

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Fifty-Nine



SEPTEMBER 1, 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.

PRESIDENT BANKS KICKS OFF IMPLEMENTATION OF *THE PATH FORWARD*



Figure 1 - Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks.

In a presentation to the Texas A&M Faculty Senate on July 11, 2022, Greg Hartman, COO, and Sr. VP for Strategic Partnerships, explained and updated the implementation of the restructuring known as *The Path Forward*. The plan developed by President M. Katherine Banks, focuses on five key areas as shown in the slide below:

The Path Forward sets as internal goals (1) improved administrative transparency, (2) reduced administrative burden, (3) accountability for quality outcomes, and (4) enhanced career growth opportunities. It also seeks to reduce duplication and redundancy in human relations, faculty recruiting and retention efforts, and information technology. Marketing and communication (MarCom) receives major attention to improve media relations,

branding, and messaging. A central theme is ***One university, One brand, One team.*** The SRG board believes this is very important since we have seen first-hand different statements of core values from the Athletic Department, fish Camp, and the Corps of Cadets. Improved branding is intended to raise Texas A&M's national profile consistent with our growth to the largest research institution in the southwest which includes our administrative and scientific role at the Los Alamos and Sandia National laboratories.



Figure 2 - Slide No. 8 from *The Path Forward Update*, July 11, 2022.

Additional areas of focus are the combining of departments into a College of Arts and Sciences, a school of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts, restructuring of the libraries, establishment of a Journalism program within the Department of Communications, expansion of the Bush School, and students working with the Health Science Center plus new investments in mental health.

These are big organizational changes which affect faculty, department heads, deans, support staff, and career paths. President

Banks has shown unprecedented transparency through Zoom meetings, working group participation, review of thousands of comments about the MGT report, and widespread personal meetings with the stakeholders. SRG board members were invited to participate in a number of the working groups, so we have first-hand knowledge of such. Moreover, the SRG board believes this is the first time former students have been invited into such academic processes. Changes in large organizations affect established bureaucracies and fiefdoms and often provoke fierce resistance. The SRG board supports President Banks in *The Path Forward* initiative to improve Texas A&M's national presence consistent with our place as a transcendental Land Grant, AAU Tier One University.

For further details see the link:

https://pathforward.tamu.edu/_files/documents/presentations/20220711TAMU-Path-Forward-Faculty-Senate.pdf

FACULTY SENATE SOUNDS OFF TO PRESIDENT BANKS

As reported by Kathryn Miller and Michael Rush in *The Battalion* on August 9, 2022, the Faculty Senate voted to pass the "Resolution of Shared Governance" during its meeting on Monday, August 8.

The faculty representatives outlined "widespread concerns that faculty voices have not been engaged in the decision-making process for major university changes, stating that shared governance is no longer functioning as envisioned by faculty at Texas A&M University."

According to the Batt article, "With 80% of faculty senators voting in favor, the resolution specifically calls for President M. Katherine Banks and all other administrators to "engage in meaningful efforts to improve shared governance," and cautions that Banks' failure to commit to shared governance with A&M's faculty creates mistrust for future administrative decisions".

Vice President of Faculty Affairs N.K. Anand, Ph.D., provided the following response to *The Battalion*: "It's disappointing that this resolution doesn't recognize the extensive faculty input that has been listened to on every major issue and change that has

occurred in the last year. There have been multiple opportunities for faculty opinion to influence decisions. There simply is not a single example given of when both the spirit and the letter of the policy was not followed.”

“I think it’s actually in President Banks’ best interest to do more to seek faculty feedback earlier, because there are several decisions she’s made where she didn’t have good information about the facts on the ground,” Kolasinski said. “She would’ve had that information had she engaged faculty who are knowledgeable on the process earlier on.” Andrew Klein, professor of geosciences and senator on the executive committee, said during the meeting that although the effects of the resolution cannot be predicted, faculty should continually give input.

“We’re very concerned about some of the directions things seem to be going, and we’re not sure it’s going to get any better,” Klein said. “It may not do anything, but I don’t think that should prevent us from going forward with this.”

Speaker of the Faculty Senate Dale Rice said in an interview with The Battalion that the senate’s hope is for the relationship between faculty and administration to be strengthened through transparency. “We don’t expect that we’ll agree with President Banks on every single thing, nor are we asking for that,” Rice said. “But what we do expect is that concerns will get taken into account, and the decisions will at least some of the time reflect those concerns and be obvious that things were done to accommodate faculty along the way.”

Miller and Rush further reported that “Rice said the lack of faculty consultation began early in Banks’ presidency when an outside firm, MGT Consulting, was hired to propose recommendations for the university, rather than getting input from faculty. Rice cited the on-campus library and Qatar campus reorganizations as points of concern.”

“Parts of the reorganization were not very transparent to us,” Rice said. “It’s that sort of thing that people look at and see a pattern, either of not involving faculty early, or when faculty are involved, not really listening and reacting to their concerns, but moving ahead with whatever the plan was in the first place.”

In its conclusion, the resolution provided a clear directive for President Banks and A&M’s administration.

“Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate requests President Banks to direct all levels of administration at Texas A&M University to engage in meaningful efforts to improve shared governance and restore trust in the decision-making process,” the resolution read.

To read the full article, go to:

https://www.thebatt.com/news/no-longer-functioning-as-envisioned-faculty-senate-denounces-president-banks/article_d462672a-1849-11ed-b658-7fc57814e046.html#:~:text=%E2%80%98No%20longer%20functioning,the%20resolution%20read

TEXAS A&M GOLFER SAM BENNETT WINS 122ND U.S. AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP



As reported by Dalton Hughes in a Texas A&M Golf press release from the Athletic Department on August 21, 2022, “Texas A&M senior golfer and Madisonville native Sam Bennett etched himself into the history books on Sunday afternoon by claiming the title at the 122nd USGA Amateur Championship at The Ridgewood Country Club in Paramus, NJ. The Aggie clinched the title with a 1-

up victory over Georgia Southern’s Ben Carr in a 36-hole championship match on Sunday.”

According to Hughes, “Bennett’s march to history began on Monday, and after finishing stroke play tied for 30th on the leaderboard with rounds of 71 and 73, Sam found himself as the #36 seed on the Match Play bracket. The Aggie proceeded to take down WAGR (World Amateur Golf Rankings) players No. 13, No. 27, No. 10, No. 9, No. 8 and No. 70 on his way to the crown jewel of amateur golf.”

Hughes further wrote, “Bennett, a multi-sport star in high school at Madisonville, became the first golfer in Texas A&M history to claim the historic Havemeyer Trophy.”

“Now here’s the portion of the story where we have a discussion: Where does Sam Bennett’s victory at the 2022 U.S. Amateur rank on the Mt. Rushmore of accomplishments by Texas A&M athletes? Obviously, I believe the discussion begins and ends with the 1957 and 2012 Heisman Trophies won by John David Crow and Johnny Manziel.”

For the rest of the story, go to the link below:

<https://12thman.com/news/2022/8/21/mens-golf-bennett-crowned-122nd-us-amateur-champion.aspx>

12TH MAN SELLS 37,000 TICKETS FOR NATION’S LARGEST STUDENT BODY

In a press release by Brad Marquardt, Assistant AD/Athletic Communications, reported in a piece by Kara Luffman on August 25, 2022, that the 12th Man sold out the nation’s largest student section for football. Luffman said “A near-record number of Texas A&M students have purchased student sports passes ensuring the nation’s largest student section will be sold out for the 2022 season.” The 37,000 figure represents approximately 1,000 more than last year and is a record for the current configuration.



Figure 3 - Kyle Field - The Home of the 12th Man.

Luffman reported that “only in 2014 when Kyle Field's capacity bulged to 107,000-plus during the stadium's redevelopment were more student sports passes purchased by the 12th Man. The exact number of student sports passes sold will be finalized in the coming weeks”.

Originally built in 1905, Kyle Field is the largest stadium in the Southeastern Conference and the fourth largest in the nation with a capacity of 102,733.

Press release from Texas A&M Athletics.

FISH OUT OF WATER



Figure 4 - Company A-1 Marching on Simpson Drill Field in the fish Review.

As reported in The Battalion on August 20, 2022, by Caroline Wilburn entitled “fish Out of Water”, the freshman class of '26 was officially inducted into the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets. The ceremony was undertaken as “hundreds of cadets took their places on Simpson Drill Field, as friends, family and current and former cadets gathered to watch the Class of 2026 officially join the ranks of the Corps of Cadets. “

Wilburn said, “Fish Review, the culminating event of Freshman Orientation Week, or FOW, for members of Texas A&M’s Corps of Cadets took place on Saturday, Aug. 20 at Simpson Drill Field. Following step off at 8:30 a.m., the event highlighted freshmen cadets as they took their Cadet Oath and stood proudly with their new outfits. As the Aggie Band began to play the War Hymn, each outfit marched around the drill field and headed back to The Quad.”

Freshman cadet and clarinet player Jezebel Villarreal said FOW was a challenging experience, but something she ultimately came to appreciate. “I opened myself to new opportunities that I never thought I could do before,” Villarreal said. “I also gained more confidence with everything thrown at me. As time went by, I was able to develop friendships and relationships among my outfit. I felt more at home, and I was able to welcome the new family I had.”

Villarreal said although Freshmen Review took place in the heat and humidity, she enjoyed it and appreciated the support from attendees. “I loved that I got to see

everyone in the Corps, not just the band,” Villarreal said. “I really just felt united with everyone. I love seeing our fans and seeing my family watch me be inducted. It was really nice.”

Kylie Wyly, mother of freshman cadet Koben Wyly in Outfit C-1, was proudly wearing an Aggie mom shirt and holding a lawn chair she brought to watch the event and said she was excited to see her son in the Freshmen Review. “He’s wanted to do this since he was little,” Kylie said. “I wanted to be here to support him and be excited for him.”

Kylie said her son has worked hard to make it to this moment. “He’s got a very strong purpose,” Kylie said. “As a parent, I’m very proud. I’m excited to see him grow, mature and become his own person, also the values and integrity that he’s going to get along the way.”

Instructor of naval science Lieutenant William de Groh, Class of 2015, said, “They have put in a lot of dedication and hard work to persevere through the challenges that FOW presents them that they may not be used to coming from high school or from different backgrounds,” DeGroh said. “There’s that kind of challenge and mindset to be in [to overcome] challenge that I think is still so important.”

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

https://www.thebatt.com/life-arts/fish-out-of-water/article_2e0909cc-20ac-11ed-965b-179ff1f2f2a6.html?utm_source=thebatt.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletters%2Flists%2Fheadlines%2F%3F-dc%3D1661353211&utm_medium=email&utm_content=read%20more

PATCHES ON TEXAS AGGIE ATHLETIC UNIFORMS....A SALUTE!!

In the SRG Bulletin 41, 6 September 2021, we asked some questions [again] about the “unified” patch that the Athletic Department included on all Texas Aggie athletic uniforms for the 2021 fall season. Here is what we asked:

- *“We believe that Texas Aggies are “unified” as The 12th Man” which is a well-established TAMU tradition – so why do we need a patch at all?*
- *If one does not agree with the 12th Man Tradition rationale above, then what is the reason for a “unified” patch specifically, and “unified” with (or against) whom?*
- *Did the TAMU President approve this uniform “unified” patch?*



Dr. Banks was kind to meet with us to discuss this issue, and we thank her for her support in doing so. We had a good discussion about it with our rationale and solutions. She and the Athletic Director, Ross Bjork, are reviewing and working this. We posted this great 12th Man Centennial patch for you above in this Bulletin. We recommend, as a solution, that it replace the planned “unified” patch since “We are the Aggies” have been unified for 144 years - further codified in our great 12th Man Tradition in 1922. And we are about to celebrate its 100th Centennial! And oh, by the way, most other SEC teams do not wear a social justice patch on their uniforms



In the 2021 SRG Bulletin series, we spoke significantly that there was a dire need of unity of purpose and effort within our beloved university – a point that President Banks agreed with. In the spirit of the President Banks’ new central theme, **“One University, One Brand, One Team,”** we conclude that she has codified this objective and working toward its achievement. We salute this!

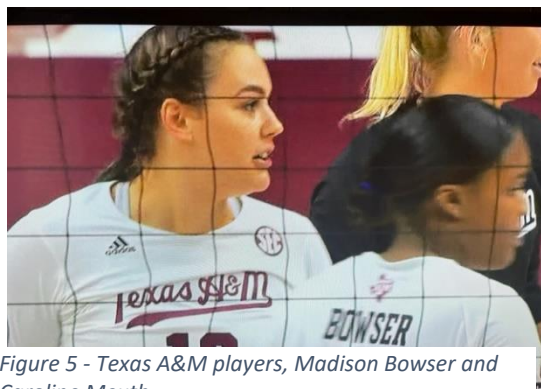


Figure 5 - Texas A&M players, Madison Bowser and Caroline Meuth.

In light of the issue of wearing social justice patches on Texas Aggie athletic uniforms, we expressed the opinions numerous times that we, the majority SRG membership, clearly understand, through service to the Nation, the right of all Americans to express their opinions – something we all cherish and support.

As evidenced by the photo attached, the patches have been removed for the fall of 2022.

So now we offer our salute and thanks to the Administration for working this out in a unified manner - embodied by ALL of us in the Texas Aggie 12th Man, and in the Texas Aggie Spirit!

TEXAS A&M TO ADD 23 SUITES IN KYLE FIELD’S SOUTH END ZONE

As reported by Alex Miller in the Bryan/College Station Eagle on August 26, 2022, “Twenty-three new suites will be added to the south end zone at Kyle Field before the 2023 football season, Texas A&M officials announced Friday.”

Miller further reported “Construction will begin following A&M’s final home game of the 2022 season, which is Nov. 26 vs. LSU. A&M athletics director Ross Bjork said by adding the suites, the athletics department is hoping to bring in \$20-25 million in one-time gifts and \$2 million in additional annual revenue.”



Figure 6 - Texas A&M Athletic Director Ross Bjork, Broadcast Director, Andrew Monaco, and Executive Deputy AD, Justin Moore review the stadium expansion.

“We have very little turnover, if any, in our current suite market, so that demand was built up and kind of a pent-up demand from our donors saying, I want to buy a suite. What can I do?” Bjork said. “So over time and as we looked at our campaign, as we looked at our other facilities, being able to fund everything, this was another revenue source, not only in annual revenue but also in one-time gifts. It just added sort of fuel to our capital campaign.”

To read more, go to the following link:

[Texas A&M to add 23 suites in Kyle Field's south end zone for 2023 season | Football | theeagle.com](https://theeagle.com/sports/football/2022/09/27/texas-am-to-add-23-suites-in-kyle-field-s-south-end-zone-for-2023-season/)

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.

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

It was previously The Association of Former Students’ policy that anyone could “opt in” (register and grant permission) to receive the 56 SRG produced Bulletins which began in 2020. In mid-April 2022, the policy guidance was changed so that only SRG members can now receive them. The “opt in” system was rescinded by The Association so that now, non-SRG persons no longer can be recipients. That rescission and change in policy also included three conditions: (1) that SRG can no longer express opinions or include “opinion-based” material in the bulletins, (2) that the SRG can only issue one bulletin each month, and (3) that our “bulletins” be simply typical SRG newsletters. Accordingly, in order to maintain our independence of thought and communication with our membership, the SRG board has decided to abandon the email service of The Association, known as “ListServe”, and to communicate with you directly through bulletins sent by email to the Class Agents. This is why that in Bulletin 55 there was a “notice” on page one explaining that this change was about to be made. The Board intends to maintain our policy of complete transparency and that is the reason we have inserted the disclaimer on the front page of this bulletin. To communicate with the SRG address your emails to SRGPresident@gmail.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: gharman@tamu.edu

Interim Provost Alan Sams: asams@tamu.edu

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