

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Twenty-Eight

3 March 2021

First University in Texas to Reach Over a Billion in Research Annually



Chancellor

THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Howdy!

10 February 2021

Gov. Greg Abbott today commended the Texas A&M University leadership and staff for being the first Texas university to surpass \$1 billion a year in research spending. Texas A&M spent \$1.13 billion on research in fiscal year 2020 — an increase of 18.8 percent from 2019.

*John Sharp
Chancellor, Texas A&M System
10 February 2021*

Read the full story at:

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Texas-A-and-M-first-in-state-to-spend-more-than-15938275.php>

Texas A&M Raises \$4.25 Billion In “Lead by Example” Campaign

The accomplishment is the most ambitious higher education fundraising effort in Texas history (Texas A&M University Division of Marketing & Communications, February 24, 2021)

Texas A&M’s *Lead by Example* campaign raised a record \$4.25 billion to fund substantial initiatives benefitting students, faculty and staff — an effort that made history by exceeding its fundraising goal and becoming the first university in the State of Texas to reach that milestone.

The official announcement came Wednesday morning with leaders across Texas A&M praising the comprehensive effort, which began its quiet phase in 2012 before ramping up to the public launch four years later and drawing unprecedented participation as donors gave more than 903,600 gifts to the university.

Among the investments: 4,500 new student scholarships; 500 or so new faculty chairs and professorships impacting and influencing future generations of Aggies; 3,364 new endowments supporting scholarships, fellowships, student programs, and more.

Construction of notable buildings on campus include the Kyle Field redevelopment, Music Activity Center, Zachry Engineering Education Complex, The Gardens on west campus, and comprehensive redevelopment of the Corps of Cadets Quad are examples, plus scores of other programs, including the Veterans Resource and Support Center.

The Lead by Example campaign — whose mission is to transform A&M into being able to solve global issues on a significant scale — is a joint effort between Texas A&M and its affiliate organizations: Texas A&M Foundation, The Association of Former Students, the 12th Man Foundation, the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation and the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets Association.

These organizations long ago established a culture of philanthropy across the Texas A&M community, so while the feat didn't surprise many, it still thrilled administrators and leaders. Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp said the fundraising process allowed many to grow closer to Texas A&M. *"Aggies love and support their university, so there was no doubt they would give back generously to keep Texas A&M at the forefront of great universities. My congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to achieve the incredible goal of raising more than \$4.25 billion."*

The effort already has had far-reaching impact, according to Texas A&M Interim President John Junkins, who sent a note out to campus early Wednesday thanking all those involved. *"There's a reason our fundraising campaign was named Lead by Example — because that's exactly what you did. I've never seen a better example of Aggies of every stripe coming together to support such worthy causes. Thanks to the generosity of the entire Aggie network, we will be able to retain and recruit more of the very best faculty, to provide more scholarships to talented students and continue to advance and enhance our vital mission of education and research,"*

Chancellor Sharp said it's the largest campaign benefiting higher education in the state's history with gifts and contributions ranging from several dollars to multi-millions. One can access the Foundation's President, Tyson Voelkel, briefing on this milestone at: https://mail.aol.com/webmail-std/en-us/DisplayMessage?ws_popup=true&ws_suite=true

It was Cold and Icy in Aggieland!

The February 2021 Texas power crisis is an ongoing crisis in the state of Texas involving mass utilities failure, such as power outages, water and food shortages, and dangerous weather conditions. The crisis was the result of two severe winter storms sweeping across the United States on February 10-11 and 13-17. More than 4.5 million homes and businesses in Texas were left without power, some for several days.

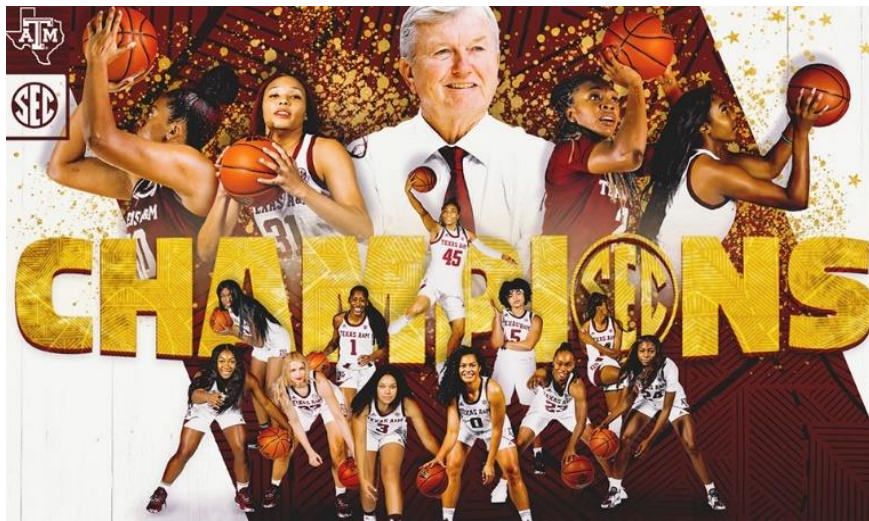
TAMU Interim President Dr. Junkins, in his address to The Association of Former



Students Leadership Council on 27 February, cited how Texas Aggies organized and volunteered to pitch in and help with the discovering and monitoring of leaks in approximately 800 TAMU campus buildings infrastructure. The Cadet Corps students were in the middle of this operation, and thousands of other students followed “in shifts” to call for timely help when leaks occurred – which was significantly instrumental in minimizing water damage! **Gig**

em! And Thanks!

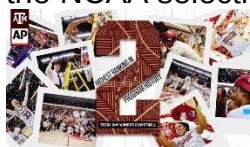
Aggie Women Beat the Gamecocks of SC for Regular Season Basketball Championship



The Fightin' Texas Aggie Women's basketball team seniors were at their best on Sunday night, 28 February 2021, when it mattered most! They led the third ranked Texas Aggies to a 65-57 victory over fifth ranked South Carolina to win the SEC regular season championship at Reed Arena!

Alaiyah Wilson, The Ags shooting guard who scored 17 points and two key baskets down the stretch when we needed them said; “Everybody on this team has something they are good at and can do, I think that is what makes us so good. No team can just cut us off, because every player brings something to the table!”

Just after this huge achievement for their 10th straight win, the Ags were rewarded by the NCAA selection committee has a number one seed for the Tournament (in the committee's second “reveal”). They were a number two seed in the first “reveal.” So, this time, they will be the overall #3 overall seed on the evening of selection Sunday in two weeks! Texas A&M has never before been named a number one seed! And oh, by



the way, the AP now has the team ranked #2 nationally! This portends great news about what might happen when the selection committee reveals the final results. **Congrats to Coach Blair and this Championship Texas Aggie team!!**

Ag Women's Track 4X400 Team Breaks All Time Collegiate Record!

On 13 February in Fayetteville, the Texas A&M women's 4x400m relay team stunned the track & field world by clocking 3:26.27 to break the all-time collegiate record as the Aggies wrapped up the Tyson Invitational on Saturday at the Randal Tyson Track Center. The Aggie foursome of Jania Martin, Syaira Richardson, Charokee Young and Athing Mu combined to stop the clock at 3:26.27, breaking the four-year-old collegiate record of 3:27.03 previously set by USC's Cameron Pettigrew, Amalie Luel, Deanna Hill and Kendall Ellis. **Congratulations team!!**

Texas Aggie Athing Mu Breaks SEC Championship 800M Indoor Record!



On February 27, 2021, young Fightin' Texas Aggie freshman runner Athing Mu did it again at the SEC Indoor Championships! She broke the SEC 800M record by two seconds (1:58.40)! This feat, fellow Ags, is elite athletic company! It's also a world record for the Under-20 category! This also is elite Aggie greatness and athletic history is being made right before us in real time.

As Coach Pat Henry said: "Like I've said before, she might be the greatest freshman athlete in any sport EVER at Texas A&M, and maybe the greatest collegiate freshman athlete in the sport of track and field. I've never seen a freshman accomplish the things that she has achieved, and we're not even done with the season!"

Here we come, Olympics!! **Congrats to Athing, and gig 'em!!**

Your Voice Matters

President Junkins recently posted a notice that a survey was to be conducted, 10 February to 10 March 2021, entitled "Your Voice Matters." You can find information about this survey at yourvoice@tamu.edu and then click on "surveys on the home page where you will find that the first of three is the student survey. As a former student, you cannot take it, but you can (and should) read it (37 pages) if you are interested in what your grand and great grandchildren are being asked!

We dug into this a little more, and the way it was advertised was a bit unclear - that it is really about the annual campus climate survey requirement, legislated by "The Plan"

(the TAMU Diversity Plan. “The Plan,” promulgated by the Diversity Council which is Chaired by the TAMU Associate VP for Diversity who reports to Provost Weichold). In the explanation on the home page, it is explained that the survey is “co-sponsored” also by the University of California and University of Minnesota – interesting based on who recently held the positions of Provost and Diversity Chief at TAMU. We are not sure what common interests we have with these other two institutions either.

The SRG Board of Directors believe that SRG former students “have a voice” in TAMU because it matters! Obviously, we don’t have a specific say in this campus survey because we were not included. But there are surveys for both “graduate and professional students” and “faculty and staff!”

Well, we have an insight and say about this and have been expressing it in previous Bulletins over the past nine months. In reviewing all 37 pages of the student survey questions, not once does any question address one’s view about the students’ orientation and assimilation into the Texas Aggie traditions, culture, the Aggie Spirit, our value system, and how these affected them in “the campus climate” and their inclusion therein! Again, we cannot understand why these topics aren’t being addressed, nor can we accept it since we employ a VP for Student Affairs with a sizable staff and budget to conduct programs toward this very end (and assume that this is important to TAMU at large). We think it is for sure.

We also point out that we have several times identified that the three major Objectives of “The Plan” fail to mention any of the aforementioned and have also recommended that this oversight should be rectified soonest with perhaps a review about who has a seat at the Council’s table. We trust that our SRG membership, after a review of this, will be inclined to express a view or two to those who decide on such matters.

True Story - A conversation with a student athlete at TAMU

On 9 February, an SRG Ag was at an establishment in College Station, and a nice, very polite young worker approached the SRG Ag (“SG”) in connection with his employment there. As would be customary, the SG said “Howdy, are you a Fightin’ Texas Aggie?” The answer was “Sir, I am a student athlete!” (“SA”). The following is pretty much verbatim of how the subsequent conversation proceeded:

SG: What school do you attend?

SA: Texas A&M, sir.

SG: So, you’re not a Texas Aggie who is an athlete at at Texas A&M?

SA: Sir, I am a student athlete there.

SG: Have you ever heard of the 12th Man Tradition at TAMU?

SA: No sir.

SG: What sport are you in?

SA: I am on the ***** team, sir,

SG: Who do you think is responsible for the beautiful stadium - if not the best certainly, in the top two in America - in which you train and perform as a “student athlete?”

SA: I believe donors are?

SG: Do you happen to know who the donors would be – students? Faculty? Staff?

SA: I believe they may be former students.

SG: They certainly are, and the “donors” are not only former students who make this University great, but they are also The Aggie Network and the 12th Man who support our athletics programs with scholarships and facilities like yours.

SA: OK, thanks, sir

SG: When you get off work, you may want to look up “Texas Aggie Traditions” and learn about them as a “student athlete” at Aggieland.

SA: Yes sir, I will, and it was very nice to meet you, sir.

SG: Likewise. And good luck!

Now if you are wondering how our 600 student athletes get oriented regarding traditions and values of TAMU, currently the Athletic Department has one night allocated toward orientation for all athletes from the VP Student Affairs’ staff. This is not adequate in which to furnish our Texas Aggie athletes an adequate understanding of all the traditions that creates the culture and spirit at TAMU. And this year, Dr. Pugh, the VP for Student Affairs, informed us that it did not happen because of the pandemic.

By any measure, “student” athletes at TAMU need knowledge about where their support comes from, and about the traditions and values behind that incredible support. We can do better!

Everyone has a Boss (or so it would seem!)

On 24 February 2021, the Bryan Eagle (Megan Rodriguez) reported that the TAMU Faculty Senate (FS) had formed a committee to propose standardized procedures for investigating professors. This was as a result of the disciplining of professors Castro and Alvard recently.

The investigations were led by TAMU Chief of Risk, Ethics and Compliance Officer, Kevin McGinnis. In the previous reporting when the investigation’s information was released, it was mentioned that First Amendment rights issues were set aside in the process with a focus being on behavior.

A Faculty Senate committee member Kolasinski stated that there was a lack of rigor and transparency involving the Faculty Senate’s participation. And, that TAMU *“does not have rules outlining a formal process, standard of evidence, or proof for faculty investigations.”*

Stallone, speaker of the Faculty Senate stressed that *“transparency is critical to the process of faculty investigations...allowing the Faculty Senate to weigh in during investigations...when you evaluate something, you want it to be evaluated by a person that has the background to do an adequate quality evaluation.”*

We commented during this past summer about faculty behavior and comportment standards (lack thereof). And, on 21 Aug.2020, the Board of Regents released a statement condemning “*vulgar, disrespectful and divisive language of a few members of the faculty at the flagship university.*”

We do not know the entire story and obviously cannot, but we trust and are confident that President Junkins and Provost Weichold are on this with their Deans! In serious discussions about all this, amongst some of us ole Aggies who have been in the “real world of corporate America and the US military,” we wonder what the Dean of Liberal Arts was doing all this time? How could this have gotten that far? And are these only isolated cases? Why did it have to be that it went to an external investigator and compliance officer? What is the “chain of leadership responsibility” regarding bosses of the faculty? Aren’t the Deans supposed to know about what their subordinate professors are doing?

One can access the entire article at: [Texas A&M's Faculty Senate forms committee seeking standardized process for investigating professors | Local News | theeagle.com](#)

Wells Hall – for your Information and Enlightenment

The **AALANA Living Learning Community** supports the academic pursuits and social success of first-year undergraduate students who self-identify as African American/Black, Latinx/Hispanic American, Native/American Indian, or Native Hawaiian. AALANA promotes academic readiness, personal growth, community interaction, and self and cultural knowledge through a community centered approach.

AALANA offers a space for shared cultural experience and the opportunity to build a stronger sense of community amongst students of color within and across the different communities represented in the AALANA LLC. AALANA supports the transition from high school to college and helps new students navigate the university environment through the help of mentors and programmatic initiatives.

Eligibility Requirements

- To participate in the AALANA, students must:
Self-identify as Black/African American, Latinx/Hispanic American, Native/American Indian, or Native Hawaiian,
 - Be a first-year or first time at TAMU transfer undergraduate student
 - Apply for on-campus housing and complete the program application
 - Roommates

During a specific period of time, students selected for this program will be able to choose a roommate(s) from other students selected for the same Living Learning Community. Students may post profiles within [myHousingPortal](#) and view responses by other students to their roommate questionnaire (i.e., sleep schedule, noise, cleanliness, etc.). Following this specific time period, students will be assigned a room with their

requested roommate within the block of rooms designated for the Living Learning Community.

Access is at: <https://reslife.tamu.edu/living/llcs/available/aalana/>. One can draw their own conclusions, perhaps, about “conflictions of consistency” between equity and equality. Again, for your information and enlightenment.

Dear White People – An Invitation for Your Enlightenment



In News from the TAMU College of Education and Human Development, reported by Heather Janak, Dr. Chayla Haynes Davison and co-author Dr. Lori Patton Davis published “Dear White People,” an article that provides education and resources for white people on how they can reimagine their whiteness to begin dismantling racism in themselves and fellow white people.

“While Dr. Patton and I do not see it as our role to tell white people how to unlearn whiteness, we offer our perspective on the topic as Black women who contend with its ugliness every day,” Haynes Davison said.

They deconstructed three truths about whiteness:

- **Whiteness will always resist the undoing of itself;** thus, feelings of guilt, fear or shame are resistance strategies that can be overcome.
- **Whiteness is not invisible.** It is something racially minoritized students, faculty and staff see every day, still it’s okay to be white.
- **Whiteness is imperfection** and requires a lifelong journey for those who claim a commitment to racial equity.

One can access information about the article here: <https://education.tamu.edu/critical-race-theory-expert-pens-dear-white-people/>

The TAMU President's Task Force on Campus Historical Displays

This an update on where the Task Force (TF) on "Campus Historical Displays" is. You will note that we have now gotten to "Displays" from "Representations" (monuments and statues), and then "Iconography." For your enlightenment, the following is the final guidance from President Junkins for all the TF committees, and one can access it here: <https://president.tamu.edu/committees-task-forces/index.html>

Background

On January 25, 2021, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents (BoR) approved actions recommended by the Office of the President, including \$24.75 million additional investment in serving our land grant mission in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Actions were informed by the report of the Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Interim president John L. Junkins announced activities and leaders charged with forming teams and beginning work on the approved actions immediately.

Alignment

The Campus Historical Displays Task Force aligns with BoR-approved action 7 in the table below.

Board of Regents-Approved Actions	Activities and Leaders
1. Expand the Student Pipeline (Fall 2021 and Fall 2022)	Communications Outreach and Engagement (Actions 1,8) Leads: Annie McGowan and Amy B. Smith
2. Increase the Regents' Scholars Program by 93 students per year for four years	Student Scholarships and Recruitment (Actions 2,3) Leads: Joe Pettibon and Lisa Blazer
3. Increase National Recognition Scholarships by 89 students per year for four years	Pathways-to-Doctorate Fellowships (Action 4) Leads: Karen Butler-Purry and Mark Barteau
4. Establish Pathways-to-Doctorate Fellowships for 10 students per year for four years	Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Recognition (Actions 5, 6) Leads: Blanca Lupiani and Jeff Risinger
5. Grow the ACES (Accountability, Climate, Equity and Scholarship Fellows) Faculty Program by 10 faculty per year for four years	Campus Experience (Across all actions) Leads: Eric Mendoza, Annie McGowan, Danny Pugh
6. Recognize More Outstanding Aggies Leading by Example	Campus Historical Displays (Action 7) Leads: Jorge Vanegas and Lilla Gonzales
7. Establish an action-oriented task force to accurately and fully tell the story of Texas A&M's history through displays and iconography	
8. Document and communicate the success of our many former students of color	

Charge

This team is charged with accurately and fully telling the story of Texas A&M through its heritage assets (i.e., buildings; open spaces and view corridors; monuments, statues, and busts; and other types of displays and iconography).

The task force will consider:

- Using the complete campus as the canvas to tell the story of Texas A&M University.*
- Designing specific spaces designated to recognize historical figures, for example, reimagining Academic Plaza and/or identifying other additional spaces for recognition.*
- Focusing on the development of conceptual plans in response to the first two bullets on or before March 26, 2021.*

Team Membership

Jorge Vanegas, Dean of the College of Agriculture (Co-lead)

Lilia Gonzales '94, University Architect (Co-lead)

Nidhi Nagireddy '23, Current Student, Company E-2 and Vice President of University Committees

Erica Pauls '21, President, Matthew Gaines Initiative, Student Rep

Shelley Holliday '99, Faculty Senate, College of Architecture (COA), Faculty Rep

Kristina Ballard, Chairperson, University Staff Council (USC), Staff Rep

David Chapman '67, Retired Staff, TAMU Archivist, CDEI Rep

Adrian Cornelius '93, TAMU Black Former Student Network (AFS), CDEI Rep

Jim Singleton '66, College of Architecture (COA) & Athlete, Former Student

Ad Hoc Special Advisor for Development: Dr. Jason Penry, Assistant Vice President, Texas A&M Foundation (TAMF)

Timeline

Provide an outline to the Office of the President regarding planned activities, timeline, milestones, goals for impact, with design concepts by March 26, 2021.

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:

Chancellor Sharp: chancellor@tamus.edu

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

Interim President Junkins: junkins@tamu.edu

Interim Provost Weichold: m-weichold@tamu.edu

Athletic Director Bjork: rrabun@athletics.tamu.edu

You can reach us at: SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com

Also, The Sul Ross Group (SRG) Board of Directors (BoD): Are responsible for producing and editing these SRG Bulletins, with transparency 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, we shall soon have an “SRG Tab” on The Association's website at: aggienetwork.com so you can access information about us.