

SRG Bulletin Four

14 August 2020

To our SRG Class Agents and their Classmate SRG Members,

Emailing our letter to the Texas A&M President after the vandalism of Sully's statue, and the protest that followed, enabled us to inform our members in a more timely way as opposed to a paper newsletter that is not so timely. We believe we are at a juncture where we need to do the same with these email Bulletins as the needs arise, so that you can lend your support and share it as you see fit. We have decided that we need to "institutionalize" this Bulletin process for continued use. We kindly request that the class agents DO NOT call The Association and ask them to distribute it for you.

If you wish to comment to those who are the campus leaders, below are the addresses for you to voice your opinions:

Michael Young (President, TAMU: PresidentYoung@tamu.edu)
1246 TAMU
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-1246

John Sharp (Chancellor, TAMU System: chancellor@tamus.edu)
Moore/Connally Building, 7th Floor
301 Tarrow
College Station, Texas 77840-7896

Congrats - Two SRG Members Announced as Distinguished Texas Aggie Alumni

Dr. C. M. Cocanougher '53 built a successful veterinary practice in Wise County and served as a Decatur City Council member and civic leader who helped draw employment to the area during a downturn, supported the hospital system and gave decades of scholarships to high school and A&M students. He and wife Jo Ann endowed ten A&M veterinary school scholarships. He was named an Outstanding Alumnus of A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and 1985's Citizen of the Year in Decatur. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a captain and base veterinarian. He served as president and rodeo secretary of the Wise County Sheriff's Posse, president of the Decatur Chamber of Commerce, officer of the Decatur Rotary Club and charter member and chairman of the Wise County American Heart Association chapter. He also served on the Texas Veterinary Medical Association board of directors.

Weldon Jaynes '54 was chairman, CEO and majority shareholder of Priester Supply Co., which he spent more than 40 years building into a prominent southwest U.S. regional distributor for electric and gas utilities. He also created Repcom International, a national telecommunication company. He is a past president (now called chair) and trustee of the 12th Man Foundation who helped start its Major Gifts Department, a recipient of its E. King Gill award and member of its Diamond Champions Council. He has created the Mr. and Mrs. L. Weldon Jaynes '54 Sul Ross

Scholarship, the Weldon Jaynes '54 Presidential Endowed Scholarship and a Corps scholarship. Jaynes is an A&M Lettermen's Association Hall of Honor inductee and a past director of the Fort Worth A&M Club. He and wife Judy give time and support to Trinity United Methodist and First Baptist Church in Arlington, Mission Arlington and the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Note: Mr. Jaynes was honored in his announcement at the March 2020 Sul Ross Group Reunion at the business meeting by Porter Garner, and we saluted him in the April Newsletter.

NCAA Announces Policy for Wearing Athletic Uniform Expressions

On 30 July, the NCAA announced the policy that athletes could wear expressions of social justice on their uniforms. The posts on social media were immediately plentiful with comments for and against. It would be interesting to learn how the TAMU President and Athletic Director voted and with rationale. This gets to the crux of the question about - are we a 12th Man in support of our team/s who wear out uniforms as "We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we?" Or, are we something else using a University represented team athletic event for other agenda for expressions, guaranteed by the US Constitution, in many other forums? Here is one post already issued: "Aggie basketball has a voice and best believe we going to use it! We all see the disgraceful comments on social justice posts on our jerseys! WE WILL BE HEARD!!"

The Commission has First Meeting

The TAMU Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [our add is – Representations, because they will address the LSR Statue] met for the first time on 31 July as reported in the press. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 August with two more before the findings and reported out in November. The two Commissioners, John Hurtado '91 and Jimmy Williams '83 directed that four sub-committees be formed: Community Engagement, Data and Policies, Values and Mission, and Campus Culture and Climate. They mentioned that they want the Commission to view issues in a broad way so that other issues (besides the statue) are not overlooked.

Membership is made up of 14 current students, 12 former students, and 16 faculty and staff members (as well as the Chair of the Board of Regents and the President of Prairie View University). Committee Chairs are: Tiana Sanford, Julie Harlin, Stephen Ruth, and Cynthia Hernandez.

The SRG Board thought that our views on what the issues are to be addressed at higher strategic focus would be a good thing to share with the Commission up front. As you know, we have been working on many related areas before this summer prior to June. So, we did so in a letter to the two co-commissioners on 5 August, and it follows here:

6 August 2020

From: The Sul Ross Group Board of Directors

To: John Hurtado, '91 and Jimmy Williams, '83, Co-Chairmen of the Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (and Representations), TAMU

Dear Gentlemen,

Since our 28 July letter, we, the Sul Ross Group Board of Directors, have now read the press reports about your first Commission meeting, and how you have organized and assigned your responsibilities. We applaud your focus on balance and the broader (and causal) issues. In that regard, and since we agree that this is correct, we offer some thoughts here about our views for your consideration as you proceed. The Sul Ross Group (SRG) has been interested and involved in digging into many related issues for some time now. We trust that these will be useful to you during your challenge.

If we all love our great Institution, and we believe that we are set apart transcendently from any others (which we do), this is derived from our rich history of selfless service, our sense of duty culture, our core values system, and resultant traditions which bind us together as one wherein the parts equal a sum greater than the whole (and our strength). This Spirit, which others covet but cannot replicate, is definitely worth preserving as we march along into modernity - for a multitude of noble reasons - which we also believe. Thus, the leadership, including the administration, faculty, and coaches, all need to understand it, embrace it, nurture it and explain it to all newcomers (not that they don't, to some degree for sure). What has happened in the past two months has revealed some serious and embarrassing voids where the "optics" have been pathetic if we believe "We are the Aggies; the Aggies are we!" We in our cohort group of elder Texas Aggie former students, some 18,000, believe we well understand all this, and we shall be most pleased to assist in any way we can in a mentoring, supporting and enlightening manner.

Diversity: First, we believe it is vital, but we also believe, in the literal sense, by itself is divisive. That would be the opposite from "E Pluribus Unum." With inclusiveness it becomes a unified sum larger than the parts. What is missing in the narrative at TAMU is the vital, "inclusive," welcomed integration and assimilation into what we are as described above! You should therefore review the Diversity Program here, including the leadership, The Council, its representation, The Plan, the process it produces, and the objectives therein. You will note (aside from the required compliance with federal and state law) that what we have said here about assimilation is never mentioned. It may be that what really occurs is the opposite. If so, that needs to change, and if we cannot get buy in, then some people need to be let go with their replacements possessing a fresh sense of understanding and purpose.

Racism: Racism is unacceptable given our core values! We look forward to learning what you report about the recent charges of "systemic racism" and that you also read what Professor Thomas Sowell says about it. We also assume you are going to review the system of reporting it, investigating it, correcting and/or punishing those involved in episodes of racist activity, and the consequences for those who abuse it by false claims of it. And as you indicated in your remarks, reported by the press, we applaud that you intend to keep outcomes in balance and in historical context!

"BLM": The expression is one thing, but the organization is a Marxist, radical entity. So, in your work, you should sort this out before you proceed. The organization is the antithesis of our Constitutional Republic and TAMU for that matter. We know that those who feel offended use this expression, but there are a multitude of other Texas Aggies, who have worked for social justice for a lifetime, are likewise offended because they truly believe they "are not the enemy!"

You need to square this particularly with the younger group on your team and understand that there are always “three sides to every story!”

Comportment Standards for Professors and State Employees (Public Servants): *We would not have a great University without great teachers and faculty members. But the past two months has exposed some who are not of such high caliber, particularly in one of the Colleges. Out of this, we want to know and understand the specific and clear standards of comportment as conditions for (State) employment at TAMU. If they do not exist, then we really have a problem to fix. Subject matter is one thing but being a professor does not include agenda driven and radical political activism. Given the call to duty to teach, it seems (like in the military), there should be a standard of apolitical, balanced professorship. And these should be outside the umbrella of academic freedom and tenure. The question is “What are they?” Are they sufficient and complete, who enforces them, and if not in compliance and spirit of them who ushers guilty parties to somewhere else? As Professor John Ellis offers in his book about “one party campuses,” this kind of thing is a threat to our campus freedom of speech in America much less TAMU. We look forward to what you find and recommend.*

Freedom of Expression: *We believe that we, as elder Texas Aggie former students, well understand this precious right guaranteed by the US Constitution (despite having been lectured about such). We embrace that and are thankful for it as-long-as we can be civil, accountable and responsible with some sort of sense of consequence for what we say. In the past two months, we have sadly witnessed some embarrassing “conflicts in agenda” with supporting cohorts who were offended. Most of us never thought we’d see Ags vs Ags confrontations. The embarrassing optics of this is not us for sure (at least who we say we are)! And the editorialization about such episodes from those in charge has been meager. We suppose, therefore, that this is why a Commission was appointed, but the timing may be way late to need.*

If we believe “We are the Aggies” as one, and thus our athletic teams are in competitions supported by the rest of us as the 12th Man, then the notion that political expressions at games about social justice is the wrong venue. And during protest activities, threatening and vulgar language, certainly going unpunished by the administration, coaches and mentors of those involved is inconsistent and not acceptable. We look forward to your findings about this also.

It would be useful for the Commission to address the question before proceeding too far with your work: “To whom does TAMU belong?” We have our version of the answer and will share it if you want. What you find and report should be well connected to the answer. Thank you.

Texas Attorney General Paxton’s Opinion

On the 7th of August, Attorney General Paxton issued his opinion regarding the question of possibly moving the Sully statue. The Texas Legislature likely will have the final say. The opinion said that a court is likely to conclude that TAMU must comply with a Section of Government Code that outlines that the Texas Legislature holds the authority to remove or relocate monuments and memorials.

A 45-person Commission, formed to, in part, make a recommendation on the future of the statue, will submit their final report in November. In a Friday statement, the Chancellor, John Sharp, said that the statue cannot be moved by anyone at TAMU, including the Board of Regents. He went on to say that the TAMU President’s

Commission has important work to do to make TAMU even greater, and that “we all should put our energy toward that goal.”

Forgiveness

This was a post about the athletes: *“Here is my thought. We have over 600 D1 athletes on campus. I can name TWO that have said/done negative things. TWO. I know I did some things and thought some things when I was less than 21 years old that I would not repeat. (), I am certain you have done some things you might not do again. Let’s stay behind the other 600 and give these few a chance to learn from watching better examples. Most of us are willing to forgive Manziel, right?”*

Well, there was more than two, and one of them was the athlete that threatened an ole Ag with “I am going to slit you.” Unacceptable, and threats like that are against the law (which to our knowledge was not punished – at least not commented on by the TAMU leadership). But the poster has a good point, and yes, we were all young and dumb. What he didn’t mention was that a person very high up in the Athletic Department was tweeting (we can follow tweets too) his congrats to our QB for a good job and for his leadership as he was participating in one demonstration.

Facts about Who Commits Murders

By Dr. Heather MacDonald, and you can find the video here:

http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001U061iGJMYbejqmFmxs6t_rWxFz45vLi0TV8suSFDYn7Nr5WVlefaYQwQa-qB5283wpf0xc3dAGOoobjzpC75T_S1dzvwpi_sEq006pfOdxfunHml1s0gVaUGYLPA-ihyCsS5mMU4tpNd6zQboyjQRCyTFKk-doBYmSsXyGr1oOtlMGxd46zlkq==&c=RT8cHrSViVajR3if9MIh9AoQe16cKLs2z6PnVQV6_QE7mwXyLvKR7Q==&ch=PhFt_0UbelmJaTOPWLNGLmaiLnquhTSMCh7UcqrKP115UGAKDim2Pq==

About the Cultural Revolutionaries

If you missed it, Dr. Victor Davis Hansen’s piece is most informative. You can find it at this site and click on “Waiting for the Counterrevolution” by Victor Davis Hansen, July 28, 2020:

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/07/protests-riots-democrats-media-blame-trump/>

SEC Announces How the Football Season will be Played

On 31 July, the SEC Commissioner announced that the Conference will play a 10 game “intra conference” schedule. Basically, the Aggies will play their six West foes and the two East teams already scheduled (Vanderbilt and SC). On 7 August, the SEC added the two West teams to play the Texas Aggies – Florida and Tennessee. Although the exact schedule has not been determined by the SEC, as of this writing the season will kick off for the Texas Aggies on September the 26th very likely at Kyle field against the Arkansas razorbacks. But there is still uncertainty! Two mid-major conferences pulled out this week and it is fairly certain that the PAC-12 and the Big-10 will also!

Dr. Matt Poling '90, and Former Texas Aggie Corps Commander Writes Letter to the Regents (Signed by Numerous Aggies in Support)

Here is the letter which was sent to the Regents on 6 August:

Board of Regents
Texas A & M University
301 Tarrow St.
College Station, TX 77840

Dear Members of the Board:

From its founding in 1876, as the Land Grant University and first public institution of higher education in the State of Texas, Texas A&M has been focused on providing a practical education to prepare Aggies for service to our state and nation. While much has changed in a century and a half, the core values of Texas A&M have endured and served her, our state and country with distinction. We are now compared to the top colleges and universities in the world. To meet the needs of our state and nation, we have expanded our teaching and research excellence from agriculture, mechanical arts and military instruction to nearly every field of modern study.

To continue this admirable record of achievement and service, we must continue our development while remaining grounded in our founding and enduring principles as expressed in our mission statement: "In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions." The BOR has the awesome duty "to promote academic research and technology to benefit the state and the nation". At a time when other institutions are sacrificing rigorous research and scholarship on the altar of a narrow political consensus and intolerant orthodoxy, Texas A&M "assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit".

We believe that most of the 10 point action plan posted by President Young on June 15, 2020 and the subsequent commission it spawned will do irreparable harm to our institution at a critical time when we should be reducing our bureaucratic footprint and advancing across the field of science and scholarship being ceded by others. The entire initiative appears to have been inspired by an unrelated police use of force incident in another state and a "detestable racist event" here on our campus, which we now know was a hoax. Actual racist incidents on this or any campus are increasing and thankfully rare, but should never be tolerated--nor have we seen any indication that they have been. Appointments and elections as Student Body Presidents, Cadet Colonels of the Corps, Deans, Yell Leaders, Class Agents and Regents demonstrate ethnic minorities and women have attained the most senior and respected offices available to students and alumni. Our military history and tradition of building Aggies from lowly fish to their highest potential is as close to a true meritocracy as can be found on any such campus. This "equal opportunity" culture has served individuals just as well as it has our university, state and nation. Conversely, an "equal outcomes" agenda, by any other name, will fall far short of achieving its ephemeral objectives of racial proportionality, while promoting campus tribalism and racial conflict and diminishing the achievements of the very minority students such a regime would be installed to ostensibly help.

This ill-advised action and leadership abdication is already engendering a reaction from the Aggie Family that is costly in both financial and moral support. One commission chair has apparently already prejudged the findings by stating they will be addressing “structural racism” without even defining the term, assessing whether such an entity exists on this campus or determining which students or faculty are receiving such preferential treatment. The composition of the commission is ethnically unrepresentative, particularly as it relates to the student appointments. Students have already spoken decisively by referendum on the Sul Ross statue and some alumni are already speaking against the broader implications of this agenda with their checkbooks. Such a movement will become a stampede should this commission or others attempt to remake this campus in its own image. We do not believe that this commission, in its rationale or composition, is a legitimate authority on the issues it will presumably rule on. President Young’s commission (which we are advised was not approved by the Chancellor and BOR) should be disbanded and the search for presidential leadership capable of rising to the challenge of these dangerous days should begin with the immediate appointment of an interim president.

We are asking for you to direct this and future leadership at the presidential level to focus on COMMONALITY rather than differences, and to protect the perpetually burning Aggie Spirit against the ill winds blowing across our nation and campuses today. Let’s focus as a COMMUNITY on resolving issues within our family, and not reflexively to pressure from outside events, hoaxes, or transparently political agendas. The alternative approach has proven on other campuses that it seeks neither justice nor peace, and has done nothing but damage campus unity, diversity of thought, and academic freedom.

Higher education is heading for further crisis. Already, we are enduring significant faltering support from alumni, calls to revoke universities tax exempt status, calls to end the federal student loan program and defund public education due to public disgust with the imposition of anti-American indoctrination and other progressive orthodoxies. The future of Texas A&M depends on your leadership. Given the discord and challenges facing our great nation, should not Texas A&M demonstrate by example how to function as a community committed to the equal worth of each individual, and embrace tolerance, free expression, and unfettered scholarship and research?

Finally, we call upon the Board of Regents to involve the vast Aggie community of over 400,000 living graduates in the process of selecting new leadership for our flagship campus as we seek to preserve and improve Texas A&M such that its proud record of service and spirit may endure. We believe the time is now for this board to take decisive action to correct our course rather than allow ourselves to be taken along with the current. Subsequent to your next scheduled meeting on August 19/20 and by September 1st 2020, we request a response to this letter be posted on the Texas A&M University website under your Board of Regents link.

The Aggie Family,

You can reach us at srgpresident@aggienetwork.com.