

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Ninety-One (91)



November 3, 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 '25 Reunion will be March 3 – 5, 2025 in College Station at the Hilton Hotel. The room block is open and ready to book room nights. Room Rate is \$149 per night plus tax. The Group Code is ROSS25 and the cut-off date to make reservations is February 9, 2025. Hilton Hotel - 801 University Dr E, College Station, TX 77840, Phone (979) 693-7500. We look forward to seeing you there. For questions, please contact the Class Programs team at 979-845-7514 or at Class@AggieNetwork.com.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT – TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTS BRIEF - GENERAL (RET.) MARK A. WELSH III – October 21, 2024

It's hard to believe this sprawling university we call Texas A&M started 148 years ago, on Oct. 4, 1876, with six faculty, two main buildings and several small faculty houses. Old Main, the first building on campus, was destroyed by fire over 100 years ago. It was replaced by one of the most recognizable buildings on our main campus, the Academic Building, which still stands today as majestically as ever at the center of campus. The other building was Steward's Hall, later Gathright Hall, which also served as the President's residence. Although the records of that first day are a little fuzzy, we do know that 48 students were enrolled by the end of the first term. Today, we have well over 79,000 enrolled and 540,000 Former Students. Since that first day in 1876, Texas A&M has made an indelible mark on Texas and an undeniable impact on the citizens of our state and nation. Aggies lead companies across the spectrum of business and

industry. They create products we use in our everyday lives. They save the lives of people and their beloved pets as first responders to the worst disasters in the U.S. They find innovative ways to power and feed the world, and ways to save our planet and make life better for those who inhabit it. They defend our nation, represent it around the world, and lead the way in our state and federal governments. While there may still be some unfortunate souls across the nation who don't personally know an Aggie, their lives have likely been impacted by one.

I recently had the honor of attending Ring Day, where 4,200 Aggies received their Aggie Ring, including my grandson Jacob, Class of 2026. It was such a special moment for my family. It reminded me of what my dad said about the Aggie Ring — that it was “a magnet that attracts everything good in this world.” I think that’s a great way to describe it. It’s truly a privilege to work for a university with such rich history and tradition. We’ve come a long way from six faculty and 48 students, but nearly 150 years later, Texas A&M still stands strong. And thanks to your dedication in support of our mission, we’ll continue preparing future generations of Aggies to go out and chase their dreams ... with that magnet on their finger attracting everything that’s good in this world.

As the week gets underway, I’d like to pass on a few important updates:

Quick-look Implementation

Our continued focus is on the completion of our supplemental studies (or “science projects”) and near-horizon priorities (defining our research identity and building our academic roadmap):

Capacity and Student Experience Studies: We received close to 2,500 comments on the Capacity Study and 1,500 comments on the Student Experience Study. The committees are working through edits to the recommendations based on your feedback. I expect to have the final reports soon.

Academic Roadmap: The Academic Roadmap Committee has received great feedback from the campus community and is making edits to the roadmap based on input received, and I expect to have a final report in the next few days.

Research Identity: Based on comments received during the feedback period, the Research Identity Committee is adjusting their report and I expect to review it soon.

New Staff Advocacy And Support Position

Several months ago, a staff member sent me an email with the idea for a new staff advocate for the university. This individual would be responsible for collaborating with stakeholders to address staff concerns, advocate on behalf of the staff and promote a positive culture across our campuses. The individual would also work hand-in-hand with our incredible University Staff Council (USC) to continue important work already underway. I’m pleased to share my enthusiastic support of this position, a Director of Staff Advocacy and Support. And after some discussion, albeit bittersweet for the Office of the President, it was obvious that Sarah Franke, my Executive Assistant and former USC Chairperson, was the ideal staff member to lead this important charge.

Please help me congratulate Sarah on this new opportunity; I know she looks forward to working with our incredible staff in this new capacity! While her departure certainly leaves a void in our office, Kathy Payne, who joined my team a few months ago, will serve as my Executive Assistant during this transition period.

Leading The National Conversation

Texas A&M can, and should, lead national conversations in areas where we have preeminence and expertise. And thanks to our world-class faculty, there is no shortage of knowledge to share. This fall, the Division of Marketing and Communications (Central MarComm) secured a partnership with the Associated Press (AP) Campus Insights Program. We are now one of only eight universities nationwide (the only university in Texas and one of only two in the SEC) in the program. Participating universities produce short video segments of academic experts talking about their work and then make the video content available to news organizations to utilize in their daily stories for free. In the first six weeks of the program, nine Texas A&M expert explainer videos were utilized 1,000 times by news organizations nationwide and globally with numerous hits in Dallas, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., New York City, Atlanta, Philadelphia and many cities abroad. Additionally, I'm not surprised to learn that the two most utilized videos by news organizations in September, across all participating universities, came from Texas A&M. I'm delighted to see more and more news segments around the globe feature an Aggie and hear the words, "Researchers at Texas A&M University advise ..."

Leadership Updates

Cabinet

Commandant, Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets: The search advisory committee, led by Chief of Staff Susan Ballabina, is actively accepting and reviewing candidates.

Vice President, Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness: Henry Judah has stepped in as the Interim Chief Human Resources Officer as we launch a national search for a new Vice President of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness.

Deans

College of Architecture and Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy: The announcements of the Search Advisory Committee selections will be shared this week.

College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences: The college is in the process of Search Advisory Committee selections.

School of Engineering Medicine: The Provost will soon launch the search for a new permanent Dean.

In closing, I hope you can join me this Friday, Oct. 25, for the Presidential Investiture Ceremony, which will include my annual fall semester address to the university community. This event isn't about me: it's about celebrating the educational

mission of Texas A&M, the incredible faculty and staff who make it possible, and the remarkable students who breathe life into our campuses and carry its value into the world. If you can't attend in person, you can watch the livestream (or recording after the event) on the investiture website.

Thanks, and Gig 'em!

r/mark

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

President's Brief - October 2024 | Office of the President | Texas A&M University



Figure 1 - Texas Flag

TEXAS STUDENTS CAN NOW USE “MY TEXAS FUTURE” TO SEE WHICH PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES WILL ACCEPT THEM

By Kate McGee - Texas Tribune - Oct. 11, 2024

Texas high school students will now be able to see which of the state's public universities would accept them based on their credentials before they fill out a college application, state leaders announced Friday. The new tool, called “Direct Admissions”, is meant to streamline the college application

process and remove some of the challenges that can make students hesitant to apply, higher education officials say. “Direct Admissions has the potential to reduce time, boost confidence, and increase transparency, encouraging Texans who might not otherwise consider college to take the next step,” Interim Commissioner of Higher Education Sarah Keyton said in a press release.

Students can plug their class rank, grade point average, and standardized test scores into the state's college and career website, My Texas Future, to get a list of the participating universities to which they'd be accepted. Students can access the information starting at the end of their junior year of high school.

Once a student learns which schools would admit them via Direct Admissions, they still need to apply to verify their academic information. If they don't qualify for direct admission at a specific university, they may still apply through the traditional application process.

Thirty-one public universities in the state — the vast majority — are participating in the new tool, including flagships like the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, but also most regional public universities. “With the launch of Direct Admissions, the college application process will be made easier for young students and their families to choose the best Texas college or university for them to lead successful lives in our state,” Gov. Greg Abbott said in a statement. “Working together, we will continue to develop a college admissions process that is more efficient and effective for all Texas students and create a brighter future for our great state.”

The state developed this new tool with a \$250,000 grant from the Lumina

Foundation as part of a competition called The Great Admissions Redesign, an effort launched in the wake of massive admissions changes across the country, including the U.S. Supreme Court decision to ban the use of race in admissions, the increase in test-optional admissions and projected enrollment declines.

Texas launches Direct Admissions tool for college admissions | The Texas Tribune



Figure 2 - Texas Semiconductor summit

TEXAS SEMICONDUCTOR SUMMIT – “IT IS A NATIONAL ASSET”

By Morgan Riddell – KBTX - Oct. 24, 2024

The Texas Semiconductor Summit this week brought some big names to town for a fireside chat on Thursday. U.S. Representative Michael McCaul and U.S. Senator John Cornyn spoke with a group of industry leaders and professionals at the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center to discuss the future of the semiconductor industry in America. It was a packed room of professionals, researchers,

and policymakers when the congressmen took the stage, highlighting the need for collaboration and innovation.

Sen. Cornyn and Rep. McCaul were early in ringing alarm bells about the need to bring this manufacturing back to the U.S. in 2020. This is when the CHIPS Act was born and has only continued to expand. Texas approved its own CHIPS Act just two years later, and since then, \$450 billion has been invested in the industry across the country.

Sen. Cornyn spoke to some incredible movement in the state to get this industry up and running. “We’ve seen nearly \$60 billion in investments and roughly 25,000 jobs created in Texas alone as a result of this legislation,” he said. “Texas A&M, and our colleges and universities, provide critical brain power in terms of the research and development but also in terms of the training that’s necessary for these good well-paying jobs.”

Rep. McCaul said it was vital their colleagues and the American people understood why this push was important. “Taiwan currently manufactures 90% of the advanced global supply of chips, advanced chips. Everything from your phone to your kitchen appliances to your automobile, to our most advanced weapon systems. It is a national security asset that we can no longer afford to offshore to countries that are at risk from our adversaries like China,” urged Rep. McCaul. “AI technology is the future of warfare. They will be unmanned aircraft on the ground and in the water so air, land, and sea, will be all almost robotic. If you think about it, we have this great power competition with China on AI technologies and in quantum computing. We have to compete with them and win. Otherwise, they get there first and they are seeking global, economic, and military domination.”

With some of the greatest minds on the project, the congressman teased the idea that in the future, Central Texas and Aggieland could be home to a National

Institute Center for Semiconductors. “There are companies right here in College Station that I think are on the cusp of some great innovations. A&M with the engineers and scientists, I think that will play in large part in why the center will come here because of the workforce talents and the engineers that are at Texas A&M and the University of Texas,” Rep. McCaul added.

A Samsung facility is underway, just outside Austin in Taylor, to manufacture and package semiconductors. This project alone expects to produce 20% of the world’s supply of semiconductors by 2030.

Records show a cutting-edge venture is coming to RELLIS Campus, promising to be a \$10 billion investment called America’s Foundry Bryan, LLC/ Project Factory One. The LLC application filed with the Texas Secretary of State shows this promising even more advanced semiconductor manufacturing right from Aggieland.

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Figure 3 - Photo by Laura McKenzie/A&M Division of Marketing & Communications

WELSH INSTALLED AS 27th PRESIDENT OF TEXAS A&M

By Caitlin Clark, Texas A&M University Division of Marketing & Communications October 25, 2024

Texas A&M University formally inaugurated General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III Friday as its 27th president during a presidential investiture ceremony, officially conferring the title and responsibilities of the office as he guides the university into the future.

“I’m excited about the journey ahead,” Welsh said during the ceremony attended by hundreds of faculty members, staff, students, elected officials and community leaders at Rudder Auditorium. “I believe this is already

the greatest university on Earth, and we are going to make it even greater.”

Texas A&M University Chancellor John Sharp presented Welsh with the symbols of the office, the University Mace and Presidential Medallion, on behalf of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. “It signifies our trust in you, General Welsh,” Sharp said. “The medallion is infused with tradition and honor, and it is a symbol of the responsibility to inspire, mentor and serve the students of this institution.”

Welsh reiterated the importance of preparing students to leave Texas A&M and make a positive difference in the world. At the foundation of the university’s success in that mission is its faculty, which he described as a “force of nature” when it comes to preparing Aggies to chase their dreams. “Texas A&M is a great university. And, great

universities are built on and by great faculty. It's just a fact," he said.

Welsh Installed As 27th President Of Texas A&M, Where 'Everything Is Possible' - Texas A&M Today



Figure 4 - College of Engineering

A&M ENGINEERING LEADS NATION IN RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

June 18, 2024 By Texas A&M Engineering

In a testament to its commitment to innovation and academic excellence, the College of Engineering at Texas A&M University has secured the No. 1 spot in fiscal year 2023 engineering research expenditures with \$444.7 million in spending, according to the rankings released today by *U.S. News &*

World Report 2024-2025 Best Engineering Graduate Schools Rankings.

"This accomplishment solidifies our position as a premier hub for cutting-edge research and reinforces our commitment to excellence in engineering education and innovation," said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. "It is a testament to the dedication and ingenuity of our faculty and students, who continue to advance engineering research and make significant contributions to the state, country and world."

Since 2013, the Chancellor's Research Initiative has provided one-time funds to recruit and hire faculty who will have a transformational impact. The active faculty at Texas A&M Engineering holds 35 memberships in national academies — 32 in the National Academy of Engineering, two in the National Academy of Sciences and one in the National Academy of Medicine.

"We were able to achieve this due to an increase in our National Academy members, thanks in part to the Chancellor's Research Initiative," said Dr. Robert H. Bishop, vice chancellor and dean of engineering and director of the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station. "Attracting top-tier faculty members leads directly to conducting high-quality research. When you bring in leading experts in their fields, they not only contribute groundbreaking ideas and innovations but also elevate the overall research standards of the institution."

"These rankings underscore why Texas A&M attracts world-class faculty and researchers and some of the best and brightest students from around the state, the country and the world," Bishop, said. "We prepare students to be leaders and innovators in their fields, and we invest deeply in supporting their work and advancing high-impact research."

Texas A&M Engineering Leads Nation in Engineering Research Expenditures | Texas A&M University Engineering



Figure 5 - Joe Ramirez - Photo by Adriano Espinosa

JOE RAMIREZ RETIRING JANUARY 1, 2025

Nicholas Gutteridge, Managing Editor The Battalion - October 30, 2024

Texas A&M's Vice President for Student Affairs Joe Ramirez Jr. announced he is retiring effective Jan. 1, 2025. "I am extremely excited to start a new chapter in my life — one in which I can dedicate more time to my amazing wife Terry, our nine children and eight grandchildren," Ramirez wrote in

the email.

The retired brigadier general spent over a decade as the Corps of Cadets commandant before moving to his current role as vice president for student affairs in 2021, where he helps oversee one of the largest student bodies in the country.

"I fell in love with Texas A&M the first day I stepped on the Quad as a naive fish in the Corps and Aggie Band in 1975, and those feelings have never subsided,"

Ramirez wrote that he made the decision "with mixed emotions." "I will continue to work alongside you and the students of Texas A&M every day until my retirement date, and I look forward to the last couple of months of interactions we will share together," Ramirez wrote. "Thank you all for what you have done for me, professionally, and for [my wife] Terry and me personally. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to have worked with all of you and to have shared so many good times with you. We will never forget you and all that you do every day for Texas A&M University. "

Joe Ramirez announces Jan. 1 retirement - The Battalion



Figure 6 - Company W-1, during a game march in in 1977. Courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library

WOMEN IN THE CORPS FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS

Theresa Lozano and Amy Leigh Steward – The Battalion - October 24, 2024

Fifty years after first joining the Corps of Cadets, women in the Corps continue to excel. By design, they don't stick out. Each boot falls in line with the rest. Each uniform is exact in what it displays. Each cadet trains alongside the others, lives alongside the others — and

ultimately takes care of the others.

Fifty years ago, this fall, Texas A&M's Corps of Cadets took a bold new step. A class of 51 cadets became the first women to join the Corps, falling in step with the century of Aggies that came before them and becoming the beginning of the line of all who would follow. Half a century later, just under a fifth of the Corps is now women. These cadets — from Reveille's handler to commanding officer for Parsons Mounted Cavalry and every role in between — continue what the trailblazing women in Company W-1 first started in September 1974.

Leah Bechert, (Company A-2), said, while being a fish is different, it's more fun than she thought it'd be. From using rifles on the drill field during Army lab to crafting fish spurs for the first time. "Even though this year definitely is more challenging, I think it teaches you a lot about yourself and who you are," Bechert said. I think having strong leaders, especially strong female leaders to look up to, definitely helps."

Currently, half the cavalry leadership team is female led with Olivia Baptiste, (Squadron 20), being the unit's third ever female commanding officer, along with her XO — the detachment executive officer, the second in command — making them the first female CO-XO group.

"Being in the Corps as a girl, honestly, I don't feel treated differently," Sarah DeLacerda, (Company E-2 and Reveille's handler) said. "You're still waking up at the same time, wearing the same uniform, going through all that stuff, but you're doing it as a girl. And I feel like it's a big respect thing. Being Rev's handler makes DeLacerda one of the most visible members of the Corps, something she doesn't take lightly. She said her favorite thing is using her position to make things around slightly brighter.

A day in the life of a Corps woman - The Battalion



Figure 7 - Sully's Boots

FROM THE PAST - SULLY'S FIRST PAIR OF BOOTS

Sully was a household name and legend across Texas during the late 1800s and was rivaled in name recognition by only "Sam" – General Sam Houston. The two knew each other, and Sully's dad Shapley worked closely with Houston for years. Sul and his family were constantly in the news, as is indicated by this story told by his dad and published in newspapers statewide, the following from the October 1887 *Austin Record*:

Captain Shapley Ross, the aged and venerable father of our distinguished governor, has been in the city for several days past visiting "his boy." He told us a good story about 'Sul's first pair of boots.' He says when the aforesaid Sul was a boy of about four or five years of age he was in the local store and the youngster happened to spy a pair of red-top boots – the first his eyes had ever beheld. He prevailed on his father to buy him a pair. How he did strut with them new boots!

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That night Sul and his brother Peter slept together. Away in the night Capt. Ross heard a fuss going on between Sul and Pete. On inquiring the cause Pete hallowed out: "Papa, Sul has gone to bed with them boots on and is just kicking my shin all to pieces." The old gentleman, thus aroused from his slumbers, commanded the young man to pull off those boots, which he did, and quiet was again restored. He little thought then that the boy who went to bed with his first pair of boots on would ever be governor of the great state!

John Adams '73



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

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”, “Firefox”, 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: **Ichamberlin@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.**