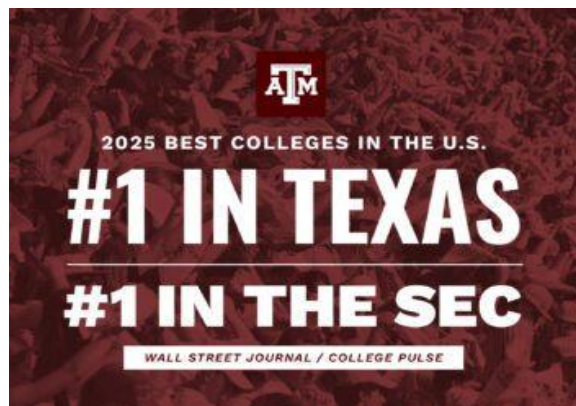
August 22, 2024 - by Kay Ledbetter

John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System, is the recipient of the 2024 “Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture” award, presented by the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association, TCAAA.

Sharp received the honor during the association’s abbreviated state meeting, held at the conclusion of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s recent staff conference. The association’s state meeting was unique this year because Texas hosted the National Association of County Agricultural Agents meeting July 14-19. “This year, our board of directors voted to give only one award,” said Tommy Phillips, TCAAA president and AgriLife Extension agriculture and natural resources agent in Kaufman County. “Chancellor

Sharp has been a true friend to agents in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as well as to TCAAA. We wanted to recognize him for all his efforts in supporting our state's agricultural economy, our state agency, and our association of ag agents at both the state and national levels. His leadership stands apart, and it was only fitting that we honor him as this year's sole award recipient."

Texas A&M System Chancellor Sharp named 'Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture' - AgriLife Today (tamu.edu)



WALL STREET JOURNAL NAMES A&M THE BEST UNIVERSITY IN TEXAS

By Lesley Henton, Texas A&M University Division of Marketing and Communications September 6, 2024

For the second consecutive year, Texas A&M University is the best university in Texas, according to rankings from *The Wall Street Journal*, which rate the top 500 universities in the country.

In the 2025 edition of the prestigious "Best Colleges in the U.S.," *Journal* editors,

along with College Pulse/Statista, place Texas A&M at No. 1 in the Lone Star State, No. 11 among the nation's public institutions, and No. 28 overall.

The overall national number is a remarkable 10-place rise from last year. Additionally, the rankings place A&M No. 1 among Southeastern Conference (SEC) schools.

Weighed heavily (70%) is a measure on student outcomes, which includes graduates' salaries, years to pay off costs, and graduation rate impact. While many rankings focus on school size or reputation among college administrators, this ranking zeroes in on the success of schools' graduates, especially in terms of college being a good investment. Texas A&M has frequently been recognized for its quality of education vs. cost, and for the success of its graduates, for example the extraordinary number of Aggie CEOs in the top 100 companies within the Fortune 500. Additional factors were universities' learning environments, including learning opportunities, career preparation, learning facilities, and whether a student would recommend the school to others.

Student Character; New to the ranking this year is a "character score," which the *Journal* defines as, "the extent to which students feel the college has developed character strengths that will help them to make a meaningful contribution to society, including moral courage, hopefulness, resilience, wisdom and a sense of justice."

"I'm thrilled to see the rest of the country start to catch on to what we here in Aggieland already know — that this university really stands for something," said General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III, president of Texas A&M. "Our Core Values are at the heart of

everything we do at Texas A&M. We take pride in knowing that we are developing the next generation of exceptional leaders who will put those Core Values into practice for the betterment of our state and nation.”

Texas A&M finds itself in elite company on the list, which is topped by Princeton University; eight of the top 10 universities are private schools, including Stanford, Yale, MIT and Harvard. The only other Texas university in the Top 30 is Rice University, at No. 29 nationally.

The WSJ/College Pulse 2025 Best Colleges in the U.S. ranking was developed and executed in collaboration with College Pulse and Statista.

View the full rankings and methodologies from WSJ online.

Wall Street Journal Names Texas A&M The Best University In Texas - Texas A&M Today (tamu.edu)



MEETING WITH ETHAN BRADEN, TAMU'S VP AND CHIEF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

27 August 2024

President Welsh's July update included a note that our TAMU Vice President and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ethan Braden, has embarked on 1) developing a new Texas A&M brand platform and national marketing campaign based on market research set to launch in early 2025 and 2) launching a "Values Campaign" that uses the core values as messaging pillars to serve as a proactive marketing and storytelling "bridge" for the next seven months. Ethan recently joined the President's team from Purdue University, bringing his young family here to College Station from West Lafayette, Indiana.

Several of our SRG members had the privilege and pleasure to meet him on August 27, 2024 and to learn about him, his journey here to Aggieland, his opportunities and "how goes it so far." He's an energetic individual who brings in-depth experience here to Aggieland to serve in an important leadership position. We quickly "hit it off" and established a cordial relationship, offering to help him and staff in any way we can - particularly with the context and understanding of Texas Aggie culture and history as they apply to execution of his mission sets.

Of interest was the term "brand." We suggested that since Texas A&M's mandate established by the Land Grant Act, of service to State and Nation might not be the right "match" to our rich history over the past 148 years (soon to be celebrated), that "reputation" would be better. He agreed, saying that the two terms are almost synonymous depending on the entity to which applied. We also had a great discussion about Aggie Values which were derived from our founding mandate of service while responding with leaders of character to vital calls to duty – the defining characteristic

which makes us distinctive and admired.

As a result, we agreed and plan to become close partners with him and his staff. For sure, Ethan is a quick study and “paddling fast” to absorb all things Aggie. If you missed the preview of the new institutional commercial, titled “What Does Texas A&M Stand For?” that debuted nationwide on ESPN during the first half of the (BTHO) Notre Dame game. If you missed it, you can access it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiXcNwf2Xpw>

We salute Ethan and his people for its production.

Again, it was a pleasure to meet Ethan and we welcome him into our Texas Aggie family!

25 BY 25 GOAL ACHIEVED IN FALL 2023

By Texas A&M Engineering August 27, 2024



Figure 3 Zachery Engineering Complex

Texas A&M University's College of Engineering has achieved a milestone by surpassing its 25 by 25 initiative. As of last Fall 2023, the college has enrolled 25,132 students across its various campuses and engineering programs.

The initiative, launched in 2013, set out to increase the enrollment of engineering students to 25,000 by 2025 in response to the critical demand for engineers in Texas and across the nation. At that time, enrollment was about 11,000 engineering students on campus, including 8,000 undergraduates and 3,000 graduates.

Aimed to provide greater access to high-quality engineering education for qualified students who might otherwise be denied due to limited enrollment capacity, 25 by 25 focused on increasing enrollment without compromising the quality of education and maintaining rigorous academic standards. It ensured talented students had access to an outstanding public education leading to high-demand engineering professions and pursuits.

“The success of the 25 by 25 initiative exemplifies our commitment to addressing the critical demand for engineers in Texas and beyond,” said John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “By expanding access and maintaining excellence, we are preparing our students to tackle the challenges of the future.”

“This milestone is a testament to our unwavering commitment to our land-grant mission,” said General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III, president of Texas A&M. “The College of Engineering’s dedication to excellence ensures that the university remains at the forefront of engineering education, equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a competitive global economy.”

The college’s dedication to innovation and a global perspective ensures that its graduates are well prepared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. To read more, go to: 25 By 25 Goal Achieved In Fall 2023 - Texas A&M Today (tamu.edu)

AGGIES CLAIM RECORD EIGHT MEDALS AT PARIS OLYMPICS

Aug 13, By: Sam Thornton, Athletics Communications



Figure 4 - Aggies at Paris Olympics

PARIS – Texas A&M brought home a school-record eight medals at the Games, which included three gold, three silver and two bronze, while also adding a world record and two Olympic records to the list of accolades. This beats its previous record of seven set at the Tokyo Games.

A combination of 20 current and former student-athletes, along with head women's basketball coach Joni Taylor, made the journey to Paris. The Aggies were representing 11 different countries across five sports, including basketball, diving, swimming, tennis and track & field. The group in its entirety produced 17 finalists and six semifinalists. The groups eight medals ranked tied for fourth in the SEC and helped propel the league to a second-place finish in the conference medal tally.

The first gold medal of the Games for the Aggies came on the track, as Bryce Deadmon and the United States men's 4x400m relay were looking to win the event for the third-straight Olympics.

Shamier Little struck gold for the Red, White and Blue immediately after Deadmon in the women's 4x400m relay, setting the tone for the group with the fastest lead off leg of all nations in the final (49.48).

Coach Taylor and the United States women's basketball team continued Team USA's historic dominance in the Games. She and the team went undefeated throughout their six games, outscoring opponents 516-422 during the tournament in their gold medal performance.

To read the entire story. Go To:

[Aggies Claim Record Eight Medals at Paris Olympics - Texas A&M Athletics - 12thMan.com](#)



Reveille X - April 2021 - Texas A&M Today - Jesse Everett – Texas A&M Marketing & Communication

**Mark your calendar - Sul Ross '25 Reunion will be March 3 – 5, 2025 in College Station at the Hilton Hotel - 801 University Dr E, College Station, TX 77840
Phone (979) 693-7500**

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.

Note: All the Bulletins from Bulletin #1 to the current Bulletin are available to be viewed on the SRG Website at www.ferrata.net/srg/portal.aspx. Click on 'Uploaded Files.'

Suggest you use “Google Chrome”, “Foxfire”, or “Microsoft Edge” as a browser.

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 Mark Welsh: **president@tamu.edu**

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

Athletic Director Trev Alberts: **lchamberlin@athletics.tamu.edu**

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

Commandant Chip Utterback: **lutterback@corps.tamu.edu**

SRG Board of Directors' Resolutions for: 2024 – 2025

To keep the Sul Ross Group (SRG) membership informed of pertinent topics and activities on campus through periodic SRG Bulletins.

As investors of A&M, to continue to meet with and to offer our support and assistance to the leadership of TAMUS, TAMU, the Association of Former Students, A&M Foundation, the Commandant, the Corps Commander, and student government leaders.

- To support A&M's Core Values and traditions and share these with all we meet, especially students, stressing unity of purpose and effort within the A&M community.
- To continue the ongoing review, execution and improvement of new student integration and assimilation into TAMU, working with and assisting the V.P. of Student Affairs, if invited, by periodically observing new student orientation – avoiding "not too much nor too little" oversight of student run organizations.
- Be it resolved that the SRG support their strategic goal of preserving what sets TAMU apart as distinctive and transcendent, as elder statesmen, and in accordance with the SRG's four established Constitutional objectives while serving TAMU, the Association, and our membership.