

## **Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Seventeen**

**26 November 2020**

### **SRG March 2021 Reunion will be Virtual**

As advertised, our traditional SRG reunion in College Station was scheduled for 7-9 March 2021. The SRG Board of Directors (BoD's) met on 13 November 2020 to address the COVID -19 pandemic impacts and risk assessment associated with reunion social distancing, members' age group, travel/movements, reports regarding vaccinations outlook and timing, and space and capacity limits imposed by the social distancing health rules.

The BoD's made some decisions since we were at planning "lead time away" about actions to proceed. These include ratification of proposed update changes to our SRG Constitution, and a vote conformation of the 2021-22 BoD's nominees. Both votes can be conducted with our members by The Association via electronic (email) processes - with accompanying information, just prior to the virtual activities so that they can be announced.

The other two actions are related to proceeding with the virtual reunion part. The first is welcoming and inducting our new entering class – the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of '66! Following that, we should have an update program for our membership on topics of interest and importance via the model of the recent semi-annual Association Leadership Council held 31 October, and you can access that at this site: 2020 Fall Leadership CouncilVideo <https://www.aggienetwork.com/media/guides/events/leadership%20council/videoarchive/2020fallleadershipcouncil.mp4>. Both actions can be executed within the bounds and limitations of the pandemic guidelines. It's not perfect but we shall try our hardest to make the best of it. We believe we can do an adequate job with the updates part. And we are working with the '66 Class Agents to integrate them "ceremoniously" into the induction program as the class representatives. This "welcoming" part for new classes is an important element for us in the SRG. And, when the pandemic is past, and we can gather again the next year, we shall circle back and make sure we've gotten it right.

This is an initial overview and there are obviously many details to be worked out and inform you about as we proceed to March 2021. But we thought it prudent to provide this "heads up" to you all for your planning purposes. Please note that The Association will follow shortly with official details and information – particularly for those of you who have already made reservations at the Hilton.

Depending on how the pandemic process plays out, there is a possible "window of opportunity" that we could get together in College Station for some sort of an "SRG Aggie fellowship" event in the June timeframe. We shall consider it but there are a lot of "ifs" about that option.

We regret that this concept plan had to turn out this way, but we had some decisions to make and we made them considering circumstances, risks, and options. In summary, we shall conduct virtual reunion in the 8 and 9 March 2021 time frame. This will be preceded by electronic votes on updating the SRG Constitution and confirming our nominated 2021-22 BoD's. The Class of '66 induction and updates to our membership will be conducted over The Association's "zoom" system they employed during the recent Leaderships Council proceedings. Thanks, and Gig 'em!

### **Fightin' Texas Aggies Ranked #5 in CFP**

On Tuesday evening 24 November, the Texas Aggie football team was ranked by the College Football Playoff (CFP) Committee as the #5 team. The top twenty are:

1. Alabama (7-0)
2. Notre Dame (8-0)
3. Clemson (7-1)
4. Ohio State (4-0)
5. **Texas A&M** (5-1)
6. Florida (6-1)
7. Cincinnati (8-0)
8. Northwestern (5-0)
9. Georgia (5-2)
10. Miami (7-1)
11. Oklahoma (6-2)
12. Indiana (4-1)
13. Iowa State (6-2)
14. BYU (9-0)
15. Oregon (3-0)
16. Wisconsin (2-1)
17. Texas (5-2)
18. USC (3-0)
19. North Carolina (6-2)
20. Coastal Carolina (8-0)

### **Ag Football Schedule May Change Again in December**

TexAgs and Billy Liucci report that the football schedule may have to change again in December because of all the cancelled games due to the pandemic. He says that SEC-wide that there is flexibility to make some changes so that all the teams can complete their schedules. Coach Fisher also mentioned that in his press conference on Monday. In the bigger picture, the date (and Aggie game) affected will be on December 19<sup>th</sup> which is the makeup game at Kyle Field against Ole Miss. He says that we shall just wait and see (and be flexible), but he believes it will all work out. As of November 25<sup>th</sup>, the Tennessee Athletic Director Fulmer said on his radio show, reported by 247 Sports.com, that "We've got Texas A&M on the 19<sup>th</sup> (of December – a change). So, this is NOT YET FIRM, BUT it appears that the remaining schedule for the Texas Aggies will be:

5 December @ Auburn

12 December Ole Miss @ Kyle Field

19 December @ Tennessee  
More to come for sure!

### **Coach Williams Says Men's Basketball Team will not be on Court during the National Anthem**



In his press interview on 24 November, Coach Buzz Williams was asked about his teaching video made while at Virginia Tech for player comportment during the National Anthem (one can access the U-Tube video here: <https://youtu.be/4Qz58jMhDDA>.) He said that the SEC “had changed the script” for games and that his players would not be on the court during the playing of the National Anthem. As reported by Travis Brown of the

Eagle, the SEC changed the guidance this past week to permit teams more flexibility to elect when on the pregame clock the Anthem will be played. So, at Aggie home games, the Anthem will be played earlier than in the past as the team is making final preparations in the locker room. In fact, the Eagle went on to report that this applies to the women's' team also. Previously, the SEC had mandated that the Anthem be played when the pregame clock reached zero. Note - the photo is during the National Anthem at the women's basketball game at Reed Arena against Lamar on 25 November.

He also said that he and his team had been aggressively discussing social justice during the past weeks including having both local and outside leaders join in. “We were learning from one another and trying to figure out how, as a group, we can be together in our communities and how we want to be a part of positive change.” The Aggie men open at Reed Arena at 2:00 on Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. One can watch Coach Williams' press conference at: <https://12thman.com/news/2020/11/24/mens-basketball-coach-buzz-savion-and-quenton-address-media-ahead-of-opener.aspx>

### **President Young's Announcement to Step Down at end of the Fall Semester**

November 24, 2020

*Dear Students, Faculty, Staff and all other members of the Aggie Family,  
As I reflect on the year, I am immensely thankful that we have arrived where we are. We have combatted the pandemic with some success - and must continue to do so - while maintaining focus upon continuity of health and safety, our educational and research mission, best-in-class athletics, and, as always, our core values.*

*We are clearly not out of the woods yet, but I am confident that we have the necessary processes, people and tools in place to successfully navigate the coming year. Undoubtedly, the new year will be filled with continued health protection protocols, vaccinations, hard work in service to others on and off campus, hope and continued resiliency, as is the Aggie way. As this year comes to an end, I have also had time to reflect on my own interests and where I can make the greatest contribution. After a quarter of a century in senior academic leadership roles, I find myself increasingly drawn to return to the passions that drew me to a career in higher education in the first place. I have become particularly excited to soon become immersed as a full-time member of the faculty of the Bush School of Government and Public Service, as well as the School of Law, and again work on the issues that have engaged me for much of my*

*career, especially issues related to religious freedom and international affairs. I believe our newly created Institute for Religious Liberties and International Affairs will be an enormously powerful vehicle to explore these issues and advance our understanding, and I want to begin work on building that Institute as soon as possible.*

*To this end, I have informed Chancellor Sharp of my wish to complete the fall semester and then step down as President, effective December 31, 2020.*

*We have a busy month ahead with final exams, graduation ceremonies, athletic events and holidays. I will be engaged to finish out this year successfully and facilitate a smooth transition. Thank you for the incredible opportunity to serve as your 25th President. As this great university goes forward, please take care of each other, Aggies. Commit to the success of each other in heart and action -- the institution and Aggies will thrive as they always have.*

*Michael K. Young*

### **Chancellor John Sharp on President Young's Decision to Step Down (And Asks Professor John L. Junkins to Serve as Interim President)**

*BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Today [November 24, 2020] I accepted Michael K. Young's resignation as President, effective December 31, 2020. I want to thank him for his service to Texas A&M University and I look forward to seeing him fulfill his passion to create an institute addressing the issues of religious freedom and international affairs.*

*During his tenure, the university increased research expenditures nearly 13 percent, to almost \$1 billion a year; concluded a \$4 billion Lead by Example fundraising campaign; and experienced a rise in national and world rankings.*

*President Young faced a critical final year because of the pandemic, but he and the campus leadership have navigated it well. They deserve our thanks.*

*To continue that stewardship, I am recommending Dr. John L. Junkins as Interim President. He is a Distinguished Professor of Aerospace Engineering and the holder of the Royce E. Wisenbaker Chair in Innovation in the College of Engineering as well Founding Director of the Hagler Institute of Advanced Study.*

*Dr. Junkins is an accomplished researcher, outstanding teacher and an innovator whose Institute has transformed our faculty. He also will bring a steady hand to the tiller to ensure that Texas A&M successfully navigates the next few months until a successor is named.*

### **Message from Dr. Junkins**

*Dear Faculty, Staff and Students:*

*24 November 2020*

*Last Thursday I learned that President Young was stepping down at the end of December 2020 and, in the same conversation, Chancellor Sharp asked me to serve as Interim President starting in January. I was doubly surprised.*

*I remarked to Chancellor Sharp that my current dual role as Director of the Hagler Institute for Advanced Study and being Professor Junkins is more than a full-time job. I also remarked that there were others more qualified to lead in this important time. He was insistent that he and the Regents surveyed the possibilities and were unanimous that, given the short fuse, I was the*

*best choice. He then said: "Jenkins, I am just calling to make it happen!" Humbled and surprised, I asked for time to process the news and his request.*

*After some deliberation with Elouise and thinking about the overall situation, I returned Chancellor Sharp's call and accepted the challenge to be your interim President. I will begin to arrange my current duties immediately and coordinate with President Young and his leadership team to transition by January. Given the short notice and the few months duration of this appointment, I will not bring a bold new agenda. My job will be to help navigate Texas A&M safely along our presently planned course and work with existing senior leadership and the faculty to solve problems as they arise until our new president takes the helm, hopefully by June.*

*My 35 years at Texas A&M, preceded by appointments at the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech, have positioned me to appreciate this great American university and see the way that traditions and excellence have been blended while building the largest and strongest university in the southwest. Remarkably, we have found a recipe for delivering effective teaching, mentoring and service, while conducting an increasing volume of world-class research.*

*More remarkably, Texas A&M remains permeated by an admirable set of core values that fundamentally define us. Texas A&M's culture appeals strongly to me because I am a blend of scholar-researcher-teacher-mentor-leader who began serious academics at Auburn University as a first-generation college student. So, I understand the notion that land-grant universities should be dedicated, first and foremost, to developing people, and in the process, lifting many out of poverty. Texas A&M's mission is broader and deeper than that, however.*

*Based on my personal experience, our former students are characterized by excellent leadership skills, a strong work ethic, and core values that reliably locate true north when ethical issues arise. As a consequence, our former students, I firmly believe, are a national treasure that contribute greatly to a more competent, just and discrimination-free society. That we have preserved these attributes while becoming a research powerhouse makes this is a very special institution. Moving forward, we are the "keepers of the flame" with the solemn responsibility to continue making progress while cultivating the fundamental values that truly define Texas A&M.*

*It is my great honor and privilege to help Texas A&M University move through this challenging era and maintain our hard-earned momentum. I will bring a collaborative and goal-focused approach to leadership while refining our plans for the coming months. With regard to meeting challenges presented by this time-varying pandemic, I am very hopeful our continued diligence will see us as safe as possible through the spring. A successful vaccine and its distribution are important to achieve my fondest hope: That we will see much better COVID-19 conditions by summer.*

*In the meantime, I will appreciate your help as we pull together this spring and learn the lessons that allow us to perform our functions even better. We can all certainly be very proud of the past eight months of incredible accomplishment while dealing with the pandemic. Kudos to Chancellor Sharp, President Young, Provost Fierke and the entire leadership team, as well as our faculty, staff and students on the front lines. COVID-19 is still with us, however, so we can't take success to date for granted and must adapt as necessary. After we navigate through this difficult time, we will surely have learned many lessons that will make us even better moving forward.*

*On that note, let me remark that upon welcoming our next President of Texas A&M University, I look forward to resuming my roles as Professor Junkins and Director of the Hagler Institute for Advanced Study.*

*Gig 'em,  
John Junkins, November 24, 2020*

## **About Dr. Junkins**

*John L. Junkins is a professor, inventor and aerospace engineer. Junkins was born in Oakman, Georgia May 23, 1943. Junkins professional history has seen him working in government (NASA), industry, and academia over a five-decade career. Junkins' scholarship is documented in over 400 professional [publications](#), including seven texts, 220 archival papers and several [patents](#).<sup>[6]</sup> His work has supported numerous spaceflight missions including the final three [Apollo](#) missions and his inventions have led to commercial products including navigation sensors for autonomous [aerial refueling](#) of aircraft, and for pointing navigation of spacecraft based on star pattern recognition.<sup>[6]</sup> He also patented an early electronic whiteboard in 1994 for use in computer conferencing and academic classrooms. He has directed over 120 graduate students, including 47 (as of March 2012) who completed their PhD under his direction; his former students have given rise to three generations of PhD descendants.*

*Junkins is a member of the [National Academy of Engineering](#) and the [International Academy of Astronautics](#) and an Honorary Fellow of the [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#)*

### Education

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- *1965 Bachelor of Science, Aerospace Engineering, [Auburn University, Alabama](#)*
- *1967 Master of Science, [University of California, Los Angeles](#)*
- *1969 Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, Los Angeles*

### Career chronology

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- *1970–1977, [University of Virginia](#)*
- *1978–1985, [Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University](#)*
- *1985 – present, Texas A&M University*

## **Interim VP and Associate Provost for Diversity Appointed – Dr. Annie McGowan**

As previously announced, the TAMU VP and Associated Provost for Diversity, Dr. Robin Coleman, is leaving for a similar post at Northwestern University. This note was emailed to the campus community earlier today on behalf of President Michael K. Young, and Provost and Executive Vice President Carol A. Fierke:

*23 November 2020:*

*We are pleased to inform the campus community that Dr. Annie S. McGowan has been named interim vice president and associate provost for diversity at Texas A&M University effective Dec. 1. She brings to the Office for Diversity noteworthy leadership experience. Most recently, Dr. McGowan served as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs at Mays Business School,*

where she holds the Bill and Gina Flores Professorship in Business. She also serves on the university's Diversity Operations Committee.

Prior to serving as Associate Dean, Dr. McGowan was Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at Mays from 2016 to 2018. During that time, she created and provided strategic oversight for the Mays Office of Diversity and Inclusion and led initiatives to recruit and retain underrepresented students in order to foster a climate of inclusivity and engagement. Her teaching interests are managerial/cost accounting and her current research centers on the implications of cost management system design and the determinants of academic success for first-generation students.

Dr. McGowan will assume the role currently held by Dr. Robin R. Means Coleman, who has accepted the position of Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, and the inaugural Ida B. Wells and Ferdinand Barnett Professor in the Department of Communication Studies in the School of Communication at Northwestern University. Dr. Means Coleman's last day at Texas A&M is Dec. 31.

We appreciate the strides Dr. Means Coleman has made in improving diversity, inclusion, and equity at Texas A&M during her two years here. She introduced the Accountability, Climate, Equity, and Scholarship (ACES) faculty pipeline program. Twice, Texas A&M has received Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award and was recognized as a "Diversity Champion" by INSIGHT into Diversity magazine. The HEED Award is a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

## **BTHO Isu!!!**



Texas Aggie Bonfire 25 November 2020

**You can reach us at:** [SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com](mailto:SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com)

**Reminder:** Anyone (Ags and non Ags, SRG Ags and all other Ags too) can "opt in" 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](mailto:chancellor@tamus.edu)

The Board of Regents: [vickie@tamus.edu](mailto:vickie@tamus.edu) or [jbell@tamus.edu](mailto:jbell@tamus.edu)

Interim President Junkins: [Junkins@tamu.edu](mailto:Junkins@tamu.edu)

Athletic Director Bjork: [rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu](mailto:rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu)