

Sul Ross Group (SRG) Bulletin Twenty-One

21 December 2020

Sound Off - Commandant Report on the Corps of Cadets' Fall Semester Academic Performance

The Texas Aggie Commandant of The Corps of Cadets, BG Joe Ramirez '79 recently posted this after the 2020 Fall semester:

*“Congratulations to the Corps of Cadets for posting an overall Fall semester 2020 Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.2! Despite a very challenging semester due to COVID-19, our cadets overcame the challenges and excelled academically. 248 cadets posted a perfect 4.0 GPA. 1494 cadets posted a 3.0 or higher GPA. And the fish class of 2024 posted an overall GPA of 3.05 this semester! This marks the 10th consecutive semester that **the Corps has posted an overall GPA above a 3.0 and is the highest Fall semester GPA ever recorded by the Corps of Cadets.**”*

This is a real credit to our cadets and their determination and resiliency during a very challenging time for our university, our state, and our nation. It's also a true testament to the great work by Ms. Meredith Simpson, Assistant Commandant for Academics, and her exceptional team of dedicated Scholastic Support Specialists who work tirelessly to support our cadets academically every day.

I am extremely proud of all our cadets, and their outstanding academic performance this semester. As always, they rise to any occasion, overcome any challenge, and show the determination and commitment to excellence that have been the hallmark of the Corps of Cadets for over 144 years. I am also proud of Meredith Simpson and her team for all the long hours and tireless dedication to academic success that they put forth every semester for our cadets and our Corps. True professionals in every sense of the word.

Congratulations to all our cadets for a superb performance this semester. Proud of all of them, and I look forward to seeing them return to campus for the start of the Spring semester in January. Best wishes to all of them and their families for a safe and joyous holiday season! Gig 'em! And Beat the Hell Outta COVID-19!!”

A comment and compliment or two: This kind of academic performance was not like this 55 years ago as we SRG members will agree! And this kind of improvement which has been attained by the Commandant and his associates is superb for a number of reasons. If you have never had the opportunity to hear General Ramirez speak about this, he gives a great explanation. First of all, it benefits the Corps students when they graduate because they are competing for jobs in a very competitive global environment. And the evidence is clear – they are among the most sought-after graduates in the Nation! Secondly, it “took off the table” a sore point between the Corps and the academic community of our University, who for many years did not view the Corps favorably because of poor academic performance. This is understandable as we all can admit since we all “collectively” lived it “back then!”

Now, it's different for sure. The Deans of our Colleges are interested and supportive of the Corps we are told, and asking "how do you do this?" As most of us know, women collectively make better grades than men! So, when one looks at the percentage mix of women in the Corps versus "big TAMU," the percentage is much less in the Corps. So, this is a huge accomplishment, and why we all should take notice.

We should point out that when the Quadrangle was modernized fairly recently, some very generous donors stepped forward and funded the four Leadership Centers which are used for academic support in a variety of ways including tutors for fish (funded by the Commandant) in the five most difficult freshman classes. This capability has contributed to the improvement also. As General Ramirez says in his talks, he "wants to add more Leadership Centers and if any of us would like to donate one (or more), he would be pleased to discuss it with us SRG Aggies anytime!"

Congratulations, Joe, and keep it up! This is another reason why the Fightin' Texas Corps of Cadets remains "Keepers of the Spirit" in a great way. (And evidence that "ole Army has not gone to hell" – Ha!)

Ags and Coach Fisher Plus Staff Strike Gold on Early Football Signing Day



These photos are of but two (Bryce Foster and Shemar Turner) of the 2021 Fightin' Texas Aggie recruiting class signed by Coach Fisher and his staff on Wednesday, December 16th. There was a total of 19 new Texas Aggie football players who chose the good guys! This is going to turn out to be a great class! We will not

know the final rankings until the final signing period in early February, but according to TexAgs, it has a good chance to climb into the top five ranking nationally! This bodes well for continuing the climb on our upward vector. [You can read about every one of these young men by logging onto the 12th Man web site.](#) Congrats to our coaching staff, and welcome to the Aggie family to this class!

Ags Grind Down the Vols in Rocky Top in Knoxville



The Ags "took care of business" in Knoxville Tennessee for sure and beat the Vols to close out a great 2020 football season (despite the challenges of dealing with the pandemic) before the bowl game "season." As reported by Olin Buchanan of TexAgs on 19 December:

"No. 5 Texas A&M (8-1) gave an emphatic closing argument for their inclusion in the four-team College Football Playoff field with a dominant 34-13 blowout

of Tennessee (3-7) on Saturday. In posting its seventh consecutive Southeastern Conference victory and sixth straight by a double-figure margin, A&M toyed with Tennessee.

The Aggies accumulated 497 yards of offense. They routinely converted on third down. They suffocated Tennessee's running game. They consistently pressured Tennessee's quarterbacks. They effectively played keep-away by controlling the football for nearly three-quarters of the game.

And in coach Jimbo Fisher's mind, they proved they belong in the playoff field. We're 8-and-1 in the SEC. We lost to the No. 1 team in the country (Alabama). I want to see someone else go 8-and-1 in this league," Fisher said. We deserve to be in it now. I believe that firmly. I've watched the games. I've seen everybody. We can play with anybody. Seven straight SEC wins. Some schools ain't even playing seven games.

Of course, Fisher was referring to Ohio State, which won the Big Ten championship with a lackluster 22-10 victory over Northwestern, who had previously lost to (2-5) Michigan State. The Buckeyes have only played six games. The Big Ten changed its own rules to allow the Buckeyes to play for the conference championship.

Fisher said Ohio State should not be given preferential treatment from the playoff committee. The injuries, the bangs, the bruises, the practices ... all that stuff matters," Fisher said. "The political end of this thing — guys out there wanting to push their own schools to get up in there — is ridiculous. Put the best teams in it."



We shall see how the CFP Committee handles this on Sunday afternoon, and importantly, if the true measure of merit concerns performance and results (including the factors of games played, strength of competition and schedule. The eSipn crew were despicable in their discussion of this on gameday – before and afterword. Their bias is awful.

Some in the eSipn spin machine made an argument that Notre Dame and Ohio State should get preference for selection because of their purported “following” and resultant revenues! And let us not forget that the B1G (so called Big 10) made a preseason decision NOT to have a season at all until they saw the SEC and ACC having one! Of note – the Rose Bowl is being moved to the Cotton Bowl venue because the California authorities would not grant a waiver to restrictions on game attendance (thus players’ families cannot attend). Nothing is surprising coming out of California!

The Final CFP Rankings!!

Well, it did not happen, and the Ags remained at #5 Hearing the talking heads starting with Mr. Barta (CFP Committee Chairman) with the eSipn pundits rationalizing the outcome was an amazing experience! Bama, Clemson, Ohio State, followed by Notre Dame at #4. The Okies are #6, which leads us to the Bowl matchups. Aggie Coach Mike Elko tweeted on Sunday after the announcements that, “I may never watch an

ESPN analyst talk again for the rest of my life!" Apropos we would say after hearing all the diatribe!

Bama and ND will play in Arlington Cotton Bowl in AT&T Stadium. Clemson and Ohio State will play in the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. The outlook is that the Fightin' Texas Aggies will be in Miami's Orange Bowl contest against North Carolina with our buddy Mack Brown on January 2nd – 1900 in the evening on eSipn. BTHO NC!!

For What It's Worth and in Review – “Cancel Culture”

Cancel culture (or call-out culture) is a modern form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles - either online on social media, in the real world, or both. Those who are subject to this ostracism are said to be "canceled." Merriam-Webster, discussing the term's history, notes that cancel, as used in the term means "to stop giving support to that person," while Dictionary.com, in its pop-culture dictionary, defines cancel culture as "withdrawing support for (canceling) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive. The expression "cancel culture" has mostly negative connotations and is commonly used in debates on free speech and censorship. The notion of cancel culture is a variant on the term call-out culture and constitutes a form of boycott involving an individual (usually a celebrity) who is deemed to have acted or spoken in a questionable or controversial manner.

The So Called TAMU “Cheating Scandal” in the COVID Virtual Learning and Testing Environment (using the Chegg Website)

In the December 16th issue of Texas Tribune, an article was published by Kate McGee entitled “Texas A&M University investigating ‘large scale’ cheating case as universities [plural] see more academic misconduct in era of online classes.” This article also showed up on the front page of the Bryan Daily Eagle the next day. One can access the article in its entirety at: [Texas A&M investigates cheating case involving Chegg website | The Texas Tribune](#). We recommend you read it as former students.

Headlines are headlines, and often are not very well representative or connected to the body of the article! This really has a lot to do with referenced online “virtual” schooling prompted by the pandemic! And it's not just about TAMU, it's a nation-wide issue (which the article later points out in fairness).

Mr. Timothy Powers, Director of the Aggie Honor System Office (which deals with student infractions in classrooms and class work), sent an email to fall finance class students allegedly involved saying “If you engaged in this [?] behavior I would like to encourage you in the strongest way to reclaim your personal integrity.” And the McGee article said, “University officials told guilty students to self-report on 8 December.” If they didn't come forward, “but were found in violation of the honor code, they could face suspension or expulsion.”

We, the SRG Board of Directors, are certainly not rushing to judgement on this because we do not know all we need to understand about it. But there appears to be a large

amount of gray area associated with this and some questions to be answered. Certainly, there “are three sides” to this story, and we intend to get with Mr. Powers and Dr. Danny Pugh, Vice President of Student Affairs, and get their inputs.

We are faced with a pandemic, which has isolated students in the TAMU programs, who cannot access their professors or conveniently meet with study groups. They are authorized their notes (in computers we assume) and textbooks while being assessed, with unclear guidance about utilizing the Chegg service provided online which provides assistance for preparation at their website.

What about “It is against policy to address and review test questions before assessment.” What? Us ole Ags recall the non-digital age of long ago! We also remember the Korean war vets who populated our engineering classes back then. They had been commissioned via the aviation cadet programs without bachelor’s degrees, and their Services were sending them back as captains and majors to get a degree. They were mature, older, disciplined, had families, a nice home to live in (not the quad), were organized, studied together, and had a library of old test questions to reference. They did for sure, were well prepared and aced every course! One of our SRG members told us that he had the opportunity to ask Mr. Powers if this would be a problem, and the answer was “no.”

Seems to us there is some work to do on this. We wanted you to know what was reported, and that we will stay on it and get back to you with what we find out.

A Shout Out and Salute to Judy and Colonel Jay Brewer ‘81!



“Now Forming at the North end of Kyle Field, the nationally famous Fightin’ Texas Aggie Band!” Colonel Jay Brewer ‘81, who is the Band’s Senior Associate Director, has been with the Fightin’ Texas Aggie Band (FTAB) since 1981 He’s the one who utters those iconic words before the incredible and nationally famous performances during Texas Aggie football game halftimes. He’s been a part of the FTAB leadership for 40 years. It’s a great story and you can read about it at:

www.aggienetwork.com/news/155234/signing-off.

Jay will step down during Final Review this Spring. He was honored at halftime during the last game in Kyle Field by Athletic Director Ross Bjork who gave the Brewers a game ball. We of the Sul Ross Group salute the Brewers and thank Jay for his leadership and contributions to one of the key elements which makes our beloved University special! We will not say goodbye now, but certainly extend a “thanks” for your call to duty selfless service.

Wishing our SRG Members and All Fightin' Texas Aggie Families....

...a very merry and blessed Christmas, and a great new year!

You can reach us at: SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com

Opt-In 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:

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