

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Forty-Three

23 September 2021

Establishing TAMU Organizational Unity of Purpose and Effort – The “Messengers, Messaging,” and the Real “Message!”

First, here are a few basic thoughts which we believe to be fact versus opinion. In any “endeavor,” to accomplish a mission, objective, task, or goal, an organization of people is usually required. The organization must have a leader who possesses leadership skills to establish “unity of purpose” and “effort.” In other words, there must be an understanding, up to down and left to right, of what’s to be accomplished, and then the team must work together to be successful. This demands communication.

TAMU is no exception. We believe there are plenty of “messengers” who are “messaging” but do not understand the “messages.” We also believe that, unlike the previous administration, this Texas A&M administration, led by Dr. Banks, understands the foregoing and is working to achieve the aforementioned requisite conditions. We, the SRG Board, have been afforded the distinct honor and privilege to be invited to interface regularly with her and her staff and senior subordinate leaders (Provost, Athletic Director, Vice President for Student Affairs). We are most grateful, because it affords us the entrée to make “elderly and stately” constructive suggestions with rationale and solutions, as a key and credible cohort of the Texas Aggie “family.”

As you know from previous SRG Bulletins, we have been and still are addressing various issues that need attention. There are many inputs from parts, cohorts and constituencies from which Dr. Banks, as president, must consider. Some issues can be “decided” at the subordinate level, but many “in the name of Texas A&M University” and its overall Texas Aggie Brand cannot. So, while many, rightly, have a “say” or input, they do NOT get to decide. She holds that responsibility!

Again, and in this regard, President Banks is working hard to achieve unity of purpose to be organizationally functional and effective. “Messaging” at every level can then be enabled with unity of effort when the right messages from messengers fully understand “The Message(s)” for explaining and supporting TAMU’s transcendence.

We want our members to know that the SRG Board of Directors, based on frequent interface with Dr. Banks and her team, believe that this president’s leadership is on the right track. We, thankfully, are part of the discussion with inputs and believe in where her leadership toward unified purpose and effort is taking us. We will continue to support her. We will also keep you informed on progress specifics, and we thank you for your support!

The SRG Board of Directors
Joe Ashy '62, President

A Salute and Thanks to TAMU Interim Provost Dr. Mark Weichold



September 7, 2021

Effective Sept. 13, Mark Weichold will join The Texas A&M University System as associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. Weichold has served as interim provost and executive vice president since January 2021.



"On behalf of the university community, I would like to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Weichold for his eight months of service as interim provost and executive vice president," said M. Katherine Banks, Texas A&M University president. "Dr. Weichold has tackled many challenges and played a critically important role in safely returning our faculty, staff and students to campus this fall. His exemplary leadership will be of great benefit as his responsibilities and contributions expand to serve all the universities in the system."

Weichold, a regent's professor of electrical and computer engineering, has previously served in numerous leadership roles, including senior associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering, executive director of the Halliburton Engineering Global Program, dean and campus CEO for Texas A&M University's branch campus in Qatar and associate provost for undergraduate academic programs.

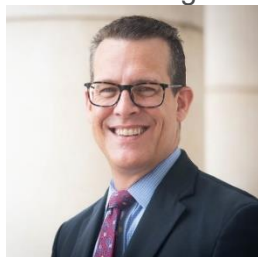
In his new role with the A&M System Office of Academic Affairs, Weichold will provide leadership and support for academic programs, educational initiatives, academic policy, student affairs, digital learning and data analysis.

Tim Scott, associate provost for academic affairs and student success, has been named acting interim provost and executive vice president. He joined the Department of Biology faculty in 1990 and was associate dean for undergraduate programs in the College of Science from 2000 to 2016. He is a professor of biology and science education policy."

On behalf of the Sul Ross Group, **thank you**, Dr. Weichold, for your selfless service in the spirit of the Texas Aggie Core Values. We appreciate your leadership when it mattered and valued our supporting relationship with you. Best wishes! The SRG Board.

New Interim TAMU Provost Dr. Tim Scott

Dr. Tim Scott is the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. He holds a bachelor's degrees in biology and chemistry from Louisiana College, and a master's in biology, and a PhD in zoology from Texas A&M University. Prior to this role, Dr. Scott taught within the Biology Department and directed the Undergraduate Program, as well as serving as the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs in the College of Science.



As Associate Provost, Dr. Scott oversees the Student Success Initiative for TAMU, managing advising, analytics, the First-Generation Center, and Hullabaloo U. He has been a tireless advocate for Aggies for more than 30 years. In addition to the Student Success Initiative, Dr. Scott oversees curriculum redesign projects for high-enrollment courses, helps to facilitate open education resources, and serves on the Provost Leadership Team.

Message From our Fightin' Texas Aggie Head Yell Leader



What an awesome weekend we had in Kyle Field...it is great to be back home in Aggieland! The 12th Man showed out in an unbelievable way at Midnight Yell Practice and our home opener as we BTHO Kent State! We made Kyle Field extra beautiful as we painted the stands in red, white and blue to show our love, passion and respect for our great country and remembered the tragedies of Sept. 11, 2001, and we honored all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our freedom. I hope this weekend reminded everyone how lucky we are to be back in Aggieland, which we had so greatly missed. It reminded us how special

Texas A&M is because of the love, loyalty and respect Aggies embody.

Texas A&M is a cut above the rest. As Aggies, we show and live out our core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service in all that we do. Sporting events are the front porch of representing Texas A&M spirit and tradition, and our core values should be shown to the millions of people watching worldwide.

As Aggies, we do not boo, we do not chant obscenities at the officials, others, or each other. Whenever we disagree with something, especially at a sporting event, we have always expressed our disapproval in a unique way — by hissing. This is a way to distinguish ourselves from every other fanbase in the country, another tradition that has set us apart from all the others.

Let us be sure that the tradition of good sportsmanship and Aggie hospitality are alive and well throughout this year. Let us strive to constantly embody our university's core values and have our opponents leave Kyle Field knowing that Aggieland is a special place, and that the 12th Man is a world class fan base unlike any other.

Thank you for your constant love and support for Aggie Football and our student athletes and for making Texas A&M the best university. It is an honor that is second to none to get to lead you, the 12th Man, the greatest fanbase in college sports. I look forward to seeing you in Colorado and yelling with you at Yell Practice and on Saturday at Empower Field at Mile High when we beat the hell outta Colorado!

Thanks, Gig 'em, and God bless Texas A&M!"

*Memo Salinas '22
Head Yell Leader*

This letter was written to Fightin' Texas Aggies by our 2021-22 Head Yell Leader, Memo Salinas '22, after the 4 September Kent State game in Kyle Field. One can access the letter here:

<https://yell.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Letter-to-the-12th-Man.pdf>

In a related matter, in Denver on 11 September at the next Fightin Texas Aggie football game against the Colorado University "buffies," the 12th Man showed up and outnumbered the buffies at Mile High Stadium in Denver! As per their normal gutter standards of comportment, the buffies threw things at Aggie fans and also shouted insults. They also booed the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band which marched at halftime.

Coach Fisher Quotes

Reflecting after the Red White and Blue Game

"My respect to the people in our military and the things they do. No place is perfect, but there is no better country in the world than ours. The people who stand for it and defend it. Freedom isn't free. We wouldn't be here doing what we're doing without these people. To remember all of

these folks and our country this weekend is special. We do have to get better and work on things. It's just like a team, and something always needs to be taken care of. We live in a great place, and we must remember that and the people that made that happen."

Coach's Favorite Aggie Tradition

As reported by The Eagle's Travis Brown on 15 September 2021, Coach Fisher's favorite Texas Aggie Tradition is Muster! We believe that Coach gets Aggieland and The Spirit! Thanks, Coach!

US News & World Report Ranks Texas A&M Among Nation's Best Public Universities

Texas A&M University is tied for No. 26 among public universities and tied for No. 68 overall in U.S. News & World Report's 2022 college rankings of more than 1,400 schools. It also ranks Texas A&M tied at No. 15 in the country for best undergraduate engineering program and tied at No. 23 for best undergraduate business programs.

The publication said it uses 17 measures of academic quality in its ranking methodology, among them the number of academic majors offered, tuition, financial aid, graduation rates, student body demographics and other factors.

Texas A&M has impressive rankings in recent similar listings. Texas A&M is ranked No. 17 among the nation's best public universities and No. 10 among best schools in the South in Forbes magazine's listing of the top U.S. colleges and universities.

With more than \$1 billion in annual research expenditures – the largest in the state – Texas A&M is also listed among the top 40 leading research universities in the Forbes list.

It is ranked No. 21 overall and No. 11 among public universities in Washington Monthly magazine's annual ranking of the top U.S. colleges. In addition, Texas A&M is the state's only school to be ranked among the top 30 national universities and is also ranked No. 2 in the magazine's listing of the "Best Bang for the Buck" schools in the South.

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Protest, 16 September 2021

On the afternoon of 16 September 2021, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) scheduled and conducted a protest event at Texas A&M's Academic Plaza. As reported by SRG representatives who observed from the perimeter and Aubrey Vogle of The Battalion, the attendance grew to about 100 later on before adjournment. It was also reported to us that responsible A&M officials were on site as observers which is a welcomed change to the previous administration's (in)action last summer and fall.

So, you ask, who and what are the Students for Democratic Society (SDS)? This organization goes back to the 1960's and you can find that history online. To read about them now and their activities and politics, go to newsds.org. You will find numerous

“Statements” for info and reference. Here is one of the latest posted on the 1st of September, entitled “SDS National Day of Action: Cops Off Campus and Black Lives Matter!” Here are some excerpts from that statement:



“SDS calls for a National Day of Action on September 9th to fight against police crimes and campus cops. SDS stands with the families of victims of police brutality in their fight for justice. We thus want to take this fight against police brutality and discrimination to our own campuses and call for the defunding, disbandment, and campus control of university police forces.

The past 2 years have seen unprecedented protests, rebellions and uprisings against police violence across the country. The murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis cops in May of 2020 sparked the largest rebellion against racist police killings in US history. The murder of Breonna Taylor met with continued public outrage and struggle, combined with movements against the death of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin. In spite of the people's rebellion, racist police killings continue, because the politicians representing the wealthy elite refuse to hold killer cops accountable. Daunte Wright was murdered by BPD cops in April of this year, and 13-year-old Adam Toledo was killed just the month before. In June 2021, another Black man, named Winston Smith, was killed by Minneapolis police, sparking protests where a right-winger drove a car into protesters and killed one, a woman named Deona Erickson- Black. Lives Matter! Community Control of the Police Now! Cops Off Campus! Fund Education, Defund Discrimination!”

If one checks out (twitter) [@tamusds](#), one will find “Committees/Projects” as follows: racial justice, mutual aid, eco-socialist, political education, socialist feminism, and LGBTQ + liberation.

Back to the Academic Plaza “anti-Sully” protest led by SDS. Reported by [The Battalion](#) article, “Tasia,” an animal science major, led black lives matter chants – calling for the removal of the LSR statue. Amora Shamberger briefed on system racism. Hanna Boyd, the SDS president, along with SDS representative “Mia,” a junior, explained that the protest was against racial oppression. She also said that the TAMU response to student voices regarding racial oppression was inadequate, and that LSR’s life contradicted TAMU Core Values. She added that these type protests will continue.

SDS “advisor” and TAMU anthropology professor Michael Alvard also spoke about Chancellor Sharp’s remarks made during his time in office. You will recall that Alvard, as reported by Megan Rodriguez of the Bryan [Eagle](#) on 12 January 2021, was investigated by the TAMU Office of Risk, Ethics and Compliance and received a written letter of reprimand by then Provost Dr. Mark Weichold. He was to be able to remain in the classroom, with oversight, but without the possibility of merit raises or promotions for two years because he “failed to deliver instruction and class materials in an unbiased and respectful manner.” Please see Alvard and Castro [Eagle](#) article 3Jan21 here: [One A&M professor fired, one disciplined after investigations into conduct and commentary | Texas A&M | theeagle.com](#)

Addition: On Oct 11, 2021, Michael Alvard wrote to us about SRG Bulletin 43:
"I read with interest the Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Forty-Three (23 September 2021). I direct your attention to the article in that issue, "Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Protest, 16 September 2021" There are a number of errors and omissions in the article in regard to what was written about me. I was investigated by OREC but I did not receive a letter of reprimand from Provost Weichold. A sanction letter was written by the chair of my department Dr. Darryl De Ruiter. More importantly, you failed to note that the sanctions were in fact reversed on appeal to the College of Liberal Arts. SRG needs to be more honest. Thanks!"
We took this under advisement, and told Dr. Alvard we would correct it. after fact checking what he said. What we learned was that it is true that the letter was not one of reprimand but of sanction as he stated. The University officials told us the second part on sanctions being overturned was "partially true," but they could not elaborate. The T Ten dean of the Liberal Arts College was the person that reversed the sanctions. We point out that the Eagle's Meagan Rodriguez article January 2021 was quoted in #43.

The protest ended with the reading of a list of SDS "demands." One can read these demands in The Battalion reporting on this episode at:

[Sully statue protesters, counter-protesters return to Academic Plaza | News | thebatt.com](https://thebatt.com/sully-statue-protesters-counter-protesters-return-to-academic-plaza)

Texas A&M University Enrollment Tops 72,000 overall – 12,000 fish!



As reported by Meagan Rodriguez of The Bryan Eagle on 16 September 2021, Texas A&M welcomed the largest ever freshman class this school year. This is partly due to planned growth in some of A&M's Colleges, but also because more students accepted offers this year than expected. Data from the first day of classes showed that there were 72,982 students spread across the main campus in College

Station plus the other adjunct entities which make up Texas A&M.

This year's first day of class numbers represent a fall enrollment increase of 2.6% from last year. Joseph Pettibone, VP for Enrollment and Academic Services said planned growth of fish in the College of Engineering and the Mays Business School accounts for a good portion of this year's increase. But he pointed out there were also generally smaller increases across the board in the rest of the TAMU Colleges.

Pettibone noted that for nearly a decade, now, that the College of Engineering has been aiming to have 25,000 engineering students by the year 2025. He added that business is one of the majors in the highest demand, so officials decided to slightly increase its enrollment since there was some excess capacity. The graduate student numbers also

increased this year which adds to the overall enrollment – something the school has long wanted to do.

TAMU Faculty for Stronger COVID Precautions

As reported by Megan Rodriguez of The Bryan Eagle on 15 September 2021, some Texas A&M faculty members, frustrated with the way the University is handling the COVID-19 pandemic, called on administrators to address their concerns.

Members of the university's Faculty Senate spent a large part of a Monday virtual meeting stating their worries to Texas A&M President Dr. Katherine Banks. Topics included asking how to handle classes when students and faculty are quarantined or isolated, as well as suggestions for ways to improve mask usage and vaccinations on campus. President Banks cited Governor Greg Abbott's policies which prohibit the university from requiring such precautions.

During A&M's three week-long testing period that recently ended, Director of Student Health Services, Dr. Martha Dannenbaum, told reporters on Monday that about 79,000 tests were administered. She then said that the positivity rate for the campus was 4.1% which means that around 3,000 people tested positive for COVID-19.

Chief Operations Officer Greg Hartman said that there was not a major spike in the positivity rate following the first Aggie football game on September 4th.

Texas Aggie Device to Help Prevent Fires



Chancellor _____
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

"Howdy!"



The Northern California utility linked to some of the world's worst wildfires, Pacific Gas and Electric, is betting big on a Texas A&M University device that helps stop fires before they start.

Some of you will remember hearing about Distribution Fault Anticipation (DFA). The system detects electric line problems early so that utility operators can fix them before they cause power outages and spark fires.

DFA was developed over 20 years by a Texas A&M team of electrical engineers led by Distinguished Professor Dr. B. Don Russell and Research Professor Carl L. Benner.

In 2019, PG&E installed DFA on seven circuits to test its effectiveness. Now, the utility plans to add DFA on 650 circuits to cover its most fire-prone areas. PG&E engineers call DFA "fundamental" to their risk reduction efforts."

Find out more about DFA here: <https://www.tamug.edu/california-utility-expands-use-of-texas-am-wildfire-prevention-system/>

*John Sharp
Chancellor, Texas A&M System*

Brandt Laycock '61 RIP

A great Fightin Texas Aggie passed away on 6 September. Brant was on our SRG Board of Directors last year and we shall miss him. We, on behalf of all SRG members, want his family to know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. The SRG Board of Directors

Got a Story for You, Ags – The Calzada Family



As reported by "Esquina Magazine," the 17 September 2021 issue by Jose de Jesus Ortiz, Texas Aggie quarterback Zach Calzada's personal route to the starting quarterback job at Texas A&M stretches across the length and breadth of SEC country. But the Calzada family's story begins in Cuba amid the tumultuous takeover of the island by the communist regime of Fidel

Castro in the late 1950s.

Zach's journey to his first college start for the No. 5-ranked Aggies against New Mexico on Saturday night, a week after coming off the bench to pace the Aggies to a nail-biting 10-7 win over Colorado, shows the same determination and ingenuity exhibited by his grandparents, Hector and Maria Del Carmen Calzada, who fled Cuba 60 years ago in search of a better life.

The family odyssey has stretched from Panama to Florida, Missouri and Georgia and now, for Zach and his sister Carolyn, who has committed to play soccer for the Aggies, to College Station. One can read the entire article here:

<https://ouresquina.com/2021/cuban-missile-zach-calzada-embodies-american-dream/>

NOTES

REMINDER - SRG March '22 Reunion Information!!

March 2-4, 2022

College Station, TX

<https://www.aggienetwork.com/events/2022/sulross.aspx>.

SRG Bulletin Sign-Up Reminder: Anyone (Ags and non Ags, SRG Ags and all other Ags too) can “opt in” and sign up by going to: <https://www.aggienetwork.com/theassociation/sulrossgroup.aspx> and simply putting in your name and email address, and then clicking on “submit.” You will then automatically receive all the SRG Bulletins.

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

Interim Provost Scott: t-scott@tamu.edu

Athletic Director Bjork: rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu

You can reach us at: SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com. The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD) are responsible for producing and editing these SRG Bulletins, with transparency to and advice from The Association of Former Students, under whose auspices we operate. We do so in keeping with one of our four charged SRG Constitution’s Purposes, which is keeping our represented SRG Membership informed in a timely manner. To access information about us as the elected SRG Board of Directors, and our Constitution, please refer to our new “**SRG Tab**” (Under “**Programs**”) on The Association’s website, at: aggienetwork.com. One can access information about us, including the current 2021-2022 SRG Board of Directors, The SRG’s Constitution and By-Laws, and the SRG’s history and what we’re about.