

SRG Bulletin Five

21 August 2020

To our SRG Class Agents and their Classmate SRG Members,

Beginning with the emailing of our letter on June 11th to the Texas A&M President after the vandalism of Sully's statue, and the protest that followed, we were able 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 where 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. We kindly request that the class agents DO NOT call The Association and ask them to distribute it for you. 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

Academic Plaza Protest, 15 August 2020

About 100 people, as reported by The Eagle, gathered in Academic Plaza at Sully's Statue on Saturday evening. Carlos Aleman, a graduate student, said "to express views on racial injustice and to make a more inclusive environment for students. We thought the first step would be to remove the statue from the center spotlight on campus." Taylor Husak '22 said, "he is an important part of our traditions."

As reported by our members there, The Batt seems to love Qynetta, and also allowed her anti-Sully group to setup their signs for their cover photo. And The Batt made no mention of the protesters taking a knee with bowed heads and raised fists during the playing of our National Anthem! A few of our SRG members spent a long time afterwards rubbing out the some-25 chalk taunts from Qynetta's crew, like "murderer" – referring to the LSR statue. Assistant professor Alvard was stirring up his charges thru the day.

Recently, the Texas Attorney General announced that since the statue was procured, appropriated and placed in Academic Plaza in 1919, then it could not be moved without legislative change. A fence was recently placed around the Statue. Security officials said that anyone who is not authorized to go behind the fencing is subject to disciplinary action."

Gaines Again

We previously commented on this in SRG Bulletin One, on 9 July. So, here is some added input, based on what we believe to be fact, and to report the truth about what has happened and been said (not by us – but others whether it is true or not). We still stick to our point about “three sides to a story!” The past two months have been packed with agenda for sure. And the “deciders” will have to decide. The student web site says about Gaines; “Senator Matthew Gains passionately and unflaggingly supported the forward movement that established the first public school system for all Texans.” The student President of the Matthew Gains Initiative said, “knowing that [Gaines] was the catalyst for the founding of this university [and] will hopefully spark hope, etc.”

This is what the Texas Legislature said on their 2001 proclamation (House Resolution No. 753: "The House of Representatives of the 77th Texas Legislature pays special tribute to Matthew Gaines for his exceptional public service, April 17, 2001):

“WHEREAS, During his term of office, Mr. Gaines worked for many progressive measures; he supported and voted for a successful bill establishing a tax-supported public school system for all Texans, and he worked and voted for the successful enabling legislation that made possible the creation of Texas A&M University in 1871 and Prairie View A&M University in 1876; he further sought to advance education by sponsoring a successful bill to exempt educational, religious, charitable, and literary associations from taxation, etc.”

The University has long supported this initiative, the Foundation is the account manager, the \$350K funding goal has been reached, the Chancellor donated \$100K, and the TAMU President, in his Ten Steps, said it will happen. One can make up their own mind about all of this. We, The SRG Board of Directors have no problem with the statue. But what goes on its plaque needs to be accurate and supportable. A claim that he was “The Father of AMC” is not. We believe the verbiage in the proclamation above is appropriate. Therefore, we offer the following draft narrative:

“Matthew Gaines was a freedman who endured the burden and pain of slavery. From Washington County Texas, he was duly elected as one of three first Black men to the Texas Senate. There, he championed education for his people in a desegregated system as well as for all Texans. He was one who cast votes to enable the establishment of A&M College under the Morrill Act during Reconstruction in 1871. Based on the injustice he suffered in his past, and his later service to his constituents and State, TAMU pays tribute to him and recognizes him with gratitude.”

Some Questions

TAMU is a Texas public University, with oversight from a Texas A&M University System Board of Regents with Chancellor and administered by Texas public servant employees. Over the past two months we have experienced and observed interesting episodes begging some questions and answers from the TAMU President and those

who are accountable and responsible. We ask the following as Texas citizens, taxpayers, former students, and donor Texas Aggies:

- Your proclamation on 25 June 2020 about racism was issued after a reported and alleged incident, and your Campus law enforcement entity was given jurisdiction to investigate it. This is part of what you said, *“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.”* What happened, was the allegation true, and what did you do about it (per your declaration)?

- TAMU employs a sizable program to familiarize and initiate new incoming students on the traditions, culture, history, and Core Values of TAMU which form the basis for “The Spirit of Aggieland.” We also have a sizeable program to provide counselors to over 1000 student groups on campus. It has been alleged that TAMU is not very “welcoming” to some students as one of the Commissioners has informed us. So, is that true? How were they advised and if at all? Did they participate and give the program a chance? What did you do about it? Do you believe and support that inclusion into the diverse TAMU student body means welcoming integration and assimilation into the Texas Aggie culture, Spirit and value system as part of “diversity?” Why don’t you mention this in your diversity Plan? Are recruited and scholarship athletes’ part of the welcoming and familiarization program? Are the faculty and coaching staff familiarized also about this too? If not, why not?

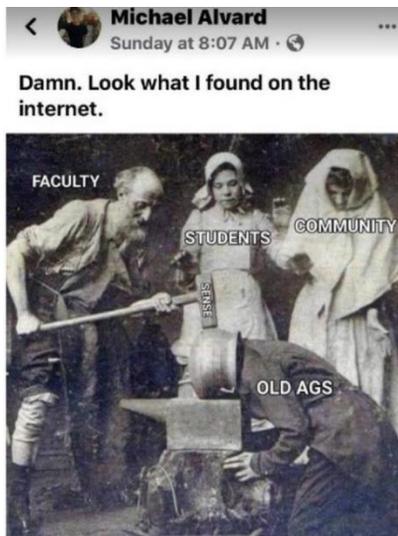
- We have observed that incidents of hate can and are reported and investigated by your compliance staff. Give us recent examples of “hate” incidents and ones which have been punished. Do the claimants remain anonymous? “Hateful writings” are something we have heard about – if so, how do you square these with 1st Amendment rights? What data can you share on this for 2019-20?

- Has the Diversity Office assisted and/or participated indirectly or directly in any of the four protests recently in academic Plaza at TAMU?

- It was alleged that the TAMU Corps of Cadets was racist and should be defunded. This is a serious claim and we assumed that you would take immediate action and get to the bottom of this including asking the claimant about it. We are not aware of any information regarding what you found or concluded, with the actions taken if any. We and our members want to know the details about this and what you decided to do about it.

- At an Academic Plaza protest, there was a serious threat made by a protesting student to a former student. What did you find out about it and do about it?

- What is “structural racism” to which you refer in your charge tasking to the Commission now in session?



- What are your TAMU (and State of Texas) standards for employed faculty comportment and behavior outside of their State and TAMU job description and responsibilities to teach courses in the TAMU curricula? We have asked to be informed about these with no response. Since this is a public University, what data can you share on violators, who investigates them, and who decides the outcomes? It is notable and embarrassing that a prominent conservative Houston talk show host has now recommended to parents to not send their kids to TAMU – citing the record of behavior of one of our professors in the College of Liberal Arts. And it this is not enough for you, check this out!

<https://www.dailywire.com/news/texas-prof-trump-a-fat-klansman-moron-paints-the-walls-of-the-oval-office-with-his-own-s>

. We have the expectation that the Commission will address issues like this and provide the findings and recommendations to fix them.

Silver Taps Virtually

During the Fall semester, because of the pandemic, Silver Taps will be held virtually on the first Tuesdays it was announced Monday the 17th of August by Dean of Student Life, Anne Reber. The ceremony on 1 September will feature the Ross Volunteers, the Corps buglers and will honor eight fallen Texas Aggies. It will be simulcast at 10:30 PM on KAMU and will salute honored families and friends and contain customized tributes to the fallen. Dean Reber said that since last March, we have not been together, so our students have not been able to honor their fallen peers. Now that we have returned to campus, we can do it as we know how through our tradition of Silver Taps.

Reduced Kyle Field Seating Capacity Plan Announced

On 18 August, the Athletic Director Bjork announced the reduced seating capacity plan, with processes and procedures, which will unfold into the 2020 Texas Aggie/SEC football season in Kyle Field. Governor Abbott has been talking all along about a 50% capacity policy, but this has been reduced (subject to changes) to about 30% so as to guarantee season ticket holders, who choose not to opt out, season “re-seated” tickets. Then, the next day, the percentage was lowered to about 25%. This process will be executed in early September and start with calls to ticket holders this Friday the 21st. The 25% capacity limit apparently comes from a combination of factors – the number of season ticket holders, how they are “grouped” in numbers, the distancing calculations, and the SEC, State and local safety guidance for the pandemic. You can read about the specifics such as face coverings, entry procedures and concessions, etc. on the 12th Man web site. The 12th Man students and Aggie Band are also being factored into the scheme to permit their attendance and participation.

You can reach us at srgpresident@aggienetwork.com