

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Ten

29 September 2020

To our SRG Class Agents and their Classmate SRG Members,

SRG email Bulletins, as the needs arise, are supplements to our Newsletters so that we can keep you informed in a more timely manner on topics as they unfold; and so you can then lend support and share it as you see fit. We kindly request that the Class Agents distribute it to their classmates. As you will see at the end of this, there is good news about the new distribution system we have started implementing with the help of The Association. As we have explained, there will be an “overlap” between the two during the transition period. Thank you and Gig ‘em!

A Letter from Governor Perry ‘72

Governor Perry sent this to the SRG and asked us to include it in our Bulletin information. We share it here:



September 24, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

“It is no secret the love and loyalty I feel for Texas A&M University, the institution that helped shape my worldview, and that prepared me for a career in public service. I do not believe Texas A&M is like any other institution, nor do I feel it should mold itself to look more like the vast majority of public universities across the nation.

Texas A&M has unique traditions, and a unique spirit, that should be preserved even as we serve a large and diverse student population that we are preparing to lead our country in the years to come. It is possible to be a vibrant, modern, distinguished institution of higher learning without diminishing the brand and time-honored traditions that still draw so many students to Aggieland today.

We are at a crossroads. With the announcement that President Michael K Young will step down on May 31, 2021, regents face an important choice concerning the future of Texas A&M University. While it is common to look for candidates who spent their professional life in higher education, it is not unusual to look for candidates with other relevant experience in leadership that can, and has, translated well in Aggieland. I believe Lieutenant General (Ret.) Joe Weber '72 is an ideal candidate to be president of Texas A&M University, even though he does not have a traditional academic background.

To be clear, General Weber served for six years as Vice-President of Student Affairs at Texas A&M, where he served with distinction in meeting the diverse needs of our student body. He

also served as a member of the faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy from 1983 to 1985, teaching a class on speech and leadership to Midshipman. Shortly thereafter, he earned a masters degree at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

It is General Weber's military experience, however, that makes him uniquely qualified to be the next president of Texas A&M. Consider the circumstances facing institutions of higher learning all over our country. Higher education has largely resisted the call to slow the growth of spending, with tuition and fee increases skyrocketing over the years to keep up with profligate spending that far exceeds inflation. Now, those very same campuses must deal with the chaos created by COVID-19: severe state budget cuts, families considering opting out of the high cost of a four-year degree program, and a drop in donations from alumni. The aftereffects of COVID-19 are sure to make an impact for the next decade. Hard decisions will have to be made. Non-traditional academic leaders will need to step to the forefront.

General Weber has demonstrated a unique skill to thrive in chaos. This is a leader who served as the principle staff coordinator for the Commander of all Joint and Coalition Forces within the Iraqi theater of operations in 2004-05. He oversaw the execution of the Iraqi theater campaign plan, providing leadership to 165,000 personnel from 29 nations. He performed diplomatic duties with high-level officials while also dealing with the daily grind of a difficult war amidst sectarian violence. He is tested and proven in the most chaotic of situations. In his last active duty assignment, as the Commanding General for the Marine Bases Atlantic, General Weber was responsible for 74,000 personnel, an annual budget of \$80 million, and holdings and assets totaling \$33 billion. Even after retiring following his 36 years in the Marine Corps, General Weber continued his exemplary career of public service. For two years he was executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation, where he managed 14,000 employees and a \$20 billion budget. More recently, he was elected to serve his home county citizens as Fayette County Judge.

I have known Joe for more than 50 years. I know his character, and his capabilities. And I know he would serve Texas A&M with distinction as our next president, keeping both our commitment to a modern, dynamic university that attracts talent, and our strong, unique traditions that set us apart.

This is the most important choice for leadership of our university since General James Earl Rudder was selected as president in 1959. These are unique times, that require a leader who understands the unique value proposition Texas A&M offers to our state, and the next generation the leaders. Joe gets Texas A&M. He will preserve what makes it sacred, while ushering in a new era of excellence. He has my unwavering and enthusiastic support.”

Gig'em,

Rick Perry

Game Day - Vandy!



Flyover - For Fightin' Texas Aggie former students and fighter pilots of the USAF's 56th Fighter Wing at Luke AFB, AZ, Major Justin "Char" Bellamy class '08 and Lieutenant Colonel Tyler "Hook" Smith class of '04, today's flyover during the National Anthem over Kyle Field was special.

The 5th Generation F-35 Strike Fighter is manufactured in Fort Worth and is employed by the US Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps plus US Allied Coalition partners.
Corps of Cadets - Quad “step off” was at 1700 hours (kick-off was 1830). Route of march was west on the south side of the MSC, turning north and then east along the MSC’s north side. It was required that all family and friends must have cleared the Quad one hour prior to step off, and that no tailgating is permitted for this game.



Kyle Field Student Seat Allocation: - As previously reported, we have been following the pandemic reduced seating plan and have received inputs from the Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Pugh and the Student Body President, Eric Mendoza, regarding the student seating allocation. One can do the math – 25% of 106,000 capacity is about 27,000 seats prompted by the Governor’s directive (and local rules) for safety distancing. The season ticket holders were given the option to be “reseated” for this season if not opting out, and that was completed before the student ticket allocation was made. Based on the results, it turned out that about half (14,000) of the seats came available for students and were allocated that way. So that is a good thing and we appreciate the updates from these two gents! Here is a pic of the result – good!

“Expressions” – We have reported our thoughts about “expressions” at Texas Aggie athletic events, so now after the first football game, we know that there were some to mention. The Athletic Department’s video presented on the Jumbotron during the second quarter can be seen here: <https://12thman.com/sports/2020/9/26/unified-as-one.aspx> . The expressions on the uniforms and helmets can be viewed here. For now, since we have clearly stated when and where it is, and is **not appropriate** to make political “expressions” at Aggieland, particularly during athletic competitions, we shall let you review this and draw your own conclusions.



TAMU Athletics UNIFIED Statement:

- How are we UNIFIED? While we all come from different places, backgrounds and experiences, each and every one of us feels immense pride at every opportunity to put on our Aggie uniform. Regardless of our identity and differences, we know with certainty we are all human beings and we are all Aggies.
- UNIFIED, what can we accomplish? The world we live in is still rife with inequality, and the forces of change must be powerful and UNIFIED to confront the challenges ahead.

While our on-demand culture is fueled by instant gratification, we know this is the marathon of all marathons and there is no quick fix. We know this will take more stamina and steadfastness than any of us have ever experienced. We are ready.

- *Why us? Being an Aggie is incredibly special and comes with great responsibility. Quite simply, the Aggie Core Values of Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, and Selfless Service are the tools to change the world, and these values will be our guide as we pursue equality for all.*
- *What can you do? Open your minds and hearts to the experiences of others. Make the commitment to run with us in this pursuit of equality for all. In this competition season, allow our UNIFIED patch to serve as a reminder we compete in solidarity versus inequalities.*



All things said, this looks like **REAL** unity to us!

Second Protest Revisited



At the protest at the Sully Statue on 26 June, there was a confrontation between six former student “ole Ags” and some football players. Out of courtesy we are omitting names here although we have them all for sure. There was a threat made by one of the players and we have verified it by

talking to the former student Ags who were there. We also confirmed that they, the former students, wrote a letter to both Chancellor Sharp and President Young describing the details of what happened, and the threats that were made by the individual to three of the ole Ags. To date, no answer has been received regarding corrective action and resolution. They are considering giving us a copy of the correspondence they sent the leadership. And they told us that if their inquiry goes unanswered much longer, they very well may pursue it via legal action. We shall stay on this and provide updates.

Accountability about “Diversity” and the “Mystery Question”

We have reported continually about this topic since 11 June, and here is a short summary: The TAMU Diversity Plan is promulgated by the Diversity Council chaired by Dr. Coleman who heads up the Diversity department in the Office of the Provost. The Plan has three major objectives and none of them mention anything about student assimilation and integration into the Texas Aggie value system, culture and traditions. We have asked the President’s Diversity (and Inclusion, Equity and Representations)

Commission some questions about this before they proceeded on their tasks toward their November findings and recommendations.

“Diversity” is prescribed by Federal and State law for subordinate cohorts to measure and report on their people’s origin of birth, ethnicity and gender. As we have stated, TAMU ranks high nationally in these categories and overall. This was recently verified by another award that was announced by the Chancellor and reported in SRG Bulletin Eight on 14 September. This was our input to the two Commissioners in our 6 August letter:

“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.”

The Athletic Department recently established their The Aggie Commitment program on Diversity on 25 August which we reported to you in Bulletin Seven on 4 September. Here is what the Athletic Department said their program was about:

“The purpose of The Aggie Commitment is to further our efforts and ensure that we are intentionally creating a diverse and inclusive atmosphere for Texas A&M Athletics every single day,” said Director of Athletics Ross Bjork. “Combating racism, making everyone feel welcome and understanding differences is a never-ending journey and we must dedicate the right resources to hold ourselves accountable and showcase leadership within our university, our community and college athletics. The Aggie Commitment is also another step to make certain that we follow through on the pledge that we made as an athletics department in June of this year, when we asked everyone to do their part to make our society a better place.”

Also, the TAMUS Regents and Chancellor allocated \$100M on 15 June to assist underprivileged Black and Hispanic kids with their application processes for admission to TAMUS schools. And as reported in our SRG Bulletin Six on 28 August, a new fall semester requirement was “added” by TAMU, within the State of Texas application form, for prospective applicants to answer a question about their views on diversity (with no definition provided to them about the term). The task was *“To describe the benefits of diversity and inclusion for you personally, and for the Texas A&M campus community.”*

Since one of our SRG members wrote us and asked us about this new requirement in the application form, we checked into it and found that, in fact, it had been added just before the Fall 2020 semester. However, nobody to whom we talked could tell us the source within the Administration who ordered it added and its rationale. Recently, one of our SRG members shared with us the status of his Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to TAMU in his effort to fix accountability for this addition to the application form.

Following here is some of the information he provided us. And it starts with his reply to what they told him:

“Thanks for the timely response to my recent Open Records Request for information held by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Enrollment & Academic Services, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and the President.

“From the repeated responses of “NO RECORDS WERE FOUND RESPONSIVE YOUR REQUEST” to my Open Record Request, it appears that the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Enrollment & Academic Services, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, and President Young are collectively unaware that Texas A&M University is now requiring prospective students to respond to the following statement:

“TAMU believes that diversity is a key part of academic excellence and our Core Values. Describe the benefits for you personally and for the campus community”

And here is what he further asked of them:

“Since it is clear that the issue of “Diversity’ is a key component of decisions affecting students at Texas A&M University, it is simply unreasonable to believe that such a requirement could mysteriously appear on the A&M admissions application without coordinated staffing.

The statement “TAMU believes that diversity is a key part of academic excellence and our Core Values” may express the views of A&M’s Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity it is not however a statement that is universally shared by parents and A&M former students across the great State of Texas who may wish to enroll their high school graduates in Texas A&M University.

In light of the fact that not one person on the staff at Texas A&M University acknowledges any knowledge of the fact that the above “diversity’ requirement was added to the admissions application to enter Texas A&M, I wish to amend D001922-090720 to include the following:

- 1. All correspondence that is responsive to D001922-090720 between your office and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Enrollment & Academic Services, the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, and the Office of President of TAMU.*
- 2. A copy of the exact wording on any application for admission to Texas A&M University that includes any of the words “diversity”, “Core Values”, or “academic excellence”.*

This “mystery” all begs a lot more questions in addition to the ones he and we previously have asked, the most important of which is: “Has the requirement (question) been **REMOVED** from the TAMU application?” We will continue to follow this and provide updates. We salute our SRG member for his effort on this.

Feedback from an SRG member (re Professor Castro Report in Bulletin Nine)

“Again, this is another great bulletin. I was particularly interested in the comments involving Prof. Castro. My daughter '92, majored in Anthropology at Texas A&M, and it took years to overcome the socialist, left-wing, anti-religious stuff she absorbed. The entire Anthropology Department at A&M is a left-wing socialist hot bed that should be purged. Perhaps Castro's work has raised the consciousness level enough to get people's attention. That would be a good thing.”

TAMU COVID-19 Testing and Reporting

The University reports how they test and also the resultant COVID data on their web site. If you want to be informed about it, you can access it here:

<https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/dashboard/index.html>

Bulletin Receipt Update - You should have already received this message by now and registered

In order for the SRG Board to communicate with all of our fellow Sul Members and widows via email, a unique email list for the SRG has recently been set up by The Association of Former Students. This email list will be moderated directly by the SRG President. We plan to use this list for Sul Ross Group and Texas A&M related items. Messages can only be sent to members of the Sul Ross Group who join the list (opt in), so it is important to register (please see info below).

Please note, the Sul Ross Group-moderated email list is separate from The Association's email list, which sends emails such as this one. So, if you received the email on Saturday the 26th of September it does not mean you have already opted in to the SRG email list.

If you wish to receive emails from the Sul Ross Group President and SRG Board, please follow these steps to join the mailing list:

1. Go to the Sul Ross Group President Page by clicking here: [Sul Ross Group](#) (note: It is better if you are logged into [AggieNetwork.com](#) before joining the list.). 2. Look for the "Subscribe to the Sul Ross Group mailing list" box. 3. Fill in your email address and name in the appropriate spot and click "Subscribe" to be added to the email list.

*Gig 'em,
Tom Reid '61
2020-2021 SRG President*

However, if you wish to have the newly established website address for ALL to Access and Register to Receive the SRG Bulletins! Here it is – just go to it, write in you name and email address and click on “Submit”

<https://www.aggienetwork.com/theassociation/sulrossgroup.aspx>