

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Two

20 July 2020

To our SRG Class Agents and their Classmate SRG Members,

Most (if not all) of you well know that there has been a lot going on at Aggieland in the months of June and July. 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 that 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. And, we have decided that we need to "institutionalize" this Bulletin process for continued use. The Association permitted us to use their system to send the 11 June letter to President Young, but not the follow-on Bulletins. So we devised our own "workaround" system, and the way it works is that the SRG will send Bulletins (like this one) to the Class Agents of our SRG classes for distribution by them to their respective classmates (using their class mailing lists). We asked that you kindly DO NOT call The Association and ask them to distribute it for you. Thanks. This is Bulletin Two.

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

7 July 2020 – Investigation Discontinued

The Campus Police said they have closed their investigation into racist notes that were placed on the windshield of a car belonging to a Texas A&M student, and there will be no further action taken by the department following its investigation and after consulting with the county attorney. "Nobody has been arrested and we determined there was no offense committed," said Lt. Bobby Richardson, who said he couldn't elaborate on the findings. "Our investigation is closed."

Senior Isaiah Martin said last month he found the notes on his car that was parked at an apartment complex. One note said, "All lives matter." Another said, "You don't belong

here" and the third note contained the N-word. Martin said he stopped speaking with investigators toward the end of the investigation. "I haven't contacted them about anything, and they haven't contacted me about anything," said Martin. When asked why he stopped speaking with police, Martin said, "It really wasn't helpful for me to continue."

Here is what President Young announced about this: June 25, 2020 Yesterday afternoon I learned of a detestable racist event – messages of hate were left on the car windshield of a Texas A&M student. Our University Police Department is working with the management of the apartment complex where the car was parked to investigate these intolerable messages. The incident, with accompanying images, was also reported to the [Stop Hate website](#) and is being examined by appropriate university officials. Texas A&M is offering a \$1,200 reward based on valid information that leads to identifying the person or people responsible. If you have any information, please call 979-845-8897 or email todd.vandresar@tamu.edu. Acts of racism are irreconcilable with the values we uphold here at Texas A&M University. Those who promote hate, discrimination and disrespect *are not welcomed* at this institution. We are tired of bigoted members of our community marring the experiences of students of color. For those found responsible of racial or ethnic harassment, we can and will enforce appropriate sanctions under our code of student conduct, which allows us to pursue action against stalking, harassment and related retaliation that violate a person's civil rights. As Aggies, we often talk about our core values. We need to live them. Let me be clear: Incidents like the one yesterday, have no place at Texas A&M. Anyone who believes that hate is acceptable is not wanted at Texas A&M.

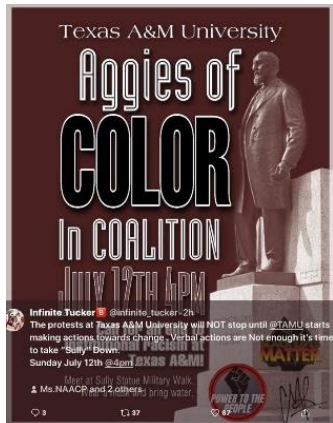
There has been a lot said about Martin and perhaps an accomplice possibly setting this up. We shall not comment on that. But there have also been a lot more comments about the consequences of hoaxes while innocents have been falsely accused. You can make your own conclusion. No reward has been awarded.

Mond Family Confederacy History

You may know now that Mond has over 10 maternal ancestors who fought in the Confederate Army, Col Santos Benavides being Mond's highest ranking relative. Much has been said about it in social media, and you can read about it from pieces written by Dr. Hector Farias Jr. and Professor Jerry D. Thompson.

<http://texags.com/forums/16/topics/3124040>

12 July 20 - Aggies of Color Protest



The third protest happened on a scorcher of a Sunday afternoon at the Sully statue hosted by the Aggies of Color Coalition. A sizable group also showed up to share information about Sully's life. TAMU track athlete, Infinity Tucker was there again, along with senior Qynetta Caston and Ebony Peterson, the cofounder of Black Lives Matter (BLM) of Bryan-College Station. Mark Crews '79, came from Boerne to show support for the statue and said, "we agree – Black lives matter and all lives matter." Douglas Huebner '70 came for Gonzalez to share information about Ross' history with other attendees. Tucker climbed up on the statue, raised his left fist, and draped the statue in a BLM flag saying, "I am proud to be an Aggie; I

am more proud to be Black – and I can be both." Peterson told a group that Ross' support for Prairie View was not a reason to keep the statue up and pointed to the reality that African Americans were not allowed to attend AMC and thus there were unequal resources for black students of Texas. Caston said, "at Texas A&M, they have prioritized tradition over inclusiveness. That's why they are responding with A&M traditions. They think that we want to end the traditions of A&M, and that is not what we are here protesting for. We are protesting to dismantle the institution of racism that A&M has on this campus."

The Football Season Outlook - Last week, the Big 10 decided to play just in-conference games. Now the Colorado game is off because the Pac-12 has eliminated nonconference games. The SEC hasn't made any final decisions yet, but it's possible the rest of the nonconference games get eliminated as well.

If there is a season, it could be SEC-only. Even a normal season is hard when the schedule includes Alabama, Auburn and LSU — as it does every year for Texas A&M. And what happens if the SEC goes conference-only and adds another conference opponent or two to the schedule? Throw Florida or Georgia into that mix, and the winning percentage becomes more uncertain. The SEC met on Monday the 13th of July on this topic and said that they will sort it out by the end of July. We shall see. As an aside, the SEC announced on 14 July that three fall sports' start dates would be delayed – which will affect Aggie soccer and volleyball schedules but not cross country.

Surveys, and Who "Owns" TAMU and Gets to "Decide, Vote, and Say"?

On 9 July, the results of TAMU's Student Senate survey on the Sully statue's future presence on the Campus was released. The survey was very comprehensive and asked 6 basic questions with detailed analysis about the data collected. We shall not dive deep into all that since you can read it yourself at http://www.thebatt.com/news/texas-a-m-student-senate-releases-sully-survey-results/article_2a371f5e-c263-11ea-865d-cbfb4952794.html. However, the OVERALL results showed that 54% of the students who responded (22,824 students, or 39% of

the 58,746 spring semester enrollees, undergraduate and graduate students) made their voices known that they were “likely or very likely to support no change to the statue.”

The next day, one of our SRG members called us and suggested that if the students were surveyed, then why not former students since we should have a significant “voice” also because of our service and gifts to the University. We thought that to be a great suggestion, because to have a “Commission” appointed by the President addressing this with resultant recommendations and proclamations expected. That would be inadvisable without this element of information. This great “ole Ag” ’58 asked about the possibility of doing the survey with the SRG members. We explained that we do not have the capability in the SRG to perform a survey since we do not have an electronic system with which to execute it. However, since The Association permitted the SRG Board to write the TAMU President where we stood on the Sully statue issue in a 11 June letter that also was sent to all our email registered members, 99% who responded to us were in support! Although this in no way “qualifies” as an official survey, it is one heck of an indicator!

Back to our member’s suggestion – if the Student Senate reps on the Commission have the well-publicized results of their survey as reference info, then what will The Association reps have? We believe this to be a cogent question, and we’ll pass this on to the Association.

This leads to questions about “deciders, voters and sayers.” Here is some rationale: When we ask ourselves “to whom does TAMU belong?” – it seems clear! First of all, it is a State of Texas Public (and Flagship) University, so it belongs to Texas and Texans (and what they stand for). This is imbodyed in the democratic process of election of a Governor and Legislature. The Governor nominates Regents, confirmed by the Texas Senate. The Regents then select a Chancellor who hires a President. So, the Regents and Chancellor are owners and voters but definitely deciders. To some degree, TAMU belongs to the students, but significantly to their parents who send them, and also the scholarship donors who give them graciously. They are voters. Importantly, TAMU belongs to the Former Students who understand it like no others can, love it, are proud of it, and support it with their gifts and service! They are voters for sure. Who it does NOT belong to are the state employees – the administration and faculty, most who are not Graduates of TAMU – who are public servants and are employed and compensated for “service” be the State to the “owners.” There ARE notable exceptions! They are “sayers” which is guaranteed in the US Constitution’s Bill of Rights. Everybody gets a “say.” The students have now voiced their opinion via the Student Senate survey. We also know that the Faculty Senate is in the same process. When they first sent their survey notice out, there had been inserted in the package a biased hack job on Sully history which was deleted soon after. More on the faculty later, particularly in one of TAMU’s Colleges. They get a “say” but not a vote.

In the past month here on Campus there have been demonstrations and much written and said about the statue and issues related to it. Faculty members have been

participants. This prompts a lot of questions about standards of employment, comportment and holding people to account. When it comes to bias, political activism, unethical actions, and relationships with outside organizations which are questionable, we have attempted to ascertain what these standards might be, especially since employees are being paid by the State. We have asked those who should know, and the two answers we have received are “none” or “do not know.” Now this is an area that we should work on and sort out, particularly as it relates to who has a “say” much less who thinks they have a “vote!”. We have SRG members watching these proceedings on social media and web sites, and it begs some explaining about unacceptable behavior that should have consequences here.

TAMU is special, built undeniably on the vision that LSR implemented and has been preserved by some extraordinary leaders since. If we have racism on campus, we need to fix that for sure (and we have a President’s Commission to address it). But as a condition of employment here, agree or not, it should be dependent on supporting and building on that vision and spirit – not tearing it down!

Commission Appointed

On 13 July, it was announced that the Commission on “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” was appointed with 45 members, with a completion date report to President Young by 30 October. You can read about it at this site:

<http://president.tamu.edu/messages/announcing-commission-charge-and-membership.html>).

To be clear, this was a combination of the 17 June proclamation he made to form two groups: a Task Force on Race Relations, and a Commission on Historic Representations. You can read it at this site:

<https://president.tamu.edu/messages/announcing-task-force-on-race-relations-commission-on-historic-representations.html>). His 15 June proclamation on the Ten Actions apply to the Commission’s tasking. You can access them here: <https://today.tamu.edu/2020/06/15/president-youngs-actions-and-next-steps-on-campus-climate/>).

Tribute to LSR

Of all the thousands of words spoken and written in tribute to Ross, the meaning of his life was perhaps best summarized in an editorial that appeared in the Dallas Morning News the morning after his death:

“It has been the lot of few men to be of such great service to Texas as Sul Ross. . . . Throughout his life he has been closely connected with the public welfare and . . . discharged every duty imposed upon him with diligence, ability, honesty and patriotism. . . . He was not a brilliant chieftain in the field, nor was he masterful in the art of politics. but, better than either, he was a well-balanced, well-rounded man from whatever standpoint one might estimate him. In his public relations he exhibited sterling common sense, lofty patriotism, inflexible honesty and with a character so exalted that he

commanded at all times not only the confidence but the affection of the people. . . . He leaves a name that will be honored as long as chivalry, devotion to duty and spotless integrity are standards of our civilization and an example which ought to be an inspiration to all young men of Texas who aspire to careers of public usefulness and honorable renown." *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1898 (1983 by Judith Ann Benner *SUL ROSS, Soldier. Statesman. Educator*).

"The Beagle," 14 July 20

Matt Poling '90 who was Commander of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets and recipient of the Brown-Earl Rudder Outstanding Graduate Award. He is a second-generation Aggie, Aggie parent, Air Force veteran, and College Station physician. You can find it here: <http://www.collegestationbeagle.com/index.html>. Please read it!

Again, a reminder about comments and opinions...

If you wish to comment to those who are the leaders and "deciders," then below are the addresses for you to voice your opinions.

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You can reach us at SRGpresident@AggieNetwork.com.