

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Fifty-Eight



August 10, 2022

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 its Leadership.

TEXAS A&M NAMES NEXT COMMANDANT OF THE CORPS OF CADETS



In a press release written by Kelly Brown and Lesley Henton, on July 19, 2022, Texas A&M University Division of Marketing & Communications announced Brigadier General Patrick R. Michaelis has been named as the 46th Commandant of the Corps of Cadets.

BG Michaelis will fill the very large boots of BG Joe Ramirez who served in that role for eleven years and has been promoted to Vice President of Student Affairs.

According to the authors, "The 1993 Aggie graduate starts his new role on Oct. 1, after retiring from his current post as Commanding General, U.S. Army Training Center at Fort Jackson, South Carolina."

"We are at an important inflection point for the Corps of Cadets and I am committed to growing this incredible leadership training program for our students," said Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks. "General Michaelis, an outstanding former student who has distinguished himself through a decorated military career, is the right leader at the right time for Texas A&M and the Corps. I look forward to great things under his capable leadership."

Michaelis said he's "humbled and honored" to be selected to serve as Commandant."

“I want to thank President Banks and Vice President Ramirez for the opportunity to once again be a part of this great institution,” Michaelis said. “I first stepped onto the Quad in August of 1989. The leadership experience, the camaraderie, the commitment to academics, and the traditions that defined my Corps experience shaped the character of the person I am today.”

Brigadier General Joe E. Ramirez Jr., Texas A&M’s Vice President for Student Affairs, said he’s pleased to welcome Michaelis back to Aggieland.

“Patrick has had a distinguished military career and brings a wealth of experience to this highly visible leadership position at Texas A&M. We are excited to have Patrick back on campus as Commandant and know that he will excel as he leads The Keepers of the Spirit, and Guardians of Tradition into the future.”

Michaelis said “the marching orders are clear: March to 3,000. As I listen, learn and assess how we are doing, I intend to amplify and adapt priorities and initiatives that allow the Corps of Cadets to remain the pre-eminent leadership and academic experience that continues to produce high-caliber leaders of character for the state and nation.”

To read the rest of the story, go to the link below.

[Texas A&M Names Next Commandant Of The Corps Of Cadets - Texas A&M Today \(tamu.edu\)](#)

TITLE IX USHERED IN A TIME OF CHANGE FOR TEXAS A&M’S CORPS OF CADETS

As reported by Luke Henkhaus, Texas A&M Division of Marketing and Communication, in Texas A&M Today on July 27, 2022, it was in the fall of 1974 when the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets became the first major military institution in the nation to admit women into its officer training program. President Jack K. Williams and Commandant Col. Tom Parsons made the decision to lead the nation in the Title IX initiative.

The 1972 federal law sought to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in higher education. It was added as an update to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which applied only to discrimination in employment.

Women were officially allowed to enroll at Texas A&M as full degree-seeking students in 1963, thanks to President James Earl Rudder’s decision to integrate the university along racial and gender lines.

According to former A&M history professor Henry Dethloff’s “A Centennial History of Texas A&M,” 150 women were enrolled at the college that first fall, and their numbers continued to climb in the years that followed: “... change was clearly in the air,” Dethloff wrote.

The Corps of Cadets, however, remained all-male despite efforts from a number of interested female students and some parents.

“This was before any women were in any of the service academies, or the Virginia Military Institute or the Citadel,” said Roxie Pranglin '78, who joined A&M's first-ever class of female cadets in the fall of 1974. “We were the first Corps of Cadets-type environment that allowed women to participate, and was it done perfectly? No. But I believe it was done with good intentions”, as was reported by John Adams '73 in his book “Keepers of the Spirit” about the history of the Corps of Cadets.



In the fall of 1974, the first women's unit in the Corps, Company W-1, was formed. They had no uniforms or on-campus dormitory space and , their first upperclassmen were men. Not all the male cadets received the women respectfully. Some men refused to “whip out” to the women. “Whipping out” is a Corps term expressing the action of a handshake and introduction between a fish and

upperclassmen.

It would still be years into the future before women cadets were integrated in the male cadet outfits, and still even further before women were admitted to heretofore all male units such as the Fightin' Aggie Band.

However, even though W-1's first officers were male upperclassmen their goal was to turn the women into true Aggie corps members. Their first commanding officer was Steven “Don” Roper '75 who said “My goal was at the end of the year basically to walk away standing as an outfit. And we did more than that in certain areas. We certainly excelled in unity, and we excelled in learning how to protect each other's backs, because that is exactly what we did”.

According to Henkhaus, “In the spring of 1975, W-1 made its first public appearance in full uniform, marching across Simpson Drill Field at the annual Military Day review. They received a standing ovation.” That was a huge part of the day”, Roper recalled. “Everything we had put into it had become worth it that day”.

The final barriers were broken by the women when, Melanie Zentgraf '85 joined the Color Guard, and Andrea Abat '89, Jennifer Peeler '89, and Carol Rockwell '89 became members of the Fightin' Aggie Band

To read the full article, click the link below:

> <https://today.tamu.edu/2022/07/27/title-ix-ushered-in-a-time-of-change-for-texas-ams-corps-of-cadets/>

COLLEGE ALUMNI GROUPS SPREAD NATIONALLY TO COUNTER 'CANCEL CULTURE'

As reported in a piece by Susan Syrluga in **The Washington Post** (WAPo) on July 24, 2022, “Alumni groups pressing free-speech issues are popping up at colleges in many states, as debates over academic freedom, “cancel culture” and changes on campus intensify.”

Texas A&M University is no stranger to this debate as the Sul Ross Group has been publishing our thoughts on such issues since the protests against the Sul Ross statue emerged in the summer of 2020.



*Figure 1 - Students walk past the "Great Dome" on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus in Cambridge.
(Charles Krupa/AP)*

The WAPo piece said, “More than a dozen groups have joined the Alumni Free Speech Alliance, a group announced last fall that now includes graduates from schools including Harvard, Bucknell, Yale and Cornell universities, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Wofford and Davidson colleges. Organizers say hundreds of people from schools all across the country have contacted them — all graduates who have questions they say their **schools’ traditional alumni associations aren’t asking.**”

“To join, the groups must hold freedom of speech, academic freedom and viewpoint diversity as primary missions”, said Edward Yingling, president of the alliance and one of the founders of Princetonians for Free Speech. “There’s a feeling that a lot of universities are losing their way. ... **There’s very little diversity of thought.**”

Syrluga further reported, “The alumni groups vary in size, character and sophistication. And some have distinctly conservative roots, even if they are now seeking to ensure that all viewpoints are represented. One of the first to organize, the Generals Redoubt, has been fighting to preserve the traditions of **Washington and Lee University** in Lexington, Va., an idea echoed by graduates at some nearby colleges with long and complicated histories such as the **Virginia Military Institute** and the **University of Virginia.**”

“The groups’ founders argue that **only alumni have the numbers and clout to lead the fight for free speech at universities** — an urgent *rebellion* against what they see as a growing orthodoxy on campuses, with faculty and students canceling opposing views, afraid to speak freely, and threatening the inquiry and debate that are central to

academia” says Syrluga’s report. To clarify, the SRG is not “rebellious”; we are supporting the administration and free speech.

“Critics say some of the groups don’t speak for most on campus and are using the issue of free speech to hold back change that’s long overdue — especially on issues of race and identity.”

Syrluga continued, “It’s too early to know how effective those efforts will be. But while many alumni groups have just been taking the initial steps to form nonprofits in recent months, some are now plunging into efforts such as hiring employees, paying for surveys, sending frequent newsletters to increase scrutiny of university decisions, and calling on institutions to adopt the Chicago Principles — guidelines written by leaders at the University of Chicago to emphasize the school’s commitment to unlimited debate, since adopted by scores of other universities. Some, like the Cornell Free Speech Alliance, have welcomed faculty and students. The Open Discourse Coalition at Bucknell provides grants to students as well as faculty.”

Syrluga further reported, “The group recently received a \$500,000 two-year grant from the Stanton Foundation, and is hiring an executive director, hoping to work with student groups and bring in speakers. They are launching a membership drive, and a donor-advised fund channeling donations to free-speech programs that apply for grants.”

“If there is one thing that is common to every university in the world, it is alumni who believe their school started going downhill after they graduated,” Larry J. Sabato, a professor of politics at U-Va., wrote in an email. But he said the facts belie that, as the highly regarded university attracts “diverse and talented students from all over the globe” and continues to lead on important issues through education and research. After more than 50 years in the U-Va. community, he said he is “incredibly proud of the progress we have made during that time and excited about what the future holds.”

The WAPO piece further reported “U-Va. spokesman Brian Coy said they have undertaken numerous initiatives in recent years tackling free speech and intellectual diversity issues, such as launching a general education curriculum that includes classes designed to get students debating ideas respectfully. U-Va.’s president, James Ryan, has spoken and written about the need to be ‘empathetic speakers and generous listeners,’ and to engage with unfamiliar ideas among the diverse range of people on campus — a place that is very different than it was when only White men were allowed to study there.”

“But Ellis and others still see problems, with some viewpoints unwelcome or canceled. When the Jefferson Council tried to place an ad in the alumni magazine praising Jefferson and noting some scholarship rejected the claim that he had children with Sally Hemings, a woman enslaved by Jefferson, the ad was rejected.”

Coy said “the Alumni Association is a separate entity from the university and that it has a policy against running ads that are “overly political or controversial.”

Ellis said “the council has more than 700 members.”

U-Va. has about 250,000 living alumni.

Ellis said “there are groups that think anything goes in public discourse, so they vilify people, or drown them out by yelling and screaming, pushing them to leave rather than arguing their position. The Jefferson Council is using some donated funds to bring speakers to campus, partnering with the conservative student group the Young Americans for Freedom, as they did this spring with former vice president Mike Pence.”

“There are lots of groups that disagree with us on campus”, Ellis said. That’s why he believes the Jefferson Council needs to “get bigger and bigger, be vocal ourselves.”

James A. Bacon, a spokesman for the council, said sparking real cultural change will be difficult. But with Ellis’s board appointment, he said, “we feel like we’re going to be getting some traction.”

Now, Ellis said, “We have their attention.”

To read the rest of the article, go to the following link:

[Alumni groups pop up to foster free speech on campus - The Washington Post](#)

A FURTHER EXPLANATION FOR SRG MEMBERS

Many SRG members have requested a further explanation of why the SRG board elected to distribute the bulletins through Class Agents rather than The Association’s ListServe program. The following document is a copy of the letter of explanation sent by the SRG President to SRG Class Agents:

Howdy,

This message is from me as president and the Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoDs) to inform you about recent guidance we have received from The Association of Former Students’ (AFS) leadership regarding how we have been communicating with our membership to inform you about issues and topics of interest concerning our Texas Aggie institution. As you know, this function is one of our four major Constitutional purposes established some 70 years ago by our SRG founders. Over the past two years, we have been accomplishing this via the production of our “Bulletins” and distributing them, at first through you, the agents of the SRG , but more recently, via an “opt in” List Serve data and communications system operated by the AFS and University. In that regard, our “mode of operendi” was to maintain civility as Aggie “senior statesmen,” straight forwardness, with facts-based comments and material.

As you know, two years ago we began the distribution of Bulletins in June 2020 after the Ross Statue was vandalized. The ensuing commentary was grossly one-sided against the statue remaining in its designated place in Academic Plaza where it has been for over 100 years as authorized by the

Texas State Legislature. At that time, when we inquired to the AFS about if they were going to respond, the answer was “no.” We, the SRG Board, decided to make a statement (in support of the Chancellor’s then recent statement that the statue should not move). That actually became “Bulletin One.” Since then, as you know, we have produced and distributed 56 additional issues. The way that has been accomplished following guidance from the AFS about utilizing List Serve has now recently changed - and that is what we need to tell you about following here.

As mentioned, initial bulletin distribution began two years ago with our emailing them to the agents of our SRG classes and then asking you to forward them to as many members as you possessed on your individual “send out lists.” We realized from the start that this was an imperfect system, but other options were few and far between! However, a few months later, the AFS approached us with an offer to use their List Serve data and email system provided that our members (and non-members too) “opted in” to agreeing to have their email address added to the receiving list in accordance with the law. A message was transmitted to advise everyone about the simple procedure to choose this option and how it would work. We were then granted the authority to use the system to send them directly out to all of you who chose to receive them. We retained “editing responsibility” but were asked to share the drafts with the AFS so that they could be review the drafts and provide comments if they had them. This worked well, and in the two-year period, we received two inputs which were welcomed. We accommodated both suggestions.

Three months ago, this arrangement (per AFS guidance) was changed in a series of three AFS meetings and communications with me and our SRG executive committee. I was advised that no longer was it permissible to include and express “opinions” in our Bulletins, and that one bulletin per month was the maximum for dissemination. Additionally, the “editing” process would now be assumed by the AFS. We were also told that the AFS was discontinuing the “opt in” function used up to this point (to allow non-SRG and others to receive bulletins) and that only SRG members would now receive them. It was obvious by the editing they made to the last draft that there were to be no “opinions -based material” (not just SRG but everyone else’s referenced reports and material). What this means now is that our bulletin content must be similar to a class typical newsletter regarding reported and shared information. As the last AFS meeting concluded, after a lengthy discussion with our executive committee in attendance, we advised that we do not intend to be “silent” in expressions about arising issues which we believe deserve comments for our SRG perspective - as your elected representatives.

We have deliberated about all the above and the way ahead considering the feedback we have received from you as our members over the past two years. In light of the SRG constitution’s stated mission sets, we believe that in our former student cohort, we should retain the capability to have “a say” about important matters and also communicate them to you

along with those who must decide about them. We will not forget about our standards – “senior and stately.” A balance in opinions matters.

Thus, this is to inform you that we will send the SRG Bulletins to you as agents when produced, and ask you to again distribute them forward to your respective classmates as we did in the beginning before we were invited by the AFS to use List Serve.

We thank you for your understanding and support in this matter and regret that we have to burden you with this task. We conclude, after all factors considered, that this is the best course of action and in consonance with your expectations as we have received and understand them. Lastly, We are interested in your feedback and comments. Copies of this letter are being sent to all living SRG past presidents, as well. You may respond to SRGBulletin@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

*Edis Oliver '63
President
Sul Ross Group*

FORMER A&M TRACK STARS MU, DEADMON CAPTURE WORLD TITLES FOR TEAM USA



A Texas A&M press release published by NBC Sports on July 26, 2022 announced that Texas A&M track & field Olympians Bryce Deadmon and Athing Mu won World Athletics Championships gold medals Sunday night to wrap up the 10-day meet at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon.

According to the press release, “Mu won the women’s 800m title with a world-leading time of 1:56.30. The victory marked the first

time an American woman won the 800m gold, an event that has been contested at the World Athletics Championships since 1983. The 20-year-old remains undefeated outdoors in any round and any distance since September 2019, which includes Tokyo Olympic gold medals in the 800m and 4x400m. “

NBC Sports reported “Deadmon ran as a member of Team USA’s men’s 4x400m that claimed gold with a world-leading time of 2:56.17. The Missouri City product clocked a third leg split of 43.82, the second-fastest split on the day only behind American teammate Michael Norman. “

Aggies contributed three gold medals to team USA’s 33 medals, which is the most by a country at any World Championships meet.

To read the full article, go to the following link:

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/sports/former-am-track-stars-mu-deadmon-capture-world-titles-for-team-usa/499-6c1a77ff-3371-4938-a55a-7e3d7afcc49d>

KEEN '78 TO OPEN AGGIE PARK WITH FREE CONCERT SEPT. 2.



As reported by Susan Owens '94 on July 18, 2022 for The Association of Former Students, Robert Earl Keen '78 will play his final show at Aggieland on September 2nd to help open Aggie Park.

According to Owens, “The free **Aggie Park Kickoff Concert** is coordinated by The Association of Former Students (AFS) and sponsored by

Southwest Airlines, the Office of Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp '72, the Office of Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks, and Bob '85 and Kelly '86 Jordan.”

“Music will begin at 7 p.m., with two opening Aggie acts (Max Stalling '89 and The Barn Dogs, a band of current A&M students). The concert will end before Midnight Yell Practice, just across the street in Kyle Field. The concert will take place at Aggie Park's Performance Pavilion – one of the many new sites being created as Aggie Park's development transforms 20 acres at the heart of A&M's campus into a premier green space offering locations for gathering and recreation.”

According to the AFS press release, “Aggie Park broke ground in February 2020 and will be completed later this summer with an estimated \$35 million in funds coming from generous donors to The Association of Former Students, which is leading the project.”

Owens also said, “In 2018, Keen was named a Distinguished Alumnus of Texas A&M University, the highest honor bestowed upon a former student by the university and The Association of Former Students. Over the years, Keen has returned to Texas A&M to play many concerts, including benefit performances for those affected by 2017's Hurricane Harvey and the 1999 Bonfire collapse. An award-winning singer/songwriter with 21 records to his name, Keen came up from the Texas folk scene to recognition as an Americana music pioneer, credited with bringing a new heyday to grassroots Texas music.”

To receive concert updates, email **Events@AggieNetwork.com**.

https://www.aggienetwork.com/news/158224/keen-78-to-open-aggie-park-with-free-concert-sept-2/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Read%20More&utm_campaign=ENews%202022-07%20main%20send

Media contact: Kelly Brown, kelly.brown@tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M FOUNDATION CORPS DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Donors who wish to invest in the continued growth and success of the Corps are encouraged to contact our Corps of Cadets development team at the following:

givetocorps@txamfoundation.com

HOW TO REACH AND ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT US

One can send messages to the Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD). To access information about us as your elected representatives, the SRG Constitution, and other information about the SRG as an organization, please refer to our relatively new **“SRG Tab”** (Under “Programs”) on The Association’s website, at: aggienetwork.com.

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

If you wish comment to those who decide:

Chancellor Sharp: chancellor@tamus.edu

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

President Banks: president@tamu.edu

COO Hartman: ghartman@tamu.edu

Interim Provost Scott: t-scott@tamu.edu

VP Student Affairs Ramirez: jramirez@vpsa.tamu.edu

Athletic Director Bjork: rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu