

The Rudder Association Fall 2021 Update

The front line of the battle to preserve America for our children and grandchildren runs through our college campuses. And no campus is more critical to our country or more dear to you than Texas A&M. Last year, statements against the Aggie Family by our own university president regarding a fairly obvious race hoax awakened many Aggies to the reality that woke ideologies had infiltrated Texas A&M at our highest level. Then the anti-Sul Ross statue protests brought the realization that poisonous theories were also being injected at the grassroots. While many remained silent, one organization ran toward the sound of the battle and stood in the breach to defend Texas A&M—The Rudder Association.

Clearly, reform was needed from the Office of the President to the small groups at Fish Camp and at every level in between. The impact TRA has had on this campus in such a short period of time could hardly be overstated. What a difference a year makes when we stand together!!

University Leadership

- We have a new president, Dr. Banks, who has forcefully stated her love for Texas A&M and its world class traditions. She has taken the helm and welcomed TRA to a place at the table where your voice will always be heard. The Rudder Association is in close contact and meets monthly with Dr. Banks.
- TRA has already had interaction with five of the nine members of the A&M System's Board of Regents and will be seeking audience with the others to ensure that your concerns about the future of Texas A&M are expressed unequivocally and are being shared with decision makers at the highest levels.
- General Joe Ramirez '79 has been appointed as the interim Vice President for Student Affairs and has worked closely with TRA on several areas including reforms of fish camp and scholarship support for cadets.
- The Vice-President for Marketing and Communications has welcomed TRA's input to ensure that Texas A&M's branding accurately reflects and actively promotes our values.

Student Impact

- No Aggie tradition is more important than Fish Camp in molding the next generation of Aggies, but in recent years many Aggie parents and former students have lost faith in this institution. Working groups from TRA and The Sul Ross Group identified serious deficiencies in the Fish Camp agenda and leadership selection process and reported these to General Ramirez. New processes for selecting student leaders and a renewed focus on Aggie traditions and history will now be implemented.
- Other student organizations are being reviewed to ensure that their leadership and membership is representative of the entire student body rather than a narrower interest.
- The Corps of Cadets must grow with the university if our core values, Aggie spirit and vital traditions are to continue. TRA lobbied President Banks and Vice-President Ramirez to address the in-state tuition waivers for cadets which had been rescinded under the previous administration. We have asked for the scholarship criteria to be lowered next year from the \$4k hurdle so that more out-of-state students committed to the Aggie Corps will benefit from

a lower in-state tuition rate. Dr. Banks has been supportive of the Corps and we are hopeful for positive change.

- TRA has met with the Athletic Director to strongly express our concerns with some student athlete's divisive political activism under the guise of "unity". A Fish Camp type experience for athletes is being discussed to make sure student athletes are as well versed in Aggie traditions and values as the 12th Man.
- TRA met with the university's chief operating officer to share your concerns that Covid-19 tests and quarantines should not lead to draconian restrictions on student academic, social and leadership opportunities this year.
- Scholarships to deserving students have been awarded to students who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing traditional Aggie values in an effective way to their peers. The money for these scholarships was individually donated by TRA members and did not come from the TRA treasury.
- TRA has defended the speech rights of students who have encountered resistance from some members of the university bureaucracy.
- TRA has sponsored like-minded student organizations such as the Aggie Rugby Team and Texas A&M's Young Americans for Freedom which planted 2,977 American flags on Simpson Drill Field in coordination with the Athletic Department's Red White and Blue 20-year commemoration.
- Residence Life has very recently experimented with assigning some students to a dormitory by ethnicity, as many other universities have done. TRA believes that such a practice is antithetical to Aggie unity and an impediment to student inclusion in the Aggie Family. TRA is strongly pushing for an immediate end to this practice.

Education and Membership

- TRA publishes articles in support of conservative reforms to its members, Texas A&M administrators, and the larger Aggie community in traditional, electronic and social media formats such as Facebook page: The Rudder Association Portal.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/401483437993685>
- Members such as State Senator Paul Bettencourt have been informed of your concerns and are supportive of TRA's recommendations to address issues at their level of authority.
- Meetings with other local representatives and influential legislators are planned.
- Updated by-laws and 501c3 application will ensure that TRA is the most respected and valued organization you could entrust with your resources and good name.

All of this was accomplished with thousands of hours of *volunteer* work from the like-minded Aggies on your TRA board and other selfless members. TRA has only *one part-time employee* and operates on a shoestring budget. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and The Rudder Association will continue the fight to defend the Texas A&M that we all know and love.

While much has been accomplished, much work remains to be done. What we value most is your membership and engagement. Without that, the TRA would no longer have the moral authority to influence the critical issues facing Texas A&M and our larger culture. If you would like to contribute financially you can do so on our TheRudderAssociation.org Website.