

**Sul Ross Bulletin (SRG) Bulletin Fifteen  
5 November 2020**

**Ole Army – “Fall In and Step Off” Once Again**

SRG – time to step off again and go on a “Corps Trip” with a pass in review at the destination. It will not be the last either.

There is a Commission, created by a lame duck TAMU President, with a report due out soon. In our opinion, its title includes terms which are misused, ill-defined and may be agenda driven. And the title omits one of its major tasked topics on which the Commission will no doubt report – the Sully statue.

There is also a Presidential Search Committee, appointed and at work. Based on what has happened in the past four months, it’s clearly vital that we select the right leader for the job! The key qualification attributes are exceptional and proven leadership ability, along with a thorough knowledge about the sense of duty, traditions, values, and rich history of selfless service to the State and Nation by Fightin’ Texas Aggie former students. Their spirit is the reason that TAMU is exceptional amongst others. The next TAMU President must promote this, nurture it, and preserve it as we continue our record of producing leaders of character. He or she must insure we adequately welcome all new Aggie fish into the Aggie Family – so they all understand the foregoing and where they individually fit and thrive as a Texas Aggie family member. Yes, we are large and diverse, but we can nurture, keep, and improve on what makes TAMU exceptional in our great State of Texas, America and globally - with the new President’s purposeful and inspired leadership.

There are some challenges which we have been highlighting for you in past Bulletins. We ask that you keep voicing your opinions to those who “decide” about the issues and challenges. That is what “fall in” will continue to be about. This will be continuing because what has happened at TAMU is a microcosm and part of what has occurred nationally. Some memory joggers for review and consideration:

- Selection of the next TAMU President with necessary leadership qualities
- Keeping constituent members informed, and leverage their wisdom, energy, spirit, and influence
- Informing the “target audience” of decision makers about what the right decisions are on key issues
- Ensuring and supporting new student welcoming, orientation and assimilation into the Aggie family process
- Insist that comportment standards for faculty members be addressed as applicable; and, regarding their “diversity,” particularly in the College of Liberal Arts, their political persuasion seems to be one sided which should be corrected and balanced

- Perpetuate the First Amendment rights record at TAMU while addressing the incompatibility issue of political expressions at Texas Aggie athletic events while wearing a Texas Aggie uniform in the 12<sup>th</sup> Man environment and tradition.
- Address, with guidance and standards, the TAMU non-Aggie, agenda driven staff where applicable
- The Sully statue and “three sides to the story”
- Ensure that the AD, coaches and athletes all understand that understanding the Aggie Spirit, values and traditions apply amongst all of us, and that the support base for athletics IS the 12<sup>th</sup> Man.

There seems to be a “persuasion” and tendency in the decision-making processes to ask students, TAMU staff, and faculty for inputs and advice. We believe that, as former students and donors, of time, passion, energy and fiscal support in service to TAMU, we have more than earned a “say” and “vote” on important issues matters. Omission from the processes, therefore, cannot be. In that regard, “falling in” must never cease!

## TAMU to Lead Hypersonics Research



Chancellor \_\_\_\_\_  
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Howdy!

3 October 2020

*I am proud to tell you that our first-class expertise in hypersonic research and ability to manage complex projects is being rewarded with a five-year, \$20 million per-year contract from the Department of Defense.*

*The Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) will lead a national consortium for modernizing hypersonic flight capabilities.*

*TEES will manage the five-year DOD initiative involving more than 40 of the nation’s top research universities, including Texas A&M University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Georgia Institute of Technology and Purdue University.*

*It’s called the University Consortium for Applied Hypersonics (UCAH). The concept is to coordinate research to accelerate innovation and educate the next-generation of aerospace engineers and PhD students in related fields.*

*The timing of this DOD contract couldn’t be better. It comes as we are set to build the biggest enclosed hypersonic testing range in the nation as part of the George H. W. Bush Combat Development Complex on the RELLIS campus.*

*Here’s a link to an article explaining hypersonic research and the expertise at Texas A&M’s College of Engineering. <https://engineeringmagazine.tamu.edu/hypersonics/>*

John Sharp  
Chancellor, Texas A&M System

One can read the Department of Defense's statement about this program and its importance to US national security here:

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2394438/dod-awards-applied-hypersonics-contract-to-texas-am-university/source/GovDelivery/>

### **Chancellor's Update to The Association's Fall Leadership Council, Saturday October the 31st**

Chancellor Sharp gave an update to The Association's Fall Leadership Council. His remarks included the announcement above regarding the Bush Combat Development Center's leading the DoD Hypersonics research program; the Medical Center upgrade (\$500M); and The Engineering-Medical master's degree program.

There were two other comments which are of interest to our SRG members. The first was about the search for the new TAMU President. He said that the new leader will be in place by 1 June 2021, and "that he will understand the culture and traditions of TAMU." The Second was about the Sully Statue, and he said that it will remain in place and confirmed that it could not be moved unless authorized by act of the Texas Legislature. One can access all the speeches and briefings here: [2020 Fall Leadership Council Video](https://www.aggienetwork.com/media/guides/events/leadership%20council/videoarchive/2020fallleadershipcouncil.mp4) <https://www.aggienetwork.com/media/guides/events/leadership%20council/videoarchive/2020fallleadershipcouncil.mp4>

### **Athletic Director's Town Hall Topics - 27 October**



AD Bjork covered a range of topics including: The Arkie games returning to Arlington in 2021; Midnight Yell update; Ag teams competing well; SEC Athletic Directors meetings; Priorities for Ag fans' experience at football games; 12<sup>th</sup> Man at Kyle; 2021 baseball season outlook; Fightin' Texas Aggie Band at Kyle Field halftime update;

Energy of Ag fans and 12<sup>th</sup> Man students at Kyle Field; Chancellor's support; Bowl season outlook; and Varsity men's soccer not a high priority now. Bjork spoke highly about the 12<sup>th</sup> Man: *"Unbelievable. And with limited capacity. Just look at the last team that we played, their head coach thought there were 50,000 people. Sam Pittman said yesterday that he thinks there'll be 50,000 people, meaning 24,000 sounded like 50. Sounded like 80. And that's what we challenged Aggies to do is bring it. Bring the noise. And let's make Kyle Field that home field advantage, even though we only have 27,000 people."*

The AD addressed the plan for the Arkie series and complimented the Arkansas AD, Hunter Yurachek, for his cooperation in working out the agreement for this pandemic year. Because of the pandemic, and thus the SEC scheduling, both agreed that they needed to play five games (half of the total of ten) in their own home stadiums. Arkansas moved a game from Little Rock to Fayetteville to do so. And they agreed to

have this year's game at Kyle since the Ags were already designated "home team." Next year, the series will move back to AT&T Stadium as originally planned and contracted through 2024. You can access the AD's Town Hall here:

<https://12thman.com/news/2020/10/27/aggie-town-hall-w-ross-bjork.aspx>.

## The Arky Game



The beatdown was good and well deserved by a bunch of unsufferable piggie fans. Their whining afterwards about the advantage the Texas Aggie 12<sup>th</sup> Man demonstrated in Kyle Field was "rich" (and delicious). Their blogs were lit up with one saying, "A&M having 27K in the stands is the biggest joke I've ever seen. If that's 27K fans at Kyle Field, then my name is Elton John and I'll sing Rocket Man at midnight!" The hog coach, Sam Pittman, when talking afterward about how to simulate an atmosphere for recruits without recruiting visits said: "Atmosphere is hard to get, unless you go to Texas A&M." Nice compliment! We think AD Bjork got his wish! Way to go 12<sup>th</sup> Man!

## An Offer of Encouragement, Assurance, and a Helping Texas Aggie Hand!

Recently, we the SRG Board of Directors heard from sources that we are "ole Ags" who are "outdated and "out if it." OK, perhaps - everyone is entitled to their opinion. But as elder Texas Aggies, we may know better than our juniors that "there are always three sides to the story!" And a lot depends on who is telling it to you!

If you are a Texas Aggie student (which we were long ago), then there is a great possibility that you, in your young lives, may not understand the other "two sides." After some 75-odd years of so, unlike you, we have in the crucible and shouldered the weight of responsibility and accountability in leading efforts toward solutions for the greater good. Therefore, we may possess some wisdom which we can share with you as you find your promising way ahead. And if your conclusions are derived principally from university staff and faculty, then we believe it worthy to give your parents and us a listen. Thus, we make our offer to you to lend advice and a hand when needed.

Let us start with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). We have conversed with the Commission recently and learned that they will be offering findings with no recommended solutions. Why that is, we do not fully understand. However, after long Aggie lives of seeking solutions to problems and executing activities to SOLVE them, we believe that is what Texas Aggies are known for. That is the rich history of former student success, and why Texas Aggies are the most sought after graduates in the Nation – leaders with character. This is an advantage handed down to you.

To the "what" must be solved: A lot has been said about DEI with more to come in the Commission report. What to do (and is doable to become effective) will be vitally important. Perhaps a brief review is in order about what the Chancellor said so eloquently about what we all want as citizens of the greatest nation ever created on

earth! He said. "We want all our TAMUS Universities to look like Texas and Texans." This means that our huge and diverse student body should be reflective and representative of Texas and Texans! However, to achieve that there are some factors that we all must consider toward the Chancellor's stated objective. Some but not all are:

- God's Golden Rule that we all love one another, especially within the Texas Aggie family
- The US Constitution's 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment which guarantees equal protection under the law
- The US Equal Opportunity laws
- US Court rulings on Affirmative Action, particularly the Supreme Court's two Decisions regarding Fisher versus the University of Texas
- The State of Texas Laws regarding the merit-based system for admission to State Universities, guaranteeing the (formally top 10%. now) top 7% based on high school standing
- An incredibly competitive cohort of prospective students who have a strong desire to attend TAMU (for good reason)

Back to DEI and some terms, which seem to be misused, are not well understood, and are used by some with an agenda. We can and should research all this for ourselves, but Texas is clearly "diverse" as measured by the population's makeup by race (physical attributes), ethnicity (cultural attributes) and gender in accordance with and required by Federal and State laws.

Why? So we can ensure that the "target" mixes are exactly what the Chancellor is working toward achieving via all the aforementioned specifications, and that we Texas Aggies are "true to each other" via a welcoming, inclusive and integrated Texas Aggie Family!! The TAMU Diversity Plan is very scant in its discussion of the integration and Family part in the Plan's Objectives, and that needs to be fixed.

Our SRG message to you Fightin' Texas Aggie students, who feel "marginalized" and cannot yet seem to find how you "fit" into your incredible opportunity – some advice:

- You got selected, and it's a huge accomplishment, so give it a chance and take advantage of it
- If you are not participating in the familiarization programs (like fish Camp, etc) offered under the auspices of the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA), responsible for this considerable TAMU investment, commitment and expenditure of resources, then do so or stop whining.
- If the programs are not effective, then offer comments and suggestions so we can get them fixed – be a part of the solution
- Be assured that TAMU is not easy! So, buckle up and knuckle down! We ole Ags can attest to this! Nothing worthwhile is easy
- We can assure you that your perseverance and hard work will be rewarded by a purposeful, satisfying, successful and productive life (transcendent as Sul Ross described it) based on a sense of duty and selfless service
- And even better, you will be surrounded and supported by the Texas Aggie family and network with a "Spirit can ne're be told!"

Our Ole Ags offer is this: as elder statesmen, we will give you our encouragement, assurance and hopefully some wisdom about your future, because YOU ARE the future! You will not be able to find this perspective elsewhere! All you have to do is call on us when the going gets tough! We have all been where you are now, and we shall gladly help you – if you are tough – to get you going! Gig ‘em!

**4 November 2020 at Reed Arena** - Coach Bird Kuhn has her arms behind her back and her husband is standing with his hand on his heart during the National Anthem. Tee shirts say *Block Out Racism*, and with *Unified* on their shirts. Seven players took a knee, while 2 had hands on their heart while kneeling. Ten stood with their hands on their hearts.



### **Dear Regents and Chancellor**

We will spare you from rehashing all we have said about this as recently as 27 October. We have asked the Athletic Director about the policy to which he has not responded. We have gotten some indirect feedback that his Department and the 12<sup>th</sup> Man Foundation are not exactly in agreement with what we have said, but at least we have been transparent about it with rationale! Mr. Bjork and Mr. Young have not.

We want to know the policy, and that is your job to sort out and let us know please. The TAMU President and Athletic Director, we assume, have condoned and supported this kind of behavior by Texas Aggie Athletes at Aggie athletic events. There is a National protocol which delineates what we Americans should do when The Anthem is played. In fact, your public announcer at Kyle Field says, “Please rise and remove your hat for the

playing of the National Anthem.” This seems to be another protest about racism and unity in a public place which needs to be explained. What exactly?

We assure you that we understand and cherish the guarantee of 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights and with all our fiber, support them, and will continue to defend them. We all well understand “Expressive Activities” guidance at TAMU. But we also understand the Texas Aggie Tradition of the 12<sup>th</sup> Man concept. There is a time and place for political expressions, but not in an Aggie uniform at an athletic event.

Since a good number of the Texas Aggies we represent have given to provide the TAMU Athletic program’s facilities, scholarships, staffs, and “network” for our 600 athletes, it is high time that you please explain the policy.

**You can reach us at:** [SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com](mailto:SRGpresident@aggienetwork.com)

**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.