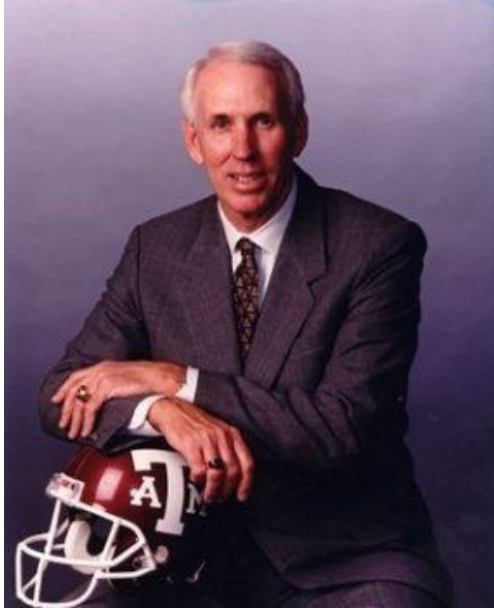


Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Thirty-Eight

12 July 2021

Coach Slocum Needs our Prayers, Ags



Reported by "Texas A&M Sports Information" on 22 June 2021 and several local and national outlets, former Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum, following out-patient tests at M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston, was diagnosed with a form of Hodgkin's lymphoma. He requires chemotherapy and undergoing treatments at Baylor Scott and White Hospital in College Station in consultation with M.D. Anderson.

Coach Slocum had the following to say about his diagnosis, "I have been so encouraged by the outpouring of love, prayers, and support from friends everywhere. I have great medical support and I will get started on this challenge as soon as possible. I have a strong faith and will trust for a positive outcome."

R.C. Slocum is the winningest football coach in Texas A&M history with an overall record of 123-47-2 in 14 years. He was named to the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame in 2012. At the time of his 100th win, Slocum had reached that milestone quicker than any other active head coach. Slocum reached the mark in his eighth game of his 11th season, while Joe Paterno had reached 100 wins in the ninth game of his 11th year. The 14 years as an Aggie head coach tied Slocum with Homer Norton, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, for the longest head coaching tenure in A&M history and Slocum's combined 30 years (16 as an assistant coach at Texas A&M) is the longest football coaching tenure in school history.

Slocum stacked the trophy case with six championships which included three consecutive Southwest Conference crowns (1991-92-93), two Big 12 South Championships (1997-98) in the first three years of the league's existence, as well as hoisting the 1998 Big 12 Championship banner by defeating the nation's top-ranked team, Kansas State, in double overtime. Slocum was a finalist for National Coach of the Year in 1994 and was the league Coach of the Year on four occasions. Texas A&M played in 11 bowl games in Slocum's 14 years and five of those were New Year's Day bowl games. The Aggies would finish in the *Associated Press* Top 25 on 10 occasions and finished among the nation's Top 10 three times.

A member of the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame and the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, Slocum had 64 players drafted by the NFL including eight first-round selections. Born in Louisiana and raised in Orange, Texas, Slocum was a tight end at McNeese State University and was honored by his alma mater as a Distinguished Alumnus. Slocum is currently a Special Assistant to Texas A&M President Dr. M. Katherine Banks. He also served on the College Football Playoff selection committee but recently resigned because of his illness. He previously served as interim athletics director at Texas A&M from April 2019 until July of 2019 when Ross Bjork was named Director of Athletics. **We are with you, Coach!!**

SRG Board of Directors (BoD) Update to Our Members

We, the SRG Board, have been pretty persistent and consistent in stating that our strategic “purpose” is to preserve the transcendence which sets our beloved university apart from others. We actively do that by being engaged and thus informed about events, issues and status. This means we continually interface with cohorts within TAMU including students, faculty, staff, leaders and major supporting entities. Our Constitution spells out our objectives - one of which is keeping our constituent members informed. This is vital because your voices matter. We would not exist without you. And in a major way, neither would TAMU. We also provide the TAMU leadership with our suggested solutions to ongoing issues.

We do our best in conducting “business” in an (elderly) stately and civil manner; presenting facts with rationale and constructive solutions so that TAMU leaders can consider them on merit, and in the best interests of TAMU. And as Interim President Junkins said, “without yelling at each other.” We will never be “in charge” and we have little authority. So, to be effective in our stated endeavors, civil, informed, and constructive suggestions are our modus operandi in representing and serving our membership, The Association and Texas A&M University.

Recently, a new TAMU President took the reigns as our leader. Dr. Banks also is building a new team including interim Provost, Dr. Mark Weichold, and interim VP of Student Affairs, BG Joe Ramirez. What we want our membership to know is that all three of them have been extraordinarily gracious and open in meeting with us, listening and exchanging views and soliciting solutions and courses of action. We cannot thank them more for this and they all have indicated that they intend to continue this discourse with us.

We shall not at this moment get into specific topics about what we’ve discussed so far other than to say that it has been most open and constructive. We will comment later in our updates with you. We cannot ask for anything more, given the constituent management and leadership challenges they shoulder. We have assured them that we stand ready to help and serve.

Again, we thank them. We will do our best to keep you informed as we proceed. Best wishes and Gig 'em Aggies!

Mike Rivera '22, Student Body VP for Traditions Enrichment

On 22 June 2021, members of the SRG Board (Ashy '62, Nelson '64, Stanton '64, Rektorik '65) met with this outstanding young man and Texas Aggie leader from Burnet, Texas. He's about to enter his senior year in PreMed (biology) and aspires to be a physician in the military. He obviously has a passion for TAMU as evidenced by his background on the Traditions Council and recently having been appointed by the Texas Aggie Student Body President, Natalie Parks '22, to be on her executive staff (confirmed by the Student Senate). For your information, here is what he wrote us after the meeting:

Howdy Sir,

24 June 2021

Thank you so very much for having me along, as well as allowing me the opportunity to receive guidance from such truly inspirational Texas Aggies. When I got into my Jeep yesterday after our meeting, I felt such a great sense of pride to wear Maroon and White, and my hope for the future is as firm as ever.

I can't begin to put words to my excitement for what we have the potential to craft in the coming years. What we do now will set the foundation for generations to come, generations which I know will be grateful that they too will get to love Aggieland just as we have. I believe whole heartedly that together we truly have an opportunity to foster the Aggie Spirit in the lives of so many of our students.

I look forward to meeting again soon, and I'd like to assure you of one thing—Selfless Service will always be the backbone of why I do this, and I will never stop. I will serve this Aggie family now and forever so that others can cherish what we hold so dear. Likewise, I will one day help my patients who are quite possibly in their darkest moments obtain just a bit of comfort in a time of pain and uncertainty and God willing, I'll serve these United States of America and those who defend it as a medical officer.

Again, I will be reaching out soon, and I can't wait to charge forward alongside you all.

Mike Rivera '22
Student Body Vice President of Tradition

Dr. Danny Pugh, previously the VP of Student Affairs, had recommended that we meet with Mike because of his position and passion to promote and preserve Aggie traditions. We had a great discussion with him and what follows here are the general topics we discussed with his comments. They were enlightening to us, and we appreciated his sharing his views. We thought our membership would be interested in learning what he had to say:

Q: Six of us SRG Board members are planning to attend fish Camp Session "F" in August. Will you be there to teach and discuss Aggie traditions?

A: I have not received an invitation, but I look forward to meeting with their leadership and discussing the future of fish Camp even if it's in preparation for the 22-23 sessions.

Q: If not you teaching, then who?

A: Students who are members of the Traditions Council, a Student Government Association Committee, are responsible for teaching our traditions. These are very talented and passionate students who I have great confidence in.

Q: What references do they use as a basis from which to teach?

A: A loose leaf notebook of material that has been handed down and modified from year to year.

Q: May we have a copy?

A: Yes, I shall get you one.

Q: Do we teach the "historical context" of each tradition (for example, for "The 12th Man," do we mention what happened at the Dixie Classic in 1922?

A: Depends, but the majority of the traditions do include a great historical context. What I would be interested in looking into is how well we connect the historical context with the significance that said context provides the tradition (example - why the Muster on Corregidor means so much and how we still represent their Spirit today).

Q: We brag on the vaunted 12th Man Student Section at Kyle Field on football game days, in which 35,000 seats are subsidized. Particularly for early kick-offs, most times only about 1/3 of the section is occupied. The optics are terrible. What is wrong?

A: Yes. With 70,000 students, it gets complicated. Your generation had "2%ers." We now have a much larger percentage based on a huge student body – who do not understand. This is certainly an issue that we are addressing, and we hope to grow the 12th Man into a sight to be seen, more so than ever before.

Q: Since only about 60% of new incoming fish get exposed to Aggieland's traditions in fish Camp and other related programs, what do you think about that "quantity" metric?

A: Not good if we want to perpetrate what sets us apart, and it needs to improve. We have a lot of work to do. I believe that my position (which has only existed for just over two years, and a position for which I have held 2 of the 3 terms) is going to be the leader who can "rally the troops" and coordinate efforts amongst all of our programs and organizations concerned with traditions and understanding the Aggie experience.

Q: The athletic department conducts their own “traditions dinner” orientation for incoming Texas Aggie athletes, supported by the Head fish Camp Director. What do you think of that?

A: I think we need to see a “traditions dinner” where our student athletes get a real and authentic view into the Aggie family. While I believe fish Camp can have a great presence at this dinner, I also think that Traditions Council, Muster Committee, the Yell Leaders, etc. can also be present to provide more angles. At the end of the day, I want to see our athletes as active members of our Aggie family, and I want to see them carry A&M with them through their professional careers. Professional athletes that STILL end their interviews with “Gig’em” get it, and I want that to happen more.

Q: Back to the 12th Man Tradition, the concept is based on “We are (ALL) the Aggies,” and the team members in the stands are equally as important as the Aggie team members in uniform on the courts and playing fields. Otherwise, the Aggie players would not have scholarships, fields, courts, facilities nor the promise to the players for a fulfilling, prosperous life via the Aggie Network (who are former students whose gifts provide the opportunity). What do you think about political expressions by player-members in Aggie uniforms on the fields and courts during competitions?

A: I think athletes have every right to voice their opinion, and I know many Aggies have protected their right to do so by serving our country and our Constitution. I would also say that it’s important that our student athletes do this in the right way. To be frank, our student athletes are absolute role models, and the rest of the student body looks up to them as leaders. With that, it is incredibly important that their voices and drives are centered around progress which will benefit Texas A&M and those who call it home. I respect the opinions of all, and with that I value the passions that our students have. With that being said, I sleep better at night when the messages and narratives we are driving are meant to push us forward, and not hold us back. “We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we...”--remember that always and live through our Core Values and I think that the matter handles itself.

Q: You mentioned there are many current students who believe that old former students ought to leave them alone so they can “do it their own way as they please.” Do they know what we really think and why? There are “three sides to every story” and we’d be honored to join a Traditions Council discussion about this with Q&As! We might be able to shed some “light of wisdom” since we can look backwards as elders with some experience re the facts.

A: Let me say this - our former students deserve to be heard if nothing else. I will go out of my way every single time a former student wants to share their thoughts/viewpoints with me, and I will value their opinion and their time and passion on the matter. On the same note, I do expect in return that us, the

current leaders of Texas A&M, are supported. I can't explain how much I appreciate the support of former students as they oftentimes have "it"--they get things that I don't, and I believe their support makes me a better leader which allows me to serve this Aggie family better than I could have done alone. With that, I would look forward to that and I will look to schedule a session in September with the Traditions Council (first, we can meet with their chair and get time approved, and let me say that I believe they will be honored to have you all).

Q: Truth be known, an Aggie graduate doesn't start realizing the incredible benefits of being an Aggie until a good many years after leaving campus as a graduate and former student. And TAMU's reputation is built by those former students who have gone forth for over 140 years with a sense of duty and selfless service in every sector of life's endeavors. That is what our reputation is built on. What do you think?

A: We need to have a continuing dialogue on this to enhance understanding about this. I think a lot of us simply don't understand the true meaning of the Aggie Network. It needs to be known that it's more than a ring. Our students need to know that they have a constant and forever support structure going forward, and that Aggies will always be there for other Aggies.

Q: What do you think of student run organizations? We think it provides experience on which is based the "can do" spirit and leadership qualities of Aggies and why we are the most sought-after graduates in America! However, "everyone has a boss," and there needs to exist a balance in the chain of supervisory authority and responsibility. Mission statements and their approval need work.

A: I think student organizations are yet again another factor that makes Texas A&M special. We have over 1200 student-led organizations on this campus, and I believe that to be exactly as you said, a contributor to why Texas A&M produces such effective leaders in the workplace. With that being said, I do agree that there always needs to be supervision. In order to register a student organization, a professional advisor must be listed, and this person serves to provide advice for the students in the organization going forward, as well as bearing responsibility for the functioning of said organization. To keep a positive connotation, I'll just say that it is EXTREMELY important that these advisors are active in order to maintain the integrity of the organization and ensure safe and efficient operation. I can say with great certainty that every advisor I've personally had has been an absolute lifeline and a blessing, and I can't stress how important their oversight is.

Name Image and Likeness (NIL) Policy – An Update

As reported by Michelle Hostick, NCAA.Org, 30 June 2021, the NCAA released their new policy on NIL "This is an important day for college athletes since they all are now able to take advantage of name, image and likeness (NIL) opportunities," NCAA

President Mark Emmert said. “With the variety of state laws adopted across the country, we will continue to work with Congress to develop a solution that will provide clarity on a national level. The current environment — both legal and legislative — prevents us from providing a more permanent solution and the level of detail student-athletes deserve.” The policy provides the following guidance to college athletes, recruits, their families and member schools:

- *Individuals can engage in NIL activities that are consistent with the law of the state where the school is located. Colleges and universities are responsible for determining whether those activities are consistent with state law.*
- *College athletes who attend a school in a state without an NIL law can engage in this type of activity without violating NCAA rules related to name, image and likeness.*
- *Individuals can use a professional services provider for NIL activities.*
- *Student-athletes should report NIL activities consistent with state law or school and conference requirements to their school.*

One can read the entire article here:

[NCAA adopts interim name, image and likeness policy | NCAA.com](https://www.ncaa.com/news/college-sports/article/2021/07/09/ncaa-adopts-interim-name-image-likeness-policy)

Billy Liucci of [TexAgs](#) on 9 July, in his interview with Q&As made some very informed and comprehensive observations about NIL and the ramifications. Here are a few of them:

- Regarding how TAMU is positioning the NIL program so as to have a competitive advantage, *“a lot is happening behind the scenes, and it's a matter of organizing the thing properly. Cash, commitment and coordination/communication. The Ags are going to be among the big winners here. If they're not, then all of the fancy buildings and facilities aren't going to matter all that much. The right people understand that.”*
- Regarding the A&M Athletic Department being unprepared with an NIL plan of action recently in the Banks recruitment, *“I believe they will once it gets going. I've heard Texas has about \$2.5 million pledged, so they'll be getting rolling soon. That's not a number that would surprise me in Aggieland, either. I'd be incredibly disappointed if the powers that be at A&M allow themselves to fall behind on this deal, and based on everything I'm hearing, that's not going to be the case at all.”*
- Regarding if it is legal for a school to tell a recruit that if he or she signs with said school, then said school will set the recruit up with a great NIL deal, *“Nope, it's not, but if you don't think every school in the country will be doing so from this point forward, you're about as naive as Mark Emmert and the NCAA.”*
- Regarding what's to keep the player's parents from getting exorbitant deals for themselves, *“I don't know what to say other than yeah, you're probably right. There's really no stopping this thing right now. What I'll be interested in is to see what happens once the fall rolls around. We're less than a month away from*

fall camp, and it's kind of wild because once the season gets rolling, how many of these deals are we going to be seeing play out during fall? Consider this month the 'gold rush' of modern college football."

There is no doubt that the way ahead for NIL is like the "wild, wild west!"

NOTES

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:

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

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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.