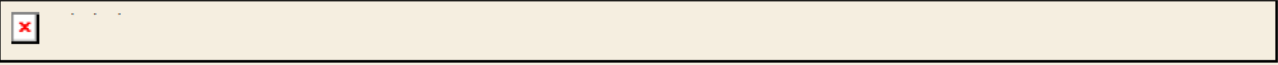


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**From:** Chancellor John Sharp <chancellor@tamus.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 9, 2023 2:45 PM  
**To:** Graham, Jay  
**Subject:** Texas A&M Opens Engineering Academy at Tyler Junior College



*Dear Jay,*

*This morning we launched a Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Tyler Junior College, opening a whole new world of opportunities for smart kids from East Texas.*

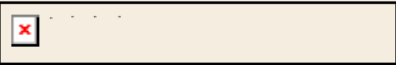
*The Texas A&M Engineering Academy at TJC will help outstanding students from East Texas earn an engineering degree from Texas A&M. Starting their college career closer to home like this allows them to save an estimated \$4,100 in tuition and fees each semester while earning a degree from one of the best engineering schools in the country.*

*Students in the Engineering Academy enroll in math, science and core curriculum courses through TJC and take engineering courses taught by Texas A&M faculty on the TJC campus. Students then complete their degree work at the Texas A&M College of Engineering in College Station.*

*The program will accept applications for the fall through July 31. We enroll the first cohort of students in Fall 2023.*

*Texas A&M President Kathy Banks created this program in 2015, when she was dean of Engineering, to address the state's growing need for engineers. This makes the ninth engineering academy we've opened now*

*As always, thank you for your support.*



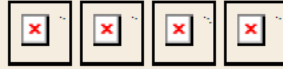
---

## **Have a prospect in mind? Pass along CCC Membership information.**

The [Chancellor's Century Council](#) is a group of individuals interested in the future of Texas higher education who provide the chancellor a means to advance the goals

and objectives of The Texas A&M University System. Members participate in various A&M System activities across the state and throughout the nation. There are varying membership levels available. [Find out how to join.](#)

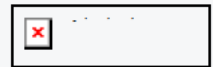
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**From:** Chancellor John Sharp <chancellor@tamus.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 22, 2023 5:10 PM  
**To:** Hernandez, Mike  
**Subject:** Prairie View A&M Celebrates new \$70 million engineering building



*Dear Mike,*

*Today we gathered at Prairie View A&M University to celebrate the opening of a new \$70 million Engineering Classroom and Research Building.*

*Now in its 75th year, the Roy G. Perry College of Engineering at PVAMU has a well-established and rich legacy as a top producer of the nation's most outstanding engineers, computer scientists, and technologists.*

*This new building will provide state-of-the art technical spaces and support hands-on learning and research critical to the field of engineering.*

*When I first became chancellor 12 years ago, I had two immediate goals: Acquire a law school and enhance Prairie View A&M University.*

*Since then, the A&M System has invested more than \$341 million in construction projects at Prairie View A&M University, including:*

- A new School of Architecture and Fabrication Lab.*
- The Don K. Clark Building, home of the College of Juvenile Justice, Psychology and Texas Crime Prevention Center.*
- The College of Nursing's 12-story nursing educational facility, located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. With dorms.*
- New classroom buildings.*
- A new student recreation center.*
- An early childhood learning academy.*
- And, of course, new athletic facilities, including a new football stadium and a new grandstand for the baseball field.*

*Prairie View A&M University has now reached R2 status, a designation held by just 133 universities nationwide. Prairie View A&M University's research expenditures topped \$105 million over the past five years, placing them in the Top 10 for historically black colleges and universities across the nation.*

*We've also increased Prairie View's allocation from A&M's permanent endowment by nearly 170 percent, from \$12.1 million in 2011 to more than \$32 million this year.*

*I am proud of all that we've been able to invest in Prairie View A&M University.*

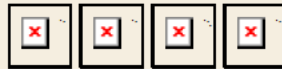
*As always, thank you for your support.*



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## **Have a prospect in mind? Pass along CCC Membership information.**

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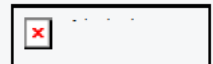
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301 Tarrow Street | College Station, TX 77840 US

This email was sent to [mhernandez@tamus.edu](mailto:mhernandez@tamus.edu).

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---

**From:** Chancellor John Sharp <chancellor@tamus.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 9, 2023 2:45 PM  
**To:** Hernandez, Mike  
**Subject:** Texas A&M Opens Engineering Academy at Tyler Junior College



*Dear Mike,*

*This morning we launched a Texas A&M Engineering Academy at Tyler Junior College, opening a whole new world of opportunities for smart kids from East Texas.*

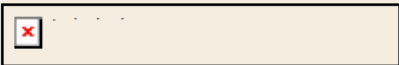
*The Texas A&M Engineering Academy at TJC will help outstanding students from East Texas earn an engineering degree from Texas A&M. Starting their college career closer to home like this allows them to save an estimated \$4,100 in tuition and fees each semester while earning a degree from one of the best engineering schools in the country.*

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*Texas A&M President Kathy Banks created this program in 2015, when she was dean of Engineering, to address the state's growing need for engineers. This makes the ninth engineering academy we've opened now*

*As always, thank you for your support.*



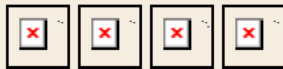
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## **Have a prospect in mind? Pass along CCC Membership information.**

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and objectives of The Texas A&M University System. Members participate in various A&M System activities across the state and throughout the nation. There are varying membership levels available. [Find out how to join.](#)

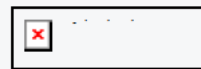
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301 Tarrow Street | College Station, TX 77840 US

This email was sent to [mhernandez@tamus.edu](mailto:mhernandez@tamus.edu).  
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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 5:45 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** "She Said", "He Said" - The Search for a Director of Journalism at Texas A&M University.

Regents,  
FYI. Vickie

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 5:52 PM  
**To:** ; Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>; Sharp, John <chancellor@tamus.edu>; gharman@tamu.edu; president@tamu.edu; jbermudez@tamu.edu; journalism@austin.utexas.edu  
**Subject:** Re: "She Said", "He Said" - The Search for a Director of Journalism at Texas A&M University.

Don, Thanks for doing the heavy lifting to bring this situation to a head.

Harvey J Haas, '59, Colonel USAF Retired  
2019 SRG President

In a message dated 7/15/2023 3:26:59 PM Central Standard Time,

writes:

Texas A&M University

Board of Regents

Dear Members of the A&M System Board of Regents:

Either Dr. Kathleen McElroy of the University of Texas is **"lying through her teeth"** or *Interim* Dean Jose Bermudez of Texas A&M **"is talking out of both sides of his mouth"**.

In any case, if any of the following quotes attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy are true, there is ample reason for the Board of Regents to seriously question if McElroy, or Bermudez for that matter, should be considered for any long-term employment at Texas A&M University!

**"He [Dr. José Luis Bermúdez] said, 'You're a Black woman who was at The New York Times and, to these folks\*, that's like working for Pravda."**

Dr. McElroy said Dr. Bermúdez had advised her that, **"I should go into this process with my eyes wide open. And he said it's like abortion, guns, and you've got a big target on your back."**

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said **" he [Bermúdez] had advised her to give up tenure in order to avoid the Board of Regents"**.

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said that **"Dr. Bermúdez told her that her appointment had "stirred up a hornet's nest," and warned her not to give up her position at the University of Texas."**

Dr. McElroy said, **"Dr. Bermúdez and other university administrators [?] asked her to prepare for a meeting with the Regents, who had seen the Texas Scorecard article."**

The above quotes, attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy, are taken from an article in the New York Times by Stephanie Saul; **[Texas A&M Celebrated a New Journalism Director. Then Came the Complaints.** Updated July 14, 2023]:

Sincerely,

Donald L. Parsons '59

Col. US Army Retired

Bryan, Texas

\*Ps: I probably fit in Bermudez's definition of "**these folks**", but the truth is I do not care one bit about McElroy's race or her previous employment. I do care however about her self-described advocacy for diversity, equity and inclusion; a distorted theory that has no place at Texas A&M University. DLP



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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 5:45 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** FW: Dr. Kathleen McElroy and SB 17

Regents,  
Please see following. Vickie

---

**From:** Alyssa Lehmann  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 3:30 PM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>; Sharp, John <chancellor@tamus.edu>; president@tamu.edu; NK Anand <nkanand@tamu.edu>  
**Subject:** Dr. Kathleen McElroy and SB 17

Hello,

My name is Alyssa Lehmann. I graduated from Texas A&M College Station in 2019 with a Bachelor's in Computer Engineering. The situation involving the recruitment of Kathleen McElroy has recently come to my attention. As an Aggie, I feel an ethical responsibility to speak up and tell you that the treatment of Dr. McElroy by the university has been racist and that is not okay, especially for such a respected institution that values ethics so highly. I had hoped that in the wake of the George Floyd protests, the university had started to see that action was needed to change direction. But this latest event tells me that A&M has not made progress on the racism present on the College Station campus. Not only has this university not made any progress but these actions show that it is also actively chasing off anyone who might be able to help the university achieve anything close to an antiracist stance.

These are not the values that Texas A&M instilled in me. It is A&M that taught me that diversity is a tremendous asset. I remember submitting a piece of writing for the mandatory engineering ethics class that explained how diverse groups have a wider variety of experiences to draw on to identify and solve problems, and this helps us tackle problems so much more effectively than a group of people with only very similar experiences to each other. Taking this class made me proud to be an Aggie.

But the actions by the leadership of this institution in regards to the recruitment of Dr. Kathleen McElroy give the impression that A&M only pays lip service to the values its student body holds dear. A genuine, public apology is needed to even start to try to make amends to Dr. McElroy, your current, former and future black students, and all of the students that have been deprived of learning from the valuable experiences of such an intelligent, knowledgeable, and respected academic. It should acknowledge all of the people that have been harmed, explain specifically how this happened, and lay out a plan for how this will be avoided in the future. Then that plan needs to be actually executed.

The Aggie Code of Honor is what defined my experience at this university. We cannot compromise our core values in the face of this political pressure to discriminate against minorities. The law that bans DEI offices was billed as making admissions "colorblind and sex-neutral". But there are entire books written about how claiming "colorblindness" in regards to race does not actually fix the racism problem, it just ignores it, encourages it to fester and worsen, and shuts down any conversation about unjust treatment. If you would like a more in depth explanation of this, a widely known and very well researched book on the subject is ***Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*** by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, a sociology professor at Duke University. If you have not

already, I very strongly recommend reading it given how heavily the DEI bill relies on the argument that being "colorblind" is not racist.

As for the sex-neutral part, I can personally attest that the Women in Engineering department is sorely needed. There were so few other women in engineering while I was attending A&M. I would look at the huge lecture halls of my freshman courses and saw almost no other women. As a freshman, I applied to the TURTLE robotics team and was not accepted. I graduated from my high school as salutatorian. I do not know why I was not accepted, but it was not because I was not qualified. Luckily, Women in Engineering was just starting up project teams that year, and I became a founding member of the WE TAMU VEX competition team. In recent years, this team has made it to the national level of the VEX competition. I was on that team for 3 years, 2 years as a member and 1 year as the programming lead. I am still close friends with the women I worked with on that team today. That team was a defining experience of my time at A&M. I wound up graduating A&M with a 3.9 GPA in Computer Engineering, Magna Cum Laude. And being on that team gave me the opportunity to mentor and provide needed support to other female freshman engineers. Without that project team, without acknowledging that I was a female student, I would not have gotten the same experience as a male student. I would have been excluded from practicing robotics altogether. Even as it is, what I learned in VEX was much different from what I would have learned in TURTLE robotics. I still did not benefit from the experience of older students and an established club. Our first year, VEX was a team of mostly freshmen and sophomores trying to figure out something brand new to us. All of the mentorship we received was from WE sources and the occasional professor. If this was my experience at A&M, where I was able to benefit from diversity and inclusion resources, would I still have been able to succeed to the same degree without those resources? What about for those in high school that have been excluded? High school students that may appear to be less successful college applicants may just not have had access to the same resources as others. Those who may appear to be less successful can be just as capable or more capable than those who appear successful on paper.

I know that Texas A&M can do better than this. Especially with DEI offices being outlawed, now more than ever we need the Aggie Code of Honor: an Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. We need to stick to our values. The quality of the education of future Aggies depends on it. Please stand with me in calling on the university to publicly issue a direct apology to everyone that has been hurt by the events surrounding the recruitment of Dr. Kathleen Eclroy. Share exactly how this happened and lay out a plan to prevent this from happening in the future.

Sincerely,  
Alyssa Lehmann

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 2:56 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** FW: Support for Board of Regents and thank you

FYI

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**From:** Joe Bourgeois  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 2:05 PM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>  
**Subject:** Support for Board of Regents and thank you

Dear Vickie,

Thank you for your service to Texas A&M!

I would like to send my thanks to the Board of Regents for diligently serving Texas A&M and our great State Of Texas!

Please relay to all of the members of the board that my family and I stand by the Board of Regents appropriately questioning the position of Mrs. McElroy based on her published statements encouraging activist journalism vs true journalistic integrity and fairness. If Texas A&M chooses to lead in the field of journalism then certainly there are candidates that better represent our goals and objectives to create a journalism curriculum that teaches true unbiased journalism with a focus on investigative research and giving the facts with multiple perspectives. We support you as our Representatives to make the hard decisions. Despite some of the faculty claiming that only they have a say, the citizens of the state of Texas have the ultimate say and we support you as our representatives on the Board. God Bless and Gig Em!! Please stand strong!!!

Sincerely,

Joe Bourgeois '89  
Kristin Bourgeois '91  
Taylor Bourgeois. '20  
Tate Bourgeois. '23

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 7:21 PM  
**To:** Valicek, Annie; Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** FW: The Eagle Editorial

Regents,  
FYI. Vickie

---

**From:** Matt Poling <President@rudderassociation.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 6:16 PM  
**To:** BOR Email Account <bor@tamus.edu>  
**Cc:** Sharp, John <chancellor@tamus.edu>; president@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** The Eagle Editorial

Members of the Board

The following is our response submitted to *The Eagle's* editorial board regarding their recent piece "Shame on Texas A&M for the McElroy Controversy" which attacked Texas A&M, our organization and me by name.

Matt Poling '90  
[TheRudderAssociation.org](http://TheRudderAssociation.org)

Editors

False narratives and unfounded personal attacks in recent national reports and local editorials concerning Texas A&M's nascent journalism department are disheartening. Perhaps President Rudder would be ashamed of the state of our media today. But we would prefer to let James Earl Rudder Jr speak to that. Just as he has about the work of The Rudder Association, as posted on the front page of our website for more than a year.

There was no "smear campaign" against Dr McElroy, but to many stakeholders there seemed to have been some basic journalistic questions left unanswered. Such as, "*How does one reconcile many years of advocating for racial essentialist views with Texans' clearly expressed desire to move our state institutions away from such ideologies?*" Contrary to the repeated media narrative, the problem was never anyone else's excessive focus on race.

Also, a question any candidate should have a good answer for, "*What is your plan to help restore America's faith in journalism?*" A profession in which the latest Gallup poll shows only 7% of Americans have "a great deal of trust" is not being well served by the filtering out of "illegitimate" perspectives, as the professor called them.

If disgraced former activist-journalist Dan Rather is the spokesman for the institution of journalism, then perhaps Texas A&M's journalism department is needed more than anyone fully appreciated. For the sake of our divided culture and a broken profession, we hope Texas A&M succeeds.

Matt Poling  
President, The Rudder Association  
(979)324-7576

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 6:12 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bonilla, Ray  
**Subject:** Letter from Bill Mahomes, A&M System Board of Regents  
**Attachments:** Letter from A&M System Chairman Bill Mahomes.pdf

FYI.

Letter has been sent. Vickie

**UNIVERSITIES**

Texas A&M University  
 Texas A&M University at Galveston  
 Texas A&M Health Science Center  
 Prairie View A&M University  
 Texas A&M University-Commerce  
 Tarleton State University  
 West Texas A&M University  
 Texas A&M University-Kingsville  
 Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
 Texas A&M International University  
 Texas A&M University-Texarkana  
 Texas A&M University-Central Texas  
 Texas A&M University-San Antonio

**AGENCIES**

Texas A&M AgriLife Research  
 Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station  
 Texas A&M Forest Service  
 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
 Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service  
 Texas A&M Transportation Institute  
 Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory  
 Texas Division of Emergency Management

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The RELIS Campus

# Board of Regents

## THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

July 19, 2023

Dr. Kathleen McElroy  
 Professor of Journalism  
 Moody College of Communication  
 The University of Texas at Austin

Dear Dr. McElroy,

I want to clear up certain misunderstandings circulating publicly about the efforts by Texas A&M to hire you for its new journalism program.

This Board of Regents did not discourage your hiring. It did not act against your potential A&M employment due to any outsiders' influence or for any other reason.

The board's role is to set strategic direction for its System leadership and the chief executives of its eleven universities and eight state agencies. The board does not direct such academic hiring decisions.

Furthermore, this board and its members would never question the hiring of an individual at any level based on his or her race or gender. Nor would this board tolerate the use of such criteria at any of its universities or state agencies.

I have asked the administration to review all relevant events and information to figure out how you ended up concluding otherwise. I am confident that we will learn from this and do better in the future.

You are an Aggie, an accomplished professional who has had a remarkable career both inside and outside of the classroom.

I cannot speak formally for my fellow regents, but I know they share my deep concerns about this matter. Speaking as one proud Aggie to another, I want to personally and publicly apologize to you for the mistakes made in this process and its unfortunate conclusion.

This is not who we are as Aggies.

Sincerely,

William "Bill" Mahomes Jr.  
 Chairman of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 8:01 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Cc:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Subject:** Public Information Request - Kate McGee - Texas Tribune  
**Importance:** High

Regents,

As a follow up – following is the verbiage from the two public information requests I sent earlier today. As I mentioned, if you have any responsive documents, please send to me no later than July 26. I will be sure the documents are provided to our OGC-Office of Public Information. Thank you. Please let me know if you have questions. Vickie

H1771-071223  
Kate McGee  
Texas Tribune

- all emails sent to or from John Sharp or any member of the Texas A&M Board of Regents between June 13 and July 11 that uses the following words or phrases:

- Texas Scorecard
- Kathleen McElroy
- McElroy
- journalism director
- journalism program
- director of journalism

---

H1781-071323  
Kate McGee  
Texas Tribune

I am requesting all text messages sent to and from the individuals listed below between June 1, 2023, and July 14, 2023 that include the following words or phrases: kathleen mcelroy, texas scorecard, texas, tribune, director of journalism, banks, mcelroy, journalism program, journalism school, rudder, Patrick.

Individuals:

John Sharp  
Bill Mahomes,  
Robert L. Albritton  
David Baggett  
John Bellinger  
James R. "Randy" Brooks  
Jay Graham  
Michael A. "Mike" Hernandez III  
Michael J. Plank  
Sam Torn

Thanks, Vickie!



Dana

**Dana Gore | Public Information Administrator**

Office of General Counsel

[dgore@tamus.edu](mailto:dgore@tamus.edu)

1230 TAMU | College Station, TX 77840-7896

Tel. 979.458.6130 | Fax 979.458.6150 | [www.tamus.edu](http://www.tamus.edu)

**THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:49 AM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Cc:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Subject:** Public Information Request from Kate McGee (1 of 2) (Emails) -- Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

**Importance:** High

Sorry for typo...this request is for emails.

---

**From:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:47 AM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill <bmahomes@tamus.edu>; Bob Albritton <rla@rclwiring.com>; David Baggett <dbaggett@opportune.com>; Jay Graham <jay@spurepllc.com>; John Bellinger <john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.com>; Mike Hernandez <mikeh@dmautoleasing.com>; Mike Plank <mplank@theplankcompanies.com>; Randy Brooks <Randy.brooks@bnbventures.com>; Sam Torn <samtorn@campozark.com>  
**Cc:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>  
**Subject:** Public Information Request from Kate McGee (1 of 2) (Text Messages) -- Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment  
**Importance:** High

Regents,  
See following request from Kate McGee. If you have responsive documents, please send to me no later than July 26, 2023. Thanks. Vickie

H1771-071223  
Kate McGee  
Texas Tribune

- all emails sent to or from John Sharp or any member of the Texas A&M Board of Regents between June 13 and July 11 that uses the following words or phrases:  
-Texas Scorecard  
-Kathleen McElroy  
-McElroy  
-journalism director  
-journalism program  
-director of journalism

---

**From:** Texas A&M University Public Records Support  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <[Vickie@tamus.edu](mailto:Vickie@tamus.edu)>  
**Subject:** Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

This is confirmation that an activity for action on a Public Information Records has been assigned to you.

[Click here to access and respond to this Activity](#)

**Activity Information**

Activity Assigned Staff: Vickie Spillers

Activity Type: Simple To Do

Activity Due Date: 7/26/2023

Activity Details: 07/17/2023 To: Vickie Spillers Re: Open Records Requestor: Kate McGee (H001781-071323) SIMPLE TO-DO PORTAL ACTIVITY: To view and upload your responsive records into the new interactive Open Records Portal page, click the blue hyperlink in this assigned Simple To-Do Activity. \*\*NOTE: After dragging and dropping your records onto the Interactive Page, please click the FINISH ACTIVITY - SAVE & SEND at the bottom of the page to send your records. The records will not upload into the Portal unless this button is clicked. You will not need to log into the Open Records Portal to respond to this Simple To-Do Activity. Please: -Respond to this activity by gathering & uploading responsive records onto the interactive Simple To-Do Activity Page, which will upload your records into the Open Records Portal for OGC's review (please remove any passwords from documents); -Compile a vendor contact list for all vendor proposals/bids/responses compiled; -Let us know if there are no records or if another department may have the information; -Let us know if you have any concerns releasing any of the records you have provided that you feel may need to be considered for a release exception; and -Let us know if a cost estimate is needed as soon as possible. Thank you. Melanie Burns

**Overview of the Request**

Public Information Records # H001781-071323

Assigned Staff: OpenRecords SystemOffices

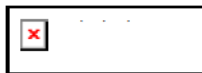
Customer Full Name: Kate McGee

Description of Record Requested: I am requesting all text messages sent to and from the individuals listed below between June 1, 2023 and July 14, 2023 that include the following words or phrases: kathleen mcelroy, texas scorecard, texas, tribune, director of journalism, banks, mcelroy, journalism program, journalism school, rudder, patrick, Individuals: John Sharp Bill Mahomes, Robert L. Albritton David Baggett John Bellinger James R. "Randy" Brooks Jay Graham Michael A. "Mike" Hernandez III Michael J. Plank Sam Torn

Summary of Request:

Clarification(s)(if any):

This is an auto-generated email and has originated from an unmonitored email account. Please DO NOT REPLY.



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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:47 AM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Cc:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Subject:** Public Information Request from Kate McGee (1 of 2) (Text Messages) -- Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

**Importance:** High

Regents,  
See following request from Kate McGee. If you have responsive documents, please send to me no later than July 26, 2023. Thanks. Vickie

H1771-071223  
Kate McGee  
Texas Tribune

- all emails sent to or from John Sharp or any member of the Texas A&M Board of Regents between June 13 and July 11 that uses the following words or phrases:

- Texas Scorecard
- Kathleen McElroy
- McElroy
- journalism director
- journalism program
- director of journalism

---

**From:** Texas A&M University Public Records Support <texasam@mycusthelp.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>  
**Subject:** Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

---

This is confirmation that an activity for action on a Public Information Records has been assigned to you.

---

[Click here to access and respond to this Activity](#)

**Activity Information**

Activity Assigned Staff: Vickie Spillers

Activity Type: Simple To Do

Activity Due Date: 7/26/2023

Activity Details: 07/17/2023 To: Vickie Spillers Re: Open Records Requestor: Kate McGee (H001781-071323) SIMPLE TO-DO PORTAL ACTIVITY: To view and upload your responsive records into the new interactive Open Records Portal page, click the blue hyperlink in this assigned Simple To-Do Activity. \*\*NOTE: After dragging and dropping your records onto the Interactive Page, please click the FINISH ACTIVITY - SAVE & SEND at the bottom of the page to send your records.

The records will not upload into the Portal unless this button is clicked. You will not need to log into the Open Records Portal to respond to this Simple To-Do Activity. Please: -Respond to this activity by gathering & uploading responsive records onto the interactive Simple To-Do Activity Page, which will upload your records into the Open Records Portal for OGC's review (please remove any passwords from documents); -Compile a vendor contact list for all vendor proposals/bids/responses compiled; -Let us know if there are no records or if another department may have the information; -Let us know if you have any concerns releasing any of the records you have provided that you feel may need to be considered for a release exception; and -Let us know if a cost estimate is needed as soon as possible. Thank you. Melanie Burns

**Overview of the Request**

Public Information Records # H001781-071323

Assigned Staff: OpenRecords SystemOffices

Customer Full Name: Kate McGee

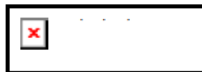
Description of Record Requested: I am requesting all text messages sent to and from the individuals listed below between June 1, 2023 and July 14, 2023 that include the following words or phrases: kathleen mcelroy, texas scorecard, texas, tribune, director of journalism, banks, mcelroy, journalism program, journalism school, rudder, patrick, Individuals: John Sharp Bill Mahomes, Robert L. Albritton David Baggett John Bellinger James R. "Randy" Brooks Jay Graham Michael A. "Mike" Hernandez III Michael J. Plank Sam Torn

Summary of Request:

Clarification(s)(if any):

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**This is an auto-generated email and has originated from an unmonitored email account. Please DO NOT REPLY.**



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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:54 AM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Cc:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Subject:** Public Information Request from Kate McGee (2 of 2) (Text Messages) Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

**Importance:** High

Regents,  
Please see following request from Kate McGee (Texas Tribune) for text messages. If you have responsive documents please send to me by July 26. Thanks. Vickie

H1781-071323  
Kate McGee  
Texas Tribune

I am requesting all text messages sent to and from the individuals listed below between June 1, 2023, and July 14, 2023 that include the following words or phrases: kathleen mcelroy, texas scorecard, texas, tribune, director of journalism, banks, mcelroy, journalism program, journalism school, rudder, Patrick.

Individuals:  
John Sharp  
Bill Mahomes,  
Robert L. Albritton  
David Baggett  
John Bellinger  
James R. "Randy" Brooks  
Jay Graham  
Michael A. "Mike" Hernandez III  
Michael J. Plank  
Sam Torn

---

**From:** Texas A&M University Public Records Support  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>  
**Subject:** Notification: Public Information Records - Activity Assignment

---

This is confirmation that an activity for action on a Public Information Records has been assigned to you.

---

[Click here to access and respond to this Activity](#)

**Activity Information**

Activity Assigned Staff: Vickie Spillers  
Activity Type: Simple To Do

Activity Due Date: 7/26/2023

Activity Details: 07/17/2023 To: Vickie Spillers Re: Open Records Requestor: Kate McGee (H001781-071323) SIMPLE TO-DO PORTAL ACTIVITY: To view and upload your responsive records into the new interactive Open Records Portal page, click the blue hyperlink in this assigned Simple To-Do Activity. \*\*NOTE: After dragging and dropping your records onto the Interactive Page, please click the FINISH ACTIVITY - SAVE & SEND at the bottom of the page to send your records. The records will not upload into the Portal unless this button is clicked. You will not need to log into the Open Records Portal to respond to this Simple To-Do Activity. Please: -Respond to this activity by gathering & uploading responsive records onto the interactive Simple To-Do Activity Page, which will upload your records into the Open Records Portal for OGC's review (please remove any passwords from documents); -Compile a vendor contact list for all vendor proposals/bids/responses compiled; -Let us know if there are no records or if another department may have the information; -Let us know if you have any concerns releasing any of the records you have provided that you feel may need to be considered for a release exception; and -Let us know if a cost estimate is needed as soon as possible. Thank you. Melanie Burns

**Overview of the Request**

Public Information Records # H001781-071323

Assigned Staff: OpenRecords SystemOffices

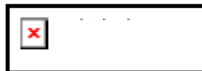
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Summary of Request:

Clarification(s)(if any):

This is an auto-generated email and has originated from an unmonitored email account. Please DO NOT REPLY.



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**From:** David Baggett <dbaggett@opportune.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 12:27 PM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Cc:** Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** Re: To the A&M Board of Regents regarding Dr. Kathleen McElroy

Will we respond to this? If so, who will take the lead?

David C. Baggett  
Managing Partner  
Opportune LLP  
[711 Louisiana, Suite 3100](#)  
[Houston, Texas 77002](#)  
Office: [713-490-5050](#)  
Fax:  
Direct: [713-237-4802](#)  
Cell:

\*\*\*\*\*CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE\*\*\*\*\*

The information in this email may be confidential and/or privileged. This email is intended to be reviewed by only the individual or organization named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, dissemination or copying of this email and its attachments, if any, or the information contained herein is prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please immediately notify the sender by return email and delete this email from your system.

Thank you

On Jul 13, 2023, at 12:16 PM, Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu> wrote:

Regents,  
Please see attached. Vickie

---

**From:** Lindsey Carnett  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 11:43 AM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie <Vickie@tamus.edu>; Agnew, Kelsey <kagnew@tamus.edu>; Bell, Jackie <JBell@tamus.edu>; Gagliardi, Michael <mgagliardi@tamus.edu>; Marshall, Sandra <SMarshall@tamus.edu>; Muniz, Mandy <mmuniz@tamus.edu>; Rodriguez, Dee <droduguez@tamus.edu>  
**Subject:** To the A&M Board of Regents regarding Dr. Kathleen McElroy

Please see attached letter.  
<Letter to the Board of Regents.docx>



Texas A&M Office of the Board of Regents  
153 Gene Stallings Blvd.  
College Station, TX 77843

July 12, 2023

Lindsey Gawlik Carnett

Dear Texas A&M Board of Regents,

I am writing to you today regarding Kathleen McElroy.

For the first time since I slid it on my finger eight years ago, I took off my Aggie Ring on Tuesday. I married my wonderful husband wearing that ring. I've traveled the world with that ring, held my friends first born babies wearing that ring, proudly displayed it whenever I met other Aggies out in the workforce. But for the first time in eight years, I took it off on Tuesday. Because I was ashamed to be an Aggie. I was ashamed to be associated with any of you.

I graduated Texas A&M in 2016 after four wonderful, enlightening years with a BA in media studies and a minor in journalism. I'm a former editor of The Battalion, a former contributor of the Aggieland Yearbook, and I've been a professional journalist for a decade now. I had A&M to thank for getting an internship in New York City with Fox News for two back-to-back summers. I had A&M to thank for my first job out of college at the San Antonio Express-News.

As a Hispanic woman, I've always been proud of my education at Texas A&M where I didn't just go to school, I thrived. When people called Texas A&M racist or backwards, I defended her. I told them about how much I learned in her classrooms, how eye opening my studies were within her walls. I told them of how my education helped me become more open minded, introduced me to more unique people, and helped me become a more diverse thinker.

But none of that mattered on Tuesday. Because on Tuesday, in a Texas Tribune article, A&M has once again shown her true colors. Or should I say her lack thereof.

When I tell you that I was completely shocked, angered and disgusted by the actions of Texas A&M on y'all's behalf regarding Kathleen McElroy, I am only scratching the surface. I've never been so mortified to be associated with Texas A&M in my time as an Aggie.

When I saw the announcement of McElroy's appointment and saw she was given a well-deserved public contract signing, I was thrilled. I was so proud of my university for not only bringing back the journalism school it so desperately needs to rebuild, but for hiring an amazing, well-decorated woman of color journalist (such as I am striving to be every day). I bragged openly about my university. Finally, we'd rebuild a journalism school that could once again rival those of UT, Baylor and UNT. McElroy would lead us into a bright future, that would produce other amazing Aggie journalists who would carry A&M's name into Pulitzer status once again.

So you can imagine the absolute horror and embarrassment I felt reading the Tribune's story on Tuesday afternoon about how y'all upheld the longtime stigmas people have come to believe about Texas A&M; that it is a racist, desperately behind-on-the-times campus where minority students such as myself are not welcome, where new ideas are not welcome, and where good ole boys go to get away from facing the reality of a changing Texas that is growing browner and browner each generation.

How incredibly disheartening. How tragic. How frustrating.

There's little more to be said. I expect little to come from your reception of my letter, despite the signatures of support I've garnered.

Good luck filling the position now. No one in their right mind would dare to take it. Those who are worthy of it will not want to work for such bumbling backwoods regents, which means it will inevitably go to someone who is not willing to take A&M where she needs to go. Thank you for keeping us stuck in mediocrity.

Know that I will not be putting my Aggie Ring back on until you all publicly apologize or right this wrong in some other overt way. Know that McElroy is 10 times the Aggie any of you will ever be.

If you are not flooded with other letters from other Aggie journalists, please know we are all equally angered, embarrassed and disappointed in Texas A&M today. Across the nation, we are talking about your failure and sharing our hurt with each other.

Sincerely disappointed,

Lindsey Gawlik Carnett,  
Texas A&M Class of 2016  
Environment Reporter at the San Antonio Report  
Print/Online board member at large of the San Antonio Association of Hispanic Journalists  
[lindsey@sareport.org](mailto:lindsey@sareport.org)  
210-410-8701

*Lindsey Gawlik Carnett*

Signing in support of this letter:

Hannah Rhodes,  
Texas A&M Class of 2018  
Membership and Audience Engagement Manager at the San Antonio Report

*Hannah Rhodes*

Bria Woods,  
Photojournalist for the San Antonio Report

*Bria Woods*

Brenda Bazán,  
Photojournalist for the San Antonio Report

*Brenda Bazán*

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 1:03 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill  
**Subject:** Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then watered down the offer after "DEI hysteria"

[https://www.texastribune.org/2023/07/11/texas-a-m-kathleen-mcelroy-journalism/?utm\\_campaign=trib-social-buttons&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.texastribune.org/2023/07/11/texas-a-m-kathleen-mcelroy-journalism/?utm_campaign=trib-social-buttons&utm_source=email&utm_medium=social)

**Gore, Dana L.**

---

**From:** Chris Bowers  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 8:59 PM  
**To:** bill.mahomes@bracewell.com  
**Cc:** Mahomes, Bill  
**Subject:** Texas A&M's treatment of Dr. Kathleen McElroy

Dear Bill,

You may remember meeting me because we discussed municipal bond matters a few times when I was an attorney with the City of Dallas.

Today I read an article in the Texas Tribune about Texas A&M rescinding its original offer to Dr. Kathleen McElroy to lead Texas A&M's new journalism department. I write to express my profound disappointment that pressure from some misguided folks has led Texas A&M to reach that decision.

My father was a journalism professor at Texas A&M for 23 years starting in 1964. When he retired, the Board of Regents recognized his service by bestowing on him the title of professor emeritus.

One of his favorite students was Kathleen McElroy. After she graduated from Texas A&M, he followed her career with interest and was proud of her many accomplishments.

My father thankfully passed away before Texas A&M made the poor decision to discontinue its journalism program. I know that he would have been thrilled to hear that A&M had selected Dr. McElroy to revive it. She would have been a terrific leader of and professor in the new department. I am appalled and saddened that Texas A&M has rescinded its original offer of employment to Dr. McElroy and how it went about doing so.

I apologize for sending this email to your work email address, but I couldn't find a TAMUS email address for you (though I tried to guess what it may be).

Chris Bowers '86

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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 1:54 PM  
**To:** Valicek, Annie; Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** Today's Faculty Senate Resolution  
**Attachments:** Resolution on Outside Influence on Faculty Hiring and Promotion .pdf

Regents,

Attached is the resolution that the A&M Faculty Senate is scheduled to take up at 3p today. It mentions the President, Chancellor and Board of Regents. Vickie

## Senate Resolution on Outside Influence on Faculty Hiring and Promotion

Whereas Texas A&M University is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and an R1 academic institution with a national reputation, and

Whereas recent events have called into question the state of academic freedom at our university, and created a national perception that outside influence has interfered in the appointment of Dr. Kathleen McElroy as a full professor with tenure at the university, and

Whereas this national perception has caused significant damage to the reputation of Texas A&M University, and

Whereas this perception of the absence of faculty independence could jeopardize our standing in the AAU, and

Whereas the recent interference in curricula matters further calls into question faculty ability to preserve departmental, school, and college accreditation, and

Whereas these events are making it increasingly difficult for Texas A&M to retain and recruit talented faculty, and for current faculty to do their jobs,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of Texas A&M University requests that the President, Chancellor, and Board of Regents make clear public statements that emphasize outside interference in faculty matters is not acceptable, and

Be it further resolved that the system and university leadership resist outside influences and stand up for the faculty against inappropriate outside pressures, or the perception thereof, and

Be it further resolved that the system and university leadership support the creation of definitive processes that ensure that faculty continue to have an appropriate institutional role in shared governance as advocated by the American Association of University Professors.

Adopted July XX, 2023

---

**From:** Donald Parsons  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 3:26 PM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie; Sharp, John; gharman@tam.u.edu; president@tam.u.edu; jbermudez@tam.u.edu; journalism@austin.utexas.edu  
**Subject:** "She Said", "He Said" - The Search for a Director of Journalism at Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M University

Board of Regents

Dear Members of the A&M System Board of Regents:

Either Dr. Kathleen McElroy of the University of Texas is **"lying through her teeth"** or *Interim* Dean Jose Bermudez of Texas A&M **"is talking out of both sides of his mouth"**.

In any case, if any of the following quotes attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy are true, there is ample reason for the Board of Regents to seriously question if McElroy, or Bermudez for that matter, should be considered for any long-term employment at Texas A&M University!

**"He [Dr. José Luis Bermúdez] said, 'You're a Black woman who was at The New York Times and, to these folks\*, that's like working for Pravda.'"**

Dr. McElroy said Dr. Bermúdez had advised her that, **"I should go into this process with my eyes wide open. And he said it's like abortion, guns, and you've got a big target on your back."**

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said **" he [Bermúdez] had advised her to give up tenure in order to avoid the Board of Regents"**.

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said that **"Dr. Bermúdez told her that her appointment had "stirred up a hornet's nest," and warned her not to give up her position at the University of Texas."**

Dr. McElroy said, **"Dr. Bermúdez and other university administrators [?] asked her to prepare for a meeting with the Regents, who had seen the Texas Scorecard article."**

The above quotes, attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy, are taken from an article in the New York Times by Stephanie Saul; [*Texas A&M Celebrated a New Journalism Director. Then Came the Complaints*. Updated July 14, 2023]:

Sincerely,

Donald L. Parsons '59

Col. US Army Retired

Bryan, Texas

\*Ps: I probably fit in Bermudez's definition of **"these folks"**, but the truth is I do not care one bit about McElroy's race or her previous employment. I do care however about her self-described advocacy for diversity, equity and inclusion; a distorted theory that has no place at Texas A&M University.  
DLP



---

**From:** Tech Wildcatters <info@techwildcatters.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 9:00 AM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** 2023 Q2 Recap & Q3 Preview 🚀

[View this email in your browser](#)



- **Arkestro** [raised](#) \$26.0 million of Series A venture funding in a deal led by New Enterprise Associates, Construct, and Koch Disruptive in June 2022. This funding has been used to accelerate growth, enable Arkestro to further help customers amplify the impact of procurement's influence across their enterprises using behavioral science, game theory and predictive machine learning models applied at a massive scale.
- **AfroLandTV** experienced significant organic growth and a large amount of monthly active users across their owned and operated platforms, including apps and linear channels. They are the biggest free streaming service for black audiences in the US.
- **RefineRE** [helped](#) the Head of Real Estate and team at an American multinational information technology services and consulting company combine all their portfolio data in a centralized platform, which provided them with consistent information and instant direct access for all team members across the globe.

- **Fetch** [raised](#) an additional \$29 million in 2022 as an extension to the Series C announced in 2021. Fetch is currently partnering with 375,000 apartment units across 25 major markets.
- 

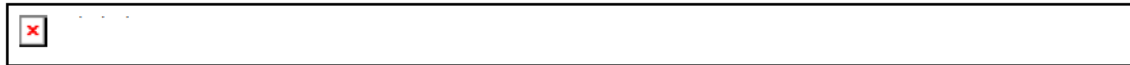
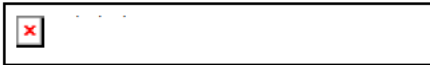


- [Dallas Startup Week](#) returns in September. Dallas Startup Week is returning for its 10th year in September. The week-long event will feature a variety of programming for entrepreneurs, investors, and startup enthusiasts.
  - Don't miss your opportunity to pitch your startup live at **SXSW 2024!** [Applications are now open](#) through November 12, 2023. Learn more about important application deadlines, eligibility criteria and more.
  - [Austin Startup Week](#) will host their 13th annual event in November. The week will consist of engaging sessions, workshops, special events, and amazing speakers.
  - [Venture Dallas](#) will be back in October to showcase innovators, business luminaries, and investors from around the nation to experience the forces propelling Dallas-Fort Worth as a premier hub of innovation.
- 



- **Tech Wildcatters** recently attended [Collision Conference](#) in Toronto. We met with investors, partners, and startups. We learned about the latest tech trends and made new connections in the VC and startup-realm. Ricky Tejapaibul, our Managing Partner, gave a presentation on mentorship in the venture capital community, titled "How to Cultivate Startup Success by Drawing on Mentor Relationships."

- **Emerging Managers** raised \$37.0BN in 2022, a 12% decrease from the \$56.8BN raised in 2021. However, despite the decrease, emerging VCs are still raising significant amounts of capital. They are also becoming more specialized and creative in their fundraising strategies. This shows that there is still a strong appetite for investment in early-stage companies.



**Our mailing address is:**

5960 Berkshire Ln, 6th Floor, Dallas, TX 75225

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You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

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**From:** Lawrence Oliver  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 11:32 AM  
**To:** Sharp, John; president@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** Angry and ashamed

Dear Chancellor Sharp and President Banks:

I was a faculty member and administrator at Texas A&M from 1984 to 2017. My two sons are Aggies. During my entire time at A&M I devoted myself not only to teaching and research, but also to doing whatever I could to increase diversity and to make the campus a welcoming environment for everyone. Thus the university's apparent capitulation to those who are opposed to diversity and inclusion, and who would like to see the campus environment and curriculum return to the "good ol' days" of bigotry, narrow mindedness, and intolerance, leave me angry and ashamed. I will never again encourage students or faculty to join what was once a great university.

With great sadness,

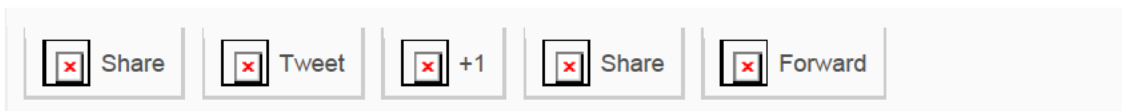
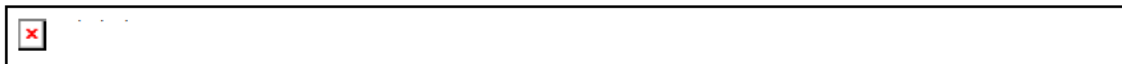
Lawrence Oliver  
Emeritus Professor of English

---

**From:** APLU Morning News Scan <publicaffairs@aplu.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 6, 2023 8:21 AM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Biden's Income Driven Loan Repayment Plan; Proposed Gainful Employment Regulations; And More

APLU's Morning News Scan

[View this email in your browser](#)



## July 6, 2023

- Politico: [Inside Joe Biden's new student loan repayment plan](#)
- The Hill: [Student debt: White House faces backlash for restarting interest on loans](#)
- Inside Higher Ed: [Biden Administration Adds Students to Income-Contingent Plan](#)
- Higher Ed Dive: [Here's why the Education Department's proposed financial transparency website has higher ed worried](#)
- The Los Angeles Times: [High-stakes, high-stress college essay stirs more anxiety under affirmative action ban](#)
- Bloomberg: [Black Colleges Face Crunch as Supreme Court Ruling Drives Influx of Students](#)
- Forbes: [Legacy Admissions At Harvard And Other Elite Institutions Privilege White Applicants, New Evidence Shows](#)
- USA Today: [After Supreme Court's rejection of affirmative action, complaint targets legacy admissions](#)
- Inside Higher Ed: [NAACP Launches 'Diversity No Matter What' Campaign](#)
- The Wall Street Journal: [Op-Ed: After Affirmative Action, End Legacy Preferences](#)

Politico

[Inside Joe Biden's new student loan repayment plan](#)

By Michael Stratford

July 5, 2023 – Alongside his pledge to start over on a plan to cancel student debt, President Joe Biden last week unveiled the final details of his separate student loan repayment program. The program, which has been in the works for more than a year, will permanently reshape how borrowers repay their federal student loans.

[Top↑](#)

The Hill

[Student debt: White House faces backlash for restarting interest on loans](#)

By Lexi Lonas and Alex Gangitano

July 5, 2023 – The White House is facing backlash about its decision to reactivate interest for student loans as part of its “on-ramp” repayment program, which progressives and advocates argue isn’t enough to help struggling borrowers.

[Top↑](#)

Inside Higher Ed

[Biden Administration Adds Students to Income-Contingent Plan](#)

By Scott Jaschik

July 6, 2023 – The Biden administration has changed an income-contingent loan program in ways that will make it more popular and also more expensive.

[Top↑](#)

Higher Ed Dive

[Here’s why the Education Department’s proposed financial transparency website has higher ed worried](#)

By Lilah Burke

July 5, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Education’s proposed gainful employment regulations have the potential to significantly change the higher education landscape. Career education programs that leave graduates with poor earnings or unmanageable debt would risk losing access to federal financial aid under the new rules.

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The Los Angeles Times

[High-stakes, high-stress college essay stirs more anxiety under affirmative action ban](#)

By Milla Surjadi, Howard Blume, and Teresa Watanabe

July 6, 2023 – Olivia Brandeis had a vision for her college application essay: She would write about covering a racist incident as a student journalist of color at Monte Vista High School in Danville, a majority-white city east of Oakland. But last week’s U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down race-based affirmative action has filled her with anxious questions about sharing her experiences as an Asian American.

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Bloomberg

[Black Colleges Face Crunch as Supreme Court Ruling Drives Influx of Students](#)

By Skylar Woodhouse and Jordan Fitzgerald

July 5, 2023 – Historically Black Colleges and Universities are gearing up for an increase in applicants following a US Supreme Court decision barring schools from using race as a factor in admissions.

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Forbes

[Legacy Admissions At Harvard And Other Elite Institutions Privilege White Applicants, New Evidence Shows](#)

By Shaun Harper

July 5, 2023 – Three Black and Latino groups have filed a racial discrimination lawsuit against Harvard University. Chica Project, African Community Economic Development of New England, and Greater Boston Latino Network submitted a 31-page complaint to the U.S. Department of Education alleging the Ivy League school systematically violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by privileging the children of donors and wealthy alumni in its annual student selection process.

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USA Today

[After Supreme Court's rejection of affirmative action, complaint targets legacy admissions](#)



By Alia Wong

July 3, 2023 – Within days of the Supreme Court’s ruling against race-based affirmative action at Harvard, a civil rights group has filed a federal complaint challenging legacy admissions at the Ivy League college.

[Top↑](#)

Inside Higher Ed

[NAACP Launches ‘Diversity No Matter What’ Campaign](#)

By Scott Jaschik

July 6, 2023 – The NAACP is asking more than 1,600 colleges, public and private, that have competitive admissions policies to join its new “Diversity No Matter What” campaign.

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The Wall Street Journal

[Op-Ed: After Affirmative Action, End Legacy Preferences](#)

By William A Galston

July 4, 2023 – Unlike *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court’s decision to end affirmative action in higher education enjoys wide public support. A recently released survey finds 52% of Americans approve of the decision, with only 32% opposed. Strong majorities of whites and Asian-Americans support it, Hispanics are evenly split, and black Americans find themselves isolated in their opposition.

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**From:** Ronnie Crocker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 3:43 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Concern over A&M journalism department story

I am reaching out to express my frustration with this breaking news story about the university's treatment of the newly hired journalism department director: <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/07/11/texas-a-m-kathleen-mcelroy-journalism/>

It is embarrassing to see my alma mater caught up in such unworthy, unprofessional and patently political behavior. I am willing to hear from all sides -- as I did with last year's news about The Battalion -- but these latest allegations must be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

I would appreciate any insight the chancellor's office can provide as I consider how to respond formally as an involved Class of '85 alum, as a career journalist and as a concerned Texan. Already, I am talking with other alumni and making plans to attend the August Board of Regents meeting.

Texas A&M, its journalism school and the Corps of Cadets mean so much to me. Each helped prepare me for the successes I have enjoyed. Humbled to be able to give back, I donated \$100,000 in 2021 to endow an A&M Foundation scholarship to help other first-generation students, and I am in conversation about other ways to contribute.

But this article seriously affects my opinion of the current leadership. I want our university committed to providing world-class education and staying above partisan politics. Unfortunately, in this case, the latter appears to have triumphed over the former.

I look forward to your response.

Ronnie Crocker '85  
*Retired executive editor, Beaumont Enterprise; former deputy business editor, Houston Chronicle; former reporter, Newport News (Va.) Daily Press, Bryan-College Station Eagle, Texas A&M Battalion*

## Gore, Dana L.

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**From:** Viola Hebert  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 7:21 PM  
**Subject:** Constituent concern Re: Dr. Kathleen McElroy

Good afternoon Chairman Mahomes and A&M Board of Regents,

The purpose of this communication is to address the multiple diminishing counter offers made by the Board of Regents to Dr. Kathleen McElroy, culminating in the watering down of the final offer based on her past history of engaging in DEI, as it is currently referenced, more than 20-30 years ago.

By way of introduction, I am a 1974 graduate of PVAMU, an officer of PV National Alumni Association, a Harris County Representative with the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, a member of the League of Women Voters, member and former Board of Directors for Texas Nurses Association, and an Alzheimer's Advocate, to name a few of the organizations I am affiliated with and serve as a volunteer. Moreover, I am not addressing this concern as a representative of either of the aforementioned organizations. Rather, I am addressing this issue as a citizen of the great state of Texas, a registered voter, a VDVR, and as a constituent of the A&M System vis a vis as an alumna of PVAMU, as well as a constituent of the arms of the Texas Legislature, such as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, that have a stake in the success of higher education throughout community colleges, colleges and universities across the state.

First, I must say that I applaud Chancellor John Sharp and President Banks for seeking out and recommending Dr McElroy as "the person", well-suited highly qualified and credentialed to revive or resurrect the defunct Journalism Program at TAMU. The fact that she is an alumna of TAMU and now willing to return to her alma mater to serve, was the proverbial "icing on the cake". Interestingly enough, Dr. McElroy was "good enough" to serve in a consultant capacity over the past year or so to help identify areas of improvement and need to resurrect the Journalism program, and was even acknowledged as a front runner to head the Program then.

Her experience and career are stellar and exemplary! With that being said, I am utterly appalled by the egregious actions taken by the Board of Regents by submitting multiple offers, each with diminishing value. Reportedly, the Board of Regents were "considering concerns expressed by constituents" that essentially boil down to the hiring of a black woman with a background/experience in research, study, and publishing works related to race, diversity, inclusion, and equality during her expansive career, has somehow become the driving and primary reason for watering down her contract...so much so that no intelligent professional worth their own salt would have accepted such a demeaning, degrading, dismissive and disrespectful offer. I for one, agree with Black Star Network's and TAMU alum Roland Martin and other journalists who call upon Black Athletes and potential students or faculty of TAMU to take heed .... do not be disillusioned by the hoopla and fanfare of TAMU offering and acquiring your skills and expertise. Rather, you may need to be on the lookout for "bait and switch" tactics or turning of the tables at any moment and you too may find yourself devalued, down-played, and dismissed "at will".

As a constituent of the A&M system, I join others in demanding a closer look at how TAMU and the state of Texas evaluate all candidates (not just people of color) based on their prior experience with race, DEI, and social justice issues. I dare say, race, and any issues surrounding or encompassing race are "staple commodities" in these United States of America, past, present, and more than likely in the foreseeable future. Whether your view of this IS good or bad... It EXISTS! I'm inclined to believe that it will be hard to find anyone, of any race, or any ethnic background or of any generational demographic who has lived completely devoid of, or has never been confronted with, or had to contend with the issue of race, DEI, race relations or whatever the new politically correct term may be in the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness in our state or in our nation. The fact that Dr McElroy has researched and studied

components of this issue in order to render a greater understanding, more knowledge, and a different perspective on the topic is yeoman's work! Such service should be lauded not looked upon with dread or disdain.

I admonish the A&M Board of Regents, Lady and Gentlemen, to reconsider your actions surrounding this issue and do the right thing. Although Dr. McElroy has now rejected the final shamefully outlandish offer, the Board of Regents, as the deciding body, should be held accountable and take responsibility by:

1. Making a public apology to Dr. Kathleen McElroy for the mistreatment and disrespect toward her during this process
2. Thoroughly examining the means and methods and process by which the Board implements the revocation of DEI and "Dis-Affirmative Action" throughout all its affiliates, agencies and organizations, across all areas, academic programs as well as athletics, and making that information public.
3. Being fair and equitable in the treatment of all candidates, students, faculty and staff, employees and constituents of affiliates, agencies, and organizations under the purview of the Board.

Finally, myself, as a private citizen, part of the A&M constituency submit this statement of concern for your consideration. It is clear that the Board has "considered" statements of others in opposition to my view, that have contributed to this act which has been labeled "DEI Hysteria". I ask each of you, please search your own sense of humanity, civility, truth, and abide by your oath ... then act accordingly for the greater good! In all due respect, maybe raise the question..."Was your intent truly reflected in the outcome and impact of your actions?"

Sincerely,

Viola L. Hebert  
"A Concerned Constituent"

--

My best regards,

Viola L. Hebert, RN, BSN, MA

Vice-President, PVAMU National Alumni Association

Email: [vice.president@pvualumni.org](mailto:vice.president@pvualumni.org)

Cell: 713-301-3194

**"Let Your Dreams Be Bigger Than Your Fears, Your Actions Louder Than Your Words, And Your Faith Stronger Than Your Feelings."** Unknown

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**From:** PLEXUSS <info@plexuss.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 3:30 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Dr. Derrick Brooms Appointed Executive Director of the Black Men's Research Institute at Morehouse College and more | June 14, 2023

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

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The logo for PLEXUSS, featuring the word "PLEXUSS" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter "X" is stylized with a green vertical bar through its center. A small trademark symbol (TM) is located at the top right of the word.

**DIVERSE: ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

## Dr. Derrick Brooms Appointed Executive Director of the Black Men's Research Institute at Morehouse College

Dr. Derrick Brooms will become executive director of the Black Men's Research Institute at Morehouse College.

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### DIVERSE: ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Report Suggests Reforms if Supreme Court Strikes Down Affirmative Action

Institutions and governments may make big changes if affirmative action ends.



### DIVERSE: ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Education Department Announces Grants for Initiatives to Support Native Students

The Education Department has announced more than \$8 million in available grants across initiatives to Raise the Bar for Native...



### INSIDE HIGHER EDUCATION BLOG

## House Appropriators Plan Bigger Cuts to Some Federal Agencies

House Appropriators Plan Bigger Cuts to Some Federal Agencies  
Katherine Knott/Wed, 06/14/2023 - 12:00 AM Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee are planning to limit new spending to fiscal year 2022 levels—a move that could mean cuts to the Education Department and other nondefense agencies, Roll Call reported. Texas representative Kay...



## INSIDE HIGHER EDUCATION BLOG

### Seeking Bipartisan Governance in North Carolina

Seeking Bipartisan Governance in North Carolina Featured Image at Top of Article GettyImages-1239984093.jpg Liam KnoxWed, 06/14/2023 - 12:00 AM

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**From:** Alyssa Lehmann  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 3:30 PM  
**To:** Spillers, Vickie; Sharp, John; president@tamu.edu; NK Anand  
**Subject:** Dr. Kathleen McElroy and SB 17

Hello,

My name is Alyssa Lehmann. I graduated from Texas A&M College Station in 2019 with a Bachelor's in Computer Engineering. The situation involving the recruitment of Kathleen McElroy has recently come to my attention. As an Aggie, I feel an ethical responsibility to speak up and tell you that the treatment of Dr. McElroy by the university has been racist and that is not okay, especially for such a respected institution that values ethics so highly. I had hoped that in the wake of the George Floyd protests, the university had started to see that action was needed to change direction. But this latest event tells me that A&M has not made progress on the racism present on the College Station campus. Not only has this university not made any progress but these actions show that it is also actively chasing off anyone who might be able to help the university achieve anything close to an antiracist stance.

These are not the values that Texas A&M instilled in me. It is A&M that taught me that diversity is a tremendous asset. I remember submitting a piece of writing for the mandatory engineering ethics class that explained how diverse groups have a wider variety of experiences to draw on to identify and solve problems, and this helps us tackle problems so much more effectively than a group of people with only very similar experiences to each other. Taking this class made me proud to be an Aggie.

But the actions by the leadership of this institution in regards to the recruitment of Dr. Kathleen McElroy give the impression that A&M only pays lip service to the values its student body holds dear. A genuine, public apology is needed to even start to try to make amends to Dr. McElroy, your current, former and future black students, and all of the students that have been deprived of learning from the valuable experiences of such an intelligent, knowledgeable, and respected academic. It should acknowledge all of the people that have been harmed, explain specifically how this happened, and lay out a plan for how this will be avoided in the future. Then that plan needs to be actually executed.

The Aggie Code of Honor is what defined my experience at this university. We cannot compromise our core values in the face of this political pressure to discriminate against minorities. The law that bans DEI offices was billed as making admissions "colorblind and sex-neutral". But there are entire books written about how claiming "colorblindness" in regards to race does not actually fix the racism problem, it just ignores it, encourages it to fester and worsen, and shuts down any conversation about unjust treatment. If you would like a more in depth explanation of this, a widely known and very well researched book on the subject is ***Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*** by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, a sociology professor at Duke University. If you have not already, I very strongly recommend reading it given how heavily the DEI bill relies on the argument that being "colorblind" is not racist.

As for the sex-neutral part, I can personally attest that the Women in Engineering department is sorely needed. There were so few other women in engineering while I was attending A&M. I would look at the huge lecture halls of my freshman courses and saw almost no other women. As a freshman, I applied to the TURTLE robotics team and was not accepted. I graduated from my high school as salutatorian. I do not know why I was not accepted, but it was not because I was not qualified. Luckily, Women in Engineering was just starting up project teams that year, and I became a founding member of the WE TAMU VEX competition team. In recent years, this team has made it to the national level of the VEX competition. I was on that team for 3 years, 2 years as a member and 1 year as the programming lead. I am still close friends with the women I worked with on that team today. That team was a defining experience of my time at A&M. I

wound up graduating A&M with a 3.9 GPA in Computer Engineering, Magna Cum Laude. And being on that team gave me the opportunity to mentor and provide needed support to other female freshman engineers. Without that project team, without acknowledging that I was a female student, I would not have gotten the same experience as a male student. I would have been excluded from practicing robotics altogether. Even as it is, what I learned in VEX was much different from what I would have learned in TURTLE robotics. I still did not benefit from the experience of older students and an established club. Our first year, VEX was a team of mostly freshmen and sophomores trying to figure out something brand new to us. All of the mentorship we received was from WE sources and the occasional professor. If this was my experience at A&M, where I was able to benefit from diversity and inclusion resources, would I still have been able to succeed to the same degree without those resources? What about for those in high school that have been excluded? High school students that may appear to be less successful college applicants may just not have had access to the same resources as others. Those who may appear to be less successful can be just as capable or more capable than those who appear successful on paper.

I know that Texas A&M can do better than this. Especially with DEI offices being outlawed, now more than ever we need the Aggie Code of Honor: an Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. We need to stick to our values. The quality of the education of future Aggies depends on it. Please stand with me in calling on the university to publicly issue a direct apology to everyone that has been hurt by the events surrounding the recruitment of Dr. Kathleen Ecelroy. Share exactly how this happened and lay out a plan to prevent this from happening in the future.

Sincerely,  
Alyssa Lehmann

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**From:** Steve Fyke  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 10:04 PM  
**To:** jsharp@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** Fiasco Over Hiring of Journalism Department Head

**This Message Is From an External Sender**

This message came from outside your organization.

John,

I am writing to tell you how disappointed I am in you as Chancellor of the A&M system, and how frustrated I am as a 1977 graduate of TAMU over how often the Code of Honor is ignored by Administration all in the name of politics.

I have attached an article from the Texas Tribune describing what I am upset about (see below). I know you have seen it and similar articles about your lack of a backbone. The Houston Chronicle also had an editorial about your actions which more than express my feelings. Basically, you have no courage to stand up to the whims of Abbott, Patrick and Paxton. You have forgotten that you are responsible for the quality of education that the students that come to Texas A&M are expecting and deserve.

As the Chancellor of one of the two largest university systems in Texas, I expect you to rise above politics and stand up for what is right. If we wanted a mindless puppet, we would have clamored for Rick Perry to be the Chancellor.

Therefore, I ask that you resign your position as Chancellor or wake up and protect what is right. I ask that you remember why you first got into politics and accepted the position at TAMU as Chancellor. Anybody can fold over in the wind as you are doing now.

Sincerely,

Steve Fyke

Class of 1977

[https://www.texastribune.org/2023/07/11/texas-a-m-kathleen-mcelroy-journalism/?utm\\_campaign=trib-social-buttons&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.texastribune.org/2023/07/11/texas-a-m-kathleen-mcelroy-journalism/?utm_campaign=trib-social-buttons&utm_source=email&utm_medium=social)

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**From:** Mike Mecke  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 8:03 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John; Ag President Katherine Banks PE  
**Cc:** ag.Porter Garner.79.Assoc.Pres.; ag.The Rudder Association; ag.np.Battalion Editor; np.BCS.Robert Borden.Opinions.Editor Eagle  
**Subject:** Fw: The Rudder Association Inc.

I hope that you, as the primary Texas A&M University leaders, will search for and hire, a Journalism Dept. Head who believes in, teaches and practices clear, honest, truthful journalism, where the facts are displayed and written for the readers to interpret and understand themselves.

"Neutral" journalism - unless clearly labeled an Editorial or Opinion piece.

Diversity is great and should be expected at TAMU and all of its branches and agencies. We are blessed with many racial and religious minorities and it is only right that all are treated equally to the majority. But not at the expense of socially filtered teaching, education practices or administrative decisions.

I was dismayed when our Journalism Dept. was dismantled in the past, that was a huge mistake. Journalism is a crucial part of our society - of a democracy. I think a high quality Journalism Dept. and Law School are two very necessary elements in assuring that Texas A&M produces graduates who will be heard and treated fairly in local, state and national politics - I do not think we were always in the past. I hope you will do your utmost to see that our students receive the best quality of journalistic education possible - nothing less.

We need at A&M, in Texas and across the United States journalism that can be trusted and believed for its truth.

Trusting you will do so, thank you,  
Mike Mecke '61

----- Forwarded Message -----

From "The Rudder Association Team" <[admin@rudderassociation.org](mailto:admin@rudderassociation.org)>  
To "Michael B. Mecke (Mike)"  
Date 7/19/2023 3:15:23 PM  
Subject The Rudder Association Inc.

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**The Rudder Association**

## **The Rudder Association Takes on DEI and Biased Journalism**

At our annual members' meeting, you requested quarterly updates—and more often when important issues arise. You are probably aware that college campuses have become more centers of indoctrination than marketplaces of ideas during this “woke” era. That development is not just bad for our culture. It is also an existential threat to Texas A&M. We’re proud to say that, while others were afraid to stand up to the divisive ideologies which undermine Aggies’ unique and inclusive culture, The Rudder Association has been facing down the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion behemoth for more than 3 years.

Defunding the DEI bureaucracy and ending the many divisive practices it spawned was The Rudder Association’s number one goal for the past academic year. Honestly, it seemed overly ambitious, and we thought it might take years to achieve. We engaged with the Chancellor, the Board of Regents, the President, and the provosts. We wrote editorials and collaborated with national think tanks to investigate and expose the cost and breadth of Texas A&M’s DEI apparatus. We educated key legislators on the importance of this issue and the adverse impact it was having on the Aggie family. We encouraged you to contact your representatives and some of our members testified in Austin. THEY HEARD US. The Governor will sign a bill into law and in five short months DEI will officially DIE on campuses across Texas.

But much work remains – even as the Governor signs legislation outlawing programs which discriminate based on the color of a person’s skin (rather than the content of their character) and the Supreme Court strikes down affirmative action, the people responsible for these divisive policies and pushing these destructive ideologies have already begun work on how to further their original aims under new names and by other means. Make no mistake, while we as an organization along with the larger Aggie family have achieved much in the past year, the work of maintaining the values and traditions of “the school [we] think so grand” is not over.

Before the ink could dry on this monumental legislative achievement, it was announced that Texas A&M would hire a former New York Times senior editor and current UT Austin professor steeped in “race and its intersection with journalism” as its new department head. Just 7% of Americans have “a great deal of trust” in journalism and the media according to an October Gallup poll. If Texas A&M is going to restart a journalism program, shouldn’t it try to identify a leader who can help restore the public’s confidence in the profession? Instead, Dr McElroy had

been quoted as believing that journalists should be filtering out what they consider “illegitimate” views. But what exactly has their track record been on doing that in recent years?

On your behalf, we immediately made our concerns about the hiring known, as we are sure did others. Because of this the journalism department head position remains open as of this date. The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Houston Chronicle, The Eagle, The Texas Tribune, Breitbart and others have recently noted our organization’s activities. Taking on DEI was one thing, but confronting bias in journalism by questioning Texas A&M’s journalism department hire really got their attention! Put “journalism” and “Rudder Association” into your search engine for a sample. By the way, It’s THE Rudder Association to you, Washington Post.

The Eagle editorial page cited scandalized activist journalist Dan Rather, fired for slander by CBS in 2004, as a source of inspiration for the profession. Dan Rather accused you (and me by name) of being racists for daring to question the hiring of a black woman in his Substack writings. But the facts are clear: The problem was the candidate’s obsessive focus on race—not yours or anyone else’s at Texas A&M.

We responded to these investigative reports in the following press release which was widely cited in follow-up articles:

### ***Clarifying The Rudder Association's Stance on Texas A&M's Journalism Leadership***

*COLLEGE STATION, Texas, July 14, 2023 - The Rudder Association, a dedicated group of former students, students, faculty, staff, and friends of Texas A&M, today clarified its stance on the recent decision to offer Dr. McElroy only a short-term contract to lead the university’s journalism department.*

*The Rudder Association (TRA) has been cited in various news outlets, from The New York Times to Breitbart, as having a significant influence on Dr. McElroy’s decision to decline the offered contract. But The Association is not a “powerful alumni group” as characterized by the Houston Chronicle. It is a small group dedicated to a powerful idea: That Texas A&M should be leading higher education towards a culture of merit, individual inclusion and a unity of spirit and away from the morass of identity politics known on our campuses as DEI.*

*Upon learning of Dr. McElroy's selection, TRA did express concerns to the administration, as did many others. TRA believes that a department head should embrace the egalitarian and merit-based traditions that characterize Texas A&M's values rather than the divisive ideology of identity politics.*

*TRA also questioned the wisdom of hiring a leader who believes in filtering out "illegitimate" views. This stance has contributed to the current crisis of trust in the media. The TRA believes that if Texas A&M is to establish a journalism program, it should strive to appoint a leader who is committed to restoring America's trust in the profession.*

*"We were ready to engage in good faith with Dr. McElroy had she taken the opportunity to prove her critics wrong, but it appears that she was not a good fit for this role. We remain hopeful that Texas A&M will continue to lead in this important arena, as it has done in many others throughout its history," said Matt Poling, President of The Rudder Association. TRA urges the Texas A&M Board of Regents to ensure that the future journalism department meets all Texans' expectations and addresses our society's needs at this critical time.*

*TRA wishes Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors.*

Subsequent to the media coverage and Dr McElroy's decision not to accept her revised contract, The Texas A&M faculty senate released a statement decrying the perception of "outside influence" prompting our second press release:

## ***The Rudder Association Responds to Concerns Over "Outside Influence" at Texas A&M***

*Group Strongly Advocates for Stakeholder Influence in Higher Education*

*COLLEGE STATION, Texas, July 15, 2023 - The Rudder Association (TRA), a group of dedicated Aggies committed to preserving and perpetuating the core values and unique spirit of Texas A&M, today responded to recent comments by Dr. Tracy Hammond and the faculty senate regarding "outside influence" on the Texas A&M campus.*

*TRA holds Dr. Hammond, the faculty senate, and the faculty's scholarship, research, and teaching in high regard. But it respectfully disagrees with the characterization of taxpayers, tuition payers, and donors as "outside influence." These groups are integral to the Aggie family, whose contributions make the university's*

*excellence possible. All citizens of Texas are stakeholders in our public institutions and have not just a right, but a responsibility to engage on issues of such importance to our state and society.*

*TRA also believes that regents and elected officials should not be viewed as "outside influence." These leaders and representatives are charged with ensuring that the strategic decisions of our state institutions align with the expectations and future needs of all Texans.*

*TRA acknowledges the national interest in Texas A&M's journalism department and the emerging narrative reflected in the statement from the faculty senators. However, it emphasizes that all stakeholders share a common goal: to produce journalists who uphold the highest standards of integrity, thereby restoring public trust in the profession for the benefit of society.*

*"We all have a stake in the success of this initiative," said Matt Poling, President of The Rudder Association. "Our collective aim should be to foster a journalism department that prepares its students to uphold the principles of journalistic integrity and contribute positively to their profession and our society."*

If we are a "powerful alumni group" as some say, it is only because of the power of our ideas and dedication of our members. The interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who attempted to hire Dr McElroy is resigning not because we or anyone else attacked him, but because we stood our ground on principle. We are honored that you have entrusted us with this important "watch dog" role. With only one part-time paid employee, nearly all your contributions go to defending and advancing your values on the campus we all care so much about and supporting the students who are helping keep the Aggie in Aggieland. More on that topic in our summer update you will receive next month.

We consider the despicable and untrue attacks on us as a measure of our success. You may have noticed the pendulum seems to be swinging back in our direction and the tides shifting towards truth and virtue. But those analogies are incomplete. Because there is no gravitational force that automatically corrects society's errors. There is only you and me joining together to fix what we see has fallen into disrepair or has been deliberately broken.


For more timely updates, visit our vibrant and growing Facebook page: Rudder Association Portal. Would you also consider updating your membership at [TheRudderAssociation.org](http://TheRudderAssociation.org) and sharing this email with others in the Aggie family? We would appreciate it!



Gig 'em,

Matt Poling '90  
President

**The Rudder Association Inc 1511 South Texas  
Ave Box 307 College Station Texas 77840-3303**

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**From:** Blake Onken  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 1:49 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** FW: What are you doing?

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**From:** Blake Onken  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 1:46 PM  
**To:** 'president@tamu.edu' <president@tamu.edu>  
**Subject:** What are you doing?

I contacted the Chancellor's office and they recommended that I "Start" with you. I suspect that I will be contacting them again shortly.

You clearly believe that you know what you are doing, but I can tell you that your short-term game plan is going to bite you (and more importantly to me, Texas A&M University) in the butt. Your treatment of Professor McElroy is only a short-term gain, at best. You have not only damaged the reputation of a nascent (previously renowned) Journalism Department, but also now given pause to every Nobel laureate and Rhodes Scholar that every other A&M department may have been pursuing to join their ranks. This is not a long-term strategy with Texas A&M University's best interests in mind.

I can only assume that your Horizon is (very) much shorter than my Vision for Texas A&M – my only hope is that it is short enough to limit the damage that you are doing to Texas A&M's reputation (but that is already water under the bridge, in my estimation).

Blake Onken, PhD, CPSS, CLSSGB  
Texas A&M University, '82 and '88

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**From:** L. Gene Kornegay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 4:41 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John; president@tamu.edu; Spillers, Vickie; senate@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** Journalism Director

Dear All,

As a member of the Aggie class of '74, I wish to express my concern for the situation related to Dr. Kathleen O. McElroy. While I certainly understand the current political environment is challenging for those in leadership roles at the university, these are precisely the times when true leaders take a stand for the Aggie Core Values. As I reviewed those values again today it seems clear that if only a portion of what is being reported about the treatment of Dr. McElroy is correct we are not living up to those core values.....and she is one of us.

I ask you to consider how this situation demonstrates any of these values:loyalty, integrity, excellence, leadership, respect and selfless service?

This time reminds me of the 1960's and early 1970's which was equally tumultuous and challenging. As a country we made significant progress toward living out the ideals our founders established. It remains our obligation to renew those ideals and find ways to live constructively as a united community in our diversity. If we could isolate the single greatest strength among our many strengths I believe it would be our diversity. Why are so many people afraid of our diversity? We need every single person to continue to grow and develop. This includes at our university. I urge each of you to renew your commitment and actions toward this goal.

With my thanks,

gene

NOTICE - This communication, including any attachments, may contain confidential and privileged information that is for the sole use of the intended recipient. Any viewing, copying or distribution of, or reliance on this message by unintended recipients is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify me immediately by replying to the message and deleting it from your computer.

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**From:** Vick Burk  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 6:36 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Journalism hiring snafu

Chancellor Sharp:

Who is responsible for the total mishandling of the hiring and then changing the offer made to Dr. McElroy? Whoever it is should at least have the intestinal fortitude to come forward publicly and give their reasons. The offer and hire should never have been made public if it was still subject to change. As far as I can tell, nothing has changed about her qualifications or abilities between the time of the announcement and now, with the exception of state law changes and the Supreme Court decision on affirmative action on college admissions. Surely we weren't making this hire for any reason other than her qualifications. It makes us all look like a bunch of ignorant racists, and I know you are not that. We desperately need a strong journalism department and this is a massive step backwards from achieving that, as it makes it infinitely more difficult if not impossible to hire a strong leader when they are treated like this. I'm proud to be a graduate of Texas A&M as are my daughters and one son in law, but this incident is a stain on our honor. Thank you for your time.

Vick A. Burk, DVM '77, '79  
Rotan, Tx

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**From:** Anne Marie Kilday  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 8:56 AM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Kathleen McElroy

I'm very disappointed that Texas A&M botched the hiring of this distinguished Texas journalist. But, it's to the gain of the UT System that she is not leaving!

In my opinion, I extremely surprised that John Sharp did not have the courage to stand up to the fear/hate mongers who will eventually destroy the great state of Texas.

You can, and should, do better!

Your old friend,  
Anne Marie Kilday

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Jesse Blakley  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 12:21 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Kathleen McElroy

The process of rescinding the appointment offer to Kathleen McElroy, a distinguished former student of Texas A&M University, for the tenured position teaching journalism and leading the reconstituted journalism school inside the College of Arts and Sciences, is disgraceful! It is an insult to the legacy of Texas A&M University System and all Former Students of the Texas A&M University System!

You and the Texas A&M University Board of Regents need publicly apologize to Kathleen McElroy, all Former Students of the Texas A&M University System and correct this injustice!

Regards,  
Jesse Mark Blakley, Sr.  
Class of 1977

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** Amy Foster  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 18, 2023 11:07 AM  
**To:** President; Sharp, John  
**Cc:** Kathleen O. McElroy  
**Subject:** Kathleen O. McElroy

President Banks,

What is going on with the University I love? First, an attempt to undermine having an independent student newspaper, and now a debacle in the hiring of a distinguished alumni for the restart of the journalism department?

This is embarrassing. A great university isn't scared of diversity of thought and culture, of difference and independence. At some point, someone has to control the minority of alumni who want to keep A&M from being what this state needs - a great university for ALL Texans. At a time when Texas has multiple newspaper deserts and groups of individuals that do not want the light of a free and independent press holding the powers that be accountable, A&M needs to be at the front of supporting good journalism and training good journalists.

Do better. You can start with getting Dr. McElroy back on track with a tenure track position and full support to restart the journalism department, and then learning how to manage whoever it is that is trying to drag A&M back into the dark ages so that they don't trash TAMU with shortsighted political agendas.

If you can't do that, perhaps it is time that you return to a position as a professor, and let someone else in who will actually lead.

Sincerely,

Amy Foster  
Class of 96

On Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 08:09:55 PM CST, President <president@tamu.edu> wrote:

Dear Amy,

On behalf of the Office of the President, thank you for your email and feedback. Your input is valued as we plan for the future of our university. Please see the latest statement from the president regarding *The Battalion*.

Sincerely,

Office of the President  
Texas A&M University

# Journalism Working Group to Include Representatives from The Battalion

**M. KATHERINE BANKS**  
PRESIDENT

February 14, 2022

I care deeply about journalism at Texas A&M. That is why I [decided](#) in December to rebuild a strong journalism degree program here. I also believe that we should return to the very successful model which existed at Texas A&M previously when *The Battalion* was associated with the journalism department.

The reaction to this plan makes it clear that I should seek additional community feedback on the role of *The Battalion* and the rebuilt Department of Journalism, while also getting feedback about industry trends and future workforce needs.

To that end, I am adding two students from *The Battalion* and additional media experts to the existing Journalism [Working Group](#) that was formed earlier this year to recommend steps toward rebuilding the journalism degree program at Texas A&M.

Today, I am also asking this Working Group to study the path forward for *The Battalion*. As part of that charge, the Working Group should discuss options for distribution of *The Battalion's* weekly publication, including consideration of digital content-delivery platforms. In addition, the Working Group should assess how *The Battalion* can best achieve its mission to be a strong, independent student voice in the future. This assessment will be part of the group's broader efforts to position the Texas A&M Department of Journalism and *The Battalion* as the best in the nation.

Thank you to everyone who shares my commitment to elevate Texas A&M as a leader in protecting the role and enhancing the quality of the free press in our society.

M. Katherine Banks

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**From:** Amy Foster  
**Sent:** Friday, February 11, 2022 9:41 PM  
**To:** President <president@tam.u.edu>  
**Subject:** Ending Print Runs of the Battalion

This Message Is From an External Sender



This message came from outside your organization.

As a former student, I was appalled to learn of the decision to end the printing of our school newspaper; this is a mistake. While I love the idea of restarting the journalism department, that has nothing to do with having a strong student run newspaper.

Reverse this poor decision now and let the Batt continue to be a part of Aggieland.

A good leader has the strength to recognize they made a error and make a course correction. I look forward to the announcement that the office of the president will no longer insist on ending the print edition, and will also refrain from interference with a vital student run organization. Leave them be; it's not like there are not more important issues that require your time.

Sincerely,

Amy Foster, Class of 96

**From:** [Frank Smith](#)  
**To:** [president@tamu.edu](mailto:president@tamu.edu)  
**Cc:** [Sharp, John](#)  
**Subject:** McElroy situation  
**Date:** Friday, July 14, 2023 4:09:39 PM

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Dr. Banks,

Please count me among the legion of alumni disappointed/outraged/embarrassed by the McElroy fiasco. An exemplary professional was wronged by our great university. This was truly an unforced error.

Frankie Smith, Class of '87

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**From:** L. Gene Kornegay  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 10:03 PM  
**To:** President  
**Cc:** Sharp, John; Spillers, Vickie; senate@tam.u.edu  
**Subject:** Re: Journalism Director

While I acknowledge receipt of your email below the situation as further revealed since my first note seems to only demonstrate a less than transparent process not aligned with the Aggie Core Values. Indeed, creating a scapegoat with the resignation of the Interim Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences seems quite disingenuous.

The indication that Dr. McElroy was treated this way as a result of outside interference proves the need for DEI. Whether one happens to agree with the editorial positions of the New York Times it is a most reputable journalism organization and Dr. McElroy has demonstrated her capability to successfully lead a journalism department at Texas' other flagship institution so those who suggest only merit should be the criteria obviously are not being truthful. Dr. McElroy has demonstrated substantial merit under any definition of the word.

This situation is highly disappointing and will only result in significant detriment to TAMU and the TAMU System. It will create a barrier to securing the highest quality faculty, researchers and staff. Likewise, we are likely to see a departure of the current high quality faculty, researchers and staff. This can be averted but it will require strong leadership from the Board of Regents, The Chancellor and the President. Those of us who are Former Students must also assist where appropriate. It is my hope all of us will have the courage to do so.

Sincerely,  
gene

On Fri, Jul 14, 2023 at 12:53 PM President <[president@tam.u.edu](mailto:president@tam.u.edu)> wrote:

Dear Gene,

On behalf of the Office of the President, thank you for your email. We welcome feedback from our students, former students and the communities we serve.

We are currently reviewing this matter. We regret any misunderstanding and wish Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors.

Texas A&M values the journalism profession and remains committed to rebuilding a strong program.

Best regards,  
Office of the President  
Texas A&M University

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**From:** L. Gene Kornegay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 4:41 PM  
**To:** [chancellor@tamus.edu](mailto:chancellor@tamus.edu); President <[president@tamu.edu](mailto:president@tamu.edu)>; [vickie@tamus.edu](mailto:vickie@tamus.edu); Faculty Senate Office <[senate@tamu.edu](mailto:senate@tamu.edu)>  
**Subject:** Journalism Director

**This Message Is From an External Sender**

This message came from outside your organization.

Dear All,

As a member of the Aggie class of '74, I wish to express my concern for the situation related to Dr. Kathleen O. McElroy. While I certainly understand the current political environment is challenging for those in leadership roles at the university, these are precisely the times when true leaders take a stand for the Aggie Core Values. As I reviewed those values again today it seems clear that if only a portion of what is being reported about the treatment of Dr. McElroy is correct we are not living up to those core values.....and she is one of us.

I ask you to consider how this situation demonstrates any of these values:loyalty, integrity, excellence, leadership, respect and selfless service?

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With my thanks,

gene

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gene

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 16, 2023 5:52 PM  
**To:** ; Spillers, Vickie; Sharp, John; gharman@tam.u.edu; president@tam.u.edu;  
jbermudez@tam.u.edu; journalism@austin.utexas.edu  
**Subject:** Re: "She Said", "He Said" - The Search for a Director of Journalism at Texas A&M University.

Don, Thanks for doing the heavy lifting to bring this situation to a head.

Harvey J Haas, '59, Colonel USAF Retired  
2019 SRG President

In a message dated 7/15/2023 3:26:59 PM Central Standard Time, writes:

Texas A&M University

Board of Regents

Dear Members of the A&M System Board of Regents:

Either Dr. Kathleen McElroy of the University of Texas is **"lying through her teeth"** or *Interim* Dean Jose Bermudez of Texas A&M **"is talking out of both sides of his mouth"**.

In any case, if any of the following quotes attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy are true, there is ample reason for the Board of Regents to seriously question if McElroy, or Bermudez for that matter, should be considered for any long-term employment at Texas A&M University!

**"He [Dr. José Luis Bermúdez] said, 'You're a Black woman who was at The New York Times and, to these folks\*, that's like working for Pravda."**

Dr. McElroy said Dr. Bermúdez had advised her that, **"I should go into this process with my eyes wide open. And he said it's like abortion, guns, and you've got a big target on your back."**

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said **" he [Bermúdez] had advised her to give up tenure in order to avoid the Board of Regents"**.

She [Dr. Kathleen McElroy] said that **"Dr. Bermúdez told her that her appointment had "stirred up a hornet's nest," and warned her not to give up her position at the University of Texas."**

Dr. McElroy said, **"Dr. Bermúdez and other university administrators [?] asked her to prepare for a meeting with the Regents, who had seen the Texas Scorecard article."**

The above quotes, attributed to Dr. Kathleen McElroy, are taken from an article in the New York Times by Stephanie Saul; [*Texas A&M Celebrated a New Journalism Director. Then Came the Complaints*. Updated July 14, 2023]:

Sincerely,

Donald L. Parsons '59

Col. US Army Retired

Bryan, Texas

\*Ps: I probably fit in Bermudez's definition of **"these folks"**, but the truth is I do not care one bit about McElroy's race or her previous employment. I do care however about her self-described advocacy for diversity, equity and inclusion; a distorted theory that has no place at Texas A&M University. DLP



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**From:** Faculty Senate Office <senate@tamu.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 2:55 PM  
**To:** President; Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Sent on behalf of Speaker Hammond  
**Attachments:** FS Letter to Chancellor Sharp and President Banks 7-14-2023.pdf

Good Afternoon,

Please see the attached letter from Speaker Hammond.

Faculty Senate Office | YMCA Building, Rm 205  
1225 TAMU | Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX 77843-1225  
**(979) 458-1014 | senate @tamu.edu**

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**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**



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**From:** Donna Delancy <DonnaDelancy@DallasCollege.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 30, 2023 11:12 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education (TABPHE), Sponsorship

**Texas Association  
of Black Personnel  
in Higher Education**



Dear Chancellor/President John Sharp:

Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education (TABPHE), Board of Directors appreciates all you do for the State of Texas in Higher Education. The TABPHE Board is comprised of members from all major cities in the state. Texas has eight active chapters: Corpus Christi, Houston, Dallas, Austin, El Paso, East Texas, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Tarrant County, and San Antonio.

**TABPHE will be hosting its 51<sup>st</sup> State Conference will be held in Frisco, Texas, on February 11-14, 2024. Our theme is "Accelerating Growth: An Opportunity for Success." The Conference will be held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Conference Center in Frisco, Texas.**

This year we are hosting an *Inaugural Golf Scholarship Fundraiser* and hope we can count on you as a sponsor to assist with our event. Your institution's contribution and support can feature your institution's name on various activities during the conference. Depending on the sponsorship level, Texas A&M University System can additionally display its logo, website, social media links, and up to a 2-minute video to air at various times throughout the event. There are five levels of sponsorship packages, Platinum, Gold, Silver, Lunch, and Tee. [Click here to complete the sponsorship form.](#) Platinum sponsors will also have their institution's name prominently displayed on the cover of our program book and will have the opportunity to air a video (up to 2 minutes in duration) at various times throughout the 3-day event. All sponsors will be recognized multiple times throughout the conference. Most sponsorship packages will include additional advertisements on the TABPHE website, [www.tabphe.org](http://www.tabphe.org).

In 2024, we will debut a pathway that focuses on *workforce education*. Workforce programs are the backbone of our state, and students pursuing workforce degrees and certificates make up a substantial portion of the student population at any institution/organization. TABPHE currently offers Faculty, Student Leadership, Staff Leadership, and Graduate Student Institutes. We want to ensure that students, faculty, and employees in workforce education see themselves in our conference offerings.

Please contact Dr. Donna M. Delancy at [fundraising@tabphe.org](mailto:fundraising@tabphe.org) or call 817-480-1118 as soon as possible because sponsorship opportunities are going quickly. TABPHE is committed to providing a statewide vehicle for a diverse higher education and workforce to learn, share, lead, and influence our Texas educational system. Thank you for considering this sponsorship request.

Sincerely,

TABPHE Fundraising Committee

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**From:** Joe Bourgeois  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2023 2:20 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** Thank you Chancellor we support you and the BOR

Dear Chancellor,

Thank you for your service to Texas A&M!

I would like to send my thanks also to the Board of Regents for diligently serving Texas A&M and our great State Of Texas!

Please know that my family and I stand by you and the Board of Regents appropriately questioning the position of Mrs. McElroy based on her published statements encouraging activist journalism vs true journalistic integrity and fairness. If Texas A&M chooses to lead in the field of journalism then certainly there are candidates that better represent our goals and objectives to create a journalism curriculum that teaches true unbiased journalism with a focus on investigative research and giving the facts with multiple perspectives. We support you and the Board as our Representatives to make the hard decisions. Despite some of the faculty claiming that only they have a say, the citizens of the state of Texas have the ultimate say and we support you as our representatives.

God Bless and Gig Em!! Please stand strong!!!

Sincerely,

Joe Bourgeois '89  
Kristin Bourgeois '91  
Taylor Bourgeois. '20  
Tate Bourgeois. '23

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**From:** Matt Poling <President@rudderassociation.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 6:16 PM  
**To:** BOR Email Account  
**Cc:** Sharp, John; president@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** The Eagle Editorial

Members of the Board

The following is our response submitted to *The Eagle's* editorial board regarding their recent piece "Shame on Texas A&M for the McElroy Controversy" which attacked Texas A&M, our organization and me by name.

Matt Poling '90  
[TheRudderAssociation.org](http://TheRudderAssociation.org)

Editors

False narratives and unfounded personal attacks in recent national reports and local editorials concerning Texas A&M's nascent journalism department are disheartening. Perhaps President Rudder would be ashamed of the state of our media today. But we would prefer to let James Earl Rudder Jr speak to that. Just as he has about the work of The Rudder Association, as posted on the front page of our website for more than a year.

There was no "smear campaign" against Dr McElroy, but to many stakeholders there seemed to have been some basic journalistic questions left unanswered. Such as, *"How does one reconcile many years of advocating for racial essentialist views with Texans' clearly expressed desire to move our state institutions away from such ideologies?"* Contrary to the repeated media narrative, the problem was never anyone else's excessive focus on race.

Also, a question any candidate should have a good answer for, *"What is your plan to help restore America's faith in journalism?"* A profession in which the latest Gallup poll shows only 7% of Americans have "a great deal of trust" is not being well served by the filtering out of "illegitimate" perspectives, as the professor called them.

If disgraced former activist-journalist Dan Rather is the spokesman for the institution of journalism, then perhaps Texas A&M's journalism department is needed more than anyone fully appreciated. For the sake of our divided culture and a broken profession, we hope Texas A&M succeeds.

Matt Poling  
President, The Rudder Association  
(979)324-7576

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**From:** Matt Poling <President@rudderassociation.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 6:25 PM  
**To:** Sharp, John  
**Subject:** The Rudder Association Responds to Criticism of "Outside Influence"  
**Attachments:** Press Release - The Rudder Association Responds to Concerns Over Outside Influence at Texas A&M.docx

Chancellor Sharp,

Thank you for your continued service to Texas A&M and the entire university system. Your presentation at our event in the spring was warmly received and appreciated by nearly everyone in attendance. I was also glad to learn of your support for the student mental health initiative championed by my friend Dr Angie Rogers. As a physician in the community, I will tell you that it is much needed these days. This is just one small initiative amongst so many that have moved forward on our campus and the others throughout the system under your stewardship.

Attached is a press release from our organization which we are sharing with interested news outlets and responds to the complaint from our faculty senate for your information.

Gig em!

Matt Poling '90  
[president@rudderassociation.org](mailto:president@rudderassociation.org)  
(979)324-7576

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The Rudder Association Responds to Concerns Over "Outside Influence" at Texas A&M**

*Group Strongly Advocates for Stakeholder Influence in Higher Education*

COLLEGE STATION, Texas, July 15, 2023 - The Rudder Association (TRA), a group of dedicated Aggies committed to preserving and perpetuating the core values and unique spirit of Texas A&M, today responded to recent comments by Dr. Tracy Hammond and the faculty senate regarding "outside influence" on the Texas A&M campus.

TRA holds Dr. Hammond, the faculty senate, and the faculty's scholarship, research, and teaching in high regard. But it respectfully disagrees with the characterization of taxpayers, tuition payers, and donors as "outside influence." These groups are integral to the Aggie family, whose contributions make the university's excellence possible. All citizens of Texas are stakeholders in our public institutions and have not just a right, but a responsibility to engage on issues of such importance to our state and society.

TRA also believes that regents and elected officials should not be viewed as "outside influence." These leaders and representatives are charged with ensuring that the strategic decisions of our state institutions align with the expectations and future needs of all Texans.

TRA acknowledges the national interest in Texas A&M's journalism department and the emerging narrative reflected in the statement from the faculty senators. However, it emphasizes that all stakeholders share a common goal: to produce journalists who uphold the highest standards of integrity, thereby restoring public trust in the profession for the benefit of society.

"We all have a stake in the success of this initiative," said Matt Poling, President of The Rudder Association. "Our collective aim should be to foster a journalism department that prepares its students to uphold the principles of journalistic integrity and contribute positively to their profession and our society."

### **About The Rudder Association**

The Rudder Association, Inc. was established in the summer of 2020 by a group of dedicated Aggies with a mission to preserve, defend, and perpetuate the core values and unique culture of Texas A&M University. The Association aims to develop well-educated leaders of character who embody the values of Honor, Courage, Integrity, Discipline, and Selfless Service. As an independent entity, The Rudder Association, Inc. maintains the objectivity to observe and document when the core values and culture of Texas A&M are ignored or threatened. The Association is committed to steering a better course for education in Texas and ensuring that the traditions that make Texas A&M unique and special continue to produce patriotic leaders of character for our society. To learn more, participate, and support the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of the Texas Aggie Culture in the spirit of Aggieland and its core values and traditions, visit [The Rudder Association](#).

**The Rudder Association Media Contact**

Matt Poling, President

president@rudderassociation.org

**SOURCE: The Rudder Association**

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**From:** Kyle Brown  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2023 10:04 AM  
**To:** Sharp, John; president@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** Y'all should be ashamed not standing up to the state

This is an absolute horrible look and sets the university back decades. Y'all should be ashamed of your selves allowing this deal to fall apart by trying to add all these restrictions. I fear for the future of our University and State as we continue down this road of allowing right wing extremism to infiltrate and dictate higher learning.



Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then backtracked after "DEI hysteria"  
[texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)

Kyle Brown  
Class of 2006

Sent from my iPhone



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**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 7:21 PM  
**To:** Valicek, Annie; Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** FW: The Eagle Editorial

Regents,  
FYI. Vickie

---

**From:** Matt Poling <President@rudderassociation.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 6:16 PM  
**To:** BOR Email Account <bor@tamus.edu>  
**Cc:** Sharp, John <chancellor@tamus.edu>; president@tamu.edu  
**Subject:** The Eagle Editorial

Members of the Board

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Matt Poling '90  
[TheRudderAssociation.org](http://TheRudderAssociation.org)

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There was no "smear campaign" against Dr McElroy, but to many stakeholders there seemed to have been some basic journalistic questions left unanswered. Such as, "*How does one reconcile many years of advocating for racial essentialist views with Texans' clearly expressed desire to move our state institutions away from such ideologies?*" Contrary to the repeated media narrative, the problem was never anyone else's excessive focus on race.

Also, a question any candidate should have a good answer for, "*What is your plan to help restore America's faith in journalism?*" A profession in which the latest Gallup poll shows only 7% of Americans have "a great deal of trust" is not being well served by the filtering out of "illegitimate" perspectives, as the professor called them.

If disgraced former activist-journalist Dan Rather is the spokesman for the institution of journalism, then perhaps Texas A&M's journalism department is needed more than anyone fully appreciated. For the sake of our divided culture and a broken profession, we hope Texas A&M succeeds.

Matt Poling  
President, The Rudder Association  
(979)324-7576

**From:** Texas A&M Today <today@tamu.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 16, 2023 5:03 PM  
**To:** Valicek, Annie  
**Subject:** Texas A&M Today June 16, 2023



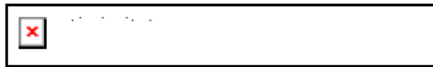
## [Juneteenth: From Texas Celebration To National Holiday](#)

A Texas A&M professor of African American history explains the story behind this important date and its enduring meaning as a celebration of freedom.

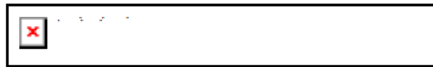
[READ MORE ABOUT THE HOLIDAY](#)

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### RECENT NEWS



[How Can We Learn From COVID To Prepare For What's Next?](#)



[How The Exposure Of Highly Classified Documents Could Harm US Security](#)

Peter Hotez says it's time to start looking beyond the current pandemic and pushing back against misinformation that cost thousands of lives.



[Aggie With Distinguished Career Selected To Lead Texas A&M Journalism Program](#)

Kathleen McElroy '81 will join the Department of Communication and Journalism as part of A&M's renewed effort to train the next generation of media professionals.

A Texas A&M professor explains why there are laws against storing them insecurely.



[Texas A&M University Libraries To Open "...I Will Go To Texas"](#)

The new art exhibition at Cushing Memorial Library & Archives will feature works by John James Audubon and others, all inspired by the unique natural beauty of the Lone Star State.

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## TEXAS A&M IN THE NEWS

### ***The New York Times***

[Tens of Thousands of Dead Fish Wash Ashore on Gulf Coast in Texas](#)

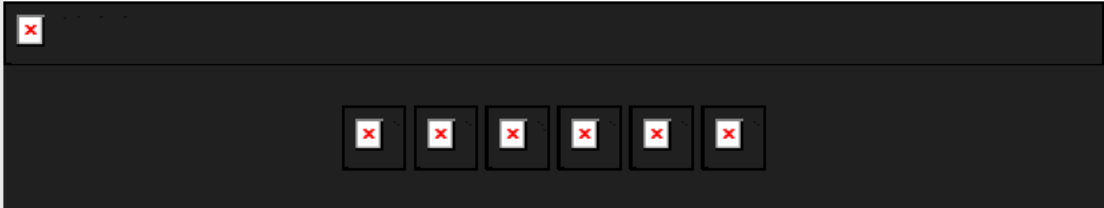
### ***The Texas Tribune***

[With \\$1.4 billion investment, Texas hopes to sprint to the front of the microchip manufacturing race](#)

### ***Houston Chronicle***

[Buc-ee's founder bankrolls mass timber project at Texas A&M](#)

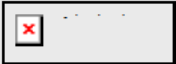
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View this email [online](#).

1372 TAMU Texas A&M University | College Station, TX 77843 US

This email was sent to studentregent@tamus.edu.  
*To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.*



---

**From:** Spillers, Vickie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 1:54 PM  
**To:** Valicek, Annie; Mahomes, Bill; Bob Albritton; David Baggett; Jay Graham; John Bellinger; Mike Hernandez; Mike Plank; Randy Brooks; Sam Torn  
**Subject:** Today's Faculty Senate Resolution  
**Attachments:** Resolution on Outside Influence on Faculty Hiring and Promotion .pdf

Regents,

Attached is the resolution that the A&M Faculty Senate is scheduled to take up at 3p today. It mentions the President, Chancellor and Board of Regents. Vickie

## Senate Resolution on Outside Influence on Faculty Hiring and Promotion

Whereas Texas A&M University is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and an R1 academic institution with a national reputation, and

Whereas recent events have called into question the state of academic freedom at our university, and created a national perception that outside influence has interfered in the appointment of Dr. Kathleen McElroy as a full professor with tenure at the university, and

Whereas this national perception has caused significant damage to the reputation of Texas A&M University, and

Whereas this perception of the absence of faculty independence could jeopardize our standing in the AAU, and

Whereas the recent interference in curricula matters further calls into question faculty ability to preserve departmental, school, and college accreditation, and

Whereas these events are making it increasingly difficult for Texas A&M to retain and recruit talented faculty, and for current faculty to do their jobs,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of Texas A&M University requests that the President, Chancellor, and Board of Regents make clear public statements that emphasize outside interference in faculty matters is not acceptable, and

Be it further resolved that the system and university leadership resist outside influences and stand up for the faculty against inappropriate outside pressures, or the perception thereof, and

Be it further resolved that the system and university leadership support the creation of definitive processes that ensure that faculty continue to have an appropriate institutional role in shared governance as advocated by the American Association of University Professors.

Adopted July XX, 2023

Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**New Texas A&M  
journalism director  
Kathleen McElroy to  
return to Texas**

theeagle.com

no tribune story yet  
Could care less about  
Texas Tribune articles but  
do want to know if she is  
coming to A&M or staying  
at ut  
We should not have to  
wait to read about it in the  
press



Text message



TAMUS-088





Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

in an out

Tue, Jul 18 at 6:20 AM

fyi banks just told me  
texas tribune doing open  
records request on  
journalism hire js  
the journalism lady dr  
mcelroy has apparently  
told the texas tribune that  
she is staying at ut and  
not coming to anm. as of  
now the university has not  
heard from mcelroy but  
you should expect a  
negative story from the  
tribunes point of view in  
the next two days js



Text Message



TAMUS-089



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**New Texas A&M  
journalism director  
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theeagle.com

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Could care less about  
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Text Message



TAMUS-090



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

in an out

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texas tribune doing open  
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the journalism lady dr  
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now the university has not  
heard from mcelroy but  
you should expect a  
negative story from the  
tribunes point of view in  
the next two days js



Text Message



TAMUS-091



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then watered down the offer...**

[texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.



Text Message



TAMUS-092



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.

Too bad Texas taxpayers are still funding her...

**Michael Quinn**



**Sullivan** 🇺🇸

twitter.com

Tribune article. Who would this person be?

sciences, jose Luis bermudez, warning her that there were people who could force leadership to



Text Message



TAMUS-093



Photo

Done

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd... &gt;

Tribune article. Who would this person be?

sciences, Jose Luis Bermudez, warning her that there were people who could force leadership to fire her and he could not protect her.

The call came one day after the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents met and discussed personnel matters in executive session, according to a posted agenda. The board discussed McElroy's hiring with Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks, according to a person familiar with the situation.

According to McElroy, Bermudez told her that her hiring had "stirred up a hornet's nest," that there were people against her and that, "even if he hired me, these people could make him fire me ... that the president and the chancellor, no one can stop that from happening," she said.

Ultimately, he advised her to stay in her tenured role at UT-Austin.

from banks js Just an update, McElroy has still not notified us that she has rejected our offer, and we don't think she will.



Text Message



TAMUS-094



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

from banks js Just an update, McElroy has still not notified us that she has rejected our offer, and we don't think she will contact us.

Jose wanted me to make sure that you and others are told that all of the comments connected to him were either lies or grossly exaggerated completely out of context. I told him that I would share that with you.



Text Message



TAMUS-095



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then watered down the offer...**

[texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.



Text Message



TAMUS-096





Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**Celebrated new leader for  
A&M journalism rescinds  
acceptance over 'hostile  
environment'**

kbtx.com

Seems she's contacted  
everyone but us  
This is the statement.  
President asked me to  
share with you so you can  
share with regents if  
needed.

Statement from Texas  
A&M University:



Text Message



TAMUS-097



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

Statement from Texas A&M University:  
There are limits on what we can discuss given the threat of litigation. A number of things have been reported that are either inaccurate or misleading. Texas A&M initially offered a tenured full professor position subject to approval through our established process. It was determined through a mutual agreement that a professor of practice position was more appropriate given her experience within the journalism industry. Dr. McElroy officially applied for the professor



Text Message



TAMUS-098



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

discussion.  
We discovered Dr. McElroy's intent to stay at the University of Texas through media inquiries. At that time, we made another attempt to reach out to her, which was unsuccessful. We regret any misunderstanding and wish Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors. We are continuing to work on building a great journalism program.

John C. Bellinger  
Dear Madam: This has been successful in producing the university to make policy changes. But to make a lasting difference, we need to effort stronger understanding. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news.

Rudder Association..... 🙄  
Last time i spoke to them i got a standing ovation . there was one guy badmouthing banks and i



Text Message



TAMUS-099



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

during hiring processes to insure this situation will not be repeated.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to our plans to develop an excellent journalism degree program. As always, I am greatly appreciative of the faculty senate and your partnership to insure that, as you noted, Texas A&M University remains a premier institution with an outstanding reputation.

Sincerely,

M. Katherine Banks  
President, Texas A&M  
University



Text Message



TAMUS-0100



8:49



New iMessage

Cancel

To: Bill Mahomes

iMessage

Thu, Jul 20 at 9:47 PM

On the phone

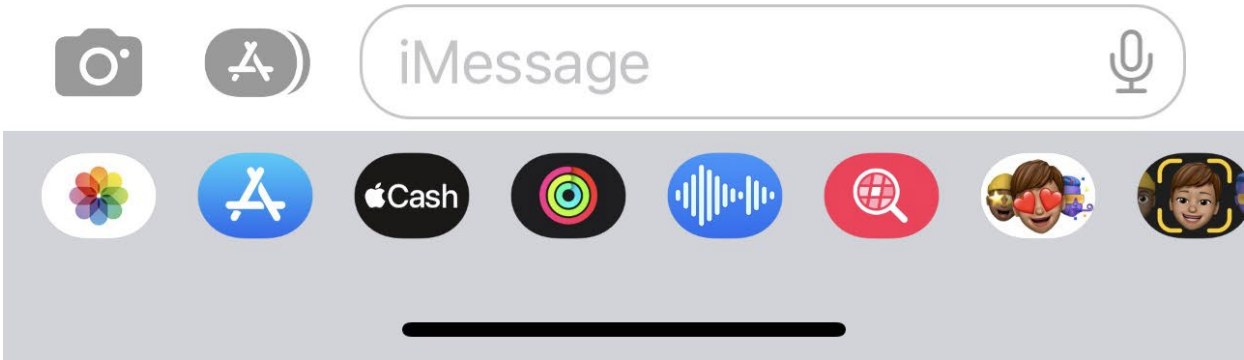
No doubt 🤔

Call me if you can. I will be up.

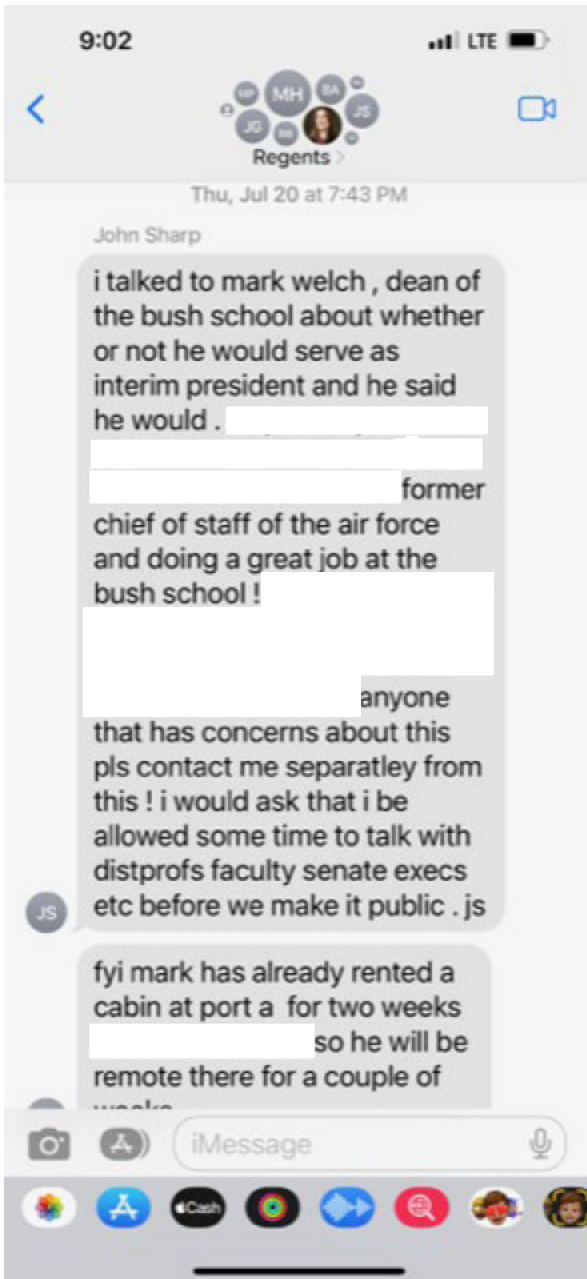
Yesterday 11:34 AM

Can we visit around 2:15?

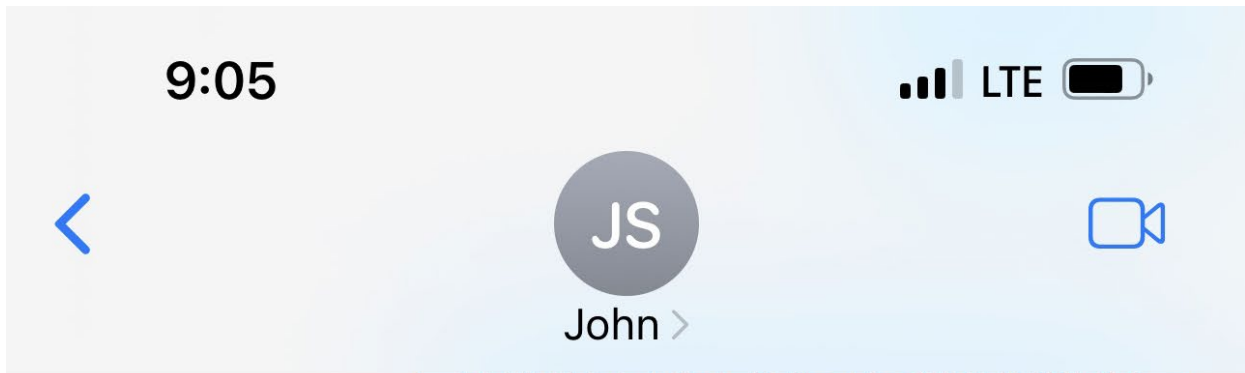
Delivered



Sent from my iPhone



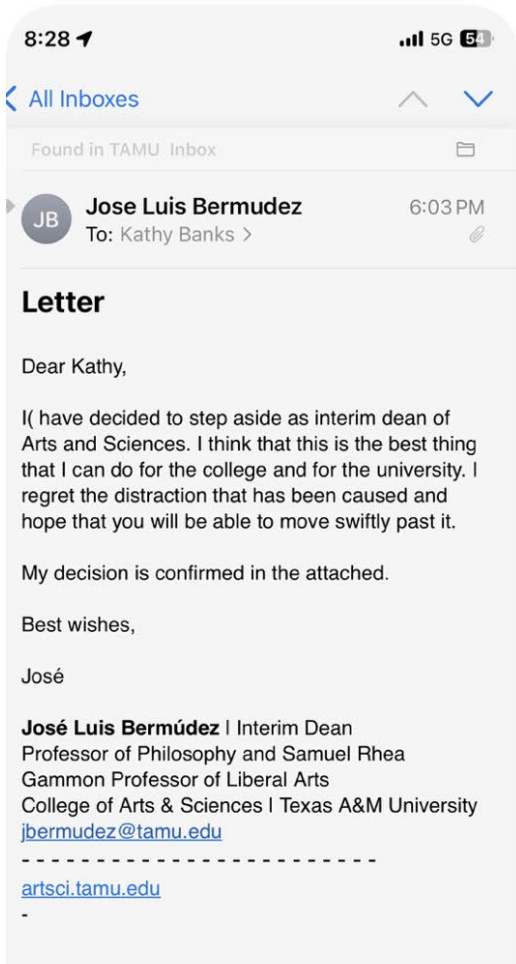
Sent from my iPhone



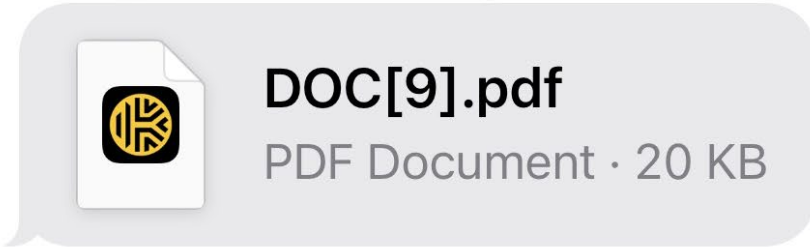
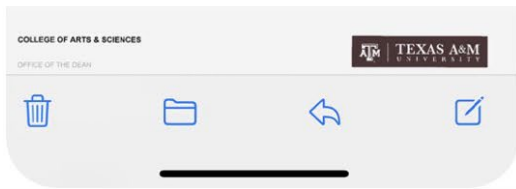
I didn't get the resignation letter. Can you resend it?

Delivered

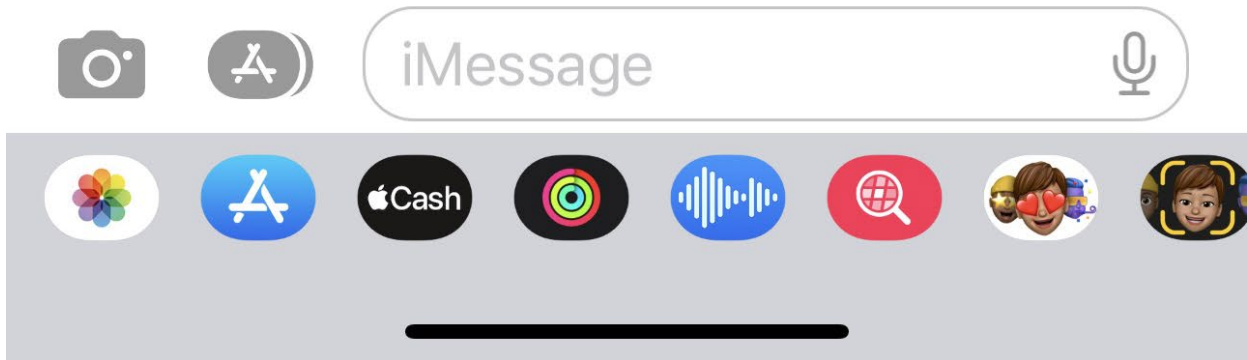
yes







🌙 John has notifications silenced



Sent from my iPhone

Seems she's contacted everyone but us

This is the statement. President asked me to share with you so you can share with regents if needed.

Statement from Texas A&M University:

There are limits on what we can discuss given the threat of litigation.

A number of things have been reported that are either inaccurate or misleading.

Texas A&M initially offered a tenured full professor position subject to approval through our established process. It was determined through a mutual agreement that a professor of practice position was more appropriate given her experience within the journalism industry.

Dr. McElroy officially applied for the professor of practice role. She was issued a standard one-year draft offer letter to be a professor of practice. She also received a 3-year administrative offer letter. She was told we were open to further negotiation and discussion.

We discovered Dr. McElroy's intent to stay at the University of Texas through media inquiries. At that time, we made another attempt to reach out to her, which was unsuccessful.

We regret any misunderstanding and wish Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors. We are continuing to work on building a great journalism program.



Adam C. Kolawinski

Matt Poling TRA has been successful in pressuring the university to make policy changes. But to make a lasting difference, we need to effect changes in leadership. It would do a lot of good if we could claim a scalp for after this fiasco. I'd love it if were Sharp, but I'd settle for Bermudez. It would be a start.

11/11/2017



Rudder Association....☺

lAst time i spoke to them i got a standing ovation . there was one guy badmouthing banks and i shut him down pretty hard. maybe this is the guy fyi js

The Black Former Students group is planning a virtual town hall for next week. Will be announced shortly.

Washington Post investigative reporter now wanting all our data on minority students, faculty and staff now, a decade ago and 25 years ago.

i told ray to keep y'all apprised of this chit chat w mcelroy's lawyer fyi js  
Speaker Hammond,

Thank you for your input and I welcome the opportunity to address the issues you brought forward.

I agree, outside influence can be problematic during faculty searches and appointments. We have clear and successful processes and policies documented in our University Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures (SAPs) that should be strictly followed for all faculty related deliberations. The Rules and SAPs were designed to insure that faculty searches are conducted in a fair and unbiased manner with faculty input at all stages in the process.

Like you, I am disappointed and concerned about the negative media coverage and wish that the employment negotiations had continued along the traditional path. I, along with my leadership team, sincerely regret any miscommunication that contributed to this result, particularly in the area of DEI legislation. We are currently assessing our communication pathways during hiring processes to insure this situation will not be repeated.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to our plans to develop an excellent journalism degree program. As always, I am greatly appreciative of the faculty senate and your partnership to insure that, as you noted, Texas A&M University remains a premier institution with an outstanding reputation.

Sincerely,

M. Katherine Banks  
President, Texas A&M University

12:57



2 People >

getting quality people  
journalist with conservative  
values into the market. This  
won't happen with someone  
like this leading the  
department.

JG

David Bagget

DB

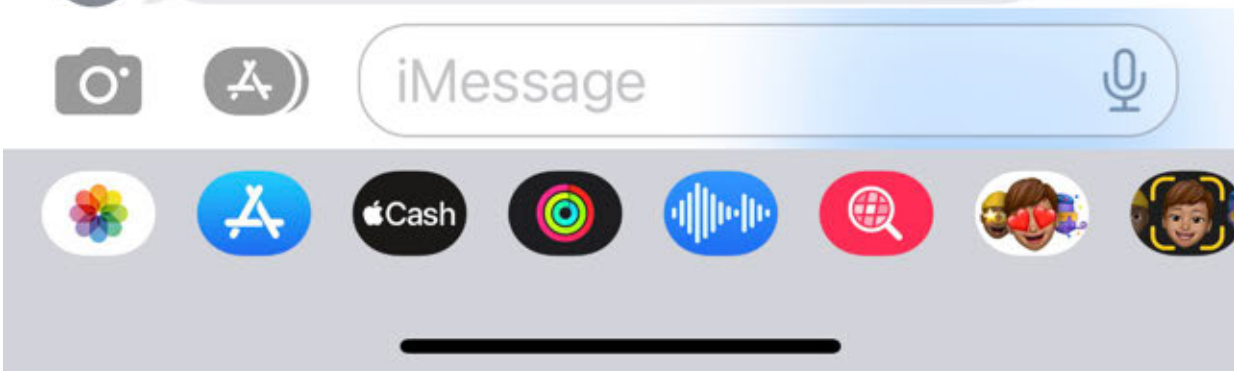
Based on limited info, I agree.

Jay Graham

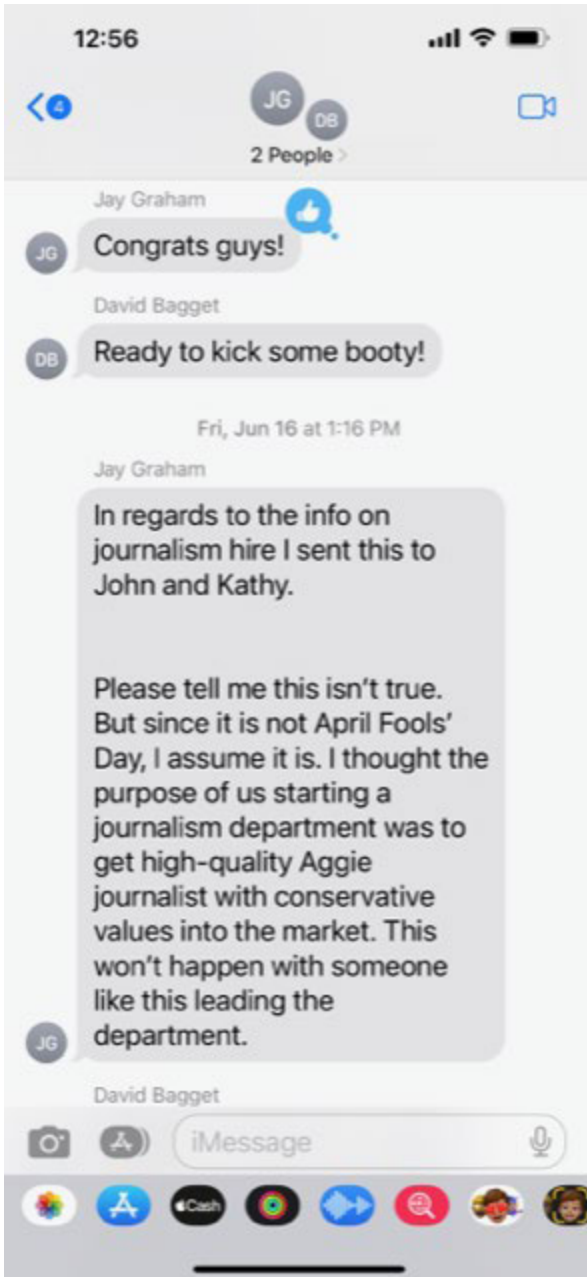
They need to hear from all of  
us. This is unacceptable and  
we can't allow it to happen!  
Kathy told us multiple times the  
reason we were going to  
combine arts and sciences

together was to control the liberal nature that those professors brought to campus we were going to start a journalism department to get high-quality conservative Aggie students into the journalism world to help direct our message. This won't happen with this kind of hire!

JG



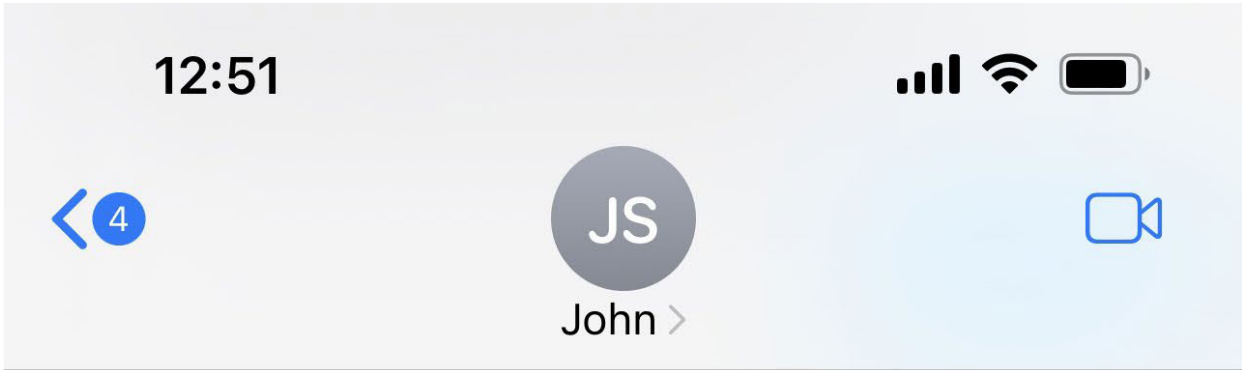
Sent from my iPhone



Sent from my iPhone

TAMUS-0112



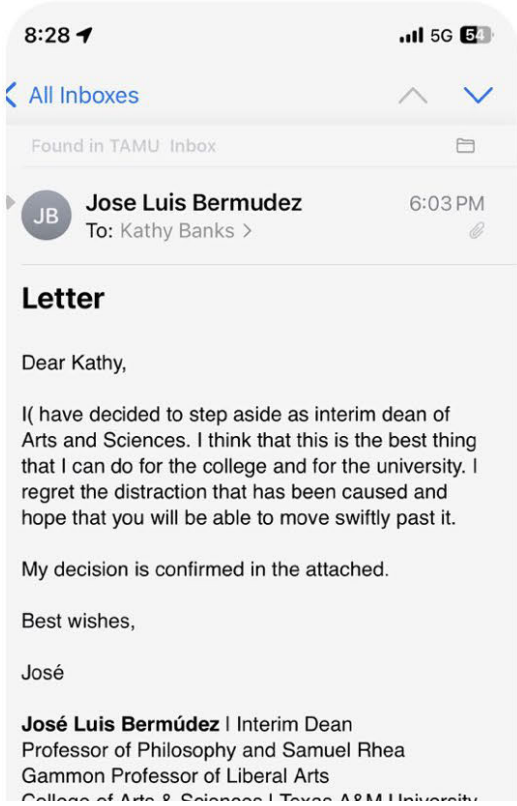


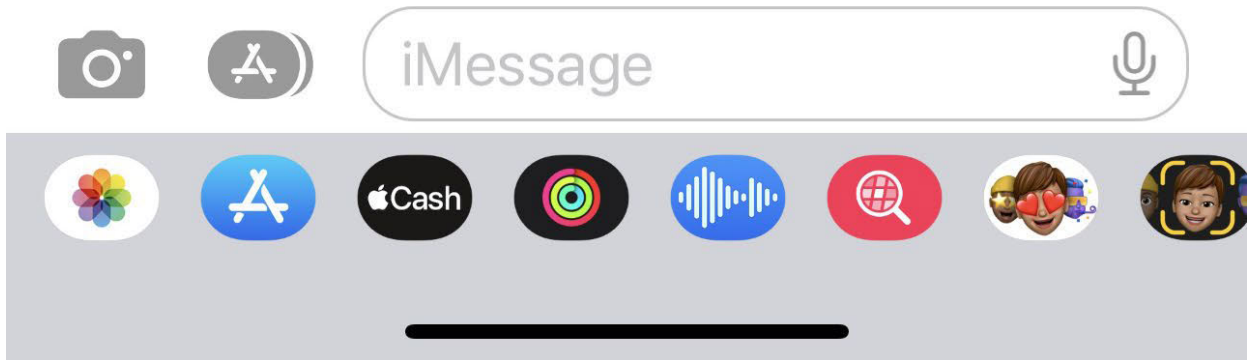
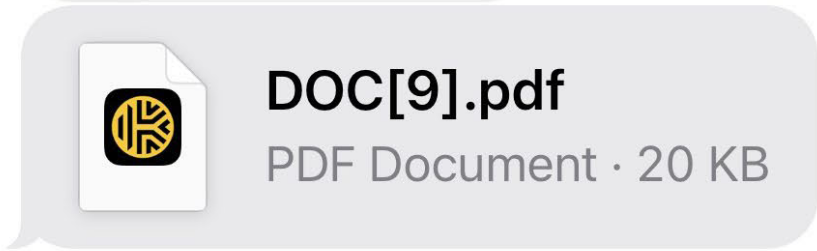
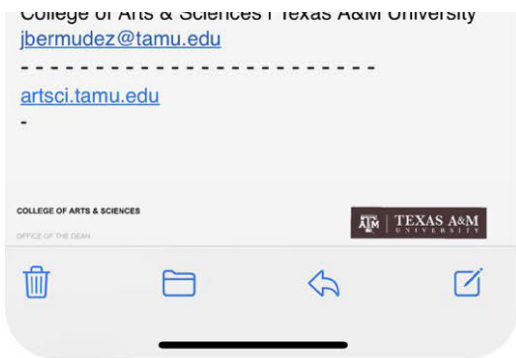
Mon, Jul 17 at 7:59 PM

I didn't get the resignation letter. Can you resend it?

Delivered

yes





Sent from my iPhone

---

**From:** Sam Torn <samtorn@campozark.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 16, 2023 7:14 PM  
**To:** Mahomes, Bill  
**Subject:** Journalism hire

Bill:

This is a quote I would like explained prior to voting on tenure.

“We can’t just give people a set of facts anymore. I think we know that and we have to tell our students that. This is not about getting two sides of a story or 3 sides of a story, if one side is illegitimate. I think now you cannot cover education, you cannot cover criminal justice, you can’t cover all of these institutions without recognizing how all these institutions were built.” McElroy said in an NPR radio [segment](#) on the role of journalists.

Sam  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Mike Hernandez <mikeh@dmautoleasing.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 19, 2023 12:35 PM  
**To:** bill.mahomes@bracewell.com  
**Subject:** Fwd: Journalism department

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mike Hernandez <[mikeh@dmautoleasing.com](mailto:mikeh@dmautoleasing.com)>  
**Date:** June 19, 2023 at 9:52:53 AM CDT  
**To:** Katherine Banks <[m.kathy.banks@gmail.com](mailto:m.kathy.banks@gmail.com)>, John Sharp <[john@johnsharp.com](mailto:john@johnsharp.com)>  
**Subject:** Journalism department

I want to make sure that I clearly state the reasons for my concern regarding the proposed hiring of Dr. McElroy to build our new journalism department as part of the Path Forward plan we all agreed to. The purpose of the new journalism department was to address the pressing issue of lack of trust in our main stream media by large majority of the population today. Dislike of the press is to be expected because they are the basically supposed to be the tattletales about things like corruption, abuse and others things detrimental to the public. Distrust of the press is totally different. It undermines their credibility which eventually undermines our democracy. Texas A&M has the ability to change that unsustainable trend by setting up a journalism department that teaches only the blind dedication to finding the truth. Truth doesn't take sides or view the world through a political prism. Truth doesn't work with or against the government or any particular political party. Truth is truly independent.

While it is wonderful for a successful Aggie to want to come back to Texas A&M to be a tenured professor and build something this important from scratch, we must look at her résumé and her statements made an opinion pieces and public interviews. The New

York Times is one of the leading main stream media sources in our country. It is common knowledge that they are biased and progressive leaning. The same exact thing can be said about the university of Texas. Yet that is Dr. McElroy's résumé in a nutshell. I forwarded her opinion piece about the song, *Eyes of Texas* for the Austin America Statesman. I forwarded every thing else I could find on a Google search of her writings to Ray Bonilla for distribution to the BOR and every article was written through the lens of race which seem to be her main focus.

It is imperative that A&M put out journalists that exemplify our core values. Dedication to the process of finding the truth, free of politics and bias. This would require a fresh start without cultural influence from main stream media like the New York Times or like Fox News on the other side. They are all biased with an agenda and that to me is a very serious problem for our Country and State that Texas A&M can help address.

I have no doubt that Dr. McElroy is a fine person and an honorable professional dedicated to her craft but there's no way that I can believe that she would not be influenced by all of the time she has spent in New York and Austin when building this new department and that is exactly the opposite of what we had in mind for someone in that position. Their résumé and articles would look significantly different.

I've said it before, but I feel that I am probably one of the biggest supporters of both of you on the BOR. The last thing I want is for it to look like there is anything other than a unified stance with the BOR, Chancellor and President. When Kathy speaks, she speaks for all of us which is why I am disappointed again that we seem to find out important decisions after the fact. Starting a new journalism department is a big deal, especially when it comes to the culture it plans to build and teach. I know Mahomes and he wouldn't have just green lighted this if he fully understood he gravity of it so something seems to have gotten lost in the translation.

A letter offer of employment is not binding, but it does present a PR predicament. Granting tenure to somebody with this background is going to be a difficult sell for many on the BOR. My sincere hope is that you both will figure out a way to completely put the brakes on this, so we all can discuss this further. If it's truly too far down the road for you all to agree to that, the board majority can decide how to

proceed and take the heat for the final call.

That's my input.

Thanks,

Mike H '83

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are the property of Vehicle Leasing Holdings, LLC and/or its affiliates, are confidential, and are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom this e-mail is addressed. If you are not a named addressee or otherwise have reason to believe that you have received this message in error, please notify the sender by replying to this e-mail and deleting this message and any attached files immediately from your computer. Any other use, retention, dissemination, forwarding, printing, or copying of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. Vehicle Leasing Holdings, LLC monitors and records all calls and messages for quality assurance purposes.

**From:** [Lindsay Shylo](#)  
**To:** [Hobbes, Bill](#); [Charles Schwartz](#); [D. Baggett](#); [Graham, Jay](#); [John Bellinger](#); [Hernandez, Mike](#); [Mike Plank](#); [Randy Brooks](#); [Robert Albritton](#); [Sam Torn](#); [Valicek, Annie](#)  
**Subject:** Daily News Clips  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023 7:34:46 AM

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## Texas Tribune

### With \$1.4 billion investment, Texas hopes to sprint to the front of the microchip manufacturing race

Fracisco Uranga

June 12

Leaders in the semiconductor industry and their Texas allies were alarmed by supply chain disruptions to the sector during the pandemic. Now the state is seeking to turn the lessons learned in the past three years into an opportunity.

Texas is pumping \$1.4 billion into microchip research and manufacturing initiatives in an effort to attract new investments, secure lucrative federal grants and create thousands of high-paying jobs over the next decade.

On Thursday, Gov. Greg Abbott approved the Texas CHIPS Act, which will create the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund, a pot of money that will subsidize companies that manufacture chips in Texas and provide matching funds to universities and other state entities that invest in chip design or manufacturing projects.

Lawmakers this year appropriated \$698.3 million for the new fund and an additional \$666.4 million for the creation of advanced research and development centers at the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University.

The investment illustrates the state's commitment to the national race to capture billions of dollars in federal funds for the industry.

Last August, President Joe Biden signed the federal CHIPS and Science Act, allocating \$52 billion to spur semiconductor manufacturing in the country. The law seeks to encourage private investment in the sector by offering subsidies for companies that build new or expand manufacturing facilities and by helping pay for new research and development projects.

States have a role to play in the federal government's strategy, especially in the training and development of the workforce needed, according to industry experts. And Texas stands out on the national stage because it already has one of the most robust ecosystems in the semiconductor industry.

The federal CHIPS Act seeks to encourage the reshoring of semiconductor manufacturing, which means bringing chip factories back to the country. The U.S. depends heavily on chip imports, especially from Taiwan and South Korea. And the possibility of China invading Taiwan — a territory that has declared its independence and has its own government, but which Beijing still considers part of China — has raised alarms about its impact on the supply of semiconductors.

Reliance on chip imports is risky, as was evident during the pandemic. Disruptions in global supply chains led to microchip shortages, which in turn caused shockwaves across the U.S. economy. Semiconductors are increasingly present in everyday life, not only in phones or laptops. They have become key components in everything from cars and ATMs to washing machines.

The national security system and the intelligence community also depend heavily on semiconductors, said William Inboden, executive director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas at Austin.

"In the 19th century, the key ingredient of military power was gunpowder. In the 20th century, it was petroleum, and now it is semiconductors," Inboden said.

Inboden said he is generally skeptical of the government intervening in the economy but added that he supported the federal CHIPS law and the Texas economic package because of the importance of the microchip industry to national security. Inboden also said that a Chinese invasion of Taiwan could cause a "catastrophic depression" in the U.S. and that the country should take preventive measures.

The federal CHIPS Act could create 100,000 new high-paying jobs in the U.S. by the end of the decade, industry experts estimate. Where investments and jobs take root depends largely on the policies of each state.

Semiconductor companies have already promised \$215 billion in investments and the creation of 40,000 jobs across the country in response to the federal CHIPS Act, according to the Semiconductor Industry Association. Sixty billion of these investments will land in Texas, where six projects that will create 8,000 jobs in the sector have already been announced. Texas is the second state with the most planned projects, after Arizona.

Two of the Texas projects will create new semiconductor fabs, as microchip fabrication facilities are known. Samsung Electronics will build one in Taylor, representing a \$17.3 billion investment that will create 2,000 jobs; and Texas Instruments will build the other in Sherman, a \$30 billion project that will hire 3,000 workers between now and 2035. Another three are expansions of existing semiconductor factories: Texas Instruments in Richardson, NXP in Austin and X-FAB in Lubbock. The last project will build a Global Wafers facility in Sherman dedicated to silicon wafer manufacturing.

Microchip companies currently have 54 facilities in the state. With about 45,000 workers, Texas has the second-largest workforce in the industry, only behind California, according to the Semiconductor Industry Association. The state is aiming to reach the top position by 2030.

Industry experts said Texas' \$1.4 billion CHIPS Act is one of the most significant financial packages in the country, and one that meets the U.S. Department of Commerce's expectations for states' role in this sector.

Texas public coffers will fund two research and manufacturing centers at the state's flagship universities, which will have two goals: to put Texas at the forefront of advancing technologies and to develop the necessary workforce for the industry. Finding highly skilled workers is one of the biggest challenges to bringing chip manufacturing back to the U.S.

UT-Austin will receive \$440 million to build fabs, which will be part of the Texas Institute for Electronics, a public-private partnership launched in 2022 that plans to become a nonprofit, independent organization this year. TIE focuses on the manufacture of the shells that contain microchips, a process known as packaging.

Packaging used to be considered a low-value part of the supply chain, but that is changing, according to S.V. Sreenivasan, director of TIE.

In recent decades, chips have become smaller and increased in capacity at an accelerated rate, but the pace of improvement is slowing down, Sreenivasan said. TIE aims to develop advanced packaging systems, which includes putting different types of technologies on the same chip. U.S. companies dominate the microchip design stages but manufacture only 12% of the circuits and make 3% of the packaging, Sreenivasan noted. That puts the country in a vulnerable position if the transnational supply chain is disrupted, he said.

Texas A&M will receive \$200 million to build fabs for quantum and artificial intelligence chip fabrication and about \$26.4 million for the Center for Microdevices and Systems, which will work to develop the next generation of chips, according to Yossef Elabd, vice chancellor for research at Texas A&M.

"We are focused on the new chemistry, the new materials, the new processes and the next version of the chip," Elabd said.

The facilities at both universities do not aim to manufacture chips for commercialization; instead, they will focus on piloting new products that meet market standards and training the future technicians, engineers and leaders of the industry. Semiconductor companies are giving feedback to UT-Austin and A&M about what kind of facilities they need to build and what they should teach students to be prepared for working in this business.

Elabd said Texas is in a good position to attract new investment and federal funds.

"Most semiconductor companies are already in Texas, a lot of funding is in Texas, we are a very business-friendly state and Texas A&M is the No. 1 school in the country for engineering production. It is the best place for chip production growth," he said. "The \$1.4 billion investment is a huge message to the entire community that Texas wants to lead the way."

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/12/texas-microchips-semiconductors/>

## The Eagle

### Texas A&M hires Kathleen McElroy as director of new journalism program

Alex Miller

12 hours ago

If journalists were ranked like college football recruits, Kathleen McElroy might be rated as a 5-star.

The pomp and circumstance outside Texas A&M University's Academic Building on Tuesday morning made it feel that way at least. Faculty and staff gathered around a table in front of the university's iconic building as McElroy signed her contract to become A&M's new journalism director for the revamped program. She will begin her role in August.

McElroy, A&M Class of 1981, was most recently a professor in the University of Texas at Austin's School of Journalism and Media. She was director of Texas' School of Journalism from 2018 to 2022.

Coming back to A&M feels both weird and foreign, she said, but also natural and like it was meant to be.

"I've been strategic, I think, about my life, but not in a way that I must do this and I must do that," McElroy said. "Things just sort of happened in a way that makes a lot of sense in my life, so I'm not surprised I'm here, but I didn't plan to be here."

After graduating from A&M with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism, McElroy was hired at The Eagle and worked in news, sports and features. She later worked at the Huntsville Item, the Austin American-Statesman, Newsday and The National.

In 1991, McElroy was hired at The New York Times and worked there as an editor in various positions for 20 years. In 2011, McElroy began her doctorate at Texas and graduated in 2014. She also holds a masters of arts from New York University.

In 2007, McElroy was selected to the Texas A&M Former Journalism Students Association's Hall of Honor.

"I am optimistic about what's ahead for journalism education at this university and believe strongly in offering the opportunity for our students to earn a degree through a well-rounded curriculum," said Jose Bermúdez, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

A journalism major was approved by A&M's Board of Regents in February and will be offered as a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree. A&M President M. Katherine Banks said in her state of the university address last September that the first students in the new journalism program will start in fall 2023 and the program will be housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. The program will be under the Department of Communications and Journalism, pending approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

For 55 years, including McElroy's time at A&M, the university had a journalism department and degree before it was discontinued in 2004. A&M has continued to offer journalism education in indirect paths as a minor and later as a degree in university studies.

Recruiting McElroy is a huge step forward for A&M's journalism program, noted Hart Blanton, head of the Department of Communication and Journalism.

"In time, through academic and industry partnerships, our goal for A&M journalism is nothing short of becoming a trusted source for news and information in the state," Blanton said.

While at Texas two or three years ago, McElroy was a part of an external review of A&M's journalism program. She noted the assessment isn't complete yet because although there is quantitative information, there is a need for qualitative information.

"You need to talk to people to know why things are a certain way," McElroy said. "I think a big mistake you can make in any leadership position or management is assuming things are either perfect or broken. Things often tend to be somewhere in between and the best way to do that is to talk to people and find out what they think is broken and what they think is perfect, and along with your own assessments."

One item on her agenda is to build collaborations with A&M's existing student media platforms, such as The Battalion, KAMU and 12th Man Productions.

"There's all these things where I think we can do more collaborations and we can do better collaborations," McElroy said. "I think there's so many ways you can rethink what journalism is."

Nonetheless, McElroy said her hope is for A&M's journalism program to grow and produce more journalism graduates, whether they go into newsrooms or other industries.

"The whole idea is what can we do for journalism majors and what can we do for journalism and what can we do for news consumers?" McElroy said. "I think that's got to be at the front. And, of course, that's all infused with Aggie spirit."

[https://theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/kathleen-mcelroy-named-texasam-journalism-director/article\\_5141715a-099e-11ee-8d30-b76a8f8e1f8a.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm\\_medium=PostUp&ctg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_ah1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248](https://theeagle.com/news/a_m/kathleen-mcelroy-named-texasam-journalism-director/article_5141715a-099e-11ee-8d30-b76a8f8e1f8a.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm_medium=PostUp&ctg=6988668&tn_email_ah1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248)

## KPCW

### Why thousands of fish washed up on these Texas beaches



Julian aKim  
June 12

Over the past weekend, troves of dead fish appeared on the shores of multiple beaches in southeast Texas, after struggling to find enough oxygen underwater.

Quintana Beach County Park announced on Friday that dead fish were washing up by the thousands. The department warned the public to stay clear of the local beaches until all the fish had been cleared, due to risk of being exposed to bacteria and sharp fins.

Crews are continuing to clear the carcasses of dead fish, which park officials described as "shredded skeletons." The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Kills and Spills Team responded to the situation and determined the cause of the massive die-off was a "low dissolved oxygen event," meaning fish essentially suffocated.

Here is what to know about what happened:

What caused the Texas fish kill

When asked what contributed to the fish deaths, Quintana Beach County Park officials said it was a "perfect storm" of factors.

First, warm water is not ideal for fish. It tends to hold less oxygen. That is especially true in shallow water, which heats up quicker. So, a school of fish likely found themselves deprived of oxygen as they swam through shallow waters in the summertime.

Another problem was that seas near county beaches were quite calm over the past few weeks, meaning there were few waves and winds to help redistribute oxygen in the water.

Over the past few days, the skies above the the beaches were cloudy. That is an issue for phytoplankton, which help produce oxygen in the water by using photosynthesis. That process is driven by sunlight. So, the less they are exposed to the sun by way of overcast, the less oxygen phytoplankton produce.

Why these dead fish aren't necessarily a bad thing

Most of the fish found dead were Gulf menhaden. They travel in large schools, which can explain how thousands washed ashore at the same time.

Over 32 different predators feast on the tiny fish, including sea birds, sharks and even some fish like mackerel and sea trout, according to the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration. They provide predators with nutrients. Gulf menhaden also serve as filter feeders, meaning they consume impurities in the water.

Because this species is a popular snack for sea animals, there are potential benefits to the massive die-off, according to Katie St. Clair, the manager of the sea life facility at Texas A&M University at Galveston.

"The flipside is that with this die-off of fish, there is a huge nutrient pulse into our environment," she said. "It's kind of a circle of life."

How climate change plays a role in fish kill

Fish kills are common in the warmer months, like summer time. But oceans at large are heating up because of human-caused climate change.

"Water can only hold so much oxygen at certain temperatures, and certainly we know that seawater temperatures are rising," Clair said. "It is concerning and something that needs to be monitored."

Warmer oceans trigger a cascade of other changes to the ecosystem and the economy. One study from the SeaDoc Society at the University of California, Davis found that starfish were more susceptible to disease because of warm water anomalies. The Environmental Protection Agency also found that fish species are leaving their natural habitat in search for cooler waters, disrupting the fishing industry.

<https://www.kpcw.org/npr-news/2023-06-12/why-thousands-of-fish-washed-up-on-these-texas-beaches>

**NBC Boston**

**Thousands of dead fish wash up along Texas Gulf Coast**

Jessie Nguyen  
June 12

Tens of thousands of dead fish washed up on the Texas Gulf coast over the weekend, blanketing the shorelines of several beaches with marine carcasses for miles.

Most of the dead fish were menhaden, a small fish often used for bait, and died due to "a low dissolved oxygen event," according to a Facebook post from the Quintana Beach County Park.

Fish kills like this are common in the summer as water temperatures rise, Texas Parks and Wildlife said. Many cases of low dissolved oxygen are natural occurrences.

A sufficient level of dissolved oxygen in water is necessary to sustain aquatic life. Warm ocean water holds less oxygen than cold water and can contribute to oxygen levels dropping too low, impacting water quality and starving fish of a life necessity. Recent samples taken from the beach showed almost no dissolved oxygen, officials said.

"As we see increased water temperatures, certainly this could lead to more of these events occurring especially in our shallow, near-shore or inshore environments," said Katie St. Clair, the sea life facility manager at Texas A&M University at Galveston.

Last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced the oxygen-depleted "dead zone" that forms each year in the Gulf of Mexico off Louisiana and Texas was forecast to cover about 4,155 square miles this year. The Gulf dead zone is largely created by urban and agricultural runoff and discharges of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Mississippi River, which drains 41% of the continental United States. In the Gulf, the nutrients feed an overgrowth of algae, which die and sink to the bottom, using up oxygen from the ocean floor as they decompose. Fish, shrimp and crabs can swim away. Animals that are slower or fixed to the bottom cannot.

Still, the sheer number of fish and area impacted has some scientists baffled. Julia Wellner, a glacial marine geoscientist at the University of Houston, tweeted Sunday her concerns over a "scary future."

"Yesterday I took a dozen international visiting sedimentologists to Quintana Beach, TX. I might be an expert on some things on the beach but this fish kill baffled all of us. Went for miles. Low oxygen sure but why here and now? Why this dramatic? Scary future."

Park crews spent Saturday and Sunday removing the fish remains from the beach. Any dead fish remnants that were left behind or continue to wash ashore will be buried naturally in the

sand and ocean over the coming days, park officials said.

Officials urged people to avoid the impacted beach because of high bacteria levels.

<https://www.nbcboston.com/news/national-international/thousands-of-dead-fish-wash-up-along-texas-gulf-coast/3066135/>

#### **KHOU**

##### **Thousands of dead fish cleaned up from Southeast Texas beach**

Zack Tawatari and Chloe Alexander

June 12

BRAZORIA COUNTY, Texas — There may still be some remnants of dead fish along Brazoria County's Bryan Beach, but it's looking a lot better compared to last week.

On Friday, miles of dead fish covered Bryan Beach, but on Monday, most of them were gone.

"It looks normal. Like it always is whenever we come out here," said beachgoers Maria Saldana. "It doesn't look any different."

"I did have a fishy smell when I got here, but I didn't even now," said beachgoers Roxana Lumbreras.

Brazoria County Parks worked sun up to sun down to clear most of the beaches of the miles of dead fish.

"It was a pretty Herculean effort quite frankly by our Parks staff," said Director Bryan Frazier. "As smelly as it was, you get your crews out there. They'd start at one, they get it done, they push it back on the dunes, they start again."

The thousands of dead fish along the coast is an irregular event but not uncommon, according to experts. They said the spile in temperatures and relatively calm waters created a lack of oxygen for the fish.

"It's something that has historically happened here on the upper Texas coast, as well as all over the Texas Coast," Katie St. Clair, the sea life facility manager at Texas A&M University at Galveston said.

The dead fish were buried on dunes, mostly to eliminate the smell, but the fish will also serve as fertilizer for the dune grasses.

<https://www.khou.com/article/news/local/dead-fish-bryan-beach-texas/285-c52d5ef7-6046-4411-9e29-3fbe6da3dfcf>

#### **The Washington Post**

##### **'Perfect storm' leaves tens of thousands of dead fish on Texas beaches**

Kyle Melnick

June 13

Darrell Schoppe had been looking forward to his fishing trip all of last week, so he got up early Friday and headed to a beach on Texas's Gulf Coast. But as he drove on the sand in his Jeep Wrangler to watch the sunrise, he saw a surprising, and terrifying, scene.

Tens of thousands of dead fish — menhaden, sharks, trout, bass, catfish and stingrays — were covering the shore. Schoppe, 54, had lived near the Gulf Coast his entire life, but he had never seen that many dead fish. He recorded videos of the ocean as he drove along the shore, finding the washed-up fish along a roughly seven-mile stretch near Freeport, Tex.

"That's all I could do at that point because I was just kind of in awe," Schoppe told The Washington Post. "Of course I wasn't going to go wait out there to try to catch any trout; everything was pretty much dead."

Schoppe was one of the first witnesses to the scene. Texas officials later advised visitors to avoid the water while cleaning crews cleared the fish.

While low oxygen levels cause fish to die every summer, a combination of warm water, calm seas and cloudy conditions left oxygen levels so low on Friday that it led to more dead fish than many officials had ever seen.

"By the time you get one stretch of it raked and cleaned off and pushed back, you look back and a whole new wave of them have come ashore," said Bryan Frazier, director of the Brazoria County Parks Department. "So you've got to do it all over again."

Frazier said cold water can hold more oxygen than warm water, and temperatures reached as high as 92 degrees in Brazoria County on Friday, according to the National Weather Service. For menhaden — the silvery, roughly foot-long fish most affected Friday — living in temperatures above 70 degrees can be difficult, officials said. Frazier said it would be tough to determine how warm the water was because it's unclear exactly where the fish died before surfacing.

Oxygen also enters water by mixing with wind and waves, Frazier said, but the Gulf Coast's waves have been calm for about three weeks. Likewise, photosynthesis creates oxygen, but a lack of sunlight the previous few days halted the energy-producing process, Frazier said.

Officials called the conditions "the perfect storm to deplete the oxygen levels inshore."

Nevertheless, fish-kill events happen almost every summer in Texas, officials said. The northern Gulf of Mexico forms one of the world's largest "dead zones" of fish, according to the National Ocean Service.

Katie St. Clair, a sea life facility manager with Texas A&M University at Galveston, said that menhaden are crucial to the ocean's ecosystem because they filter the water and serve as food for other fish. But St. Clair said fish in the Gulf are accustomed to adjusting and repopulating.

"This area is used to these dynamic events," she said.

While it's uncertain whether climate change had an influence in last week's case, scientists have said that temperature shifts could be lowering oxygen levels in water and causing sea

creatures to leave their habitats worldwide. Similar instances have occurred in other states, such as Florida and Ohio, and other parts of the world, including Australia and Europe.

Cleaning crews began using beach rakes and tractors Friday to bury the dead fish under dunes. Employees watched as dead fish constantly moved toward the shore, where thousands more surfaced Saturday and Sunday.

Some people still visited the beach and dipped into the water, but Frazier said the area smelled like an "old fish market" all weekend as fish sat in the heat. Schoppe said his Jeep still smells like dead fish from driving near the shore, and he has since parked it outside of his garage.

"My wife said, 'Nope, it's staying outside until that stink goes away,'" Schoppe said.

One of the local beaches, Quintana Beach County Park, was clear of fish by Monday night, its supervisor said. Frazier said fish were still surfacing on other beaches Monday afternoon.

With students out of school for the summer, Frazier hopes the county's beaches will become a relaxing destination again.

"Just because it's a natural phenomena does not make it pleasant; that's not something anybody likes to see," Frazier said. "But nature has a way of bouncing back."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2023/06/13/dead-fish-texas-gulf-coast/>

### **AgriLife Today**

#### **Stover testifies in front of full House Committee on Agriculture**

June 13

Patrick J. Stover, Ph.D., director of the Texas A&M Institute for Advancing Health Through Agriculture, or IHA, recently testified in front of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture to document that swift action is needed to reverse the increasing rates of diet-related chronic diseases and their subsequent economic burden on health care systems and costs.

Given that many of the drivers of chronic disease are related to diet, health behaviors and our food systems, Stover was poised to provide insightful comments on our health care burdens, saliently offering solutions. The IHA's research aims to align precision nutrition, responsive agriculture and healthy living as a solution to the pressing health crisis affecting all Americans.

Medical costs associated with diet-related diabetes alone total more than \$327 billion annually.

"Agriculture and food are the only feasible solutions to address our skyrocketing health care costs. We need to develop a systems-based approach to connect agriculture, food, nutrition and human health," said Stover.

The committee hearing focused on federal nutrition programs. In his testimony, Stover cited the disproportionate impact of chronic diseases and food insecurity and associated costs on rural, underserved and underrepresented communities, underscoring the urgent need for agriculture-centered responsive solutions.

"We need to continue the work to eliminate hunger while expanding our mission to also ensure that our food environments promote human health," said Stover. "Both the food environment that consumers experience and consumer health behaviors need to be addressed together through sound policy grounded in high-quality scientific evidence that is lacking at this time."

A strong evidence base is needed to ensure that the best science drives policy. To this end, Stover created the Agriculture, Food, & Nutrition Evidence Center at Texas A&M University. He also emphasized that the United States has made successful advances through nutrition and agriculture already, but that hunger and health must become the new endpoints for our food systems to adapt to if we are going to tackle the problem of chronic diseases.

"Farmers and ranchers have always been prepared to meet the needs and expectations of the nation, they feed America, and want to be part of the solution to help all Americans," Stover said.

Stover, an international leader in biochemistry, agriculture and nutrition, is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He has more than two decades of academic leadership experience, including serving as Vice Chancellor and Dean at Texas A&M AgriLife. Last month, he was named the 2023 W.O. Atwater Memorial Lecturer for his outstanding contributions to nutrition research.

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2023/06/13/stover-testifies-in-front-of-full-house-committee-on-agriculture/>

### **The Eagle**

#### **Five tips to protect your home from mosquitoes this summer**

Cole Baerlocher

June 12

Warmer temperatures and rain means mosquito season is underway in most of the state. With an increase in mosquitoes comes an increase in bites.

While these insects pose a big annoyance for Texans, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service entomologist Sonja Swiger, Ph.D., shared five tips on how to protect your home from mosquitoes this summer.

Eliminate standing water

Mosquitoes develop in stagnant water, Swiger said. Limiting water-filled breeding sites around the home can reduce populations in proximity.

It takes an immature mosquito around 10 to 14 days to develop in water, so it is a good rule of thumb to replace or remove water that has been sitting for longer than five days, she said.

Potential areas to check for standing water include water dishes, bird baths, plant saucers, leaky faucets, and gutters.

"Observe your surroundings for water that is standing for more than a few days and dump the water or make sure it is free of larvae," she said.

Utilize screens and closed doors

Mosquitoes are attracted to body heat and the carbon dioxide that is emitted when we breathe. While screens on open windows and doors are an effective barrier to keep mosquitoes from entering homes, it is vital to ensure that screens do not contain holes and that doors stay closed.

"It is highly recommended that you use screens on your windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from coming inside," Swiger said. "Mosquitoes are going to do what they have to in order to get to us."

Keep a well-trimmed yard and shrubbery

While preferences with personal property may vary, it is vital to prevent the type of habitat where adult mosquitoes thrive. Potted plants, thick, tall grass and overgrown landscape plants provide shelter for mosquitoes.

By managing these types of environments around your home, you prevent the likelihood of mosquitoes following you into your home.

"It is important not to have too many potted plants or overgrown shrubs because those serve as harborages for adult mosquitoes to thrive in," Swiger said.

Utilize repellents and be consistent

Texas is home to over 80 species of mosquitoes that thrive throughout the warmer months both during the day and at night.

"If you are outdoors, using is one of the only sure-fire ways to prevent mosquito bites," Swiger said.

Spray products like "Off!" are recommended because they are better able to mask our scent from mosquitoes. Swiger mentioned that citronella candles are not nearly effective since the scent does not travel far enough to provide any protection in a area.

Be aware of mosquito activity

Swiger said it is important to be aware that mosquito activity varies from species to species. Some are active early in the morning while others are active at dusk and during the night. Preventative measures can reduce mosquito populations in or near your home, and consistent use of repellents can reduce bites.

If you see or notice a public area where mosquito populations are heavy, notify your local public health department to report sites. Action by public health professionals can reduce mosquito populations and mitigate their spread to other areas.

[https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/five-tips-to-protect-your-home-from-mosquitoes-this-summer/article\\_4fe6ea6c-00e1-11ee-8a51-5b19eb86c566.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/five-tips-to-protect-your-home-from-mosquitoes-this-summer/article_4fe6ea6c-00e1-11ee-8a51-5b19eb86c566.html#tncms-source=login)

## **The Eagle**

### **Anthrax: A concern for herbivores**

Magie Berger

June 12

As we enter summer months, livestock producers and outdoor enthusiasts across the state, especially those in South Texas, have more to think about than rising temperatures.

Anthrax, sometimes incorrectly referred to as bovine anthrax, is a bacterial disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, which occurs naturally in soil. The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, historically sees a rise in positive cases in June, July and August, followed by a slow decrease through September and October.

How concerned should you be about anthrax? Two Texas A&M AgriLife experts weigh in and explain what anthrax is and what you should do if you suspect a positive case in your area.

Terry Hensley, DVM, is the TVMDL assistant agency director and a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service veterinarian. He has broad knowledge of veterinary medical topics and has been a valuable resource for the Texas Animal Health Commission, TAHC, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the public during previous outbreaks.

Narayan Paul, Ph.D., DVM, Diplomate ACVM, is a board certified veterinary clinical microbiologist and the bacteriology section head for TVMDL, where anthrax testing takes place.

How do animals contract anthrax?Hensley: Anthrax is not contagious like the flu. The most common route of infection is by ingestion of the bacterial spores from contaminated forage, soil or water. Infection by inhalation or through skin wounds is also possible.

The disease can infect all animals with some being more susceptible than others. Herbivores such as cattle, sheep, goats and horses, as well as wild herbivores like deer, are more susceptible than swine and carnivores such as dogs.

Can humans get anthrax from animals?Hensley: Humans are considered relatively resistant to anthrax; more resistant than cattle but less resistant than dogs. Cases in humans are uncommon in the U.S. In rare circumstances, infection could be acquired from the inappropriate handling of the carcass of an animal that died of the disease. The source of infection would most likely be by ingestion, inhalation or wound contamination by anthrax spores.

Anthrax poses little risk to the average person. Veterinarians, ranchers and hunters who work, live and recreate in areas of the state where anthrax is known to occur should be aware of the disease and take precautions when finding a carcass with the classic signs of anthrax. Normal day-to-day activities pose little threat of acquiring infection.

In Texas, the "anthrax triangle" is an area created by connecting Uvalde, Ozona and Eagle Pass. Encompassing parts of Crockett, Edwards, Kinney, Maverick, Sutton, Uvalde and Val Verde counties, this is where most positive cases originate.

What are the signs or symptoms of anthrax?Hensley: The bacteria produce two toxins that attack various organ systems resulting in fever, depression and organ system failure. In highly susceptible animals such as cattle, sheep, deer and other herbivores, death may occur suddenly, so no signs of illness are noticed beforehand. Horses may exhibit signs of subcutaneous edema and a more protracted course of disease than cattle. Animals that die from the disease will often have bloody discharge from the orifices, absence of rigor mortis and lack blood clotting. These can all be signs of an anthrax-related death, but are not absolute without lab confirmation.

Treatment success is unlikely in animals that are severely ill when discovered. If illness is detected in the febrile stage but before other clinical signs, treatment with appropriate antibiotics may be successful.

There is an anthrax vaccine available for use in livestock species. However, the vaccine is not approved for use in dogs.

How many positive cases of anthrax does TVMDL generally see in a year?Paul: We see three to four positive cases per year. However, during 2019, TVMDL confirmed 23 positive cases in several species including cattle, white-tailed deer, goats, horses and exotic antelope.

What should people do if they suspect an animal of having anthrax?Paul: If you see the sudden death of an animal with leakage of uncoagulated blood from natural openings, contact your local veterinarian, the TAHC or TVMDL.

Hensley: People should not open a carcass suspected of anthrax. If you must handle the carcass, wear disposable gloves, a mask, long pants and a long sleeve shirt or coveralls. Launder your clothes in hot water. In anthrax endemic areas, do not pick up bones or antlers since you have no way of knowing whether the animal died from the disease or not. The spores can remain in the environment for decades.

How should samples be taken for submission to TVMDL?Paul: The preferred specimen is blood collected from a superficial vein, such as the jugular. The sample should be submitted in a sterile red top or purple top anticoagulant blood tube. Swabs of bloody fluid oozing from body orifices may also be submitted in a sterile red top tube or commercial transport medium. Although not recommended, if the carcass has been opened, the spleen, lung and liver may be submitted for bacterial culture. Ears should not be submitted for anthrax culture tests as they are relatively avascular and are likely to yield inaccurate results.

It is important to collect samples from animals at the point of death or freshly dead as *Bacillus anthracis* can die in an anaerobic carcass after a period and would yield a false negative bacterial culture.

How does testing work?Paul: Upon arrival of anthrax-suspect samples in the lab, they are streaked onto different bacterial culture media that contain essential growth factors/nutrients for the growth of the bacterium.

The cultured media are then incubated at 98.6 degrees in aerobic condition for 48 hours. The culture media plates are examined at 24 hours and 48 hours to see if any suspected anthrax bacteria appear in the form of ground-glass, dry colonies and non-hemolytic colonies on blood agar plates.

Two confirmatory tests, bacteriophage lysis and penicillin antibiotic tests, are performed on any suspected bacteria. Anthrax bacteria are positive for bacteriophage lysis and susceptible to penicillin antibiotic.

More information

More information

Additional information on anthrax can be found at the Texas Department of State Health Services website.

Those interested in anthrax testing should call one of TVMDL's full-service laboratories in College Station or Canyon. For more information on TVMDL's testing services, visit [tvmdl.tamu.edu](http://tvmdl.tamu.edu).

[https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/anthrax-a-concern-for-herbivores/article\\_91759720-00e2-11ee-909b-efa5417a148f.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/anthrax-a-concern-for-herbivores/article_91759720-00e2-11ee-909b-efa5417a148f.html#tncms-source=login)

#### **The Dallas Morning News**

#### **Poison hemlock was spotted in a Dallas suburb. Here's what you should know about the plant**

Noor Adata

Jun 3

Not everything that grows in your yard is meant to be touched.

On Sunday, Kenzie Kizer of Lancaster wrote on Facebook about her incident handling a plant that doctors later identified as poison hemlock. Kizer said she was attempting to remove weeds near her home when she began experiencing some severe symptoms.

"Shortly after pulling the weeds my arms felt as if they were on fire," Kizer wrote. "So I took a shower to wash out what I believed to be splinters. Less than an hour later my tongue started swelling, my skin was burning, my speech was slurred, I was dizzy, confused and very shaky."

Kizer's symptoms are a reaction to the toxins found in poison hemlock, which grows up to 10 feet tall and resembles an innocuous white wildflower. It often sprouts around roads, and occasionally in people's yards, said Barron Rector, an associate professor and range specialist at Texas A&M's AgriLife Extension Service.

Native to Eurasia, poison hemlock belongs to the same family as the carrot, according to the AgriLife Extension Service. It grows in warm weather, which in Texas can be anytime from spring to early fall.

"Here is a plant that for some unknown reason was brought over in the period of settlement of this country," Rector said. "Nobody exactly knows when the poison hemlock showed up in the Western Hemisphere."

The wild hemlock, known scientifically as *Conium maculatum*, is also believed to have killed Greek philosopher Socrates, Rector added.

Poison hemlock is especially concerning because it resembles harmless plants, causing some to ingest it, which can be fatal to people and certain livestock, including cattle and pigs.

"Because it looks like other plants in this family, like the wild carrot, there are people who mistake the plant for being something else that they've learned locally," Rector said.

Symptoms of hemlock poisoning include trembling, muscle paralysis and a loss of speech. Death from the poisoning can occur from respiratory paralysis; however, this usually involves ingesting a larger amount of the plant.

Meanwhile, touching the plant without any protection can result in redness and sometimes skin irritation. In people with sensitive skin, dermatitis can develop and the toxin enters the bloodstream.

Last summer, park officials in Dallas responded to toxic water hemlock spotted around White Rock Lake.

Poison hemlock can be identified by its triangle-shaped leaves and purple streaking along its light green stems, according to Iowa State University's Extension and Outreach.

Avoidance is one of the main ways to keep from getting hurt by plants, Rector advised. If it isn't in the way, consider leaving the plant where it is and not handling it.

But if you must handle the hemlock, Rector recommends wearing gloves and long sleeves and using a shovel to lift the plant up and into a disposal bucket.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2023/06/03/poison-hemlock-was-spotted-in-a-dallas-suburb-heres-what-you-should-know-about-the-plant/>

## The Eagle

### Genetics can improve livestock grazing in South Texas

Kay Ledbetter

June 12

Using new fitness traits like heat tolerance and grazing behavior, Milt Thomas, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the Department of Animal Science professor in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, is determined to help improve beef cattle systems in South Texas.

Thomas, who has made a name for himself in beef cattle circles around the world, returned to his alma mater this past year to take on the beef cattle systems research program at Beeville, a part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Corpus Christi.

He earned his bachelor's degree in animal science and his master's in dairy science-reproductive physiology, both from the University of Missouri, Columbia, before coming to Texas A&M University to earn a doctorate in reproductive physiology.

Thomas completed his doctoral research at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at Beeville, studying beef cattle reproduction – “and that was the beginning of the age of molecular biology and DNA studies,” he said, which really propelled his interests.

“The livestock breeding world wanted to incorporate DNA technologies, and I started down that path,” Thomas said. “My interest in genomics took my wife and me around the world.”

Thomas spent 15 years in the Department of Animal and Range Sciences at New Mexico State University, NMSU, serving as the Gerald Thomas Chair in Food Production and Natural Resources. While there, he was involved in breeding Angus, Brangus and Brahman cattle for the Chihuahuan Desert.

This, he said, was a great experience to prepare for breeding Angus cattle for tolerance to high altitudes in Colorado and Wyoming when he went to Colorado State University, CSU, as a professor and the John E. Rouse Chair of Beef Cattle Breeding and Genetics in the Department of Animal Sciences.

His research collaborations at NMSU and CSU took him to Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Brazil and France before Thomas returned to his Texas roots and moved to his family's ranch in Goliad County, near the community of Weesatche.

Building on tradition, but turning the corner

Now Thomas is using that experience to help the Texas A&M AgriLife beef cattle research program at Beeville turn a corner that will complement the more than 100 years of important intensive animal science research and 50 years of reproductive research.

“It's time to make some changes,” Thomas said, about taking over the program. “We have changed these cattle a lot over the years, and they are very good at some things like growth and carcass size. We've been highly successful.”

“But our amount of knowledge and data about how one cow grazes differently than another is very minimal.”

Cattle in subtropical climates such as the Gulf Coast of Texas are challenged by high temperatures and humidity, so most are Bos indicus- or Brahman-influenced. Thomas's latest research project will characterize the genetic variation of grazing traits in a subtropical environment and investigate how these traits are influenced by ambient temperature and humidity.

This research will be a collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which will include moving a portion of the Germplasm Evaluation, GPE, project conducted by the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Nebraska to the Beeville station.

The project will evaluate Brahman-crosses, Beefmaster, Brangus and Santa Gertrudis cattle in a subtropical environment. The project will also study the genetics of grazing traits, which meshes with the long-running forage agronomy program at the AgriLife Research station in Beeville.

“Down in Beeville, it's hot and humid, so we need heat-tolerant animals. Deciding on the animals to use for studies led us to the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Nebraska, one of the world's largest animal ag research facilities. They cover every phase of animal science.”

The GPE includes 3,700 cows from the 18 most popular breeds in the U.S. Within it are the four heat-tolerant breeds – Brahman, Beefmaster, Brangus and Santa Gertrudis, which all make their home in Texas – but they were being evaluated in Nebraska.

“Now, we are collaborating, and the new home of a portion of the heat-tolerant cattle in the GPE is the AgriLife Research station at Beeville. We have already moved 120 females and seven bulls to Beeville. And, we'll have about 60 calves born this spring. We will now do the study of the heat tolerance for this project. We will grow the calves and collect weaning weights, etc.”

Some of the heat-tolerant cattle will remain in Nebraska, so we can better understand how much the subtropical environment of the Texas Gulf Coast influences these cattle. This type of research is called the study of gene-by-environment interaction, known as a G x E project.

Hilltoppers or bottom dwellers: It's all in the genes

Thomas said over the years, the genetic selection of beef cattle has helped livestock performance improve. The primary tool of genetic selection of beef cattle is expected progeny difference, EPD, which merges progeny records, pedigree and genomic information to estimate breeding values. For EPD, the environmental effects are adjusted out by contemporary grouping, which compares the genetics of cattle raised at the same location, age and sex, etc.

“However, there's still a great need to better understand the effects of the environment on cattle, how these environmental effects are accounted for in the breeding value estimation processes, and most importantly, develop new traits to foster sustainability of beef cattle production systems.”

Specific examples he gave of fitness traits that have received investment in the past five to 10 years are feed efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions, hair-shedding, susceptibility to bovine respiratory disease, pulmonary arterial pressure for high mountain disease and feedlot heart disease, cow longevity and grazing distribution.

The one thing Thomas said they will bring new to the GPE is grazing traits, or sustainability traits. That meshes well with the forage and agronomy grassland scientific team led by Jamie Foster, Ph.D., AgriLife Research forage agronomist in Beeville.

Thomas said the concentration on the genetics of grazing distribution continues his research in the western U.S. funded through a USDA program called Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, WSARE.

“We observed hilltoppers and bottom dwellers, as there are cows that are lazy and hang around the water trough and those that go take a hike every day – and that’s where our data and results revealed a big genetic component to explore. We’re at a phase in the history of agriculture where we always talk about sustainability.”

He said cattle need to do better in the future by walking around and eating grass, as opposed to the ones that just stand around waiting to be fed. “How sustainable is it when we have to deliver expensive feeds to these cattle that could make it by being better at grazing?”

Building on 50 years of reproductive research

Moving forward, Thomas said the research program at the AgriLife Research station in Beeville will be about beef systems – combining beef reproduction with extensive grassland and forage agronomy work. If part of the research team is studying the health of the grassland, what better way to work with them than find out more about the animals grazing that land.

He said he found when studying the genetics of grazing with western ranchers that one of their challenges was their landscape included running water, but the grazing lease typically was owned by a public entity.

“There was lots of concern by those public entities about cows being in the riparian areas – creeks and streams and rivers. There was need to keep those cows out of the water and degrading stream health and habitat. In surveys, ranchers were willing to pay more money for bulls if they knew the bull would sire daughters that were hilltoppers rather than bottom dwellers. South Texas has the same type of interest – how to manage the landscape better. Cows are cows; we know they will always overgraze part of the pasture and under graze other parts. The more that cow will do on her own, the more sustainable that system is.”

Thomas said when the AgriLife Research station in Beeville started studying beef cows, most cows weighed 1,000 pounds or less. Today, cows weigh 1,300 to 1,500 pounds. That’s where the sustainability issue comes in – the cost and how they impact the land. GPE animals are an ideal set of animals to study this. The study includes not only the four heat-tolerant breeds but also involves the Hereford, Red Angus and Charolais breeds.

“We started bringing GPE cattle to the Beeville station in January, and the first calves are being born now. There are 60 cows, 60 heifers and seven bulls. We already have the first data points, birthweights on the calves as they’re born. And the heifers were weaned in Nebraska, and we are collecting hair-shedding scores on them as the temperature warms this spring.”

Next, they will implement two different tools to determine grazing patterns. One is an ear tag with a solar device that will send GPS signals on a cow’s location and how much she is moving. The other device is a bolus placed in the rumen with a receiver at the water trough uploading data to a cloud-computing system. This accelerometer will tell us how much the cow moves, when they drink water, and their body temperature.

“The larger beef cow needs more grass to eat, and most of the systems we water our livestock with are way outdated. We are no longer watering a 1,000-pound cow anymore, but sometimes a 1,500-pound lactating cow and calf. A cow of this size nursing a calf needs 30 gallons of water per day. We need to make sure our water troughs are big enough.

“When we start releasing a lot of these data and results, I think the ranching community is going to be somewhat alarmed that we need to do some things differently,” Thomas said.

[https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/genetics-can-improve-livestock-grazing-in-south-texas/article\\_216dc6ec-00e6-11ee-a5cb-8b3b8f7639fb.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/genetics-can-improve-livestock-grazing-in-south-texas/article_216dc6ec-00e6-11ee-a5cb-8b3b8f7639fb.html#tncms-source=login)

## The Eagle

### Considerations for picking a forage sorghum hybrid

Kay Ledbetter

June 12

“What forage sorghum hybrid should I pick?”

That’s a question Jourdan Bell, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agronomist and associate professor in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Amarillo, gets multiple times per week this time of year.

Because of variability in forage sorghum hybrids, producers do have a lot of questions, Bell said, but at the same time, the variability provides them with options to fit their production systems, yield goal and end-user’s nutritional goals.

“I have compiled six years of the forage sorghum silage data and included hybrids that have been tested anywhere from two to six years,” she said. “There are many good hybrids on the market. It is really challenging to narrow down one variety for high yield and high digestibility, because there are many considerations for production.”

Bell said the Texas High Plains, is just entering sorghum planting season, so there is still time to coordinate planting windows with hybrid maturity class and harvest schedules to optimize both yields and forage nutritional quality.

Narrowing the hybrid list

Producers need to know the following production considerations to determine what variety suits their production system best:

Planting and harvest windows.

Water availability.

Hybrid sugarcane aphid tolerance.

Yield vs. quality.

“Ideally we want high quality, high yielding hybrids,” Bell said. “Our AgriLife Extension hybrid trials provide producers an indication about how hybrids mature in a Southern Great Plains environment. We include days to half-bloom, which is a very good indication of maturity.”

She explained half-bloom indicates the stage when more than 50% of the plants are blooming. Depending on the hybrid and environmental conditions, harvest is 20 to 40 days after half-bloom. Although the maturity class is advertised for all hybrids, sorghum is photoperiod sensitive, so development is impacted by day length. Maturity also can be impacted by heat and water stress.

“It is very helpful to evaluate regional data to understand how the hybrids perform in the environment they will be grown,” Bell said. “In our trials, we usually see that the days to half-bloom vary no more than 10 days for hybrids that we have evaluated for several years, but this does not always correlate with the advertised maturity because the maturity may have been determined under different environmental conditions.”

The trial data also includes the harvest date and moisture at harvest.

"We harvest at soft-dough, but some hybrids do not dry down as quickly in high-moisture environments or under irrigation, so it is important that producers consider late-season irrigation timing," Bell said. "Considering the days from planting to half-bloom can help producers manage their planting window and coordinate harvest with custom silage choppers to ensure that the forage is harvested at a time to optimize both forage yield and nutritional quality."

#### Irrigation and harvest

Producers who are dependent on limited irrigation supplies often share sorghum acres with corn, so an early maturing hybrid gives them an option to plant later and harvest sooner, Bell said.

"It's important to know that these hybrids are very fast and will not compensate for in-season water stress later in the season like a later-maturing hybrids," she said. "However, because they are early, they will usually dry down sooner and can be chopped before corn silage to preserve forage quality."

"Later-maturing hybrids may not reach half-bloom until about 90-days after planting, so they need to be swathed if trying to harvest sooner. This is very important to preserve quality, but it is also an additional harvest expense. However, later maturing hybrids can provide flexibility for a later harvest date if there is enough water and nutrients to sustain the forage."

Hybrids harvested closer to the grain physiological maturity may be less desirable, Bell said. End-users sometimes comment that forage sorghum harvested after the grain has reached physiological maturity may have a reduced feed value because the grain can be harder to process. This can be prevented by considering the forage maturity class, the planting date and harvest window.

Producers also ask about sugarcane aphids, which are now called the sorghum aphid, she said. There are newer forage sorghum hybrids on the market with sugarcane aphid/sorghum aphid tolerance.

"It is important that producers continue to scout if they use a tolerant hybrid because there are different levels of tolerance," Bell said. "We do not have data evaluating differences in tolerance between hybrids."

#### Brown midrib and male-sterile sorghum hybrids

Producers also ask if they should only consider brown midrib, BMR, hybrids. Although BMR hybrids show improved digestibility across broad averages, this is not always the case for individual hybrids.

"There are non-BMR hybrids that perform better than BMR hybrids and vice versa, so producers need to visit with their seedsmen and evaluate regional hybrid trials to evaluate hybrid performance in a side-by-side comparison," Bell said.

"Producers are also inquiring about male-sterile sorghum hybrids," she said. "These hybrids maintain quality longer because nutrients are not translocated to developing grain, but unlike photoperiod sensitive hybrids they increase in dry matter because they head earlier in the season."

However, Bell warned that male sterile hybrids will develop grain if not harvested by heading and if planted close to another sorghum field. Although sorghum is considered self-pollinating, pollen from a neighboring field can travel in a windy environment.

"In our sorghum silage trial, we have not isolated the male-sterile hybrids because of logistics, but we will bag male-sterile heads this year to provide a more accurate male-sterile dataset," she said. "In past years, there has not been as much interest in male-sterile yields without the grain because the general interest was primarily tonnage."

[https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/considerations-for-picking-a-forage-sorghum-hybrid/article\\_69824276-00e8-11ee-842d-d761ed57831c.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/considerations-for-picking-a-forage-sorghum-hybrid/article_69824276-00e8-11ee-842d-d761ed57831c.html#tncms-source=login)

## PA News

### **BRIGHT FUTURES — Port Arthur engineer gives back with STEM nonprofit for Black girls**

June 13

Award-winning chemical engineer Kara Branch of Port Arthur had a unique journey into the engineering space. Branch attended Tyrrell Elementary from 1994-99 and attended Tekoa Academy Of Accelerated Studies from 1999-2000. She was the Princess of her class at Tekoa Academy.

As a first-generation college student wanting to study dance, she was introduced to the possibility of pursuing an engineering career by a college advisor. Fast forward to today where she has reached special heights in her engineering career. Now she spends a significant amount of time giving back to the industry through her non-profit Black Girls Do Engineer. Branch started the organization in order to provide girls and young women the engineering resources that weren't available to her when she was growing up. Branch worked rigorously to climb her way to the top of a competitive field, where she managed 15-plus improvement projects in Houston's oil and gas industry, served as a project manager in the space industry supporting National Aeronautics and Space Administration and served as an engineering manager for Intel.

For Branch, her drive and determination weren't just based on achievement and building her impressive resume but on representing other Black women who would be following a career in STEM in the years to come. "There was a huge lack of representation and my culture missing in my roles, so immediately I had to find a way to fit in," Branch said. "My motivation came from my love for science and my ability to do well at mathematics. No one had ever asked me if I wanted to be an engineer from grades K-12." When Branch arrived on the Prairie View A&M University campus, she had every intention of pursuing dance. It wasn't until she met with her college advisor that she even knew engineering was an option. Due to her love of chemistry and ability in math she went on to obtain a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering. She later returned to Prairie View A&M for a Master of Business Administration.

"My first role wasn't your typical first role out of college because it was a small company where the owners' goals were to raise us up to their level so they could go into retirement," Branch said. "The pressure was extreme, but I learned to find my voice, and people started to realize that I was the real deal and respect the voice I found. One thing I knew for sure when I walked into those board rooms was that I was a great engineer, because the projects I was working on were the first of their kind or a new innovation and I was figuring them all out." Despite being the only Black woman in the roles she held, Branch pushed the limits and landed managerial roles with major clients. She realized there were other ways she could contribute when her oldest daughter, Ricki, expressed interest in becoming a software engineer at the age of 9. Branch was caught off guard by her daughter's interest since she didn't speak much about her profession to her children due to the trials and tribulation she faced. "I knew I had to do two things — help her achieve her dreams of becoming an engineer and create a space for girls who look like her, who shared the same passion, to come together," Branch said. "That's the day Black Girls Do Engineer was born. Our organization was created with the concern that Black-American girls and young women are not choosing STEM related careers, and our passion is to change the narrative and fix this issue." In 2019, Branch officially founded Black Girls Do Engineer, headquartered in Houston. Branch and her team impact members in achieving their STEM career goals through mentoring, personal growth regimens, STEM projects and activities, STEM challenges, and guidance on career paths based on insight from professionals that are leaders in the STEM industry. Black Girls Do Engineer expanded with chapters in Los Angeles, New Orleans and a virtual chapter, in addition to its Houston chapter. The organization has impacted 2,000 girls and college students to date. In collaboration with its partners, it has awarded \$44,000 in college scholarships and maintains a 100 percent college acceptance rate. "Representation matters because you must see someone who looks like you in a particular interest of yours do the work to know you can do it too," said Branch, who has served as a Science and Engineering Lead and Diversity & Inclusion Region Chapter Leader for Employee Resource Groups. "During my very first members meeting, the girls in the room had never seen a Black woman who was an engineer



before, and it sparked their interest even more. These same girls have grown with my program and now their confidence has skyrocketed to where they know what field that want to study in STEM, they know what colleges they want to go to, and they know exactly what they want to focus on in their study." The Mayor of Houston awarded the organization their own "Black Girls Do Engineer Day." In addition, Branch received several awards for her work in STEM, mentorship, diversity, child advocacy and more. There are several ways to get involved as a sponsor, mentor or volunteer, or to donate that can start by visiting [blackgirlsdoengineer.org](https://blackgirlsdoengineer.org).

<https://www.panews.com/2023/06/13/bright-futures-port-arthur-engineer-gives-back-with-stem-non-profit-for-black-girls/>

### **The Chronicle of Higher Education**

#### **A Governor Tells Public Colleges: The Drag Show Must Not Go On**

Kate Hidalgo Bellows

June 12

For Alyssa Gonzales, a highlight of her freshman year at South Dakota State University was attending a campus drag show.

Hosted by South Dakota State's Gender and Sexualities Alliance, an LGBTQ student group, the show featured three artists in makeup and costumes waltzing through dance numbers and gymnastic feats. "Drag" refers to the performance of exaggerated masculinity or femininity, often as a form of entertainment; it's an LGBTQ tradition that advocates say promotes queer self-expression and gender experimentation.

"It's just amazing seeing how these people fully dressed-up do amazing stunts, and how they interact with the audience," Gonzales, now a rising junior and the alliance's president, told The Chronicle. "They make a very positive and comforting safe space for a lot of people."

South Dakota's chief executive, however, would like to see the performances gone from the state's public colleges.

Last month, Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, wrote a letter to the South Dakota Board of Regents demanding that it ban drag shows on college campuses. The board oversees the state's six public colleges.

The board hasn't yet acted on Noem's demand. But what they decide to do could have consequences for state leaders who oppose drag on campus; for LGBTQ students who embrace the art; and for colleges trying to sort through it all.

In recent months, campus drag shows have become a frequent target of conservative politicians across the country.

Devon Ojeda, a senior national organizer with the National Center for Transgender Equality, said such efforts could affect not just drag shows, but also pride events where people may dress outside of the gender binary. "These drag-ban bills can be an instrument to harass LGBTQIA people," Ojeda said. "It gives people the audacity to harass our community."

**The fight over drag shows is quickly moving into the courts. The president of West Texas A&M University canceled a student drag show in March, saying that such performances were offensive toward women. An LGBTQ student organization sued the president, Walter Wendler, and other officials at the public university. Meanwhile, a federal judge in Tennessee ruled on June 2 that a state law restricting public drag performances violated the First Amendment.**

At a time when LGBTQ rights are mired in political conflict, college leaders must proceed carefully.

Public colleges "have to walk a very careful line to communicate their concerns about these kinds of intrusions on academic freedom and institutional autonomy," said Steven Bloom, assistant vice president for government relations at the American Council on Education, "while preserving their working relationships with policymakers."

'None of Us Are Happy'

South Dakota State's spring 2022 drag show, which so inspired Alyssa Gonzalez, went off without a hitch. Last fall's rendition caused a lot more fuss.

The Gender and Sexualities Alliance billed the performance as "kid-friendly" and encouraged attendees to tip performers. Ahead of the event, riled conservative lawmakers wrote to South Dakota State's president, Barry H. Dunn, and asked if taxpayer money was being used for the show. Dunn clarified that the alliance, a registered student organization, was sponsoring the event, not the university itself.

The show went off without incident, though the alliance increased security. "We had record turnout, there were no security issues," the vice president of the group, Lindsay Tull, told The Chronicle. "It was a really good night."

Still, the system's governing board was driven to act. In December, the Board of Regents asked college presidents to stop allowing kids at events hosted by student organizations while the board reviewed student-activity policies.

"We respect the First Amendment, but none of us are happy about children being encouraged to participate in this event on a university campus," the board's president said in a news release. An interim policy was quickly put in place that allowed kid-friendly events to continue, with board approval.

A final "minors on campus" policy was approved in May. Under the new rules, programs involving minors may not include "specific sexual activities," "obscene live conduct," or anything else that meets the legal definition of "harmful to minors."

Meanwhile, Republican state lawmakers introduced two bills this spring to prohibit state colleges from funding or sponsoring drag shows.

"Should taxpayers be expected to provide resources to host any event students want on campus?" Rep. Chris Karr, who sponsored one of the bills, asked a House committee in February. "That is why I took this bill further. It isn't just about SDSU, we are talking about taxpayer resources." Both bills eventually failed.

Now, the governor has waded into the debate.

Noem's call to ban drag shows was part of a list of demands to the Board of Regents. She also asked the board to remove references to preferred pronouns in campus materials and to require American history and government courses for graduation. And she set up a whistleblower hotline for people to report complaints about the state's colleges and universities.

A spokesman for South Dakota State University referred The Chronicle to the Board of Regents; a spokeswoman for the board said it was still reviewing Noem's letter. Noem's office did not respond to requests for comment.

What Counts as Free Speech?

The debate over drag shows also intersects with higher ed's longstanding conversations about campus free speech.

In her May letter referencing drag shows, Noem directed public colleges to protect free speech. It's not the first time she's talked about campus expression.

Since she became governor in 2019, Noem has made it a priority to reduce suspected liberal influence on college campuses — with the stated goal of promoting free speech. She has rallied against diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education and signed legislation to prohibit transgender athletes from participating in girls' and women's sports.

Additionally:

In March 2019, Noem signed into law a bill ordering colleges to promote "intellectual diversity."

In July 2021, she signed an executive order barring the South Dakota Department of Education from applying for federal grants that have links to critical race theory.

In May 2021, Noem wrote a letter to South Dakota's Board of Regents asking that it strongly consider getting rid of campus diversity offices. The following January, the board indeed did away with the offices and replaced them with "opportunity centers."

In March 2022, Noem signed into law a bill ordering colleges to discontinue mandatory training and orientation programs that discuss "divisive concepts" related to race, gender, and sex. In her most recent letter, Noem assailed "gender theory," which she said has been "rebranded and accepted as truth across the nation." (The Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research defines "gender theory" as the "study of what is understood as masculine and/or feminine and/or queer behavior in any given context, community, society, or field of study.")

Noem also suggested that the First Amendment shouldn't protect the promotion of gender theory: "These theories should be openly debated in college classrooms, but not celebrated through public performances on taxpayer-owned property at taxpayer-funded schools." She denied that embracing particular standards of "behavior and decency" is equivalent to suppressing speech.

But to LGBTQ activists and free-speech advocates, that's exactly what those standards would do.

"We do have the right to express ourselves, whether that be through words or actions," Gonzales, the South Dakota State student leader, said. "Taking that away limits expressing ourselves, both for the students and event-goers who go to drag shows and for the drag artists themselves."

Zach Greenberg, a senior program officer for campus rights advocacy at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, known as FIRE, told The Chronicle that drag shows are expressive conduct protected by the First Amendment. "Students have the right to put forth expressive events, even if those events are hateful, inflammatory, or offensive," Greenberg said.

If the South Dakota Board of Regents agrees to Noem's demand to bar campus drag shows, litigation will likely follow, Greenberg said. He urged public institutions to resist pressure from state officials to limit free expression. Banning drag shows on campus "sends the message that some viewpoints are not OK," Greenberg said.

At South Dakota State, Gonzales said she doesn't want other people to be denied the opportunity to see a drag show for the first time. But if the student group is told to close the curtains, she said, the club would survive.

"We would find other ways to have fun," she said. "But it's just one of our biggest things that everyone looks forward to every year."

[https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-governor-tells-public-colleges-the-drag-show-must-not-go-on?](https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-governor-tells-public-colleges-the-drag-show-must-not-go-on?emailConfirmed=true&supportSignUp=true&supportForgotPassword=true&email=slindsay%40tamus.edu&success=true&code=success&bc_nonce=p1jjazdxjblforwjjstut&cid=gen_sign_in)

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## MSN

### Aggie senior Austin Bost reflects on his Texas A&M career in touching final interview

Jarett Johnson

June 13

Time is something you can never get back. So, however you choose to use it comes at a cost and hopefully results in lasting memories. Austin Bost came to Texas A&M in 2020 after achieving All-Conference First Team honors at Panola College. He eventually worked himself into the starting lineup and earned All-SEC honors.

In 2023 Coach Jim Schlossnagle and the staff chose Bost to wear number 12 for the season because of his leadership, competitiveness, and selflessness. Bost wore the number with pride and represented the Aggie family well.

But all good things must end at some point, and unfortunately for Bost and the Aggie Baseball team, it needed in Northern California against Stanford. After winning back-to-back games to the Regional Final, Stanford beat Texas A&M twice, sending them home earlier than pre-season predictions could have foreseen.

With the season over and his playing career at Texas A&M ending, Bost spoke about his time as an Aggie, plus what it meant to return for his senior year.

Austin Bost was a joy to watch, and I'm happy I chose to spend some of my time watching him play.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/ncaabk/aggie-senior-austin-bost-reflects-on-his-texas-aandm-career-in-touching-final-interview/ar-AA1ctsUK>

## The Eagle

### Relationships sold Texas A&M baseball transfer commit Ali Camarillo Jr. on Aggies

Travis Brown

13 hours ago

The Texas A&M baseball program in the last two seasons certainly has reaped the benefits of the transfer portal at shortstop. Kole Kaler was solid for the 2022 College World Series squad and Hunter Haas had a stellar season this year.

Cal State Northridge transfer Ali Camarillo Jr. hopes to be a continuation of that trend.

On June 2, while the Aggie baseball team was at the Stanford Regional in the northern portion of his home state, Camarillo announced his commitment on social media. The decision simply came down to the relationships, he said.

"I've talked to a lot of good schools in the portal — a lot of [Southeastern Conference] schools — but the coaching staff at A&M was one of the only coaching staffs that didn't really throw

money at me, didn't try bribing me with their facilities and what they have," Camarillo told The Eagle. "It was more about the relationship first."

In two seasons with the Matadors, the 6-foot-1, 175-pound infielder hit .332 with 58 runs batted in, 16 doubles and eight home runs. In 46 games this season, including 45 starts, he hit .371 with 15 doubles and seven home runs to earn All-Big West honors. The Chula Vista, Calif. native posted a pair of consecutive four-hit games in a late-March series against California Riverside.

"I'm an offensive shortstop," Camarillo said. "I'm good with the glove. I make routine plays. I can make some spectacular plays and, overall, I like to say I make the game look easy. I'm a team guy. I want to see my teammates succeed and I want to win more than anything. That's why I committed to Texas A&M. I'm a winner first and that's a big piece of my game."

Camarillo coming out of Otay Ranch High School was ranked 267th nationally overall and 57th at shortstop in the class of 2021, according to Perfect Game.

Most of Camarillo's recruitment took place over the phone, via text or calls, because he was preparing to play in the Cape Cod summer league. He did not visit Aggieland before committing, but facilities were not high on his priority list, he said.

In his first three games with the Cape Cod's Harwich Mariners, Camarillo is hitting .214 with three hits, including a double. Tuesday morning, Camarillo conducted his interview while sitting amongst livestock at his host family's farm, he said with a laugh.

Haas just completed his junior season, his first with the Aggies from Arizona State, and hit .323, second on the team to first baseman Jack Moss. Haas started at shortstop in all but one of A&M's 64 games. In the Stanford Regional, Haas hit .428 with seven RBIs. Haas is draft eligible, but could return for another season.

The Aggies also have highly touted sophomore Kaden Kent, who started one game at shortstop in 2023, but can play several defensive positions.

Camarillo said he believes he can match the output A&M has had at shortstop in recent years.

"I've seen Haas play," Camarillo said. "He's an amazing player. He did really good at that Stanford Regional and that just motivates me to be just as good or better."

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/baseball/relationships-sold-texas-a-m-baseball-transfer-commit-ali-camarillo-jr-on-aggies/article\\_8e056b6c-0a3b-11ee-8d8e-9bbc690e45dd.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm\\_medium=PostUp&Ictg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/baseball/relationships-sold-texas-a-m-baseball-transfer-commit-ali-camarillo-jr-on-aggies/article_8e056b6c-0a3b-11ee-8d8e-9bbc690e45dd.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm_medium=PostUp&Ictg=6988668&tn_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248)

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The Texas A&M University System

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## **AgriLife Today**

### **Al Davis named director for Texas A&M Forest Service**

June 14

Al Davis, formerly interim director for the Texas A&M Forest Service, has now been appointed director by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents in a special telephonic meeting on June 14.

“Al Davis earned this appointment with his hard work and his dedication to excellence,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Davis has successfully led the A&M Forest Service through one of the most active wildfire seasons in the state’s history. During 2022, the agency responded to 12,000 wildfires and saved more than 8,000 homes in the path of these fires, protecting both property and the lives of Texans.”

In his two years as interim director of Texas A&M Forest Service, Davis has helped the agency focus on people and its core mission areas to conserve, protect and lead. The agency has nearly 550 employees and 58 office locations across Texas.

“It is a privilege to be in a position to lead this important agency and work alongside fellow Texas A&M University System state agencies to continue keeping Texas prepared,” Davis said. “As an agency, we are all deeply committed to protecting our great state and nation through strategic incident response and a relentless drive to build more resilient and sustainable communities.”

Davis had been with TEEEX since 2005, having served as director of the National Emergency Response and Recovery Training Center. In 2014, he was appointed to deputy agency director.

Previously, he was chairman of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium and co-founder and principal emeritus of the National Cyber Security Preparedness Consortium. He is also a former advisory board member of the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security.

Davis earned a bachelor’s degree from Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and two master’s degrees from the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., and Averett University in Danville, Virginia.

Before joining The Texas A&M University System, Davis worked as a consultant with United Water and served as a chief executive of the Public School District in New Orleans. He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring with the rank of colonel.

Texas A&M Forest Service provides statewide leadership and technical assistance to ensure trees, forests and related natural resources are sustained for the benefit of all. The agency supports the state’s incident response capability, protecting against wildfire and responding to a range of all-hazard incidents.

From initial response to ongoing recovery, the agency strives to protect Texas from wildfire and other disasters. To that end, it has formed strong partnerships with fire departments and governments on a local, state and national level. Its programming and educational outreach directly assists communities across the state in

protecting and conserving their lands.

#### About The Texas A&M University System

The Texas A&M University System is one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, with a budget of \$7.2 billion. Through a statewide network of 11 universities, a comprehensive health science center, eight state agencies, and the RELLIS Campus, the Texas A&M System educates more than 152,000 students and makes more than 24 million additional educational contacts through service and outreach programs each year. System-wide, research and development expenditures exceed \$1 billion and help drive the state's economy.

<https://agrifiletoday.tamu.edu/2023/06/14/al-davis-named-director-for-texas-am-forest-service/>

#### **KBTX**

##### **Experts feeling confident power grid will hold up during the summer**

Conner Beene

June 13

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - The power grid is hoping to keep things cool during the summertime.

According to experts, they aren't expecting any problems to take place with residents with keeping the lights on and the A/C running.

Thomas Overbye, Director of the Smart Grid Center at Texas A&M University, says adjustments have been made and crews are prepared to fix the worse possible situations.

"If the situation is as expected, the generators have had their maintenance done and we've planned out pretty well different scenarios," said Overbye.

Compared to how the grid responded to the major winter storm in 2022 and the multiple requests to conserve energy in 2022, Overbye says great progress has been made for this year.

"There are changes in having more generation," he said. "There are changes in how the grid is operated. There are changes in how the electricity market is being operated."

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/14/experts-feeling-confident-power-grid-will-hold-up-during-summer/>

#### **KAGS**

##### **'A really good support system' : Texas A&M app developers present flood-tracking app to Orange City Council**

Lupita Villarreal

June 13

ORANGE, Texas — A new-flood tracking app was presented to Orange City Council on Tuesday.

Developers of the app "Blupix" want to partner with the City of Orange to help provide precise, real-time information about flood levels to residents and first responders.

Residents would be able to help gather the data by uploading photos.

Users will be able to go to the Blupix app and create an account. Once that is done, users will upload a photo of the stop sign where the flooding is occurring.

The pole of the stop sign will gauge how deep the water is. Stop signs are used because they are universally the same length.

Texas A&M University Researcher and Data Scientist Bahareh Alizadeh says the artificial intelligence model will analyze the length of the submerged pole and the actual length of the pole before the flood.

"So by comparing them, we can look at the level of flood at the stop sign," she said.

The app will provide real-time precise information about flood levels, which will also help city leaders like Orange Mayor Larry Spears, Jr. make key decisions.

"Giving them an opportunity to be involved a lot of times during inclement weather, hurricanes and things like that and that nature," he said. "So, by adding them to this, and saying here is a chance to relay info on what's going on all in this Golden Triangle area, I think we will get a really good support system."

Researchers even developed another app in the Blupix family, called Blupix Pre-Flood that will collect photos of stop signs without any flooding.

"This is for places that has limited google street view data or in case of during a flood they have limited data connectivity," Alizadeh said.

These are apps that both city officials and Texas A&M researchers like Charles White say should be taken advantage of.

"950 million stop signs in America and only 10,000 flood gauges in America. So, if we turn those 950 million stop signs into flood gauges, that is the benefit," White said.

The Blupix app was previously presented to Port Arthur City Council in February.

Port Arthur Mayor Thurman Bartie say because flooding poses such a great risk in Southeast Texas, he's excited to put the new tool to work.

"I believe that we should use every resource, every instrument that we have, and for sure in a community like mine here in Port Arthur," said Bartie previously told 12News. "Now you try to be prepared or you're preparing yourself to either correct the infrastructure or do something that would actually mitigate so to speak."

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/news/local/texas-a-m-u/texas-am-app-developers-flood-tracking-app-orange-city-council/502-fe179fd5-408d-4845-b9be-951307f1ad4d>

## **KBTX**

### **Texas A&M names new leader of journalism program**

Katherine Griffith

June 13

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (KBTX) - A veteran journalist with more than 40 years of experience has been hired to lead Texas A&M's new journalism program.

Kathleen McElroy, class of '81, will oversee the new program.

She says one of her priorities is to build a curriculum that incorporates innovative ways to deliver news.

"A&M is special to me and the opportunity to start a new program is so amazing when so many people think journalism is dead or dying or struggling and here we are at a place where let's make journalism thrive, let's put all the innovation that's going on on this campus, and let's add it to journalism," McElroy told KBTX.

McElroy has worked at places like The New York Times, The National, Austin American-Statesman, The Huntsville Item, and The Eagle.

Most recently, she was a professor at the School of Journalism and Media at the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. José Luis Bermúdez, the interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, says McElroy is the perfect person for this position.

"I think Dr. McElroy is the perfect fit because she's got an extraordinary career in journalism," Bermúdez said. "She's an Aggie so she understands some of the things that make Texas A&M special and how to translate that into training future journalists."

McElroy graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in broadcast journalism in 1981.

She was the first Aggie selected to the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Hall of Fame.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/14/texas-am-names-new-leader-journalism-program/>

## **The Daily News**

### **A&M employee accused of embezzling \$360k meant for library supplies**

Trace Harris

June 13

A former Texas A&M University at Galveston employee is accused of embezzling money meant to buy toner for the campus library, stealing more than \$360,000 in public money through a personal PayPal account, according to an affidavit officials have fought to withhold.

Texas A&M University at Galveston police allege that from Nov. 11, 2018, to April 20, 2022, Michael Sweeney,

38, of Galveston, a former library business manager employed by the university from 2017 to 2022, embezzled the money by falsely charging vendors for toner cartridges for the library with payments directed to his personal account, according to an affidavit.

Sweeney was arrested Jan. 12 and indicted by a grand jury March 23.

After the indictment, The Daily News contacted university police, who refused to hand over police reports, affidavits and other public records that reveal details about criminal complaints leading to charges. The Daily News on May 12 made a formal request under the Texas Public Information Act for police reports and an affidavit from the Texas A&M University System's open records portal.

On June 9, Texas A&M University System released a few records with basic details, but none provided information such as the probable cause used to justify an arrest, which are well established to be public records and typically disclosed without a formal request. The university system cited section 552.130 of the Texas Government Code, arguing it was not required to provide information sought in request because it is confidential by law and that the university need not seek a ruling from the Texas Attorney General's Office, which is generally the case when the government seeks to withhold public information.

The Daily News obtained the affidavit Tuesday from the Galveston County District Attorney's Office.

A university patrol officer was assigned to the case Aug. 19, 2022, and learned more than \$90,000 was missing from the university library fund, according to the affidavit. The investigator learned the money was supposed to be used to buy toner cartridges for the library, which never received them, according to the affidavit.

Data from the library's budget showed that one vendor, Gateway Printing, was paid each month from \$4,500 to \$4,900, according to the affidavit. The payments were made using a university procurement card through a PayPal account, according to the affidavit.

Library Manager David Baca told investigators that when the cartridges were needed, he would let Sweeney know to order them, according to the affidavit. Baca told investigators the university's shipping and delivery would deliver the packages and a student would sign for them, in violation of school policy.

University Business Administrator II Sirena Birkeland contacted Gateway Printing and found the company never sent toner to the university, despite the fact Susan Lee, university associate vice president of finance, found the payments to Gateway totaled more than \$250,000, according to the affidavit.

Gateway informed the university the company doesn't use PayPal as a form of receiving payment, according to the affidavit. Investigators were given ledger books from shipping and delivery, which showed no deliveries from Gateway in 2020, 2021 and 2022, according to the affidavit.

On Aug. 25, 2022, investigators found that a university credit card was used by Sweeney to order printer supplies from Dalton Print Shop in Dalton, Georgia, according to the affidavit. The manager of the print shop determined the company never shipped anything to the university, according to the affidavit.

On Sept. 30, 2022, the Galveston County District Attorney's Office signed three subpoenas, one for PayPal transactions to Dalton Printing and Gateway Printing, one for Comcast and another for Citibank, according to the affidavit.



On Oct. 19, 2022, investigators received a DVD of two files, both for procurement cards. The first card showed expenditures from Feb. 3, 2018, to Aug. 3, 2022, and the other showed expenditures from Dec. 3, 2018, to Aug. 3, 2022, according to the affidavit. No deliveries from either company were found, according to the affidavit.

On Nov. 16, 2022, a subpoena was issued to United Services Automobile Association, where Sweeney personally banks, according to the affidavit. Investigators received Sweeney's bank records from Feb. 14, 2018, to Nov. 15, 2022, which showed several large transfers from a PayPal account to his own bank, according to the affidavit.

Investigators asked university risk and compliance manager Debbie Dell to examine Sweeney's PayPal account and found that about \$363,311.90 of university money was placed into his account, according to the affidavit.

Sweeney initially was given \$1 million bond, which was reduced to \$100,000 Jan. 18, when he was released.

Rebecca Watts, executive director of the division of marketing and communications for Texas A&M University at Galveston did not respond to requests for comment.

Sweeney is charged in Judge Kerry Neves' 10th District Court. He is being defended by island attorney Jonathan Zende Del. Zende Del did not respond to requests for comment.

Chief Assistant District Attorney Shannon Donnelly of the Galveston County District Attorney's Office said she could not provide information on an ongoing case.

The next court date for Sweeney is a status conference set for July 17.

[https://www.galvnews.com/news/a-m-employee-accused-of-embezzling-360k-meant-for-library-supplies/article\\_b5be1436-fa95-5750-9a90-3f63a52594bd.html](https://www.galvnews.com/news/a-m-employee-accused-of-embezzling-360k-meant-for-library-supplies/article_b5be1436-fa95-5750-9a90-3f63a52594bd.html)

## **Texas A&M Today**

### **Texas A&M University Libraries To Open "...I Will Go To Texas"**

Ivy Mestrovic

June 14

Texas A&M University Libraries is proud to present "...I Will Go to Texas: A Selection of Texas Landscapes, Wildflowers and Wildlife." The original exhibition will be on display at Cushing Memorial Library & Archives June 22 – Sept. 29.

Featuring paintings by John James Audubon, John Cassin, Charles Criner, Porfirio Salinas, E.M. Buck Schiewtz '21, Raiford Stripling '31, Friedrich Tempelty and Clifford Wendler '39, the exhibition includes works spanning from the mid 1800s through the late 1900s. The paintings capture different moments of Texas' natural and cultural history. Visit the exhibit to see Texas' natural beauty in a new way through the work of a diverse group of artists.

"Cushing houses the largest art collection at Texas A&M University," said Beth Kilmarx, assistant university librarian for special collections. "The collection contains some of the finest works by American painters,

naturalists and German engravers depicting Texas life and the landscapes, fauna and flora of Texas.”

To celebrate the opening of the exhibition, Cushing Library will host a reception that is free and open to the public on Thursday, June 22, from 3 to 5 p.m. Architect Justin Curtsinger '06 will speak about how Texas' history and landscapes and Texas A&M University's cultural heritage inspired the architects and artists that worked on campus during the 1930s and 1940s.

Cushing Library is open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

This exhibition is free and open to the public.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/14/texas-am-university-libraries-to-open-i-will-go-to-texas/>

### **Texas A&M Today**

#### **Texas A&M's Mays Business School Welcomes 'Transformational Hire'**

Michelle Blakley

June 14

Mays Business School has recruited Dr. Stephen J. Anderson — a rising star in the field of marketing whose research is focused on aiding entrepreneurs and consumers in developing countries — to hold the inaugural Dr. Leonard L. Berry Chair in Services Marketing.

Anderson begins his career in Aggieland this summer.

Anderson has five degrees in business and economics, including a master's and doctorate from London Business School. He joins Texas A&M after a decade of carrying out research in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

“Boosting the performance and productivity of entrepreneurs can stimulate growth and prosperity in their communities,” Anderson said. “Estimates suggest there are ~400 million small businesses across Africa, Asia and Latin America, where they make up about 60% of the jobs and 40% of a country's GDP. Improvements in these businesses provide a way for entrepreneurs, and the employees they lead, to enhance their lives.”

In one of his ambitious field studies with over 900 Ugandan entrepreneurs, access to virtual business coaching led to more strategic business pivots and improved the sales growth of participants by about 25%. While in South Africa, access to marketing and finance training resulted in more tactical business practices and increased firm profits by 20-30%. Over the past decade, thousands of entrepreneurs have participated in similar business support programs overseen by Anderson. He has created collaborations with a range of partners including government agencies (the World Bank, Entrepreneur Institute of Mexico, Nigeria's Ministry of Finance, Peru's Ministry of Science and Innovation), non-government organizations (Balloon Ventures, GROW Movement, Technoserve), and private-sector companies (Equity Bank, KiWi, SAP).

“Similar to how health programs intervene in developing countries with medical solutions to improve the health of a community,” Anderson said. “I set out to provide business solutions for entrepreneurs in these contexts, then use randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to rigorously assess the impact on outcomes like sales or profits.”

Anderson's field research designs and delivers multi-year programs for local entrepreneurs to join. These programs provide access to a range of business support tools, from training and technology to mentoring and money.

"No one provides the unique combination of resources like Dr. Anderson does through his programs," says Stephen Kagera, a field research manager based in Africa. "These programs often involve intense training interventions that also utilize easy-to-use and relatively cheap technology to help entrepreneurs better manage their customers and products, which can ultimately drive greater sales and profits for their businesses."

"I am excited to join the Department of Marketing at Mays Business School, where scholars focus on marketing's impact on business outcomes and social outcomes," Anderson said. "I believe the mission of 'advancing the world's prosperity' is the right vision — an inspiring vision. Whether a practitioner or researcher, it reminds us that our impact as business leaders can and should extend beyond top-line and bottom-line performance, and beyond the borders of our existing companies and countries."

Dr. Anderson will continue this important research focused on alleviating poverty and positively impacting the lives of entrepreneurs in these emerging markets. He will be working with Dr. Leonard L. Berry while holding the endowed chair.

"I could not have imagined a better person to fill this position and carry on my work in marketing services," Berry said. "Dr. Anderson is making such a positive difference in people's lives; I have always tried to do the same in my work. Within five minutes of meeting, we established an immediate connection."

The Dr. Leonard L. Berry Chair in Services Marketing was established in 2021 at Texas A&M University's Mays Business School through a \$1 million gift from Leonard Berry and Brazos County Commissioner Nancy Berry to the Texas A&M Foundation. It is the first endowed chair to be established by a current faculty member at the university.

Berry holds the M.B. Zale Chair in Retailing and Marketing Leadership. He also is a University Distinguished Professor of Marketing, a Regents Professor and a Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence. He has published 13 books and is the most cited scholar in the Texas A&M System with 237,978 citations on Google Scholar.

The endowed chair was created to continue groundbreaking work in the field of services marketing, with a focus on the potential of services to benefit humanity and improve quality of life.

"Steve Anderson is a transformational hire for Mays Business School," said Mays Business School Dean, Dr. Nate Sharp. "While all scholars aspire to conduct impactful research, Steve's research is literally 'advancing the world's prosperity' on multiple continents. I cannot imagine another faculty member better suited to carry forward the legacy of — and hold the endowed chair established by — one of the most impactful scholars in the entire field of marketing research, our own Dr. Len Berry. I am thrilled to welcome Steve to Mays Business School and feel honored to support his ambitious research agenda."

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/14/texas-ams-mays-business-school-welcomes-transformational-hire/>

**MSN**

**Housing bubbles: When demand for real estate exceeds supply and causes a spike in prices**

Paul Kim

June 13

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Housing bubbles are sharp price increases driven by a temporary surge in demand that isn't rooted in basic fundamentals.

Fundamentals are determined by the factors that affect supply and demand, such as costs of building houses and changes in population demographics.

Though experts often disagree on the existence of a housing bubble, you can look at housing prices compared to rent and income as a good indicator.

In the 90s and early 2000s, loose lending standards and subprime mortgages led to a housing bubble that devastated families across the US, particularly those in the middle class. Housing prices are now higher than they were at the peak of the housing bubble, yet experts disagree on whether this price spike can be considered a bubble.

If a price spike in the housing market doesn't necessarily indicate a housing bubble, what is a housing bubble and how does it form?

What is a housing bubble?

A housing bubble is a sharp price increase in the real estate market as a result of a sudden, temporary surge in demand caused by external factors. According to Logan Mohtashami, lead analyst at Housing Wire, housing bubbles occur when "prices are disconnected from fundamentals, and the demand that's being pushed by housing is in a speculative nature."

Housing bubbles are defined by their ability to "pop." Eventually, whatever is driving demand will collapse, and suddenly there is no demand, which means that housing prices will begin dropping rapidly.

Let's take an example: the housing bubble in the mid-2000s. At that time, lending standards were incredibly slack, and it was easy to get a housing loan, which created unsustainable demand for housing. When credit standards tightened, demand shrunk and prices fell.

Compared to other economic bubbles, housing bubbles are uncommon. This is primarily because housing is so expensive, so it's not subject to a great deal of impulsiveness.

"It is very hard to have a massive marketing campaign that goes viral, that makes everybody want to suddenly change this fundamentally huge decision in your life that has so many steps, and so much interaction with credit and loans and banks," says Skylar Olsen, former principal housing economist at Tomo, a digital real estate

firm. "It's not like the Beanie Baby craze." Maintaining a house is also costly in both time and money, which discourages speculation.

What causes a housing bubble?

There is no one cause for a housing bubble — it varies from bubble to bubble. However, they're always caused when the housing market moves away from the fundamentals that it's based on, usually by some temporary external pressure on the housing market that boosts demand.

The housing bubble that crashed housing prices in the 2000s was a result of subprime mortgages or loose lending practices, what Mohtashami calls exotic loan debt structures. These risky loans were given to borrowers who wouldn't have been able to buy a house otherwise, opening the possibility of home ownership to a whole section of the population. Unfortunately, many of these borrowers were unable to make their mortgage payments, so they lost their homes as credit standards tightened.

"We no longer have any exotic loan debt structures in the system," Mohtashami says. "Hence, we have created the best homeowner loan profiles ever in our history."

Speculation can further drive the housing market away from fundamentals, though it doesn't have the force to create a housing bubble on its own. When real estate prices start climbing, speculators might see an opportunity to ride that wave and buy into the real estate market. These property investors limit the housing supply and raise prices even higher and further away from the fundamentals. Speculation pushes more housing construction which makes the crash worse when the bubble pops by creating supply overhang, which further devalues homes.

What are housing market fundamentals?

If the market moving away from fundamentals causes a housing bubble, this begs the question: What are the fundamentals of the housing market?

Like all markets, the housing market is driven by supply and demand. Housing supply can be influenced by factors such as construction prices, land availability, even new construction technology. Housing supply is thought to be elastic in the long run, which means it can adjust to meet demand over a long period of time. However, this is increasingly less true.

Supply can also be affected by housing destruction. "I think that's worth talking about, especially as we approach climate change," Olsen says. "You can lose a bunch of homes during a hurricane or with storm surge."

On the other hand, housing demand is largely driven by the demographics of the people buying houses. This includes the age of the people buying houses and the income of these people. Demand is also impacted by the type of employment and where people want to migrate.

"Big job booms, or industry booms within a metropolitan area will attract higher earning jobs. Higher earning income ends up increasing the ability of people to pay in the market," Olsen says.

Demand will also be affected by the location of the housing market. Looking at something on a smaller scale, like a city, demand can be affected by school districts and crime rates.

What happens when a housing bubble pops?

A housing bubble pops when whatever was pushing demand suddenly evaporates. Suddenly there is an

abundance of supply compared to demand, exacerbated by both speculation and new houses on the market. "That causes a drop in home prices because people are willing to sell their home for lower and lower. Eventually, demand and supply reach an equilibrium," says Nik Shah, founder of Home.LLC.

When a housing bubble pops, the general consensus is that if you're able to hold onto your house, you should wait to sell it until after the market has stabilized. "Same thing with stock markets, right? You don't want to sell on a down market, just hold on," Olsen says.

How to determine if we're in a bubble

Though defining a bubble and its potential causes is easy enough, determining if we are actually in a housing bubble is tricky. Housing experts often disagree on whether a price spike is caused by a shift in fundamentals — so not a housing bubble — or something that's completely divorced from these fundamentals.

**Research economist Luis Torres writes in a Texas A&M study that "home prices growing at a rapid rate is not in itself conclusive evidence of a bubble." Instead, these price increases are "not based on economic fundamentals, especially if price increases for that region do not reflect overall historical price trends."**

**Additionally, because fundamentals change over time so "there is no safe way of knowing what prices should be," Torres writes. There's no way to determine when the market is acting abnormally, because there's no normality to compare it to.**

However, it can be helpful to compare other economic trends against housing prices like the cost of rent. If rent is increasing alongside housing prices, there might just be a migration wave moving to a certain area or perhaps demand for housing is just going up. Olsen says "there might be something inappropriate in home values if they grow so much faster than rents, right?"

Additionally, another concerning indicator is if housing prices are rapidly outpacing income. Housing demand grows when income grows because people have more disposable income for a down payment on a house. If income isn't growing but housing prices are, then something else other than buying power is pushing demand.

Homes are expensive overall in 2023, but we are not experiencing a housing bubble. Prices are still soaring in some parts of the country. But some experts predict that prices will start to go down (at least in certain areas) because mortgage rates and aspiring buyers' incomes aren't significantly budging.

The mid-2000s housing bubble explained

The housing bubble that popped in 2008 was a culmination of several bad practices in the housing market that took place over several years.

Mortgage-backed securities: Mortgage-backed securities (MBS) were a type of investments that grouped together mortgages and sold them to investors on the secondary market. They are only as secure as the mortgages themselves, which in the 2000s, meant they weren't very secure, but investors had no idea because risk wasn't being assessed properly.

When MBSs moved into the primary market, which meant investors were buying directly from lenders, "you had a bunch of mortgage lenders who found it easy to lend because they have this stream of money," Olsen says.

Adjusted-rate mortgages: Low mortgage rates increase real estate demand by making houses accessible to

more people who wouldn't have been able to purchase a house otherwise. In the 2000s, a large portion of mortgages were adjustable-rate mortgages. These entice people with an initial low mortgage rate that increases after the initial rate period expires. Olsen says that households that took out an adjustable-rate mortgage didn't understand or weren't told exactly how much their mortgage rate might change. "They were given a loan that they could not really pay off," she says.

Rising mortgage rates caused a wave of foreclosures, which doubled from nearly 720,000 in 2006 to 2.3 million in 2008. Six trillion dollars was lost in wealth as a result of the housing crash.

Credit is now incredibly tight. "It's never been harder to get a loan to buy a home," Shah says. As a result, it's unlikely that we'll see a housing bubble caused by these same circumstances. If we want to keep it that way, Mohtashami says "the best thing for America is to never ease lending standards from where they are right now, and everything will be okay."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/realestate/housing-bubbles-when-demand-for-real-estate-exceeds-supply-and-causes-a-spike-in-prices/ar-AA1cvcJa?li=BB16M4hs>

## **AgriLife Today**

### **Rains both good and bad for Texas Panhandle**

June 13

Agricultural operations in the Texas Panhandle are adjusting to above-average rainfall over the last month that improved soil moisture profiles but is delaying fieldwork, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

Recent rains in the Texas Panhandle have reversed much of the region's moisture deficit brought on by several years of drought. While beneficial to the long-term prospects for agriculture, heavy rains and soggy conditions are causing planting delays for some producers and destroying crops for others.

The inability to access fields is preventing producers from planting planned crops like cotton and corn. Producers are now assessing field conditions and evaluating their planting options, said Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo.

#### Rain challenges producers in Texas Panhandle

Many rainfall events around the Panhandle during May were slow, soil-soaking events that improved the soil moisture profile. Isolated heavy rainfall caused flooding, but the rainfall events that led to catastrophic flooding in towns like Hereford and Amarillo were not the norm for most of the region.

Precipitation has consistently fallen throughout the Panhandle since mid-May, so the region is saturated. Hereford received more than 20 inches of rainfall over one month, which is above its average annual precipitation of around 18 inches. The Hereford flooding was also caused by extreme amounts of rainfall in a short time – around 11 inches in two hours in some areas.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research station at Bushland had received more than 10 inches over the last month, Bell said. Prior to last month, only 0.9 inch of rain was recorded at Bushland from Jan. 1-May 1.

Rainfall in June has continued that cycle. Precipitation amounts were also very sporadic, with some production areas receiving more or less than others nearby. Rain has replenished stock tanks, playa lakes and filled creeks and even lakes that Bell and others have never seen hold water.

Bell said there are still fields with standing water and crops that are likely drowned out. Other planted fields have issues with soil crusting that prevents good crop emergence. Another round of storms on June 11 and June 12 brought hail that impacted many more fields across the entire Panhandle. Cotton fields planted in early May are also developing very slowly because of cool conditions, provided they were not hailed out. Early planted corn looked good if not drowned or hailed out.

“Before the rain, many producers were reevaluating planting decisions because of the drought and declining groundwater, and now it’s been challenging to get in the field and get work done because of the rain,” she said. “And now we are seeing many fields that were not planted or, if planted before the rains, drowned or hailed out. It takes time for fields to dry enough to access, so the challenge for producers is to get their summer crop in before it’s too late.”

Rain impacts on wheat, warm-season crops

Most wheat acres failed earlier in the season due to drought, Bell said. Consistent rains throughout May likely benefitted remaining wheat fields and harvest potential, but grain yield potential was set prior to the recent rainfall.

Bell said a considerable amount of the region’s small grain crops are used for forage, and later-maturing small grain species used for forage, such as triticale, are likely to experience greater boosts in yields compared to earlier-maturing wheat varieties.

Bell said wheat is fortunately not at a stage where producers are concerned about sprouting heads, but there may be some grain test weight losses from widespread leaf diseases like rust. It is too late to spray for foliar diseases, but producers are hopeful the impact on grain weights will be minimal.

The rain’s impact on warm-season crops will be mostly good because fields needed the soil moisture as crops move into hotter summer periods, Bell said. But the consistent rainfall has also led to below-normal temperatures, and cooler conditions have impacted plant development progress because of low heat unit accumulation.

Some producers were able to get cotton planted before the rains began in May, Bell said. But the planting window is closed for Panhandle cotton if it is not in the ground at this point. The dates for crop insurance and late planting have passed, so producers with fields not planted or that need to be replanted will need to evaluate other options.

The soil moisture will be crucial for corn production, but corn can still be risky because of its high moisture requirement if producers have low well capacities, she said. Producers will need to consider earlier-maturing hybrids if planting corn and shift their period of peak water use later.

Sorghum provides flexibility for producers because it can be successfully planted into late June as long as they consider the appropriate maturity class, she said.

“Even though it’s been very wet, we know it can quickly turn very hot and dry,” she said. “The forecast is transitioning into an El Niño, but I do think it is important that producers still consider available moisture and



irrigation well capacity when making the final decision.”

#### Other benefits from rainfall

The rains in May and June are likely to significantly improve forage production and rangeland grazing and browsing for both livestock and wildlife, as well as water availability, Bell said. Summer grasses will likely get a boost from the replenished soil moisture profile.

More than 50% of the acreage in the Panhandle is native rangeland, making those acres an essential resource for livestock, she said. Many of those areas have been locked in drought for multiple years, and the moisture will be very beneficial.

“We tend to focus on crops, but the benefits to rangeland and grasslands are incredibly important,” she said. “Ranchers are also dealing with fences and roads that washed out. Both crop and livestock producers faced damages and losses to the recent rains.”

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries:

#### CENTRAL

Rainfall was spotty over the past week, and temperatures have risen. Soil moisture levels were adequate to surplus. First cuttings of Bermuda grass were being cut and baled with good yields reported. Wheat and oat harvests were nearly complete. Wheat yields from fields with heavy Hessian fly pressure were one-third lower than fields with little to no insect pressure. Good yields were coming in at 50-70 bushels per acre. The corn crop was in good condition. Grain corn was mostly at the water ripe stage and beginning to color. Sorghum was rapidly reaching the heading stage. Some sesame was being planted following the wheat harvest. Pastures looked good but were covered in weeds. Erath County reported several calls related to hypoxylon canker in oak trees. Algal blooms in ponds increased along with weed pressure. Livestock were in excellent condition. Sheep and goat markets held steady. The cattle market took a slight upturn. Livestock fly numbers remained consistent. Rangeland and pasture conditions were good.

#### ROLLING PLAINS

Most areas reported sporadic rainfall throughout the week. Areas that remained dry proceeded with wheat harvest. Many counties reported better-than-expected wheat yields. Cotton planting proceeded in areas dry enough to enter as the planting deadline was set at the end of the month.

#### COASTAL BEND

Very hot, dry conditions were reported. Conditions were drying topsoil quickly. Corn was in the dent stage and starting to dry down. Corn looked very good, with significantly higher yield potential over last year. Corn harvest was underway in some areas. Sorghum crops also showed potential for above-average yields, but later planted fields will need more moisture to perform as well as earlier planted fields. Grain sorghum was turning red; harvest should begin in the next few weeks. Wheat fields were harvested, and yields were fair to good. Early planted soybeans were in good to excellent condition. Rice was doing well and starting panicle development, with some early rice starting to head. Cotton conditions were fair to good in most fields. Cotton responded extremely well to the moisture in late May and early June. A lot of the earlier planted cotton was starting to square and bloom. Extreme heat and dry conditions were starting to take a toll on pasture and rangeland conditions. Pastures were in fair to good condition but could use some rain. Weed and insect control continued to be a priority, but no major problems were reported. Hay harvest was in full swing, and yields varied from fair to good. Second cuttings of hay were coming to an end in some areas with wide-ranging yields and quality reported. Cattle on pasture were in good to excellent condition, and feeder cattle prices were at or near record

levels. Calves gained well throughout the spring and looked good.

#### EAST

Subsoil and topsoil conditions were adequate. Hay production was in full swing across the district. Producers were spraying for weeds. Scattered rainfall was received in most counties. Pasture and rangeland conditions were good. Blackberry, blueberry and summer vegetable harvesting continued. Cattle markets were strong. Livestock were in fair to good condition. Horn flies remained a major problem. Wild pig damage was reported.

#### SOUTH PLAINS

Continuous rain events caused local flooding and prevented fieldwork, including cotton planting. Temperatures began to heat up towards the end of the week allowing access to fields in some areas to continue planting. Established crops were slowly developing due to cooler temperatures, but warmer temperatures and sunny skies in the forecast should help. A few fields of cotton were zeroed out due to hail damage. Some cotton fields sustained minor damage from thrips. Grain crops and pastures were thriving due to the moisture. A few irrigation systems were turned back on ahead of the dry, sunny forecast.

#### PANHANDLE

Wet conditions kept farmers out of their fields for most of the week. Most counties in the district reported adequate subsoil moisture, with some reporting surplus topsoil moisture. Crops were in fair to good condition. Planting resumed on corn and began on grain sorghum in some areas, and most fields needed weed control. Corn that was planted early in the season looked excellent. Wheat was still maturing, but some fields were beginning to turn color. Cotton conditions were questionable due to extreme rainfall. Emerged cotton was growing slowly due to overcast, cool days and surplus topsoil moisture. Rangelands were green, growing and recovering well. Most pastures were not stocked to allow them time to recover. Rangeland and pasture conditions were mostly fair to good. Fly issues on cattle were a problem, and some pinkeye was showing up. Some foot rot problems were beginning to appear.

#### NORTH

Soil moisture levels were short to adequate. Some counties received scattered thunderstorms, while others reported sporadic rain. Hail damaged crops in some areas. Pasture and rangeland were in fair to good condition. Corn looked good and was tasselling in most fields. Soybeans and grain sorghum were doing well. Oats were being harvested, and peanut planting was underway. Livestock were in good condition. Spring-born calves were doing well. Nuisance flies were still very intense in most counties.

#### FAR WEST

Daytime temperatures were in the mid-80s to low-90s and in the 70s overnight. Soil moisture levels continued to improve. Spotty showers delivered trace amounts to 2.25 inches of rain. Storms brought damaging hail as well. Cotton planting was complete, but fields were growing slowly due to cool night-time temperatures. Cotton around the El Paso area was being irrigated. Corn and sorghum were doing well in the weather, but melons were behind schedule. Conditions were favorable for cotton planting if producers were able to access fields. Pecan orchards looked good, but producers were noticing potential leaf spot damage. Rangeland conditions were improving, and pastures were greening up nicely. Most ranching operations were wrapping up a first hay cutting, and rangelands were expected to recover exceptionally following the rainfall. Alfalfa fields looked good, and some fields were cut despite the rain. Livestock were in fair condition and improving, and producers finished working of lambs and kid goats.

#### WEST CENTRAL

Scattered rains delivered trace amounts up to 1.3 inches, with some hail damage reported. Temperatures were

rising, and humidity levels were above normal. One county reported temperatures above 100 degrees. More rain was needed to fill stock tanks and lakes. High temperatures were stressing plants. Cotton planting was delayed by wet conditions, and several fields held standing water. Pecan orchards had promising crops, but pecan nut casebearers caused some early damage.

Producers were harvesting wheat, preparing fields and shredding pastures where they could. Some producers cut and baled Bermuda grass and hay grazer. Pastures and rangelands looked good and were improving, but weed pressure was high. Rangeland and pastures that were overgrazed were slower to recover. Livestock looked excellent, with good grazing availability. Cattle prices were up. Stocker steers sold \$15-\$25 higher per hundredweight, and stocker heifers sold \$8-\$10 higher per hundredweight. Feeder steers were \$10-\$15 dollars higher, while feeder heifers were \$12-\$14 higher per hundredweight.

#### SOUTHEAST

Multiple rains saturated the ground, but some areas received sporadic rainfall. Some heavy storms caused power outages. Very high temperatures were in the forecast. Ponds were full and livestock were in good condition. Agricultural operations were more optimistic about production through summer following recent rainfall. Fieldwork occurred where drier conditions allowed. Rice fields looked fair, but early planted fields looked excellent. Cotton was planted, and planted fields progressed, but cooler, cloudy conditions slowed crop development. Irrigated and dryland corn was doing well. Hay and haylage harvest continued where the weather allowed. Forage production fields were being fertilized following recent cuttings. Grazing and forage production conditions were excellent. Cool-season forages were still present but declined, and weed control ramped up. Fly and mosquito populations were booming.

#### SOUTHWEST

Some areas remained dry, while others received trace amounts of up to almost 1 inch of rainfall. Temperatures were rising, and moisture levels declined. Wheat and oats were harvested. All irrigated crops looked good. The corn and sorghum fields looked excellent. Hay harvest was in full swing, and pastures responded well to recent rainfall. Gardeners were busy harvesting. Crop pest numbers were low. Cattle prices were excellent, and livestock were beginning to concentrate around water or in the shade to cool off. Livestock and wildlife were in good condition, but producers were warned that conditions were favorable for anthrax outbreaks.

#### SOUTH

Grain sorghum started to turn color, and corn was beginning to dry down. Some producers were applying harvest aids on grain sorghum. Midge, head worms, rice stinkbugs and sugarcane aphids were reported in grain sorghum. Sesame was in the early vegetative and flowering stages. A few garden webworms were reported in sesame, but the crops looked clean. Potato and sweet corn harvests continued. Later-planted corn fields were in the dough stage. Peanut planting was in full swing and should be completed soon. Cotton fields emerged and looked good. Irrigated fields were beginning to square, and some were setting bolls. Flea hoppers, tarnish bugs and whiteflies were reported in cotton fields. Bermuda grass fields were being cut and baled. Livestock and wildlife were looking for cool shaded areas or ponds or creeks to stay cool. Cattle prices were still very strong. Watermelons and cantaloupe harvests continued. Row crops were progressing rather well, with most farmers focusing on insect and weed control. Beef cattle conditions improved as grazing availability increased. Local markets continued to report below-average sale volumes with steady to strong prices for all classes. Ranchers and deer producers continued to supplement their livestock and wildlife. Quail were still in mating season.

<https://agriflifelife.tamu.edu/2023/06/13/texas-panhandle/>

## **Farm Press**

### **Texas A&M breeding program releases new wheat, triticale varieties**

Kay Ledbetter

June 14

Two new wheat varieties and a new triticale variety are headed to farmers in the fall of 2024, according to an announcement by Texas A&M AgriLife and the Texas A&M Wheat Improvement Program.

Texas A&M AgriLife Research wheat breeders Jackie Rudd, Amarillo, and Amir Ibrahim, Bryan-College Station, both within the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, made the announcement at the recent small grains field day at the research plots near Bushland.

The wheat breeders put their experimental lines through observation trials and 20 elite line breeder trials before planting them in uniform variety trials at 30 locations across the state to test the genetics by environment.

New Texas A&M AgriLife-bred varieties

'TAM 116' is licensed to Adaptive Genetics and has been tested through the years as TX14A001035 in field trials.

"This is a dual-purpose wheat with excellent yield potential, good disease resistance and good end-use quality," Rudd said. "It has performed exceedingly well under intensive management systems."

'Dyna-Gro 7322' is in the process of being licensed to JoMar Seeds, which will work with Nutrien to commercialize the variety. It was tested over the years as TX14V70214 in the breeding and variety trials.

"This is a broadly adapted beardless, dual-purpose variety with good grain yields, excellent foliage disease resistance and high forage yields," Rudd said. "It has performed well in grain trials as well as in forage and silage trials."

'Titan' is the new triticale licensed by Watley Seed. This triticale can be planted early for fall growth. It has good winter hardiness and is an early maturing variety.

Jason Baker, research specialist for AgriLife Research, Amarillo, was the breeder of Titan, which is going through the increased seed production stage this year. He said it will probably be next fall when the seed becomes available to farmers.

"We've tested this variety over multiple years on locations from eastern New Mexico to western Kansas to Comanche and Abilene – both forage and silage tests," Baker said. "It does well in diverse testing areas for multiple purposes and ranks near the top on all of them."

Baker said it has been 15 years since AgriLife Research released a new triticale, but "we can expect others in the coming years because we have good ones in the pipeline that are focusing more on silage purposes."

Public wheat breeding leads to commercial licensing

Richard Vierling, Ph.D., director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon and Texas A&M AgriLife Foundation Seed director, and Sean Stephens, manager at Foundation Seed, are responsible for

producing genetically pure Foundation Class seed of the new cultivars developed by AgriLife Research scientists.

“When breeders have an experimental line they believe is ready, two things happen,” Vierling said. “They contact Sean for seed increase and work with me to develop materials containing descriptive information about the lines available to license. We distribute those descriptions and ask companies with a commercial interest to submit a proposal for licensing.”

Breeders also work with Janie Hurley at Texas A&M Innovation to document the new variety as potential new intellectual property and review background information regarding its development.

Once a proposal is selected, license negotiation is carried out by Texas A&M Innovation, the office that licenses new varieties to companies for commercial purposes. Texas A&M Innovation also works with the companies and breeders to seek the appropriate intellectual property protection, like Plant Variety Protection certification, for the new varieties.

More varieties in the pipeline

Stephens is already expanding the seed availability of two experimental lines that Ibrahim and Rudd believe show promise to initiate commercial production later this year.

TX15M8024 has good yield, milling and bread quality. It is resistant to rusts and the Hessian fly and adapted to the Blacklands and South Texas.

TX16M9216 also has Hessian fly resistance, along with resistance to leaf, stripe and stem rust. It has good yields and test weights and should be adaptable statewide.

Ibrahim said the TX in the name stands for Texas and 15 is the year it was grown in the head row. A variety begins as an F1 in the greenhouse and then F2 in the field. Disease reactions are looked at in F3 and F4 years before the F5 generation when it is grown for a head row.

“There are many diverse climates across Texas – dry and cooler up here in the Panhandle where more than a third of the Texas crop is grown, and hot and humid further south,” Ibrahim said. “There is rarely a line that will do well across the entire state of Texas. Some don’t have the leaf rust we need in the south or the Hessian fly resistance.”

<https://www.farmprogress.com/wheat/texas-a-m-breeding-program-releases-new-wheat-triticale-varieties>

## **Morning Ag Clips**

### **Top Five Tips for Supporting Pollinators This Summer**

June 13

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — When we see the first bit of green finally break through the earth or bud form on a tree outside our window, we know spring has indeed sprung. That’s when many of us start to think of our pollinator friends and what we can do to help them as our plants begin to grow and bloom.

But what about the dog days of summer? Although the Texas climate may have gardens looking less than lovely by August, pollinators will still need us. With a little advance planning now, we can support pollinators through the sweltering months and into fall.

Some popular garden plants like roses are usually self-pollinated or pollinated by the wind, but most of the flowers you can buy at a nursery are going to attract and need pollinators. Around 80% of flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce, and over three-quarter of the staple crops that feed people and livestock do too.

Thinking locally is a great way to help pollinators. Using plants native to your region can add some extra help to support both native and other pollinators, and native plants will be better suited for the soil and climate. With any plant, planting a cluster of several of the same type will make it easier for pollinators to find them. A bonus to attracting pollinators is that your local wildflower populations may also increase.

Top tips for supporting pollinators from a Texas A&M AgriLife expert Molly Keck, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service integrated pest management program specialist in the Texas A&M Department of Entomology and serving Bexar County, offers some science-based advice to keep pollinators around and thriving during the hottest months.

**Overlap blooms.** Pollinators need flowers that bloom at different times of the year. An array of flower varieties that peak after others fade are ideal. Native and drought-tolerant species are also good additions to a garden or landscape. By planting from spring into fall, you can extend pollinators' resources.

**Be colorful.** Plant flowers in a variety of colors since different pollinators are attracted to different colors. Keck said bumblebees are attracted to blues and purples, whereas other bees are more attracted to yellows or whites. She suggests adding some really bright colors like oranges and pinks to your garden to draw in butterflies. Red isn't seen well by bees, so red flowers with a contrasting center are usually a better bet. If you plant colors, they will come.

**Add shapes and sizes.** Pollinators' flower preferences come in all shapes and sizes, so variety is also key. Some like deeper or more open bowls, since pollinators have preferences as to the way they collect pollen or feed on nectar. Be aware that some of the more modern hybrid flowers with "doubled" flowers — what looks like many petals or a flower within a flower — may lack the pollen, nectar and/or fragrance pollinators seek out. In pursuit of the best-looking bloom, some plant breeders have left out what pollinators need. In other words, avoid those that are all show but may lack substance.

**Easy on the pesticide, please.** Keck said many people mistakenly believe that if they don't use pesticide, their plant won't flower. She said if you feel you have to apply pesticide, do it in the evening when most of the pollinators have "gone to bed." That will hopefully give the pesticide time to dry before morning. Never spray the inside of a flower. If a plant is flowering, it most likely doesn't need help since it takes a tremendous amount of energy to bloom in the first place, which wouldn't happen if it was stressed. Also make sure to read and follow the label and be aware of toxic ingredients.

**Give them shelter.** Providing pollinators with shelter is another way to support their numbers. Houses for bees and other pollinators can be purchased online, at home and garden stores or you can even make your own using tubes. And whereas honeybees group in hives, most insect pollinators are solitary dwellers and most bees actually live underground. Some pollinators, like mason bees, need mud to line their homes. Keeping a bit of mud near your garden is a helpful way to aid with their construction.

**The bee's knees**

Bees are the "bee's knees" among pollinators, Keck said.

"Bees are the best because they are actively going after the pollen," Keck said. "Their body is really fuzzy, so

they pick up a bunch of that pollen and then they accidentally drop it off as they bounce from flower to flower.”

When most people think of pollinators, and bees in general, they typically think of honeybees and maybe bumblebees, Keck said.

“But there’s actually a lot of different species of native bees that are great pollinators that we often overlook because they’re small or we just assume they are honeybees because of how they look,” she said.

Pollinators: Beyond bees

Although bees may be the most efficient pollinators, plenty of other insects do their share of heavy lifting.

“Beyond bees, there are also butterflies and moths, flies, beetles and some wasps that are also good pollinators,” Keck said. “The sheer number of beetles makes them a substantial, but often overlooked, pollinator.”

In addition to insects, birds and bats can also be pollinators. Think about adding night-blooming flowers for nocturnal pollinators.

Supporting pollinators year-round

The majority of pollinators are most active in the spring and summer and then they start to slow things down in the fall. In fact, most insect pollinators, aside from honeybees, will die over the winter.

However, bees and other pollinators often lay eggs in hollow stalks of plants. If you typically cut these plants back or pull them up, find a corner of your garden or yard where you can leave them until next year.

Keck said those eggs pollinators lay and leave behind will hatch sometime between February and April, and the cycle will start all over again.

<https://www.morningagclips.com/top-five-tips-for-supporting-pollinators-this-summer/>

## **Morning Ag Clips**

### **Why Should I Get My Soil Tested?**

June 13

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Why should I get my soil tested? This question is asked by everyone from home gardeners planting their tomatoes to farmers planning out their crop rotations and homeowners looking to keep a lush lawn.

Jake Mowrer, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service extension associate professor, Soil Nutrient and Water Resource Management in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, said soil testing is important because it determines three things:

Existing nutrients of the soil.

Any nutrient deficiencies and needs.

Potential growing constraints.

“Soil testing measures the nutrients and other aspects of soil fertility related to crop, garden and ornamental plant growth,” Mowrer said. “Indirectly, soil water is important in that nutrients must be dissolved in it to be taken up by plants.”

Establishing the right fertilizer and nutrients

Mowrer said soil tests are important to home gardeners because they provide a guide for your plants’ nutrient needs and help maximize yields efficiently.

“Soil testing does two important things. First, it measures the amount of nutrients your soil will provide to a plant during the growing season,” Mowrer said. “Second, it establishes the basis for making fertilizer recommendations to make up the difference between what the soil provides and what the plant requires to complete its growth cycle.”

Mowrer said soil reports empower gardeners to manage nutrients from fertilizers, manures, composts or other amendments in a way that ensures plant health and avoids nutrient escapes that can harm water resource quality.

Soil tests will commonly provide information on soil pH and salt content, as well as the amount of macronutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and calcium and micronutrients such as zinc, iron, copper, and manganese. Additional tests may be performed to provide information on soil organic matter, or the amount of limestone required to correct an acidity problem.

Knowing the soil test results is a huge first step when looking to improve your overall plant and soil health. Something as simple as knowing which fertilizer to buy for your specific garden soil and plants could make a world of difference in your own home garden.

When is the best time of year to have your soil tested?

“For example, a farmer growing corn should sample and test in December or January to ensure results are received in time to purchase and apply fertilizer ahead of spring planting. However, wheat sown in October or November should be preceded with soil testing in July or August,” he said.

Oftentimes, knowing when to get a soil test done can be half the battle. Mowrer said soil testing should definitely be done prior to any decision about purchasing or using fertilizers. And, the answer depends on what you are growing and when you are planting.

As for home gardeners, Mowrer recommends testing in January or February for something like tomatoes when they need to be transplanted in March.

The benefits of testing your soil as a homeowner

Soil tests can help homeowners avoid applying too little or too much fertilizer and other amendments.

“Many homeowners and landscape service providers tend to over apply fertilizers to ensure a beautiful lawn or productive garden,” Mowrer said. “However, soil testing solves the mystery with real data you can use to avoid both under-application and over-application.”

Mowrer said soil test results let homeowners accurately target their garden soil or turfgrass and flower beds nutrient needs and be environmental stewards at the same time.



With soil testing, homeowners can soon have the perfect balance of nutrients and fertilizer to sprout the home gardening projects and landscapes of their dreams.

Get your soil tested today

For more information on testing your soil and submitting a sample, visit the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory at <https://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>. You can also contact your local AgriLife Extension office and inquire about the process there. Soil test results from the lab will take two weeks to be returned to the sender.

<https://www.morningagclips.com/why-should-i-get-my-soil-tested/>

## **The Daily News**

### **As winter warms, farmers in southern US find ways to adapt**

Melina Walling

June 13

When Pam Knox walked into the peach orchard at the University of Georgia horticulture farm this spring, there was nothing on the trees except leaves and a couple of brown fruits — the result of one of the state’s warmest winters ever followed by two nights of freezing weather in March.

“It’s just really odd, because over the course of one night, they lost their entire crop and their entire production here,” said Knox, an agricultural climatologist with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, which shares research and expertise with farmers and others. Commercial peach farmers in the state lost as much as 95% of their yield, she estimated.

Georgia, with its iconic peaches, isn’t the only place in the South where farmers have had to deal with changing conditions. Houston, Tupelo and Atlanta all had one of their top five warmest winters on record this year, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information. Farmers are contending with those warming winters by using new or improved agricultural techniques, trying out new crop varieties and even growing crops that were previously less common in their regions.

“Winter is the season in Georgia that is warming the most quickly,” Knox said, affirming a trend that includes most of the United States. “We don’t have any reason to think that that trend is going to change, so we will continue to expect more warmer winters.”

Cody Mills, an extension agent and Chickasaw County coordinator at Mississippi State University, said a warmer and wetter winter delayed some farmers from planting corn and some soybeans because they had to wait for drier weather. A couple weeks might not seem like a long time, he said, but that can set back cutting and harvesting later.

Cattle ranchers have been affected, too. Mills said that the pathogens associated with a wet winter — as well as the mud — took a toll on some cows. Wetter, warmer weather creates better conditions for the pathogens and parasites that cause cows to develop conditions like foot rot, pinkeye and diarrhea, said Russ Daly, an extension veterinarian with South Dakota State University.

In Texas, the warm weather presented more of a mixed bag for cattle farmers, said David Anderson, a professor and extension economist at Texas A&M University. He said drought conditions have meant higher hay costs, but farmers have needed less of it since cows eat less in hotter weather.

Farmers have always adapted to changing weather. Now they're adapting to climate change.

For example, some fruit growers in Georgia are planting earlier-blooming peach varieties that don't require as much cold weather, Knox said. But it's not an easy calculation, because some of those earlier varieties may also be more susceptible to frost.

Farmers may also diversify their crops. Knox said some farmers in recent years have begun trying citrus and olives that are more often grown in climates with milder winters than Georgia's.

In Mississippi, some farmers have turned to corn varieties with a shorter growing season, Mills said. And researchers are working to improve vaccines against livestock conditions that can be made worse by a warming environment.

Taking good care of animals regardless of the changing conditions is paramount, said Brandi Karisch, an extension beef cattle specialist for Mississippi State University.

"We've always done it that way' is usually the death of a business, and you can see the same thing in the cattle world," Karisch said. "We have to adapt to what the animals are telling us that they need and what we're seeing from a climate and a system standpoint."

As they work to ensure the health of their crops and animals, farmers also "have to make sure that they make money, and you're not going to invest in a crop that's not going to succeed," Knox said. But she doesn't see the end of Georgia peaches anytime soon. Instead, she sees farmers considering which peach varieties they'll be able to grow going forward and what other crops they can add to the mix.

"I think the farmers see the temperatures get(ting) warmer as an opportunity to increase the diversity of what they can grow," Knox said. "They're trying to figure out ways to respond to that and to take advantage of it."

[https://tdn.com/news/as-winter-warms-farmers-in-southern-us-find-ways-to-adapt/article\\_f0b62e30-6f58-5cc9-a8bc-e57abb91be0b.html](https://tdn.com/news/as-winter-warms-farmers-in-southern-us-find-ways-to-adapt/article_f0b62e30-6f58-5cc9-a8bc-e57abb91be0b.html)

## **The Daily Texan**

### **A tool for learning or an accomplice for cheating? How artificial intelligence, like ChatGPT, is changing the classroom at UT.**

Morgan Severson

June 13

When Jared Mumm, a professor at Texas A&M University at Commerce, had a sneaking suspicion some of his students used ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence chatbot, to write their final essays, he asked the software if it wrote them. The result? False accusations of cheating and the beginning of a messy conversation about AI's place in the classroom.

A Texas A&M University at Commerce spokesperson told the Washington Post the university is “developing policies to address the use or misuse of AI technology in the classroom.”

But what are UT’s policies on the use or misuse of AI technology in the classroom?

“There’s actually no change in policy that’s required because it’s already a violation of University policy for any student to turn in work in a class and represent that work as their own work if it’s not their own work,” said Art Markman, UT’s vice provost for academic affairs. “Using an AI system ... and then not acknowledging the use of that system is no different than a student who might have someone else write an essay for them.”

Markman said during the spring semester, a University task force evaluated the use of AI like ChatGPT for assignments. In preparation for the fall semester, Markman said the task force will post articles online throughout the summer explaining the University’s approach to AI in the classroom.

The first article, called “5 Things to Know About ChatGPT,” is meant to provide “suggestions for instructors who wonder how this tool may affect their course design and teaching.”

To prevent the use of ChatGPT on an assignment, the website suggests that professors require students to use sources only available on UT Libraries subscription databases and journals because the chatbot can’t access them. Meanwhile, another suggestion encourages professors to see ChatGPT as a tool for students when they are writing.

“As long as the student ultimately adds significant new material and thoroughly edits or ultimately eliminates the output from ChatGPT, they are producing a document that reflects their own work,” the website states.

Ethan Glass, a philosophy and psychology alumnus who graduated in May, said he took a class in the spring called Language and Computers with Venkata Govindarajan. For one assignment, Glass said he gave ChatGPT the LSAT, a law school admissions test, to evaluate how well the chatbot performed.

“It did pretty well on the reading comprehension questions, (and) it did really poorly on the logical reasoning questions,” Glass said. “It tends to generally (do) better when it’s given more text because it has more stuff to go off of.”

Glass said for other classes, like his philosophy classes, he would paste prompts into ChatGPT to view the response and gain confidence in his own writing. However, Glass said he never turned in an assignment generated by ChatGPT or AI.

“I totally think it’s cheating. I think part of the learning objectives in college is to learn how to write and learn how to formulate your thoughts,” Glass said. “And if you’re not spending any time criticizing your thoughts or thinking things through, then you’re just really really missing out on something very important.”

Glass said he didn’t feel disadvantaged when other students use ChatGPT, but he felt disappointed. He said he noticed that one of his classmates used ChatGPT to write a discussion post because his classmate forgot to delete the question they asked the chatbot before posting the response to Canvas.

“I remember walking around the PCL around finals season and people had ChatGPT open, all over,” Glass said. “You couldn’t get very far without seeing the ChatGPT screen. Maybe they’re just enthusiasts about the technology and just for having fun testing it, but I have a hunch that a lot of people were cheating with it.”

In the fall, Markman said the University is “launching a refreshed version” of the University Honor Code. It’s something the University started working on before ChatGPT became available, Markman said, as a way for students and faculty to recommit to UT’s learning environment.

“It’s really not about ‘Can we find clever ways to catch people doing the wrong thing?’” Markman said. “At the end of the day, it’s really about trying to understand why the assignments in particular classes are being given, what skills they’re designed to teach, and for all of us to commit to doing that work and getting the feedback and learning the knowledge and the skills that our classes are designed to create.”

Markman said he sees AI as “more exciting than frightening” and as a tool not only to help students, but to help instructors teach complex concepts in better ways.

“We certainly want people who are teaching to communicate clearly their expectations about particular assignments and when a particular tool should and shouldn’t be used,” Markman said. “But we also want people to think cleverly about ways to teach difficult concepts that might become easier to do when an AI system is available.”

For professors who don’t want AI to be used for an assignment, Turnitin, an anti-plagiarism software embedded into Canvas, launched a new AI detection feature. However the University is currently in the process of vetting the detection software’s accuracy, Markman said.

The Daily Texan asked the ChatGPT chatbot if using it to complete academic assignments is cheating or a tool for learning. Here’s a portion of what it said:

“ChatGPT as a tool for learning, idea generation or to gain a better understanding of a topic can be a valuable approach. It can assist you in exploring different perspectives, generating ideas and improving your overall comprehension. However, it is important to ensure that you are using the information obtained from ChatGPT as a starting point and critically evaluate and verify it through other reputable sources.”

<https://thedailytexan.com/2023/06/13/a-tool-for-learning-or-an-accomplice-for-cheating-how-artificial-intelligence-like-chatgpt-is-changing-the-classroom-at-ut/>

### **Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Immersive Reality Lab at TAMU-CC Takes Virtual Learning to New Heights**

Olivia Andrade, Gabriella Ruiz

June 13

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – From virtual reality headsets to immersive virtual environments, the new Immersive Reality Lab (IRL) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is providing unique opportunities for Islander students, faculty, and staff to explore cutting-edge and interactive learning experiences. Funded by both institutional funds and CARES Act money, the need for the space became more important following the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing demand for virtual learning environments.

The IRL, located in the university’s Mary and Jeff Bell Library, uses the latest in extended reality (XR) software which includes virtual reality (VR) headsets equipped with HTC Vive Pro Eye technology. It also features Cave

Automatic Virtual Environment (CAVE) technology, a three-wall wrap-around highly-immersive projection space that provides XR experiences for one or more users at time. The CAVE utilizes lightweight stereoscopic glasses that offer users nearly complete freedom of movement and the ability to view rendered 3D objects from individual points of view.

“As XR technology continues to grow in popularity across various industries, it is important for students to have exposure to this technology and develop the necessary skills to work with it,” said Joseph Doan, TAMU-CC IRL Coordinator. “Institutions that offer XR lab space and training can help students not only foster innovation, but it also helps prepare them for careers in fields such as engineering, gaming, health care, and more. The possibilities are limitless.”

Azalia Valadez '23, graphic design major, said that she can see endless opportunities when pairing her coursework with the technology.

“My favorite part is the 3D drawing,” Valadez said. “There are a lot of options and effects to choose from and even the ability to create a full mural. As a graphic designer, we create content that’s meant to bridge the gap between the consumer and the brand, and with XR technology, there are no gaps in between. You are literally ‘in’ the art.”

Doan has conducted exploratory conversations with faculty in the areas of computer science, communication and media arts, psychology, counseling, art, chemistry, and physics on the possible integration of the IRL in their curriculum. In addition, the IRL is currently working with Dr. Callie Shaw, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, to implement the use of XR content into her classroom pedagogy.

“The accessibility of this technology truly places a phenomenal resource at the fingertips of our students,” Shaw said. “Traditional methods of teaching and learning in criminal justice often rely on theoretical concepts and hypothetical scenarios, which can sometimes feel detached from the reality of actual law enforcement situations. By leveraging the immersive technology available at the IRL, we saw an opportunity to provide our students with a more realistic and experiential learning environment.”

Islanders interested in using the IRL for academic courses, research, or development purposes are asked to meet with Doan to determine if the lab can meet their needs. Plans are in place to include external users as the IRL further develops its technological and collaboration capabilities.

<https://www.tamucc.edu/news/2023/06/061323-immersive-reality-lab-at-tamu-cc-takes-virtual-learning-to-new-heights.php>

### **The Eagle**

#### **Texas A&M-Texas will renew rivalry in 2024 as SEC releases opponents**

Robert Cessna

11 hours ago

Texas A&M, as expected, will play Texas at Kyle Field in 2024 as the Southeastern Conference announced its league schedule for the first season with Texas and Oklahoma on Wednesday night. It will be the first time the rivals have met since 2011.

The Aggies in '24 also will be home to LSU and Missouri, while playing Arkansas in Arlington at AT&T Stadium. A&M's league road games will be Auburn, Florida, Mississippi State and South Carolina.

Game dates will be announced at a later date.

The SEC teams A&M won't play that year are Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Ole Miss, Tennessee and Vanderbilt.

In non-conference play, A&M will host Notre Dame, McNeese, Bowling Green and New Mexico State.

The SEC is doing away with divisions for the one-time schedule that will have no school traveling to the same location it did in 2023. The SEC considered traditional opponents in making the schedule along with overall strength of schedule, which was based on each school's conference winning percentage since the last SEC expansion in 2012 when A&M and Missouri were added. Each school's '24 schedule will include four opponents whose winning percentage ranked among the top eight conference winning percentages since 2012 along with four opponents whose winning percentages ranked among the second eight conference winning percentages since 2012.

All existing 14 SEC schools will play either Texas or Oklahoma during the 2024 season.

The SEC opted to retain the league's current eight-game schedule along with one required opponent from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 or major independent during the 2024 season when the SEC becomes a 16-team conference.

The 2024 SEC championship game will feature the top two teams in the league standings at the end of the regular season

Texas A&M

Home: Arkansas (Arlington), LSU, Missouri, Texas

Away: Auburn, Florida, Mississippi State, South Carolina

Alabama

Home: Auburn, Georgia, Missouri, South Carolina

Away: LSU, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Vanderbilt

Arkansas

Home: LSU, Ole Miss, Tennessee, Texas

Away: Auburn, Mississippi State, Missouri, Texas A&M (Arlington)

Auburn

Home: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt

Away: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri

Florida

Home: Kentucky, LSU, Ole Miss, Texas A&M

Away: Georgia (Jacksonville, Fla.), Mississippi State, Tennessee, Texas

Georgia

Home: Auburn, Florida (Jacksonville, Fla.), Mississippi State, Tennessee

Away: Alabama Kentucky, Ole Miss, Texas

Kentucky

Home: Auburn, Georgia, South Carolina, Vanderbilt

Away: Florida, Ole Miss, Tennessee, Texas

LSU

Home: Alabama, Oklahoma, Ole Miss, Vanderbilt

Away: Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Texas A&M

Mississippi State

Home: Arkansas, Florida, Missouri, Texas A&M

Away: Georgia, Ole Miss, Tennessee, Texas

Missouri

Home: Arkansas, Auburn, Oklahoma, Vanderbilt

Away: Alabama, Miss State, South Carolina, Texas A&M

Oklahoma

Home: Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas (Dallas)

Away: Auburn, LSU, Missouri, Ole Miss

Ole Miss

Home: Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Miss State

Away: Arkansas, Florida, LSU, South Carolina

South Carolina

Home: LSU, Ole Miss, Missouri, Texas A&M

Away: Alabama, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Vanderbilt

Tennessee

Home: Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi State

Away: Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Vanderbilt

Texas

Home: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi State

Away: Texas A&M, Oklahoma (Dallas), Arkansas, Vanderbilt

Vanderbilt

Home: Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas

Away: Auburn, Kentucky, LSU, Missouri

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/football/texas-a-m-texas-will-renew-rivalry-in-2024-as-sec-releases-opponents/article\\_42386212-0b02-11ee-8d20-a7147fe34a3c.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm\\_medium=PostUp&ltg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45eecca248](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/football/texas-a-m-texas-will-renew-rivalry-in-2024-as-sec-releases-opponents/article_42386212-0b02-11ee-8d20-a7147fe34a3c.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm_medium=PostUp&ltg=6988668&tn_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45eecca248)

## MSN

### **2024 4-star OT Blake Ivy received 'Crystal Ball' to land with Texas A&M**

Cameron Ohnysty

June 14

Texas A&M is just days removed from last weekend's huge recruiting weekend, which included several Jimbo Fisher summer camps mixed in with several official visits, which had 2024 four-star offensive tackle Blake Ivy, one of the program's priority recruits this summer.

On Tuesday morning, 247Sports' Director of Football Recruiting Steve Wiltfong, whose prediction record speaks for itself (99.38% for the 2024 class), submitted his official "Crystal Ball" prediction, as he believes that the Aggies will land Ivy, who has yet to nail down a commitment date.

Standing at 6-4 and 285 pounds, Ivy is by far the most athletic offensive lineman in the high school ranks,



possessing a 7-foot wingspan with scouts drooling over his potential as an elite blindside protector. Recruiting-wise, the Aggies are currently in heated competition with Texas and LSU, and he'll head to Austin this weekend and Baton Rouge on the weekend of June 23.

For those worried that Jimbo Fisher and his staff have hit a dry recruiting spell, the summer is when they shine, especially as we near the annual recruiting pool party toward the end of July. Wilfong's word is one to trust, and Blake Ivy is one of those rare athletes who could compete for snaps at either left or right tackle as soon as he steps on campus.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/ncaafb/2024-4-star-ot-blake-ivy-received-crystal-ball-to-land-with-texas-aandm/ar-AA1cxiMz?li=BBnb7Kz>

## **MSN**

### **Longhorns to Face Aggies Alongside Brutal Inaugural SEC Schedule: Report**

Matt Galatzan

June 14

The Lonestar Showdown, it appears, is officially back.

According to reports from Horns247, the Texas Longhorns and Texas A&M Aggies are set to reignite their historic rivalry when the Horns make their way to the SEC in 2024, with the game set to take place in College Station at Kyle Field.

The news comes just weeks after speculation began to emerge that the two schools would not be able to face off annually due to the SEC's decision to go with an eight-game conference schedule, as the Horns would have had the Oklahoma Sooners set as their only permanent rival.

However, it now appears that, at least in year one, the college football world will finally once again be treated to one of the greatest rivalries in the history of the sport.

The two schools last faced off in 2011 in College Station, with Justin Tucker propelling No. 25 Texas to a 27-25 win over the Aggies with a last-second field goal.

The Aggies then made their move to the SEC in 2012, marking the beginning of a decade-plus drought between the two rivals. The Longhorns currently lead the all-time series with the Aggies 76-37-5.

Per the report, the Longhorns will also face their former Southwest Conference rival Arkansas Razorbacks on the road as well, alongside matchups with Oklahoma in Dallas.

The last time the Longhorns faced the Razorbacks was in Steve Sarkisian's first year at the helm in 2021, with Arkansas handing Texas an early 40-21 'welcome to the SEC' blowout loss. Texas leads that series 56-21 all-time.

Texas is also set to host the reigning back-to-back national champion Georgia Bulldogs in Austin as well, rounding out what could turn out to be a brutal introduction into the SEC.

The Horns will also face off against the Michigan Wolverines in 2024 on the road in Ann Arbor.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/nfl/longhorns-to-face-aggies-alongside-brutal-inaugural-sec-schedule-report/ar-AA1cxSnt?li=BBnbfcl>

## **The Dallas Morning News**

### **SEC schedule: Texas-Texas A&M rivalry renewed, Red River Showdown stays intact for 2024**

June 14

The Texas Longhorns and Oklahoma Sooners know who they will face during their first season as members of the SEC.

The conference officially announced its full 2024 slate Wednesday night, with the renewal of the rivalry between Texas and Texas A&M serving as a highlight. The Red River Showdown between Texas and Oklahoma will also continue that season, with the squads facing off at the Cotton Bowl. Game dates and times will be announced at a later date.

The Aggies and Longhorns will face off at Kyle Field, restarting a historic matchup that was played 118 times. The last time the rivals faced off was in 2011, where Texas defeated Texas A&M 27-25 before the Aggies departed for the SEC.

Georgia and Arkansas also stand out as notable opponents for the Longhorns. The Bulldogs are scheduled to make a trip to Austin, while Texas will face the Razorbacks in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Oklahoma's first season in the conference includes hosting Alabama and Tennessee and a road trip to face former Big 12 foe Missouri. The Sooners will also visit Auburn and LSU, completing a trifecta of Tigers in their slate.

Texas A&M's schedule includes a neutral site meeting with Arkansas, a home game against LSU and a road trip to Florida.

The SEC won't be separated by divisions in 2024, meaning the top two teams in the standings will earn a spot in the SEC Championship Game when the regular season ends. The conference announced at its league meetings that it will play eight league games when it expands to 16 teams.

Traditional rivalries like Alabama-Auburn and Mississippi-Mississippi State were honored, along with yearly showdowns like Alabama-Tennessee, Georgia-Auburn and Ole Miss-LSU.

The Texas and OU move comes a year earlier than the SEC originally expected. Texas and Oklahoma were contractually bound to the Big 12 through the 2024-25 school year.

The advanced timetable left some athletic directors apprehensive about rushing into an expanded conference slate.

Some schools such as LSU and Texas A&M have been clear in their support for playing more conference games,

and a few such as Kentucky have been steadfast in their desire to stay at eight. It remains unclear exactly where each school stands.

Texas and Oklahoma athletic directors participated in this year's SEC meetings, but will not have voting rights until July 2024.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/texas-longhorns/2023/06/14/sec-schedule-leaks-what-we-know-about-ut-am-ut-ou-and-other-2024-matchups/>

## **KBTX**

### **Texas A&M and Texas set to renew football rivalry at Kyle Field in 2024**

Josh Gorbutt, Darryl Buffett and Conner Beene

June 14

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - The Southeastern Conference has confirmed the historic rivalry between Texas A&M University and the University of Texas will resume in 2024. The 119th meeting between the Aggies and the Longhorns will be played at Kyle Field. Dates for conference games will be released later in the summer.

The rivalry's renewal was announced on the SEC Network as the conference unveiled new football schedules for 2024, the first season the University of Oklahoma and the University of Texas will join the conference. The Southeastern Conference announced on May 31 it would adopt an eight-game conference schedule in 2024, doing away with the conference's current divisions.

Texas A&M will also host the LSU Tigers and Missouri Tigers at Kyle Field, for a total of 7 games at home in College Station.

The Aggies will face the Arkansas Razorbacks at AT&T Stadium for the final scheduled year of the Southwest Classic in Arlington. The contract for the series schedules the game to be held on September 28.

One notable opponent missing from Texas A&M's schedule is the University of Alabama. For the first time since 2012, the Aggies will not face the Crimson Tide in a conference game.

Texas A&M will play football in the state of Alabama next year, though, as they make a road trip to Auburn. Texas A&M is also scheduled to visit the Florida Gators, Mississippi State Bulldogs, and South Carolina Gamecocks in 2024.

One of the reasons for the 8-game SEC schedule is the conference's requirement that each team plays a Power 5 opponent. Most teams have already scheduled that series, including the Aggies. Texas A&M is set to open 2024 against Notre Dame on August 31 at Kyle Field.

Texas A&M will play three additional non-conference games in 2024. McNeese State University will visit Kyle Field on September 7. Two weeks later, Texas A&M hosts Bowling Green at Kyle Field on September 21. Finally, Kyle Field will play host to a 'Battle of the Aggies' when New Mexico State visits Texas A&M on November 16.

Texas A&M Athletic Director Ross Bjork had been outspoken about the Aggies' expectations that the rivalry

game would return first to College Station.

The teams last met in 2011, when Texas A&M played their final game in the Big 12. Ryan Tannehill threw a touchdown pass to Jeff Fuller to put the Aggies up 25-24 with 1:48 left to go in the game. Still, the Aggies left enough time on the clock for Texas to set up a 40-yard, game-winning field goal by Justin Tucker, allowing the Longhorns to win the game, 27-25.

The University of Texas has dominated the Lone Star Showdown series since it began in 1894, winning 76 games to Texas A&M's 37. The teams have tied five times.

Each of the existing 14 SEC members was slated to play Oklahoma or Texas in 2024, either home or away. In addition, no school had to travel to the same location where it traveled in 2024. Beyond that, the SEC said opponents were determined based on traditional opponents and a balance of overall schedule strength.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/14/texas-am-texas-set-renew-football-rivalry-kyle-field-2024/>

## **Houston Chronicle**

### **Texas A&M will host Texas in 2024 as rivalry resumes in SEC**

Brent Zwerneman

June 14

COLLEGE STATION — The revival of the state's most revered college football rivalry has an official return year, and the first meeting in 13 seasons between Texas and Texas A&M will be at the same site as the last one in 2011.

The Southeastern Conference announced Wednesday night that the Longhorns and Aggies will play in the fall of 2024 at A&M's Kyle Field. The exact date has not been announced, but traditionally, the state's two most prominent programs played on Thanksgiving night or Thanksgiving weekend.

"That's the one we have circled," former Southlake Carroll, Alabama and NFL quarterback Greg McElroy said on SEC Network. "The amount of vitriol that exists in that rivalry in both directions, knowing it's coming back for the first time since 2011 ... I'm sure the Aggie faithful, being as kind as they are, will have a nice warm reception for their Longhorn brethren when they enter into Kyle Field."

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for their Longhorn brethren when they enter into Kyle Field.”

The Longhorns will host Florida, Georgia and Kentucky in 2024 and will play at A&M, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Vanderbilt. UT and OU will meet in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas as usual.

“Georgia going to Texas? Georgia right now is the team everyone is shooting for,” ESPN commentator Paul Finebaum said of the Bulldogs, who’ve won the last two national titles.

The Aggies will host Texas, LSU and Missouri in 2024 and will play at Auburn, Florida, Mississippi State and South Carolina. A&M and Arkansas will play in Arlington’s AT&T Stadium for what’s expected to be a final time in 2024. The SEC and old Southwest Conference rivalry is expected to become a home-and-home series following that final game in the home of the Dallas Cowboys.

“The setup of (the Aggies’) schedule really creates a lot of opportunity for success, especially playing LSU at home,” SEC Network analyst Takeo Spikes said.

The Sooners will host Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee in 2024 and will play at Auburn, LSU, Mississippi and Missouri, along with the annual meeting with Texas in Dallas.

According to the SEC, the current 14 league members all will play either Texas or Oklahoma in 2024 (home or away). In addition, no program will repeat a road trip from 2023 in 2024. The West and East divisions also will be no more in 2024, and the top two teams that season will play in the SEC title game in Atlanta in early December.

The SEC announced earlier this month during its annual spring meetings in Destin, Fla., that it would use an eight-game league schedule for 2024 as the conference continues working toward a long-term model to be revealed within the next year. Starting in 2025, each team will likely play nine SEC opponents (three annual rivals and six rotating foes).

The other, less likely, option is an eight-game SEC schedule with one annual rival and seven rotating opponents.

UT president Jay Hartzell, who was instrumental in the Longhorns’ exit from the Big 12 and entrance into the SEC, told the Houston Chronicle at the SEC spring meetings, “This is going to be a blast. It’s fun, too, because you see all this (at the SEC meetings) and you say, ‘It’s a year away.’ But it’s only a year. It’s going to be great — and it’s overdue.”

The Longhorns defeated the Aggies 27-25 on a game-winning field goal by Justin Tucker at Kyle Field in the rivals’ last of 118 meetings in 2011.

“That was part of the deal, I’m sure,” Finebaum said of UT playing at A&M in the Longhorns’ first year in the SEC, which the Aggies joined in 2012. “There’s just so much richness in (that rivalry).”

Should the SEC, as expected, adopt a nine-game league schedule starting in 2025, the Aggies and Longhorns will meet annually. Should the league unexpectedly wind up with the eight-game format with a lone annual rival, Texas and Oklahoma would meet every year, and A&M and LSU would play annually.

A&M coach Jimbo Fisher made his pitch for the nine-game format at the spring meetings, in part to play the Longhorns every year.

“When Texas comes into the thing, of course you’d want Texas, because that’s the traditional rival and the things you have,” Fisher said of angling to play UT annually. “But there are a lot of great ones in the SEC, too. ... LSU has become a great rivalry for us right there. But as you go traditional rivalries of A&M, you would probably say Texas.”

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/texas-sports-nation/college/article/texas-aggies-longhorns-sec-football-schedule-18152043.php>

## **24/7 Sports**

### **Notebook: Two key A&M targets in action as Texas A&M kicks off second week of summer camps**

Andrew Hattersley

10 hours ago

Texas A&M kicked off its second week of summer camp and there were some notable names and performances to take note of.

Beginning with national top-100 Mater Dei running back Nate Frazier, who brought a smile to the face of Jimbo Fisher and Marquel Blackwell when he said he wanted to camp on Thursday. Frazier, who is in town for an unofficial visit until Thursday, did not have to do that but loves practice and wanted to get some work in with Blackwell. The Aggies have made a strong impression on Frazier, who noted the presence of Blackwell and development of Devon Achane as two aspects that intrigue him about the Aggies. Frazier heads to Oregon and Alabama each of the next two weekends for official visits and wants to return to College Station in October for an official visit when A&M hosts Alabama. Georgia is another major player for the 5-foot-11, 208-pound running back who displayed great explosion and quickness.

<https://247sports.com/college/texas-am/article/elite-rb-nate-frazier-has-high-praise-for-marquel-blackwell-foll-211602534/>

## **Sports Illustrated**

### **Analyst Flames Texas A&M Over Longhorns 'Inferiority Complex'**

Matt Galatza

19 hours ago

The Texas A&M Aggies left the Big 12 and the Texas Longhorns behind in 2012, hoping to forge a new path and a new identity along the way.

After all, for the previous 118 years, the Aggies had, at least partially, built their persona around their hate for their Lonestar State rivals.

Unfortunately for Texas A&M (or fortunately depending on how you look at it), the Aggies were not able to escape the shadow of the Longhorns for long.

However, despite much consternation and battling against the decision from the Aggies, Texas is now set to join them in the SEC in the summer of 2024, with the first matchup between the two teams reportedly set for College Station later that year.

And now, ESPN's Greg McElroy is coming after the Aggies for the apprehensions about reuniting with their in-state rivals.

"Stop playing this inferiority complex," McElroy said. "Stop. Here's what I would say if I were Texas A&M: I would say anytime, any place, anywhere we'll play the Longhorns, we're just glad to have the rivalry back. And we'll stomp on them when we get our opportunity."

McElroy's point is valid too. The Aggies should have no reason to fear or debate the Longhorns coming into the SEC as things stand now.

The additions of the Texas and Oklahoma will only serve to make the SEC stronger, which in turn, should help the Aggies improve as well.

After all, a rising tide lifts all boats, even in the stormy seas of the SEC.

<https://www.si.com/college/tamu/news/tamu-texas-am-aggies-longhorns-inferiority-complex-espn-greg-mcelroy-sec>

### **Fort Worth Star Telegram**

#### **Texas A&M baseball coach Jim Schlossnagle on TCU: "For sure I root for them."**

Mac Engel

June 15

As TCU registered the final out against Indiana State on Sunday, it was lost on most of the 9,000 in attendance at Lupton Stadium that it was two years ago to the day + 1 when the coach who made TCU's presence in Omaha both a reality, and an expectation, resigned. On June 9, 2021, Jim Schlossnagle left TCU to become the head coach at Texas A&M. On June 10, 2023, TCU returned to the College World Series for the first time since 2017. It will be a long time when this program no longer has any remaining imprint of his fingerprints. Between the presence of current head coach Kirk Saarloos, most of the players on this roster, and the baseball facility itself, Schlossnagle is still here even though he's been gone to College Station for two years. "We established a structure of a program that is going to stand the test of time," Schlossnagle said in a phone interview this week. "Kirk has done an awesome job of building on that, and moving forward like I did with (former TCU coach) Lance Brown. There is no resentment here or anything like that at all. "I take a lot of pride in that, not that I had anything to do with this team. That's a credit to their staff and those players."

When Schlossnagle resigned from TCU in the early summer of 2021, it was the end to a period of time when he felt the itch to try something different. His son and daughter, both of whom are now TCU graduates, were out of the house. Schloss' had been at TCU for 18 years. Save for winning a national title, he had achieved everything else. The timing of the departure, however painful and sad, made sense. As time passed, the departure worked out for both parties. In Schloss' first season at Texas A&M, the Aggies reached the College World Series. Meanwhile his successor and former assistant, Saarloos, led TCU back to the NCAA Tournament,

where its season ended in College Station in a loss against Schlossnagle's Aggies. This season, A&M reached the NCAA Tournament and were eliminated by Stanford, which defeated Texas to reach the World Series. When TCU plays Oral Roberts in the first game on Friday in Omaha, Schlossnagle will be watching. A lot of TCU's current players either played for him, or he recruited them. Outfielder Elijah Nunez, outfielder Luke Boyers, pitcher Luke Savage, infielder Brayden Taylor were all Schloss' players, among a list of others. "For sure I root for them; I will never be separated from the guys I coached," Schlossnagle said. "I am super happy for those guys. I am so glad they are playing in Omaha; I'm just sad I wasn't a part of that in my last year there." When Schlossnagle came to TCU in 2003 from UNLV, most of what is in place today didn't exist.

His arrival was a part of a broad, university-wide movement to invest in school upgrades, specifically its athletic department. For years he viewed TCU as the private school in the Southwest that could thrive, if ... (if it spent some money). "When I was at Tulane (from 1994 to 2001), TCU was the one private school I had my eye on that I thought it could be very successful," Schloss' said. TCU spent the money. It built the necessary facilities, specifically Lupton Stadium. The baseball program flourished.

Former football coach Gary Patterson receives, justifiably, most of the credit for the rise of TCU's overall athletic brand; what Schloss' did for the baseball program deserves to be in the conversation. It made the World Series in 2010, and went four straight years from 2014 to 2017. "Toad to Omaha" became a thing. A strong, painful, case that one of those teams should have won the title, specifically in 2016. A culture and an identity that Schloss', and so many others built, keeps going even after its founding face moved elsewhere. "Any time my team isn't in the World Series you are super jealous, and I think every coach in the nation, that's where you want your season to end," Schlossnagle said. "I root for the players. I watch them, and if we aren't playing (TCU), I am excited for them, and for the TCU fans, that they got back there.

"I know they had great crowds over the weekend (against Indiana State). There is no bitter sweetness to this at all. The only time I want to play TCU is in the World Series." Considering the caliber of the coaches and the state of both Texas A&M and TCU in baseball, maybe next year.

<https://www.star-telegram.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/mac-engel/article276392981.html#storylink=cpy>

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The Texas A&M University System

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## Rio Grande Guardian

### **BREAKING NEWS: Texas A&M HSC cuts ties with DHR Health**

Steve Taylor

June 16

EDINBURG, Texas — It was only a couple of months back that, to great fanfare, Texas A&M University Health Science Center and DHR Health announced increased collaboration in clinical research and graduate education.

The two institutions held a signing ceremony at the Edinburg Conference Center at Renaissance on March 29, with leaders from both institutions saying the collaboration will offer better integrated services for the residents of the Rio Grande Valley.

Those leaders included Texas A&M University Chancellor John Sharp (pictured above), Jon Mogford, COO and senior vice president of Texas A&M Health, Dr. Carlos Cardenas, chairman and co-founder of DHR Health, and Dr. Manish Singh, CEO of DHR Health.

Now, that collaboration has abruptly ended. In a news release, Texas A&M University Health Science Center said it will “end the planning and development of academic and clinical research affiliations” with DHR Health. “Upon further evaluation of our respective missions, we feel this separation is in the best interest of both organizations, the communities we serve and the state,” the news release states.

The news release points out that no current Texas A&M sponsored residents will be impacted by this decision. That is because all current residents at DHR Health are sponsored by previous academic affiliates and the health system.

“We continue to develop the best options to train our students and remain committed to bringing value and collaborative care to our South Texas communities,” said A&M’s Mogford.

The news release says Texas A&M Health has “long been committed” to the Valley through research, education and resources.

“From existing partners to the Global Institute for Hispanic Health and Healthy South Texas to water safety projects in the colonias and expansion of our nursing programs at the Texas A&M Higher Education Center, we will continue to strengthen current partnerships and engage new collaborators that improve the health and well-being of the communities in the Rio Grande Valley,” the news release states.

DHR Health has yet to comment on the split with Texas A&M. The Rio Grande Guardian International News Service will bring DHR’s reaction as soon as it comes in.

The Guardian understands that DHR was hopeful of securing, with Texas A&M’s help, \$25 million from the state Legislature during the recently concluded 88th session for an education and research building. The building would likely have been erected on DHR’s main campus in Edinburg. Texas A&M University Health Science Center was going to be involved in this research.

However, the Guardian understands that when differences between the House and Senate versions of House Bill 1 – the budget bill – were being reconciled by a conference committee late in the session, the \$25 million for the education and research building was appropriated solely to Texas A&M. Texas A&M is expected to build the education and research center on its McAllen campus.

The Guardian sought confirmation that funds earmarked for DHR were moved to Texas A&M from state Rep. Greg Bonnen, R-Friendswood, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, but a call and email to his office was not returned.

Earlier this year, Dr. Singh, DHR’s CEO, called on state lawmakers to help his institution become a national leader in Hispanic medical research. Singh made his pitch for state funding during the RGV Partnership’s 2023 Valley Legislative Tour in late January. The tour included a visit to DHR’s new hospital in Brownsville.

“We have a chance to make a transformational change in the state of healthcare in Texas, to become a national leader in cutting edge, clinical trials of Hispanics,” Singh told the Guardian, just before making his presentation to state lawmakers.

Singh said legislators need to pay attention to the changing demographics of Texas. The Hispanic population is growing fast and a high percentage of the state’s workforce will be Hispanic in the not too distant future.

“Our legislators need to pay attention. If we want to maintain the economic engine here of Texas, they need to pay attention to this population,” Singh said.

<https://riograndeguardian.com/breaking-news-texas-am-hsc-cuts-ties-with-dhr-health/>

## **Rio Grande Guardian**

### **DHR Health confirms its split from Texas A&M HSC**

Steve Taylor

June 16

EDINBURG, Texas – DHR Health has confirmed it is parting ways with Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

News of the split was announced by A&M in a news release earlier today.

A few hours later, DHR issued its own news release. It reads:

“DHR Health is proud to announce that it is the sponsoring institution for seven (7) newly accredited residencies and fellowships by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) totaling 107 accredited new residency and fellowship positions for the Rio Grande Valley. These programs will begin on July 1, 2023.

“Texas A&M Health had been invited to participate in these programs, with a Letter of Agreement signed March 20, 2023 between DHR Health and Texas A&M Health to work together on these new residencies.

“DHR Health has learned today that Texas A&M Health is withdrawing from this agreement. DHR Health

acknowledges this, and respects Texas A&M Health's decision and wishes them well.

"DHR Health possesses all necessary resources, faculty and support to launch these excellent programs next month. These include the first-ever Emergency Medicine, Diagnostic Radiology and Surgical Critical Care Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs in the Rio Grande Valley, the only Urology residency in the RGV, and as well DHR Health's own Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and General Surgery residency programs.

"DHR Health is committed to remain the leader for GME in the Rio Grande Valley, as a health system and now as an independent ACGME-accredited sponsor for our future physicians' training programs."

It was only a couple of months back that, to great fanfare, Texas A&M University Health Science Center and DHR Health announced increased collaboration in clinical research and graduate education.

The two institutions held a signing ceremony at the Edinburg Conference Center at Renaissance on March 29, with leaders from both institutions saying the collaboration will offer better integrated services for the residents of the Rio Grande Valley.

Those leaders included Texas A&M University Chancellor John Sharp, Jon Mogford, COO and senior vice president of Texas A&M Health, Dr. Carlos Cardenas (pictured above), chairman and co-founder of DHR Health, and Dr. Manish Singh, CEO of DHR Health.

In today's news release, Texas A&M University Health Science Center said it will "end the planning and development of academic and clinical research affiliations" with DHR Health. "Upon further evaluation of our respective missions, we feel this separation is in the best interest of both organizations, the communities we serve and the state," the news release states.

The news release points out that no current Texas A&M sponsored residents will be impacted by this decision. That is because all current residents at DHR Health are sponsored by previous academic affiliates and the health system.

"We continue to develop the best options to train our students and remain committed to bringing value and collaborative care to our South Texas communities," said Jon Mogford, PhD, chief operating officer and senior vice president of Texas A&M Health.

The news release says Texas A&M Health has "long been committed" to the Valley through research, education and resources.

"From existing partners to the Global Institute for Hispanic Health and Healthy South Texas to water safety projects in the colonias and expansion of our nursing programs at the Texas A&M Higher Education Center, we will continue to strengthen current partnerships and engage new collaborators that improve the health and well-being of the communities in the Rio Grande Valley," the news release states.

The Rio Grande Guardian International News Service understands that DHR was hopeful of securing, with Texas A&M's help, \$25 million from the state Legislature during the recently concluded 88th session for an education and research building. The building would likely have been erected on DHR's main campus in Edinburg. Texas A&M University Health Science Center was going to be involved in this research.

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Bill 1 – the budget bill – were being reconciled by a conference committee late in the session, the \$25 million for the education and research building was appropriated solely to Texas A&M. Texas A&M is expected to build the education and research center on its McAllen campus.

The Guardian sought confirmation that funds earmarked for DHR were moved to Texas A&M from state Rep. Greg Bonnen, R-Friendswood, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, but a call and email to his office was not returned.

There was no mention of the \$25 million research center in today's news release from DHR.

Earlier this year, Dr. Singh, DHR's CEO, called on state lawmakers to help his institution become a national leader in Hispanic medical research. Singh made his pitch for state funding during the RGV Partnership's 2023 Valley Legislative Tour in late January. The tour included a visit to DHR's new hospital in Brownsville.

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Singh said legislators need to pay attention to the changing demographics of Texas. The Hispanic population is growing fast and a high percentage of the state's workforce will be Hispanic in the not too distant future.

"Our legislators need to pay attention. If we want to maintain the economic engine here of Texas, they need to pay attention to this population," Singh said.

<https://riograndeguardian.com/dhr-health-confirms-its-split-from-texas-am/>

## **KRGV**

### **DHR Health announces end of partnership with Texas A&M University**

June 16

Texas A&M University withdrew from its agreement to provide residency and fellowship programs with DHR Health, the latter announced in a Friday news release.

DHR Health and Texas A&M entered into a partnership in March 2023 to provide a new residency program for medical students in the Rio Grande Valley.

"DHR Health has learned today that Texas A&M Health is withdrawing from this agreement. DHR Health acknowledges this, and respects Texas A&M Health's decision and wishes them well," a news release from the hospital stated.

The DHR Health release also announced seven newly accredited residencies and fellowships by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. This brings the total number of newly accredited residency and fellowship positions for the Rio Grande Valley to 107.

These programs will begin next month.

“DHR Health possesses all necessary resources, faculty and support to launch these excellent programs next month,” the release stated. “DHR Health is committed to remain the leader for GME in the Rio Grande Valley, as a health system and now as an independent ACGME-accredited sponsor for our future physicians’ training programs.”

<https://www.krgv.com/news/dhr-health-announces-end-of-partnership-with-texas-aandm-university>

## **Texas Scorecard**

### **Aggies Hire NY Times ‘Diversity’ Advocate To Head Journalism Program**

Valerie Munoz

June 15

Texas A&M has hired former New York Times Senior Editor and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion proponent Kathleen McElroy to direct their journalism program.

McElroy previously served as Director of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin and has focused on race and its intersection with journalism in her PhD program at UT Austin.

During her time there, she was part of the Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity (CREED). According to their website, CREED advocates for equity-based hiring practices and distributes anti-racism “resources.”

In an op-ed McElroy wrote for The Daily Texan, UT Austin’s official newspaper, she advocated for diversity measures and keeping track of faculty demographics to make the university more welcoming to those who are not “cisgender straight White men.”

While she felt like UT Austin was inclusive, “every faculty member and staff member of color is an ad hoc Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer at UT because our numbers are so small. I have been attending seminars and reading articles about attracting faculty of color because we all have to identify, hire and nurture faculty of color as we have done for privileged groups.”

McElroy has also spoken numerous times about her unique perspective towards objectivity and activism in journalism.

“We can’t just give people a set of facts anymore. I think we know that and we have to tell our students that. This is not about getting two sides of a story or 3 sides of a story, if one side is illegitimate. I think now you cannot cover education, you cannot cover criminal justice, you can’t cover all of these institutions without recognizing how all these institutions were built.” McElroy said in an NPR radio segment on the role of journalists.

Texas A&M told Texas Scorecard that they are confident in McElroy’s abilities.

Texas A&M kicks off its expanded journalism program in the fall. We hired Dr. Kathleen McElroy, who is a superb professor, veteran journalist and proven leader, as well as an Aggie. She has worked for newsrooms for 30 years, and has led journalism programs at two Tier 1 research institutions. Her track record of building a successful curriculum — coupled with her deep understanding of the media landscape — positions her uniquely

to lead the new program.

Although the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 17 by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) to prohibit Texas universities from hiring employees to “perform the duties” of a DEI office, it will not take effect until January 2024. SB 17 is also supposed to block any promotion of policies, training, or activities “designed or implemented in reference to race, color, or ethnicity.”

The measure will prohibit universities from requiring ideological oath statements relating to race, equity, antiracism, and social justice, but universities may still hire candidates based on their studies of these topics.

Texas A&M is governed by a board of regents appointed by Gov. Greg Abbott and confirmed by the Texas Senate.

This article has been updated since publication to include a statement from Texas A&M University.

<https://texasscorecard.com/state/aggies-hire-ny-times-diversity-advocate-to-head-journalism-program/>

## **Texas A&M Today**

### **How Can We Learn From COVID To Prepare For What's Next?**

Luke Henkhaus

June 16

Though the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended five weeks ago, the pandemic itself is far from over.

Meanwhile, there's plenty of reason to suspect the emergence of yet another major pandemic in the not-too-distant future. No one is more familiar with that reality than Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, as well as a fellow at Texas A&M University's Hagler Institute for Advanced Study and Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs.

Texas A&M Today recently caught up with Hotez to discuss this latest chapter of the pandemic, future threats to public health, and the pressing need to address anti-vaccine rhetoric and other forms of misinformation.

As we continue to track the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S., what can we expect to see in the near term? The good news is that the numbers seem to be going down in terms of new COVID cases. The wastewater numbers here in Houston, for instance, are going down. I think part of the problem, though, is we're not collecting nearly as much data as we used to. We used to get regular state and national case reporting data, data on hospitalizations, positivity, wastewater analysis, and now we're not getting as much of that information. So we could experience another wave this summer, like we did in the summer of 2020 here in Texas, and we may find out about it fairly late.

The bottom line is, this is your time to make certain you're up to date on your boosters, especially the bivalent booster that confers immunity against the Omicron subvariants that are currently circulating. Not enough Americans have got it — only about 17% of those who are eligible. And even if you did get it last September when it first became available, it's starting to wear off, so if you're over the age of 65 or if you're immunocompromised, it's time for another booster.

Looking ahead, some models are predicting that we could see another winter wave. We just heard from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration about a fall booster that may become available, and we'll see which groups are eligible to take it, but especially if you're a senior, you should be looking at the possibility of three different vaccines this fall: One is the new COVID booster, second is your influenza shot and third is a new RSV vaccine that's going to be available, so seniors will be eligible for that as well.

You've been stressing the importance of looking beyond COVID at what comes next. In your opinion, what kinds of public health threats should we be watching for in the coming years?

First, remember that COVID-19 is our third major coronavirus of the last 20 years. So don't be surprised if there's fourth major one emerging before the end of this decade.

Second, I'm always worried about avian and zoonotic influenzas or pandemic influenzas, so we need to be ready for that.

And then third, I'm worried about tropical infectious diseases. On the Gulf Coast and in Texas, we have a unique susceptibility to those because of our high levels of poverty and climate change and urbanization, which is the reason we set up our National School of Tropical Medicine here in Houston. I'm worried about dengue or Zika returning, as well as typhus and Chagas' disease. (To learn more about these diseases, search on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, or read this paper from the National School of Tropical Medicine on these diseases in Texas)

How can the U.S. adjust its approach to better prepare for these future pandemics?

I think the mistake that too many people are making is thinking that COVID was just a one-off, and that's not the case. I think it's part of a "new normal" of regular waves of pandemic threats. And that's happening because of this confluence of shifting poverty and climate change, catastrophic weather events, urbanization and human migrations. So we should expect pandemics and health threats, like vector-borne diseases here on the Gulf Coast, to become part of the new normal and adjust accordingly.

The American people understand the importance of investing in defense. We understand the threats posed by Putin invading Ukraine or Xi posturing toward Taiwan. But now we have to start realizing that with pandemic threats and global infectious diseases, yes, they threaten public health, but they also destabilize economies and cause global insecurity.

We need to be prepared for a higher-level investment to develop countermeasures against that. We should be thinking about disease as more than a health threat and recognize them as economic and security threats.

Your next book is titled "The Deadly Rise of Anti-science: A Scientist's Warning." How can we understand the overall impact of anti-vaccine and other anti-science rhetoric during the COVID pandemic?

The number I come up with in the book is that 200,000 Americans, including 40,000 Texans, needlessly died because they refused the COVID vaccine during our terrible Delta and BA.1 Omicron waves in 2021 and 2022. This was at a time when vaccines were more than 90% protective against severe illness and death, and yet so many Americans needlessly died because they were hearing disinformation.

The anti-vaccine movement has shifted from the early 2000s with false claims that vaccines cause autism to becoming a political movement with a link to this concept of health freedom or medical freedom. All that rhetoric really did a lot of damage, especially in East Texas and Central Texas and the Panhandle, where almost every Texan knows someone, a loved one or a friend, who needlessly died because they refused the COVID vaccine. Those are the consequences.

We call it misinformation, or we call it an “infodemic,” but it’s none of those things. My book finds that it was organized, it was deliberate, it was politically motivated, and it killed Americans — it killed Texans. We have got to find a way to de-link the anti-science rhetoric from politics because it just doesn’t belong.

How will that kind of rhetoric impact our ability to respond to future pandemics?

As we get onto the other side of COVID, these anti-vaccine groups are not just going to fold up the tent and go home. They have political power, they have financial clout, and they’re supported at the highest levels of some elements of the government, so as new pandemics come through, this is going to be even tougher.

I’m definitely worried about that, and I’m worried about spillover into all childhood immunizations. I worry that we’re going to see a new normal where parents are no longer willing to vaccinate their kids against diseases like measles, whooping cough and tetanus, even polio — we could see the return of some of those illnesses as well.

Overall, I think this medical freedom framing is a false concept. We need to continue requiring childhood immunizations for school entry, because we know what happens when we stop doing that — we see terrible outbreaks of measles, and measles is a killer disease. So that remains essential.

For adult immunizations, that’s a much tougher issue. Even if we don’t require mandates, we should at least provide accurate health information. The problem that we faced during the COVID pandemic, and one of the findings in the book, is that nightly news anchors on Fox News deliberately filled their content with anti-vaccine statements falsely discrediting the effectiveness or safety of vaccines. So it’s not so much about mandates, it’s about finding ways to stop this anti-science aggression that came from some of our news outlets and elected leaders, because it killed people.

How can we begin to combat some of that anti-science rhetoric and provide reliable information to our communities?

We need to bring together people who think about other deadly, big-picture societal issues like suicide, traffic accidents or gun violence, and try to think of it from that standpoint. Because the numbers of Americans dying from this are right up there with any of those forces.

You never know what’s going to be a trusted source of information for people. It could be a local family physician, or an institution like Texas A&M, which has an incredibly strong reputation across the state of Texas, even in the areas I’ve mentioned. That’s one of the reasons I’m so thrilled to have appointments with the Hagler Institute and the Scowcroft Institute at Texas A&M, because I think it’s important that A&M represents a really important voice for our state and for our region.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/16/how-can-we-learn-from-covid-to-prepare-for-whats-next/>

## **Texas A&M Today**

### **New Study Reveals Global Reservoirs Are Becoming Emptier**

Alyson Chapman

June 16

Water is an essential and indispensable component of humanity’s everyday existence. As the global population grows and the climate warms, so does the water demand. Over the past two decades, global reservoirs have



become increasingly empty despite an overall increase in total storage capacity due to the construction of new reservoirs.

Led by Dr. Huilin Gao, associate professor in the Zachry Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Texas A&M University, researchers used a new approach with satellite data to estimate the storage variations of 7,245 global reservoirs from 1999 to 2018. The researchers published their findings in *Nature Communications*.

Overall, global reservoir storage increased at an annual rate of 28 cubic kilometers, attributed to the construction of new reservoirs. However, despite these efforts, the data reveals that the rate of reservoir filling is lower than anticipated.

“As the global population continues to grow in the 21st century, surface water reservoirs are increasingly being relied on to meet rising demands in the context of a changing climate,” Gao said. “However, the amount of water available in reservoirs and its trends have not been well quantified at the global scale.”

The researchers developed the Global Reservoir Storage dataset, freely available online to benefit decision-makers and the wider science community. It represents a significant advancement in tracking global reservoir storage conditions.

Given the projected decline in water runoff and the rising water demand, the observed trend of diminishing storage returns from reservoir construction is expected to continue, potentially impacting water supplies with significant implications. These findings indicate that addressing future water demands cannot rely solely on constructing new reservoirs, emphasizing the need for novel management strategies.

“Through this research, we share a new perspective for reevaluating the socio-economic benefits of new reservoir construction and the tension between growing water demand and lessening water availability in developing countries,” said Dr. Yao Li, a Texas A&M former postdoctoral researcher who is currently a professor at the School of Geographical Sciences at Southwest University.

The decline in reservoir storage is particularly prominent in the global south, including South Asia, Africa and South America. Despite efforts to construct new reservoirs, the data shows that they fall short of expected filling levels.

The most significant decline is in South America and Africa, where growing populations contribute to an escalated water demand.

In contrast, reservoirs in the global north, including regions in North America and Europe, are experiencing an upward trend in reaching their maximum capacity. Reservoirs in high-latitude regions like the Great Lakes and Siberia exhibit comparatively higher storage capacities, primarily attributed to their lower population densities and lesser impacts from human activities.

The analysis did not consider the sedimentation process, and therefore the overall storage decline presented in this study is conservative.

Other contributors to this research are Dr. Gang Zhao, a former postdoctoral fellow at the Carnegie Institute for Science in Stanford who is now a researcher at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, and Dr. George H. Allen, assistant professor of Hydrology and Remote Sensing at Virginia Polytechnic

and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Both Li and Zhao are former Texas A&M students who worked in Dr. Gao's research group, Gao Hydrology Research Group.

This research is funded by NASA and the Texas A&M President's Excellence Fund X-Grants Program.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/16/new-study-reveals-global-reservoirs-are-becoming-emptier/>

## **KAGS**

### **Texas A&M Meat Science expert gives tips for barbecue beginners**

Matthew Gromala

June 16

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — As temperatures rise for the summer, many will look to barbecuing as their outdoor activity of choice.

Ray Riley '79, '81 is the manager for the Texas A&M University Rosenthal Meat Science and Technology Center and a teacher at the school's renowned barbecue summer camp.

However, getting into barbecuing can be a daunting, especially with some world-renowned experts having honed their craft for decades.

Here are some of the tips that Riley recommends for those looking to start on their barbecue journey:

A good thermometer can make all the difference

"You need to accurately measure the temperature of your meat and your pit. With more experience, you'll tell by time and feel, but it's best to play it safe when starting out."

Make use of as much knowledge that is out there about barbecue as possible

"(I)f you had a question, you had to call up an old friend or relative. These days, the internet has just about every answer you need. I also recommend Aaron Franklin's books."

You don't need a huge smoker to get started, but don't go with a gas cooker

"something as simple and inexpensive as a small pit smoker can hold heat just fine. You don't need a pellet grill or some big ol' pit on a truck trailer to make good barbecue. I wouldn't recommend a gas cooker, though—it just doesn't give flavor like wood or charcoal."

Starting out by making pulled pork is better for beginners than brisket

"Everyone wants to make brisket, but a good brisket is hard to master. Making pulled pork out of a Boston shoulder is a lot simpler, and you can work your way up from there."

Understand different grades of beef, but don't break the bank

"A higher USDA grade means higher quality beef, but you don't always have to get USDA Prime. Buy what you can afford."

Don't start smoking too early after you've started your fire

"Preparation depends on what you're making, but definitely get your pit up to temperature and burn until the heavy smoke clears out before throwing in the meat."

Take your time

"Some people prefer certain temperatures, but most of the time, I recommend cooking at a nice, low 250 degrees Fahrenheit and making sure you're in no rush."

Don't check in on your meat too often--more time smoking means more flavor

"If you're constantly lifting the lid on your smoker, you're not cooking. Set a timer to check it every hour or so and watch TV, read a book or do some chores. And if anyone asks you when the meat will be done, tell them it'll be done when it's ready!"

"We always tell our students, 'As long as you know how to cook, you'll always have friends,'" Riley said.

Click here to read the original article on Texas A&M Today.

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/life/food/tamu-meat-science-expert-gives-tips-for-barbecue-beginners/499-8d7f0c3a-4551-45c1-91eb-698247221c41>

## **Austin County News Online**

### **IGNITE GARDENS WITH NEWEST TEXAS SUPERSTAR – THE FIRECRACKER PLANT**

June 16

Homeowners looking to add a touch of fiery brilliance to their garden should look no further than the firecracker plant, named the newest Texas Superstar.

The firecracker plant comes from the vibrant landscapes of Mexico and Guatemala, said Greg Grant, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulturist, Smith County, and Texas Superstar executive board member. This showy, tender plant has a delicate, wispy appearance, and the pops of color are a show-stealer in a wide range of landscape uses.

Despite its delicate looks, the firecracker plant is a vigorous and versatile addition to any environment, Grant said. In Texas, it thrives as an annual or container plant in the northern third of the state, a tender perennial in the middle third, and a long-lived, evergreen perennial in the lower third.

"Its adaptability makes it an excellent choice for gardeners across the state," he said. "They really become showy during the dog days of summer, but they're a good investment because they perform from April to the first frost. Firecracker plants are selections that can make first-time gardeners look good and require very little attention."

To be designated a Texas Superstar, a plant must perform well for growers throughout the state. Texas Superstars must also be easy to propagate, ensuring the plants are widely available and reasonably priced.

#### **GET TO KNOW THE FIRECRACKER PLANT**

Also known as the coral fountain or coral plant, the firecracker plant features mounding herbaceous growth, adorned with an abundance of small tubular blossoms in a vivid shade of orange-red to red. Plants can occasionally be found in a pale yellow variety.

Its blooming period begins in early summer and lasts until the first frost, ensuring months of dazzling color in gardens, Grant said. Plants are visually stunning, but also a low-maintenance option for garden enthusiasts.

The firecracker plant is exceptionally heat and sun-tolerant, Grant said. It thrives under the scorching Texas sun,

making it a reliable performer in even the hottest summers. Additionally, it can tolerate partial shade, providing some flexibility in placement around the home.

The firecracker plant has very few insect or disease problems, ensuring that it remains healthy and vibrant throughout the growing season, he said.

The plant often grows wider than it does tall due to its spreading nature, making it a fantastic choice for filling in empty spaces to add a burst of color to landscapes, Grant said.

With a mature height and spread of approximately 3 feet, the firecracker plant is ideal for various uses in the garden. It also works well as a bedding plant, creating a vibrant, eye-catching border.

The firecracker plant's spreading growth habit makes it perfect for containers, with a cascading pop of color to patios and balconies, he said. For those with limited space, hanging baskets can provide miniature displays of fiery color when filled with firecracker plants.

Grant said firecracker plants work in the ground or in small containers but larger containers – whiskey-barrel sized to 30-gallon or planter boxes – will reduce the maintenance they might need.

"It grows in sand, silt or clay or in a pot or basket," he said. "I would say bigger is better when it comes to containers, boxes or baskets just because smaller containers require more watering. But the firecracker plant also lends very well to cascading down from a container or box. It looks like a firecracker exploded from the ground and looks equally stunning arching and flowing from a container."

#### FIRECRACKER PLANT CARE, MAINTENANCE

Regarding care, Grant said firecracker plants adapt well to most soil types and thrive in areas with good drainage. It prefers low to medium waterings, making it suitable for water-wise gardens and arid parts of the state.

Grant suggests watering plants every few weeks when experiencing drought conditions, but they should be fine if the plant is not wilting.

"Their toughness and ability to grow is another characteristic that ties back to the investment," he said. "It is going to grow and look better as the season progresses, unlike other annuals that are at their best when we get them home."

Gardeners in the northern half of Texas can either replant firecracker plants each year or plant them in containers and overwinter it indoors or in a greenhouse.

Another characteristic that might interest homeowners is that the firecracker plant is also a magnet for hummingbirds, Grant said. The blossoms are especially attractive to hummingbirds and can turn a garden into a frequent stop.

Texas Superstar is a registered trademark owned by Texas A&M AgriLife Research. Plants are designated by the Texas Superstar executive board, which comprises nine horticulturists from AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension and Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

## **Courier Journal**

### **Pet Talk - Helping Livestock Beat The Heat This Summer**

June 15

The best place to be when the sweltering summer weather arrives is inside with air conditioning, yet livestock outside of air-conditioned barns often need other ways to beat the heat.

Dr. Isabelle Louge, a clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, says that while all livestock can cool down using shade, water, and fans, cooling strategies for livestock vary depending on the species and breed.

For example, shade is a common way to provide animals relief from the sun, but some benefit from the shade more than others.

“Access to shade particularly helps light-skinned animals from getting sunburned in areas with very little hair, such as the nose and around the eyes; white pigs, especially, should be kept under shade during the day since they are prone to sunburns,” Louge said. “Trees, run-in shelters, and open-sided canopies and roofs can serve as great sources of shade, or owners can consider only letting animals out to graze at night.”

While drinking water can significantly cool down animals as well, owners should be aware of how animals use water differently.

“Cows sit in watering holes to help them cool off, yet this method of cooling off can increase the moisture in a cow’s hooves, which make them soft and can lead to lameness from foot diseases like foot rot and abscesses,” Louge said. “It is better to discourage this behavior and provide other means to cool down animals with water.”

One effective way to cool down animals is to wet them periodically with cool – not cold – water, because, as Louge points out, cold water shocks the system and causes blood vessels near the skin’s surface to contract, reducing an animal’s ability to release heat.

“Most livestock species – with the exception of horses and donkeys – do not sweat to cool down, and because they can’t take advantage of this evaporative cooling naturally, physically wetting down animals and using a strong fan can create a breeze that encourages evaporation, mimicking sweating and cooling the animal,” Louge said.

Fans, in general, are a good addition to cooling strategies because the increased airflow helps animals lose heat through their skin, but Louge advises owners to take care when considering the presence of fans around their animals.

“It is important to make sure the animals do not get access to the fan blades or electrical cords, as these can be hazardous,” Louge said. “Owners should also make sure the fans are designed for high outdoor temperatures, as the motor can overheat and catch fire if they are not made for such temperatures.”

Other methods of cooling can be tailored more specifically to animals as well.

Animals with fiber or long hair – including woolly sheep, llamas, alpacas, angora goats, cashmere goats, and highland cattle – can keep cool easier once their hair is removed.

“The more hair or fleece a large animal has, the more likely it is to get heat stressed,” Louge said. “So for animals with very thick wool or hair, it is a good idea for owners to shear them multiple times in the summer to make sure they do not get too shaggy.”

Because of this, if possible, Louge suggests owners who live in warm areas not purchase animals that naturally have a lot of hair or wool; instead, owners should select a breed that is well-adapted to the local climate.

Finally, animals that rely on fermentation to digest their food – including cattle, goats, llamas, alpacas, horses, and donkeys – should not eat during the hottest part of the day, as this can overheat the animal.

“When these species eat a meal, the bacteria in their gut break down the food and produce heat as a byproduct,” Louge explained. “Because of this, it is best to feed animals early in the morning and in the evening when the sun is going down.”

No matter the animal, however, owners should bring their animals into the shade and provide water and a fan if they notice signs of overheating, such as fast breathing, panting, decreased activity level, slobbering, stumbling, and incoordination. Heat stress can worsen quickly, so Louge also strongly recommends calling a veterinarian to assess the animal and ensure they do not require more extensive supportive care to resolve the overheating issue.

Extreme heat can cause stress for livestock, and it is an owner’s responsibility to maintain their animal’s health. By personalizing cooling strategies to an animal’s species and breed, owners can ensure their livestock are able to withstand the stifling heat and remain comfortable throughout the summer.

[https://www.courierjournal.net/online\\_only/article\\_f27f3c80-0c66-11ee-8513-ebee4dfed50.html](https://www.courierjournal.net/online_only/article_f27f3c80-0c66-11ee-8513-ebee4dfed50.html)

## **KSAT**

### **Bloom boom: Native wildflowers giving a show through start of summer**

Sarah Acosta

June 16

SAN ANTONIO – Sunflowers, indian blanket and tickseed are just some of the native pollinating flowers that have popped up all over South Texas.

South Texas is experiencing a native bloom boom, bigger than what we’ve seen in the past three years.

“Can we say that we’ve had rain this year?” David Rodriguez, a horticulturist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Bexar County. “So the abundance and wild time rainfall through late winter through the spring has really woke up a lot of these plants compared to this time last year.”

He explains that after three years of extreme drought, the recent rain has woken up some of those dormant wildflower seeds.

“Survivability,” Rodriguez said. “So these seeds can stay dormant in the soil for a long period of time when the temperatures correct, the moisture is correct and the timing is correct. They wake up.”

And the more blooms, the better. We need our native flowers for pollinators to maintain the foundation of our local ecosystems.

“It’s a part of our natural ecosystem,” Rodriguez said. “You know, you have the wildlife, the birds, because a lot of birds might come in later to eat some of the seeds as well. You know, survivability and beneficial to insects, particularly bees, the bees are very important.”

The bees are even having a baby boom, because of the bloom boom.

KSAT12’s Patty Santos spoke with local beekeepers about this, you can check out her story on KSAT.com.

The butterflies also love it.

But sunflowers and wildflowers can sometimes grow aggressively and overwhelm your gardens. So how do you keep them from getting out of hand, especially if you have strict home owner association rules?

Rodriguez said to pull the weeds to keep them out of the grow patch or by mowing parts or all of them down when they are ready.

“Like the highway department does, the highway department with the big stands of blue bonnet and other stands of other and in paint brush and Galata, they time it right when most of those seeds are just splitting and dropping, they wait a week or two,” Rodriguez said. “Then they go in there and they do the the prescribed mow in some areas.”

Rodriguez said you can tell it’s the right time to mow them back once the flower heads have dropped their petals, browned and dropped their seeds. He said mowing them back doesn’t mean they won’t come back, those flowers may sprout again for a second time in the fall and of course will bloom again in the spring.

Also don’t forget to pull weeds or grasses that are overwhelming the wildflowers you want to keep.

<https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2023/06/16/bloom-boom-native-wildflowers-giving-a-show-through-start-of-summer/>

**KBTX**

**Weekend Gardener: Cooking with plants that are edible**

Karla

Castillo

June 16

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (KBTX) - This week, Lisa Whittlesey with Texas A&M AgriLife talks about plants you can incorporate into your meals.

“You can have beauty and you can have things that you can enjoy and you can cook with in your kitchen,” said Whittlesey. “This is just one example. This is a plant called Nasturtium and both the leaves and the flowers are edible so a great summer salad for you right?”

Whittlesey says herbs like basil, oregano or thyme are just some plants you can eat and look great in containers.

“One thing I’ll caution you for any plant that you’re gonna eat, you want to be sure that you know what has been applied to it,” she said. “So this, it’s at my house. I know I’ve just watered it and fertilized it, but I haven’t sprayed anything on it. Just something to note, especially if it’s an edible crop.”

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/16/weekend-gardener-cooking-with-plants-that-are-edible/>

## **KGNS**

### **TAMIU president delivers yard signs to incoming students**

June 16

LAREDO, TX (KGNS) - Future TAMIU Dustdevils received a special gift personally from the university’s president.

On Friday morning, TAMIU President Dr. Pablo Arenaz and the office of recruitment went door to door to deliver yard signs to six students that have been accepted into the university.

Alex Garcia, Victoria Perez, Paulina Salazar, Sean Villarreal and Ivan Gomez each received a sign that said “I’m going to Dustdevil Country” that they can set up on their lawn to inform their neighbors about their academic choices.

Dr. Arenaz believes it’s a special way to congratulate and welcome these incoming students.

“I think it helps make a connection, an early connection between the university and the students, that they begin to feel apart of the Texas A&M International University family and that’s very important for them and for us for them to make that connection and feel part of the university,” said Dr. Arenaz.

Dr. Arenaz said this is a tradition that dates years back before the pandemic that they continue to take part in.

The first day of classes for TAMIU’s fall semester is August 28.

<https://www.kgns.tv/2023/06/16/tamiu-president-delivers-yard-signs-incoming-students/>

## **The Eagle**

### **A&M–Central Texas educates future teachers in innovative ways**



June 16

The landscape of learning is constantly shifting, compelling colleges and universities to find innovative ways to position students for career success. At Texas A&M University–Central Texas in Killeen, a new Alternative Teacher Certification Program takes the evolving needs of students and shifting pandemic challenges into account to result in a unique course of study.

“Before COVID-19, our classes were fully face-to-face for both undergrads and graduate students,” said Elizabeth Casey, curriculum and instruction department chair. “We moved online quickly when COVID-19 hit and since that time, many of our courses have remained online. It really benefits the students who continue to enroll; many actually prefer the online course offerings.”

Pandemic-related uncertainties have created a lingering sense of anxiety, something teachers in training deal with personally and are taught to address within their own classrooms.

“We’re more aware now of our students’ needs, and we work closely with them when they aren’t feeling comfortable,” Casey said. “We want to make sure everyone feels heard and safe in their learning environments.”

For example, faculty members now accompany undergraduate students during service-learning courses when they go out into regional K-12 classrooms. That encouragement trickles down to inform the prospective teachers’ interactions with elementary and high school pupils.

“K-12 students need to hear positive feedback about themselves, and they need to know how to offer positive comments to their own peers,” Casey said. “Social and emotional learning factors have been added into some of our courses so that our students will be prepared to support them in this way.”

Technology is another area in which innovation is occurring at lightning speed with artificial intelligence leading current discussions.

“We’re still trying to figure out how AI impacts courses in our department and across the university, and what’s going to happen with it,” Casey noted. “Some classes are using generative AI tools that let students do research and prepare papers, and then have conversations with their instructors around that.”

Thanks to expanded video-conferencing capabilities, student teachers now have more opportunity than ever to put these advanced technologies to use in the classroom.

“Innovative ed-tech is only going to continue to grow,” Casey pointed out. “We’re making sure our students are comfortable using it, so that if we do have to pivot exclusively back to online learning again at some point, they’ll be prepared.”

Another plus: A&M–Central Texas’ Alternative Teacher Certification Program offers flexible course offerings to accommodate career changers and nontraditional students. Courses are online, and students have the option to take one or two classes in 8 week increments, depending on how quickly they would like to move through the program requirements. After taking four classes and passing state exams, students are able to apply for a teaching position at a district in the central Texas area.

The A&M–Central Texas’ BS in Education also has flexibility built in. Courses are offered online, hybrid and face-

to-face as students move through the program. In the past, clinical teachers have been expected to spend their last semester working in a classroom under a mentor teacher without pay, aligning their schedule to a typical K-12 teaching day and amounting to around 40 hours per week.

“Now, we’re moving toward a yearlong residency model where students are in the classroom three days a week during the fall and spring semesters with a mentor teacher,” Casey said. “They have Mondays and Fridays off to earn money through substitute teaching and hone pedagogical skills at their placement school if they choose.”

For more information about A&M–Central Texas’ Alternative Teacher Certification Program, call 254.519.5438 or visit [tamuct.edu/teach](http://tamuct.edu/teach).

[https://theeagle.com/brandavestudios/a-m-central-texas-educates-future-teachers-in-innovative-ways/article\\_7b44a2d4-b16e-5afe-a51e-e9b7d759c12d.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm\\_medium=PostUp&lctg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248](https://theeagle.com/brandavestudios/a-m-central-texas-educates-future-teachers-in-innovative-ways/article_7b44a2d4-b16e-5afe-a51e-e9b7d759c12d.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm_medium=PostUp&lctg=6988668&tn_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248)

## **TXK Today**

### **Dr. Ross Alexander named sole finalist for President at Texas A&M University-Texarkana**

June 16

The Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System voted unanimously to name Dr. Ross C. Alexander as sole finalist for president of Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

Alexander served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of North Alabama since 2017. Under his leadership, UNA established itself as the fastest-growing university in the state, with a record retention and graduation rate. Alexander achieved this growth with a focus on online and adult education, global education and workforce development.

“Dr. Alexander’s career has been marked by academic innovation and entrepreneurship at several institutions,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Dr. Alexander is just what Texas A&M University-Texarkana needs to continue to grow and serve East Texas.”

In addition to leading unprecedented enrollment growth at UNA, Alexander led efforts to secure tens of millions of dollars in funding from local, state and federal sources to support multiple capital projects on campus, including a Computing and Mathematics Building and Engineering Building. Based on his strategies, UNA is one of the only universities in the nation whereby a student can earn a micro-credential, certificate, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, and doctoral degree either on-campus or online.

“I am honored, privileged and humbled to be chosen as the next President of Texas A&M University-Texarkana. I am deeply grateful to Chancellor Sharp for the faith he has placed in me to assume this exhilarating new role at an exceptional university in an extraordinary community,” Alexander said. “A&M-Texarkana is a relatively young university with tremendous potential. I am honored to lead it during this next exciting phase of growth, ascendancy, and expansion.”

Prior to UNA, Dr. Alexander held leadership positions at Indiana University East, a regional campus of Indiana

University, including Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education. Prior to that, Alexander was a faculty member, chair, and program director for many years at the University of North Georgia. Alexander takes on the role after former president Dr. Emily Cutrer announced in December she would step down this summer. He and his beautiful wife Lilia—who is originally from Bulgaria—have three young children, Victoria, Madelaine, and Ross, Jr.

Regent Jay Graham led a committee that conducted a nationwide search for Cutrer’s successor. Regent Randy Brooks was also on that committee, which included:

Members from the university:

Dr. Brian Matthews, Associate Professor of Management, and Faculty Senate Vice President and President-elect (incoming)

Dr. Heather McKnight, Director of Nursing and Associate Professor

Dr. Tom Wagdy, Professor of History

Dr. Kathy Lease, Associate Professor of Education Leadership

Dr. Nurul Alam, Professor of Biology

Dr. Melba Foster, Instructor of Education

Toney Favors, Vice President for Student Enrollment, Engagement, and Success

Jeff Hinton, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer

Venus Lillis, Director of Academic Advising and Student Services, Staff Council Vice-President and President-Elect (incoming)

Shuntay McCauley, Student Government Association President

And members from the community:

Sonja Yates Hubbard, principal with the Yates Group

Cary Patterson, founding partner of Nix Patterson, LLP

Lesley Ledwell Dukelow, president of Ledwell & Son Enterprises

The executive recruiting firm Academic Search assisted with the search.

Under state law, the Board of Regents must name a finalist for at least 21 days before finalizing the appointment at a subsequent meeting. Alexander will be the fifth president at Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

<https://txktoday.com/news/dr-ross-alexander-named-sole-finalist-for-president-at-texas-am-university-texarkana/>

## **MSN**

### **Aggies vs. Hurricanes Week 2: Way Too Early Staff Predictions**

Timm Hamm

June 16

After hosting New Mexico in Week 1, the Texas A&M football travels to South Beach to take on the new-look Miami Hurricanes in Week 2. After a 17-9 win at Kyle Field last season, the Aggies will have their hands full with a new and improved Mario Cristobal squad.

The biggest question for the Aggies is at quarterback and offensive line. Both position groups should be better,

and the revamped offense under Bobby Petrino could contribute to that. The defense is the strength of this club as it has been for a number of years under Jimbo Fisher, and it's stout once again.

Miami dealt with health issues last year at key positions, especially at quarterback, but should be healthy against the Aggies in Week 2, and that could cause trouble for A&M at Hard Rock Stadium.

Let's take a look at our AllAggies.com staff predictions for Aggies vs. Hurricanes in South Florida on Sept. 9.

Matt Galatzan - Publisher

Texas A&M pulled of a big win vs. the Hurricanes last season, and the Aggies will be better offensively in 2023. Miami should be improved as well, but I think Conner Weigman gets a big win for his career here.

Aggies 34, Hurricanes 24

Timm Hamm - Writer

After a warm-up against the Lobos at Kyle Field in Week 1, the Aggies have a tough road matchup against Miami. This is not last season's Hurricanes and A&M will have issues with this new Miami offense. The Canes take advantage of home field and pull away late after a fourth-quarter Aggies turnover.

Hurricanes 31, Aggies 27

Cole Thompson - Writer

Both Texas A&M and Miami failed to meet expectations last season. As a result, both programs fired their offensive coordinators, targeted talent via the transfer portal, and put an emphasis on young talent taking a larger step. Bobby Petrino might end up being the reason A&M ranks top 10 in scoring, but it's going to take longer than two games to see it in action.

Hurricanes 30, Aggies 24

Connor Zimmerlee - Writer

Last season's matchup between these two teams was an absolute slugfest of which offense could throw the game away better. Fortunately for Texas A&M, its offense prevailed just enough to pull out the 17-9 win over Miami. This season, it looks to get the offense back on track and rebound from a disappointing 5-7 showing. Look for the Aggies to do just that, making a statement in Week 2.

Aggies 31, Hurricanes 17

Matt Guzman - Writer

A brutal 17-9 Aggies victory last season that was hard to watch, to say the least, epitomized the lackluster offense that won Texas A&M just two conference games a year ago. Miami may not be in conference, but it does pack a non-conference punch higher than any other non-SEC teams the Aggies will face next season, so it will be a chance for them to prove they aren't messing around after likely winning against New Mexico. Returning quarterback Conner Weigman will have a solid game — at least one worthy of a higher passer rating

than the 34 that Max Johnson had last year — and the Aggies should overpower the Hurricanes.

Aggies 28, Hurricanes 14

Casey Smith - Writer

Texas A&M won last year's first game in the home-and-home series against Miami 17-9, and in the return game at Hard Rock Stadium, expect this to be a matchup between quarterbacks with something to prove.

Aggies' gunslinger Conner Weigman showed promise in limited action last season and will look to take the reins as the full-time starter. Miami's Tyler Van Dyke was regarded last year as a fringe top-10 quarterback but didn't live up to the billing, throwing for 1,835 yards and 10 touchdowns to five interceptions.

Aggies 27, Hurricanes 17

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/ncaafb/aggies-vs-hurricanes-week-2-way-too-early-staff-predictions/ar-AA1cEY4L?li=BBnbfcl>

## **Dallas Morning News**

### **Texas A&M hoops extends Buzz Williams' contract through 2027-28 season**

June 16

Texas A&M has extended the contract of head basketball coach Buzz Williams through the 2028 season, the school announced Friday.

Williams, who just completed his fourth season in College Station, was named SEC Coach of the Year for the second time in 2022-23. He also received the honor in 2019-20, his first season at the helm of the Aggies.

"Buzz Williams is a tremendous leader and role model for our student-athletes, and he's a great example of Texas A&M's core values," Texas A&M athletic director Ross Bjork said in a statement.

"He's taken our men's basketball team to new heights over the past two seasons with even brighter days ahead. It was an easy decision to ensure that Buzz is here in Aggieland for many years to come as we continue our mission of creating opportunities through championship athletics."

Williams' 52 wins over the past two seasons are a program record and he is the first Texas A&M head coach to win 25 or more games in consecutive seasons.

Last season, the Aggies compiled a 25-10 record and made the NCAA Tournament for the first time in five seasons.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/sports/texas-am-aggies/2023/06/16/texas-am-hoops-extends-buzz-williams-contract-through-2027-28-season/>

## **The Eagle**

### **Texas A&M gives men's basketball coach Buzz Williams two-year contract extension**

Travis Brown

17 hours ago

Texas A&M head men's basketball coach Buzz Williams has received a two-year contract extension, the school announced Friday.

Williams' extension through the 2027-28 season was approved by the A&M University System Board of Regents during a special meeting held via telephone Wednesday.

Williams' initial deal was set to expire after the 2024-25 season per his contract obtained by The Eagle through an open records request. The university exercised a one-year option, which was spelled out in Williams' initial contract, through the 2025-26 season. Notice of the acceptance of the one-year option was given in May 2022 per documentation obtained by The Eagle through an open records request.

Williams' salary began at \$3.8 million per year at A&M and rose \$100,000 per year. His salary increased to \$4.2 million annually on May 1, 2023.

Financial terms of Williams' extension were not released Friday.

"Buzz Williams is a tremendous leader and role model for our student-athletes, and he's a great example of Texas A&M's core values," A&M athletic director Ross Bjork said in a statement. "He's taken our men's basketball team to new heights over the past two seasons with even brighter days ahead. It was an easy decision to ensure that Buzz is here in Aggieland for many years to come as we continue our mission of creating opportunities through championship athletics."

The Aggies made their first NCAA tournament under Williams last season as a No. 7 seed, falling in the first round to 10th-seeded Penn State 76-59 to finish with a 25-10 overall record. The year prior, the Aggies advanced to the final of the National Invitation Tournament, finishing as runner-up to Xavier.

A&M also advanced to the final of the Southeastern Conference tournament the past two seasons, losing to Tennessee and Alabama, respectively.

In four seasons at A&M, Williams holds a 76-47 record and earned SEC Coach of the Year honors in 2020 and 2023.

"Corey [Williams] and I are extremely grateful to the Texas A&M System Board of Regents, President [Katherine] Banks and the entire athletic department administrative staff for their belief and support in our program," Williams said in a statement. "Our family loves the Bryan-College Station community and Aggieland, and we're grateful for the support of the 12th Man. We're proud of what our teams have accomplished, which is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our players and staff. We are excited about the future of Texas A&M basketball and humbled for the opportunity to be a part of it."

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/mens\\_basketball/texas-a-m-gives-mens-basketball-coach-buzz-williams-two-year-contract-extension/article\\_b7be7d36-0c75-11ee-ab5c-4f742fd8b27a.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/mens_basketball/texas-a-m-gives-mens-basketball-coach-buzz-williams-two-year-contract-extension/article_b7be7d36-0c75-11ee-ab5c-4f742fd8b27a.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-)

headlines&utm\_medium=PostUp&ltg=6988668&tn\_email\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45eecca248

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The Texas A&M University System

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## The Eagle

### State officials approve almost \$1.2B in funding for A&M System

Alex Miller  
8 hours ago

Gov. Greg Abbott approved a record \$1.19 billion in new spending for the Texas A&M University System on Monday.

This is the first time the A&M System has received over a billion dollars in new state funds, which are contained in several bills and includes funding across several system schools and agencies.

A&M Chancellor John Sharp called this spring's Texas legislative session "the Higher Education Session" in a letter he wrote to the state Legislature.

"I think because A&M is growing so fast and has become, quite frankly, the school of choice in Texas, we had 40,000 students apply for 10,000 slots," Sharp told The Eagle on Monday. "I think the Legislature likes what's going on here and they responded accordingly."

State legislators approved \$180.9 million to the A&M System in exchange for freezing undergraduate tuition and academic fees for in-state residents over the next two years. These funds were tied to tenure reform and legislation in regard to higher education's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts, which were bills signed by Abbott last week.

Sharp said this started in a committee within A&M's Board of Regents when the board instructed A&M officials to find ways to not have to raise tuition for the next two years.

"A&M was a key beneficiary of that because we have more veterans than anybody else, so we got more reimbursement for that, and because we're growing so fast," Sharp said.

New state spending for the A&M System also included: \$159 million for the A&M System agencies for "Keeping Texas Prepared" and 5% pay increases for agency employees in each of the next two years and \$43.1 million in formula and research performance funding for the A&M Health Science Center.

"Now, anytime there's a tornado, anytime there's a hurricane, an out-of-control wildfire, A&M is now in charge of that," Sharp said. "After [Hurricane] Harvey when Gov. Abbott named me as the hurricane czar, or whatever you want to call it, the agencies here, like the Forest Service, like TEEX, Ag Extension ... these agencies are now basically on the front lines of every one of those disasters that happen. ... We've added a ton of work to what an ag extension agent has to do, to what a forest service person has to do, responding to flood waters, hurricanes, whatever disaster happens."

An additional \$775 million was awarded to A&M System schools and agencies. Those funds included \$200 million to the A&M System for quantum and artificial intelligence chip fabrication and \$30 million to the A&M Engineering Experiment Station for a new Hypersonic Wind Tunnel.



"I think our government relations folks continue to do a great job both in Austin and Washington," Sharp said.

[https://theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/texas-am-system-to-receive-billions/article\\_ef54eafa-0eb9-11ee-95d8-8381c768ad9e.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm\\_medium=PostUp&ltg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248](https://theeagle.com/news/a_m/texas-am-system-to-receive-billions/article_ef54eafa-0eb9-11ee-95d8-8381c768ad9e.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm_medium=PostUp&ltg=6988668&tn_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248)

## **KAGS**

### **Gov. Greg Abbott approves \$1.19 billion in spending for Texas A&M University System**

Matthew Gromla

June 19

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — On Monday, Gov. Greg Abbott approved a record \$1.19 billion in new spending for the Texas A&M University System, according to a release from the university.

The money will freeze undergraduate tuition and fees for Texas residents for the next two years. It is also the first time that Texas A&M has surpassed \$1 billion in new funding from the state.

Included in the funding increase was a state match bump for Prairie View A&M to qualify for federal funding among other things.

"We are thankful to state officials for meeting the needs of higher education in what is a historic legislative session for higher education," said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System in a news release.

According to the release, the funds that allowed the changes to be made "was tied to tenure reform as well as legislation addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts in higher education."

The new spending overall for the A&M System includes:

\$180.9 million for the Texas A&M System institutions' share of the affordability contingency

\$43.1 million in formula and research performance funding for the A&M Health Science Center

\$159 million for the Texas A&M System Agencies for "Keeping Texas Prepared" and 5% pay increases for agency employees in each of the next two years

\$775 million in new initiatives.

Funding for emergency systems managed by the Texas A&M University System was also provided, which includes:

Texas Division for Emergency Management, \$14.6 million for Workforce Development

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, \$24.2 million for the Extension Agent Network

Texas A&M Forest Service, \$34.7 million for Emergency Response Capacity and Local Firefighting Capacity

Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, \$3.7 million for Rapid Detection of Animal and Human Disease Threats

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, \$19.5 million for Recruitment and Retention

The \$775 million in new initiatives for the A&M System will also include:

Texas A&M University System, \$226.4 million, which includes \$200 million for quantum and artificial intelligence chip fabrication; \$26.4 million for the Center for Microdevices and Systems at Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station; and \$1.5 million for a mental health study

Texas A&M University, \$200 million for constructing facilities adjacent to the Johnson Space Center and \$25 million for the Virtual Production Institute in College Station and Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

Prairie View A&M University, \$15 million for the Ag Match so the university could qualify for federal funding.

Tarleton State University, \$5 million for Better Health for Rural North Texas

Texas A&M Central Texas, \$1.8 million for instructional programming at East Williamson County Higher Education Center

Texas A&M International University, \$4 million for Clinical Lab Sciences and Occupational Therapy Programs

West Texas A&M University, \$6 million for Advancing Food Animal Production

Texas A&M University – Texarkana, \$4.9 million for Better East Texas Phase III

Texas A&M University Health Science Center, \$15 million for Texas A&M Care, Rural Health Care Initiative and \$25 million for an education and research facility in at the Higher Education Center in Hidalgo County

Texas A&M AgriLife Research, \$25 million for Research Capability and \$15 million for tornado damage at the Vernon Research and Extension Center and the Texas A&M AgriLife Foundation and Seed facility

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, \$1 million for the Bee Pollinator Program

Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, \$30 million for a new Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and \$5 million for the ongoing NASA Aerospace Scholars Program

Texas A&M Forest Service, \$2.5 million for aviation support costs, including fire retardant, \$146.1 million for reimbursement for response to natural disasters and \$2.1 million for vehicles

Texas Division of Emergency Management, \$13.3 million for vehicles

“It was a team effort, but the Regents, in particular, were focused on keeping college affordable in Texas,” Sharp said in a release. “Our students and their families will reap the benefits of their efforts.”

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/news/local/texas-a-m-u/gov-greg-abbott-approves-119-billion-in-spending-for-tamu-university-system/499-078cc82f-1b12-4cf3-8610-38340279e02d>

## **KBTX**

### **Undergraduate tuition, academic fees for Texas residents frozen for next two years**

Rusty Surette

Jun 19

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (KBTX) - The following news release has been shared by the Texas A&M University System:

Gov. Greg Abbott on Monday approved a record \$1.19 billion in new spending for The Texas A&M University System, including money to freeze undergraduate tuition and fees for Texas residents for the next two years.

The new spending, which was contained in several bills, is the first time in history the Texas A&M System has eclipsed a billion dollars in new funding from the state.

The A&M System took the lead on its three priorities: keeping college affordable, keeping Texas prepared to respond to disasters, and increasing a state match so Prairie View A&M University could qualify for federal

funding.

The System also played a pivotal role in tuition reform as lawmakers enacted largely the Texas A&M System tenure system, plus adopted changes in the Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) legislation based on Texas A&M University's recommendations.

"We are thankful to state officials for meeting the needs of higher education in what is a historic legislative session for higher education," said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System.

He praised the Board of Regents, the System leadership, and its government relations team.

"It was a team effort, but the Regents, in particular, were focused on keeping college affordable in Texas," Sharp said. "Our students and their families will reap the benefits of their efforts."

Lawmakers approved \$698.5 million for all public higher education institutions – including \$180.9 million to A&M System universities – in exchange for freezing undergraduate tuition and academic fees for Texas residents over the next two years. The affordability money was tied to tenure reform as well as legislation addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts in higher education. The governor signed both of those bills last week.

The Legislature also provided more money to offset the expense of free tuition for the dependents of veterans, agreed to pay a higher portion of health care costs for higher education employees, and authorized \$71.5 million for ongoing performance-based funding for at-risk students graduating from the state's regional universities where a large portion of their student bodies are first-generation students.

The new spending overall for the A&M System includes:

\$180.9 million for the A&M System institutions' share of the affordability contingency  
\$43.1 million in formula and research performance funding for the A&M Health Science Center  
\$159 million for the A&M System Agencies for "Keeping Texas Prepared" and 5% pay increases for agency employees in each of the next two years  
\$775 million in new initiatives.

"Keeping Texas Prepared" is a statewide emergency management initiative for the five emergency management agencies of the Texas A&M University System to meet the emergency response and recovery needs of a growing state. The Legislature provided \$96.7 million, including:

Texas Division for Emergency Management, \$14.6 million for Workforce Development  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, \$24.2 million for the Extension Agent Network  
Texas A&M Forest Service, \$34.7 million for Emergency Response Capacity and Local Firefighting Capacity  
Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, \$3.7 million for Rapid Detection of Animal and Human Disease Threats  
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, \$19.5 million for Recruitment and Retention  
The \$775 million in new initiatives for the A&M System includes:

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Texas A&M University, \$200 million for constructing facilities adjacent to the Johnson Space Center and \$25

million for the Virtual Production Institute in College Station and Texas A&M-Fort Worth.  
Prairie View A&M University, \$15 million for the Ag Match so the university could qualify for federal funding.  
Tarleton State University, \$5 million for Better Health for Rural North Texas  
Texas A&M Central Texas, \$1.8 million for instructional programming at East Williamson County Higher Education Center  
Texas A&M International University, \$4 million for Clinical Lab Sciences and Occupational Therapy Programs  
West Texas A&M University, \$6 million for Advancing Food Animal Production  
Texas A&M University – Texarkana, \$4.9 million for Better East Texas Phase III  
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<https://www.kbtx.com/app/2023/06/19/undergraduate-tuition-academic-fees-texas-residents-frozen-next-two-years/>

## **The Eagle**

### **Chancellor John Sharp thanks state leaders**

13 hours ago

[Editor's note: This is the letter Texas A&M Chancellor sent to state leaders after the system received the largest amount of state funding.]

As Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System, I would like to say how grateful I am that Texas has such strong and visionary leaders in our state government.

You have proven your dedication to the students, prospective students and their families by ensuring that public universities in the State of Texas can offer higher education that is nothing short of affordable, outstanding and transformative.

Your wisdom and bold action to keep tuition and academic fees flat for resident, undergraduate students for the next two years will have a profound effect on Texas. Further, your support of community colleges and programs to help low-income students earn college degrees will have a dramatic effect on countless Texans.

Your investment in higher education proves your commitment to the people the of the Great State of Texas, but it also ensures we, as a state, will continue on our path to prosperity. We particularly appreciate your vision to make Texas into the foremost state for semiconductor production, which simultaneously will bolster our already-strong economy while also helping the nation become less dependent on foreign countries for essential computer chips.

I also would like to thank you for funding a new endowment to expand our research activities and offer additional money to more public universities that are already conducting extraordinary research and undoubtedly will push the limits even further.

Every legislative session seems to have a dominant theme. In my eyes, the 88th Legislature's regular session will be known as the Higher Education Session.

Thank you again for your hard work and service to the state.

JOHN SHARP, chancellor

Texas A&M University System

[https://theeagle.com/opinion/letters/chancellor-john-sharp-thanks-state-leaders/article\\_69bc2170-0eef-11ee-970e-e7511c3a5b12.html](https://theeagle.com/opinion/letters/chancellor-john-sharp-thanks-state-leaders/article_69bc2170-0eef-11ee-970e-e7511c3a5b12.html)

### **Fort Worth Report**

#### **Texas A&M's virtual reality institute for Fort Worth, College Station receives \$25 million**

Jacob Sanchez

June 19

The Texas A&M University System could put Fort Worth on the map for fusing technology used in the movie franchises "Avatar" and "Star Wars" for use in other industries, according to officials.

The Legislature dedicated \$25 million to the system's burgeoning Virtual Production Institute that will be based in College Station and the future Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus, which is expected to break ground in June.

The institute will be focused on the technology that allows filmmakers to see computer-generated environments in real-time. However, researchers will be looking for ways to use augmented reality tech beyond entertainment.

"We're planning ways to develop content that will be accessible to the existing workforce so that they can learn how to use this technology for their own fields," Tim McLaughlin, an interim dean at Texas A&M, told the Fort Worth Report.

McLaughlin is overseeing the development of the institute in the university's School of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts. He plans to spend the summer listening to people in the arts and workforce leaders to see how the Virtual Production Institute can benefit both.

"What I'm really excited about is how we can extend into the rich arts in Fort Worth, both the visual and performing arts, plus the industries around Fort Worth," McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin sees augmented reality as a boon for manufacturing, designing products, architecture and engineering. Additionally, the technology could allow workers in fields that are potentially dangerous to be immersed in a situation and learn how to go through it, he said.

“What is missing in terms of being able to take the next steps is companies and industries to adopt this technology in the workforce,” McLaughlin said.

The funding is part of nearly \$1.2 billion in new spending for Texas A&M, and comes from the state’s budget for the next two years, according to a news release. Gov. Greg Abbott on Sunday signed the \$321.3 billion budget into law.

“We are thankful to state officials for meeting the needs of higher education in what is a historic legislative session for higher education,” Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp said in a statement.

[https://fortworthreport.org/2023/06/19/texas-ams-virtual-reality-institute-for-fort-worth-college-station-receives-25-million/?utm\\_source=Fort%20Worth%20Report&utm\\_campaign=75a60bbeb6-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2023\\_06\\_19\\_01\\_36&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_-75a60bbeb6-%5BLIST\\_EMAIL\\_ID%5D&mc\\_cid=75a60bbeb6&mc\\_eid=df2bd415e9](https://fortworthreport.org/2023/06/19/texas-ams-virtual-reality-institute-for-fort-worth-college-station-receives-25-million/?utm_source=Fort%20Worth%20Report&utm_campaign=75a60bbeb6-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_06_19_01_36&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-75a60bbeb6-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D&mc_cid=75a60bbeb6&mc_eid=df2bd415e9)

## **Texas Scorecard**

### **Texas Governor Signs Law Requiring Public Universities to End DEI Practices**

Katy Marshall

June 19

As college students across Texas head home for the summer, Gov. Greg Abbott signed legislation prohibiting public universities from creating diversity, equity, and inclusion departments. However, there are certain loopholes in the law.

Over the past few years, universities and other public institutions have created DEI departments and councils to promote divisive racial policies. Although seemingly innocuous, DEI initiatives are commonly associated with the controversial critical race theory. Activists in these departments often push for equal outcomes instead of equal opportunities.

Senate Bill 17 by State Sen. Brandon Creighton (R–Conroe) bans Texas’ public universities from establishing a DEI office, using DEI criteria in their hiring practices, or requiring employees or prospective employees to attend DEI trainings.

However, the restrictions do not apply to academic instruction, student organizations, student admissions, guest speakers, or scholarly research.

The measure requires a representative from each state-funded university to testify before lawmakers, detailing their compliance with the law every legislative session.

The state auditor will review each university at least once every four years, and any institution that still has a DEI department or fails to meet SB 17’s other requirements will no longer receive state funding.

Last year, Abbott warned state agencies, including public universities, that implementing DEI hiring practices would lead to discrimination and violate state law.

Creighton said his legislation ensures that Texas universities prioritize merit over DEI quotas.

“Texas is leading the nation and ensuring our campuses return to focusing on the strength of diversity and promoting a merit-based approach where individuals are judged on their qualifications, skills, and contributions,” Creighton said in a statement.

Dismantling DEI programs in public universities was one of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick’s 30 legislative priorities. Patrick said SB 17 would “ban divisive DEI offices and hiring practices at our universities to make sure that individual merit and achievement are rewarded.”

“The woke left’s drive to divide Texans is never-ending,” he said, arguing that “DEI hiring practices have caused division and must be stopped.”

“Texas universities improve and the educational environment is enhanced when we recruit the best faculty based on merit and equal opportunity, not arbitrary quotas based on equity,” Patrick concluded.

Although legislators in both chambers approved the measure, some criticized an amendment House lawmakers added that they say “undermines the bill in several ways.”

During a late-night committee meeting, House legislators approved an amendment to SB 17 requiring universities to make “reasonable efforts” to find new jobs with equivalent pay for former DEI employees, instead of firing the individuals.

On social media, Creighton said his legislation will lead to savings for Texas taxpayers.

“The elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices will result in millions in savings for taxpayers and restore a culture of free inquiry, meritocracy, equal opportunity, genuine innovation within Texas higher education,” said Creighton.

SB 17 will go into effect January 1, 2024.

<https://texasscorecard.com/state/texas-governor-signs-law-requiring-public-universities-to-end-dei-practices/>

## **My RGV**

### **Texas A&M ends development of residency program with DHR Health**

Matt Wilson

June 19

In a sudden move, Texas A&M University Health Science Center announced Friday that it’s unilaterally ending the development of its academic and clinical research affiliations with DHR Health, which the institutions announced just three months ago.

DHR Health, which says it learned of that decision the same day Texas A&M Health made it public, acknowledged the cancellation of the initiative.

Neither institution shed any light on what led to the end.

“Upon further evaluation of our respective missions, we feel this separation is in the best interest of both organizations, the communities we serve and the state,” a statement from Texas A&M Health reads.

The release notes no current Texas A&M sponsored residents will be impacted by the decision and describes the organization’s health-oriented commitment to the Rio Grande Valley.

“We continue to develop the best options to train our students and remain committed to bringing value and collaborative care to our South Texas communities,” Dr. Jon Mogford, Texas A&M Health’s chief operating officer and senior vice president, wrote in the statement.

Tucked into a news release announcing its sponsorship of seven newly accredited residencies and fellowships, DHR Health confirmed that it and Texas A&M are no longer working toward creating new residency programs together.

“DHR Health acknowledges this, and respects Texas A&M Health’s decision and wishes them well,” it read.

In March, the entities described with enthusiasm the new partnership as an agreement that would pave the way for hundreds of new residencies, calling it a bound forward in health care for locals.

The separation is the second such break between DHR Health and a higher education entity in less than a year’s time.

In October, DHR Health decided to unilaterally terminate its affiliation agreement with UTRGV, which supported over 100 residents.

The university described the divorce as part of its “natural evolution,” saying that its mission no longer aligned with a “for-profit, physician-owned health system like DHR Health.”

<https://myrgv.com/local-news/2023/06/19/texas-am-ends-development-of-residency-program-with-dhr-health/>

## **The Eagle**

### **Abbott deploys A&M Vet Emergency Team following Texas Panhandle tornado**

Caroline Wilburn

10 hours ago

The phone rang early Monday morning, confirming what Beth Bernardo had been expecting — the Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team had been asked to deploy to Perryton, a Texas Panhandle community that was hit by a tornado last Thursday. The team’s mission would be helping animals injured in the disaster.

“These people have lost their homes, some of their family,” said Bernardo, VET logistics coordinator.

“Everything that they have known in their life is completely gone or completely changed. ... That little bit of hope we can give them by being able to support their animals and support their pets, essentially their other



family, has just been incredible.”

The team, deployed by Gov. Greg Abbott, departed from A&M’s RELLIS campus Monday afternoon to help provide veterinary medical support for animals injured in the Perryton tornado. The team will be in the area for two to three days as they help animals who have suffered lacerations, cuts, scrapes and fractured legs caused by blowing and falling debris, said Dr. Wesley Bissett, founding member and director of VET.

“We’re expecting this to be primarily a dog and cat type of response,” said Bissett, an associate professor of large animal clinical sciences. “We are prepared to do large animals as needed, but given the area that was hit, we think it’s going to be primarily household pets.”

VET is comprised of faculty, staff and students from the A&M School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (VMBS). In response to human and natural disasters, the team deploys around the country at the request of local, state and federal officials. This team has responded to four tornado-affected areas.

Search-and-rescue missions for individuals affected by the tornado have ceased, but animals in need are still being located, Bissett said.

“Those pets have been hitting the local vet clinic,” he said. “Which is at a point now where it’s overwhelmed and needing assistance. So, their county requested that we come in ... and we’ll provide triage and stabilization of animals that have been injured.”

Reuniting pets with their owners is often the first step in recovering from a natural disaster, Bissett said.

“The reality is, our team, we are in the business of veterinary medicine,” he said. “But I always tell the team members, ‘We’re in the business of hope,’ because whenever we can put an animal back together and get it back to its family that gives them hope for tomorrow.”

Beyond helping animals who are injured, VET assists communities in establishing shelters and an animal-focused long-term plan for future disasters, said Dr. Debra Zoran, VET education officer.

“We go out and help communities plan for the shelters in disastrous areas,” Zoran said, an A&M small animal clinical sciences professor. “It’s the whole idea of ‘What do you do when this happens?’ [The students’] role is to literally set up a shelter for those. And [Perryton], it sounds like they didn’t have that, so we’ll probably be helping them.”

Ten VET members and five A&M Agrilife Extension Disaster Assessment and Recovery agents deployed from Bryan-College Station on Monday. Additionally, two VET members along with VMBS’ faculty, staff and students from the Veterinary Education, Research, & Outreach (VERO) program will join the team Tuesday.

Founded in 2010 at the request of the state, VET is the largest team of its kind. The team has grown significantly in size and capability since its start, Bissett said.

“We’re an official part of the Emergency Response Team, or the states emergency response plan,” he said. “The vast majority of big issues that have happened in the state since that happened, we have deployed to. We’ve also made a couple of deployments out of state to wildfires in California and most recently to hurricane Ian in Florida.”

Along with VET, Abbott deployed the A&M Public Works Response Team, Forest Service, Texas Task Force 2 and A&M Agrilife Extension service along with other state resources. However, VET does not receive any state funding, Bernardo said.

“We get the majority of our funding from donors,” she said. “We do get some grant money, but honestly, it is not enough. We heavily rely on those donors that see what we do and love what we do, and want to help the mission as well. Those donors are just as important as every single person that we have out in the field because otherwise, we couldn’t do it.”

[https://theeagle.com/news/local/am-vet-emergency-team-deployed/article\\_3c84776a-0eeb-11ee-9a83-17ba95d4b4dc.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm\\_medium=PostUp&lctg=6988668&tn\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45eeca248](https://theeagle.com/news/local/am-vet-emergency-team-deployed/article_3c84776a-0eeb-11ee-9a83-17ba95d4b4dc.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fnews-alert&utm_medium=PostUp&lctg=6988668&tn_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45eeca248)

## **Killeen Daily Herald**

### **4-H program allows youth to learn about subjects from photography to fashion**

June 19

From fabric to fashion and farm to fork, from learning to leading and from one student to the entire world—these are the core focuses for 4-H, a nationwide organization that teaches children and teens to see the world beyond themselves.

Out of nearly six million 4-H members in the nation, 116 are from Liberty Hill. The local chapter is part of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service, a division of the Texas A&M University System, in partnership with Williamson County. 4-H membership is for anyone in grades 3 through 12, and each community club is run by volunteer club managers and project leaders.

There’s basically no limit to the projects children and teens can get involved in with 4-H. Chapter members can learn about everything from dairy cattle and goats to entomology and horticulture, as well as global citizenship, public speaking, computer science and shooting sports, such as archery.

“There’s tons of opportunities,” 4-H Sponsor Julie Norris said. “You can choose to do an animal project, but if you’re interested in something like photography or fashion and interior design, that’s there too. I think a lot of people don’t realize that.”

4-H stands for heart, hands, health and head. These pillars, which make up the organization’s mission, are what the kids use and learn while working on various projects.

The first “H,” heart, covers many community service projects 4-H members participate in. For example, Liberty Hill 4-H members recently hosted a bake sale at McCoy’s, and the proceeds went toward buying coats for Operation Liberty Hill. Members raised \$600 and bought approximately 75 coats to donate.

“I think it’s important to give back to the community that you grew up in because they gave you so much,” 4-H President Kristen O’Neill said. “Now you’re giving back to them.”

The next “H,” hands, is relevant to several 4-H activities which all require students to do hands-on work. The

Liberty Hill chapter offers photography, interior design, dog care and much more. 4-H Manager Terresa O'Neill runs the fashion and interior design project, and said her students do everything from sewing to working with different types of fabrics.

"We focus on both fashion and interior design with learning about fabrics," Terresa O'Neill said. "That works for both clothes as well as draperies and upholstery. It works for both industries. We do fun things. We do what's called a burn test where we can determine whether the fabric is a cotton or a natural fiber."

Terresa O'Neill also leads the food and nutrition project for the Liberty Hill 4-H, which falls into the third "H", or health category of 4-H. She said her goal is to cook at every meeting.

"We cook and hopefully it's edible once we get it done," she said. "Then we talk about the nutritional value, and if it's not something that's particularly healthy, how we could have made it a little bit healthier."

The last "H," head, can fall into each category because every project and activity requires students to think outside of the box and use their minds to overcome difficulty. 4-H also offers science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) projects. Norris said she runs the photography project, which falls under the STEM category.

"Teaching kids to look at things a little bit differently kind of opens their eyes to things," Norris said. "Something that maybe they wouldn't have thought they could take a picture of. That's just a project I've loved for many years."

4-H also offers a unique opportunity for its members to hold leadership positions within the organization. 4-H member Sophia O'Neill is the current reporter for the Liberty Hill chapter, and also serves as a tier-two Texas 4-H water ambassador. The role of a water ambassador includes having a genuine interest in water and natural resources and the willingness to take the responsibility of educating youth and adults in their communities and beyond for 12 months.

"I mainly wanted to be an ambassador because, when I'm older, I want to be a marine biologist," Sophia O'Neill said. "This past summer, we went on the tier-two trip, which was to Galveston and College Station where we got to go on a dolphin tour. I learned a lot through that, and it will also help me with my future."

Liberty Hill 4-H will hold its first meeting for the upcoming school year in September, as well as an open house and informational night in August. Norris said Liberty Hill 4-H is always looking to grow their membership and expand the opportunities offered to members.

"We're growing," Norris said. "I think it's important for people to understand that if there's someone in our community that's interested in 4-H that wants to do a new project, that opportunity is there for them."

For more information on the Liberty Hill chapter, email [libertyhill4hclub@gmail.com](mailto:libertyhill4hclub@gmail.com) or visit Liberty Hill 4H Club on Facebook.

[https://kdhnews.com/news/texas/4-h-program-allows-youth-to-learn-about-subjects-from-photography-to-fashion/article\\_6d38fbc8-88ea-577f-9609-f1d40610b15c.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/texas/4-h-program-allows-youth-to-learn-about-subjects-from-photography-to-fashion/article_6d38fbc8-88ea-577f-9609-f1d40610b15c.html)

## Longview News Journal

### Davis: Tips on supporting pollinators

June 18

Shaniqua Davis, Extension agent for agriculture and natural resources for Gregg County.

When we see the first bit of green finally break through the earth or bud form on a tree outside our window, we know spring has indeed sprung. That's when many of us start to think of our pollinator friends and what we can do to help them as our plants begin to grow and bloom.

But what about the dog days of summer? Although the Texas climate may have gardens looking less than lovely by August, pollinators will still need us. With a little advance planning now, we can support pollinators through the sweltering months and into fall.

Some popular garden plants like roses are usually self-pollinated or pollinated by the wind, but most of the flowers you can buy at a nursery are going to attract and need pollinators. Around 80% of flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce and over three-quarters of the staple crops that feed people and livestock do, too.

Thinking locally is a great way to help pollinators. Using plants native to your region can add some extra help to support both native and other pollinators and native plants will be better suited for the soil and climate. With any plant, planting a cluster of several of the same type will make it easier for pollinators to find them. A bonus to attracting pollinators is that your local wildflower populations may also increase.

#### Top tips for supporting pollinators

Molly Keck, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service integrated pest management program specialist in the Texas A&M Department of Entomology and serving Bexar County, offers some science-based advice to keep pollinators around and thriving during the hottest months.

- **Overlap blooms.** Pollinators need flowers that bloom at different times of the year. An array of flower varieties that peak after others fade are ideal. Native and drought-tolerant species are also good additions to a garden or landscape. By planting from spring into fall, you can extend pollinators' resources.
- **Be colorful.** Plant flowers in a variety of colors since different pollinators are attracted to different colors. Keck said bumblebees are attracted to blues and purples, whereas other bees are more attracted to yellows or whites. She suggests adding some bright colors like oranges and pinks to your garden to draw in butterflies. Red isn't seen well by bees, so red flowers with a contrasting center are usually a better bet. If you plant colors, they will come.
- **Add shapes and sizes.** Pollinators' flower preferences come in all shapes and sizes, so variety is also key. Some like deeper or more open bowls, since pollinators have preferences as to the way they collect pollen or feed on nectar. Be aware that some of the more modern hybrid flowers with "doubled" flowers — what looks like many petals or a flower within a flower — may lack the pollen, nectar and/or fragrance pollinators seek out. In pursuit of the best-looking bloom, some plant breeders have left out what pollinators need. In other words, avoid those that are all show but may lack substance.
- **Easy on the pesticide, please.** Keck said many people mistakenly believe that if they don't use pesticide, their plant won't flower. She said if you feel you must apply pesticide, do it in the evening when most of the pollinators have "gone to bed." That will hopefully give the pesticide time to dry before morning. Never spray

the inside of a flower. If a plant is flowering, it most likely doesn't need help since it takes a tremendous amount of energy to bloom in the first place, which wouldn't happen if it was stressed. Also make sure to read and follow the label and be aware of toxic ingredients.

- Give them shelter. Providing pollinators with shelter is another way to support their numbers. Houses for bees and other pollinators can be purchased online, at home and garden stores or you can even make your own using tubes. And whereas honeybees group in hives, most insect pollinators are solitary dwellers and most bees actually live underground. Some pollinators, like mason bees, need mud to line their homes. Keeping a bit of mud near your garden is a helpful way to aid with their construction.

The bee's knees

Bees are the "bee's knees" among pollinators, Keck said.

"Bees are the best because they are actively going after the pollen," Keck said. "Their body is really fuzzy, so they pick up a bunch of that pollen and then they accidentally drop it off as they bounce from flower to flower."

When most people think of pollinators, and bees in general, they typically think of honeybees and maybe bumblebees, Keck said.

"But there's actually a lot of different species of native bees that are great pollinators that we often overlook because they're small or we just assume they are honeybees because of how they look," she said.

Pollinators: Beyond bees

Although bees may be the most efficient pollinators, plenty of other insects do their share of heavy lifting.

"Beyond bees, there are also butterflies and moths, flies, beetles and some wasps that are also good pollinators," Keck said. "The sheer number of beetles makes them a substantial, but often overlooked, pollinator."

In addition to insects, birds and bats can also be pollinators. Think about adding night-blooming flowers for nocturnal pollinators.

Supporting pollinators year-round

Many pollinators are most active in the spring and summer and then they start to slow things down in the fall. In fact, most insect pollinators, aside from honeybees, will die over the winter.

However, bees and other pollinators often lay eggs in hollow stalks of plants. If you typically cut these plants back or pull them up, find a corner of your garden or yard where you can leave them until next year.

Keck said those eggs pollinators lay and leave behind will hatch sometime between February and April and the cycle will start all over again.

[https://www.news-journal.com/news/local/davis-tips-on-supporting-pollinators/article\\_c26e973a-094a-11ee-8132-2fa27c0db05d.html](https://www.news-journal.com/news/local/davis-tips-on-supporting-pollinators/article_c26e973a-094a-11ee-8132-2fa27c0db05d.html)

**KRIS**

**From emancipation to celebration: Tracing the rich history of Juneteenth**

Davon Taylor

June 19

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, is a holiday that holds deep historical significance in the United States.

It commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans and symbolizes the ongoing fight for freedom and equality.

Le'Trice Donaldson is a professor of History at Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi. She said that Juneteenth started with an order to release slaves.

“General order number three issued, which essentially put an end to slavery all together,” Donaldson said.

On June 19, 1865, two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation, General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and issued general order number three, and all enslaved African Americans were now free.

This marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for liberation and the end of slavery in the United States.

“July 4th, 1776, there were still millions of American still in bondage, and not free, and did not have their independence,” she said.

Juneteenth signifies the delayed realization of freedom for enslaved African Americans in Texas and serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight for equality and justice. It is a celebration of resilience, community, and the quest for freedom.

“Decided that it would be best to send a contingency of soldiers to come to Texas and officially issue the order, especially in order to reconstruct and the occupation of Texas to officially make sure that they understand that slavery has ended. You must free these people,” Donaldson said.

Juneteenth quickly became an occasion for African Americans to gather, reflect, and honor their ancestors who endured the hardships of slavery. Now it's a day of remembrance, jubilation, and unity within the black community.

“Juneteenth becomes incredibly important as time goes on to areas in particular that had large black populations, so It was far more prevalent in southern states than it was in western or mid-western states,” she said.

<https://www.kristv.com/news/local-news/from-emancipation-to-celebration-tracing-the-rich-history-of-juneteenth>

## **Inside Higher Ed**

### **Could percentage plans work? What about admitting more transfer students from community colleges?**

Scott Jaschik

June 20

Colleges are still waiting for the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on affirmative action in their admissions programs. A final decision is expected in the next two weeks.

As they wait, college and university officials are continuing to explore what they will do to enroll diverse classes in the likely event that Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill lose their cases. Many already adopted test-optional admissions policies during the pandemic (and have kept the policies in place).

But two options, among others, are available to colleges that want to preserve diversity even if they aren't allowed to consider race directly in admissions decisions. Colleges aren't generally talking about these policies today (in public) out of fear that it could make it easier for the court to rule against affirmative action.

One policy is a state adopting a percentage plan. The other is increasing the enrollment of community college transfer students.

#### Percentage Plans

The first percentage plan was set by a law in Texas, signed by then governor George W. Bush in 1997, to allow every graduate of a Texas public high school in the top 10 percent of his or her class to get into any Texas public college, without any SAT or ACT score. The law was most significant for admission to the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, but it applied to all of the state's public colleges.

The plan was developed in the wake of a decision in 1996 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to bar affirmative action in university admissions. That decision remained in place until the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of affirmative action in 2003, but the 10 percent plan has remained in place, although the University of Texas at Austin succeeded in reducing the number of students admitted under the plan. It cited its inability to grow the university's enrollment to accept all of those who qualified for the 10 percent plan and to still have the ability to admit others, such as athletes, whom it wanted to admit.

The plan has allowed UT Austin, Texas A&M and other universities to admit diverse classes, not only of Black and Latino students, but of low-income white students who live in rural parts of the state. And the fact that people in every high school benefit from the plan has been key to its popularity.

Of course, the plan depends on racial segregation in housing. Texas has some integrated areas, but many Texas high schools are monolithic: all Black, all Latino or all white. In other states, such as Michigan, where some officials considered a percentage plan after that state voted to bar affirmative action in 2006, a 10 percent plan wouldn't work because the state is more desegregated than is Texas.

And there is the question of whether a state should rely on its segregated housing to promote diversity in higher education.

Plus, some scholars have questioned whether the plans work in truly changing the makeup of a university's students.

A paper published in 2021 by the National Bureau of Economic Research by Kalena Cortes of Texas A&M University and Daniel Klasik of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill discussed the issues. Their findings are based on examining where students who enrolled at UT Austin and Texas A&M went to high school.

“We find that the Top 10 Percent Plan appeared to increase the likelihood that high schools from non-suburban areas of Texas sent students to the flagship campuses that had not previously done so. This result suggests an increase in geographic diversity; however, these changes did not amount to regular sending patterns and the population of students from these high schools was dwarfed in enrollment by the population of students from high schools with patterns of sending students to the flagship campuses that were well-established before the Top 10 Percent Policy began,” their paper says.

“In general, the high school sending patterns to either flagship campus, always-sending schools have the fewest free lunch eligible students (26 percent), the largest grade-12 enrollment (mean 230 students), the highest average SAT scores (26 percent in 1st quartile), and are also the closest to both UT and TAMU campuses (152 miles to the nearest flagship campus, on average),” they write. “Always-sending schools send over 2 percent of their seniors to UT and over 3 percent to TAMU. In stark contrast, never-sending schools have the highest percentage of free lunch eligible students (34 percent), the smallest grade-12 enrollment (average 26 students), the lowest SAT scores (7 percent in 1st quartile), and are the farthest from each of the flagship campuses (209 miles from the nearest flagship campus, on average).”

The inclusion of SAT scores points to a reason why states may not opt to do percentage plans. The recent move by many colleges to drop SAT or ACT requirements may make it possible for more colleges to admit more Black and Latino students. And, obviously, percentage plans may not work for private colleges, at least those at the top of the pecking order.

But an advantage of a percentage plan is speed. Once adopted, it does not require students to learn about it to have an impact.

#### Community College Transfers

If percentage plans focus on the students who at 17 or 18 are striving to get into flagship universities, community colleges offer different students. Many of these students are outstanding students, and those who are admitted to top colleges do well.

Some colleges have had notable gains in minority students by focusing on them.

Consider the University of California, Berkeley. Black enrollment there had been flat for several years, at 4 percent of new freshmen in 2018. (That number has since fallen to 3 percent, Reuters reported.) That’s the figure for the fall of 2018 as well, with 380 Black freshmen. But 221 Black transfer students arrived as well, and they account for 6 percent of Berkeley’s transfer admits, up from 5 percent in recent years.

Latino numbers have been going up at Berkeley in recent years, with their share of freshman admits going up from 20 percent to 22 percent in 2018, although critics have noted that the gains still don’t match the increases in the Latino population of the state. But here, too, the share of transfer admits who are Latino is not only going up but is higher than those being admitted as freshmen. The 989 Latino transfer students starting at Berkeley this fall make up 26 percent of the transfer population, up from 24 percent a year ago.

Those numbers may not sound large, but they are far more students than competitive private colleges typically admit. (And as advocates for community colleges point out, even those numbers could grow.)



However, many four-year colleges resist moves to let in more community college students. They say they have plenty of applicants for freshman admissions and working out articulation agreements is hard.

Whether colleges will embrace more community college transfers remains to be seen.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/2023/06/20/what-could-colleges-do-preserve-diversity-without-affirmative-action>

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The Texas A&M University System

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## **FORT WORTH INC**

### **Gig 'Em: The Aggies Have Shovels in the Ground in Fort Worth**

JOHN HENRY

JUNE 21

The Aggies called an assembly for mid-morning on the first official day of summer perhaps simply to prove that they and their partners intend to build an urban research campus in downtown Fort Worth come hell or high water.

The chancellor was there with lots of water to greet the hundreds who showed up to an empty parking lot partially covered and with fans working overtime to create the desperately-needed airflow to assuage the seemingly endless cycle of summer suffering under the thumb of, by every appearance, an irked Mother Nature and her generous serving of humidity.

And this was before it got hot. But we know better: There's no crying in summer, particularly on this day.

The sweat was merely symbolic of the work that's already been done here.

Texas A&M-Fort Worth broke ground Wednesday on the first building for its urban research campus in the southeast part of downtown — the \$150 million, eight-story Law & Education Building, home to the Aggies' law school, as well as other academic programs offered by A&M, A&M Health, and Tarleton State University.

The campus, which will include two other planned buildings, is being called a first-of-its-kind public-private collaboration intended to boost the regional economy while anchoring an innovation district in southeast downtown.

The guys who really broke a sweat on this day were in the adjacent parking lot, their tools of excavation already deployed. What comes out of that ground is being called transformative, as much so as what the wildcatters found in the dirt and brought back to Fort Worth all those years ago.

“As you may know, Fort Worth is not only the fastest growing large city in the United States of America, but it's the only large city without a Tier One research university in Texas,” A&M System Chancellor John Sharp said. “And we aim to rectify that.”

It's like actually watching a flower bloom.

In addition to very important people wearing hard hats and embedding shovels into a mound of dirt set down for the occasion in an Aggie engineered plant box (just merely an assumption), news emerged during this gathering that the research campus was already bearing fruit.

Lockheed Martin announced on Wednesday that it would become the first company to sign a memorandum of understanding to discuss jointly developing education courses, workforce training and research programs, including the possibility of Lockheed researchers working alongside the staff and students at Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

“It’s not often you break ground on one building while announcing potential tenants for a second building still on the drawing boards,” Sharp said. “It just demonstrates the commitment of the A&M System and our community partners to get this game-changer up and running quickly.”

John Goff, the Fort Worth developer and chair of the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership, followed by telling his audience that Elbit America and Alcon, both Fort Worth companies, have assured him, he said, that they, too, would be involved with Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

The city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County are collaborating with the Texas A&M System to construct two other buildings over four city blocks owned by the A&M System. The Research & Innovation Building is where several Texas A&M System agencies will work alongside private sector tenants. A third structure, the Gateway Building, will house offices, more classroom and meeting spaces, and a conference center.

Stantec is serving as the architect of record for the Law & Education Building. Stantec is also providing lab planning services on the project in partnership with the design architect, Pelli Clarke & Partners.

The construction management teams on the first building will include Turner Construction Company, CARCON Industries, Fort Worth-based Source Building Group Inc., and Dikita Enterprises.

The Law & Education Building is expected to be complete by 2025. The other two buildings are planned to be completed by 2027.

The first building is being financed with bonds backed by the Permanent University Fund and other sources. The other two buildings will be financed with city-issued bonds secured by leases to the A&M System and private sector development firms.

An entity called the Research & Innovation Local Government Corp., will oversee construction of the Research and Innovation Building, Gateway Conference Center, and a campus plaza.

“There is so much momentum in Fort Worth and a huge part of that catalyst, of course, is higher education and the presence of Texas A&M University here in Hell’s Half Acre in downtown Fort Worth.

“The Texas A&M System is building exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our history. This groundbreaking today represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort

Worth and North Texas for decades to come.”

In addition to Parker, Tarrant County Judge Tim O’Hare also took part in the groundbreaking. Both gave addresses, as did Texas A&M School of Law Dean Bobby Ahdieh, among the first to see the possibilities in Fort Worth for A&M and the region; Bill Mahomes, chairman of the Texas A&M System Board of Regents; Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks; Tarleton State President James Hurley, and Goff.

“As a longtime Dallas resident,” Mahomes said, “I must confess that I’m a little envious of Fort Worth today. Your beautiful city is about to have its own Texas A&M System campus right here in downtown and it’s such a great, great fit.”

In attendance were Kenneth Barr, Mike Moncrief, and Betsy Price, all predecessors to Parker as Fort Worth mayors. Price and Goff were among those representatives from Fort Worth who brought the idea of downtown campus to Sharp in 2020. Former Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley and state Rep. Charlie Geren, among many others, were there, too. So was TCU President Daniel Pullin.

“This is going to be the center of innovation, not only for Fort Worth, but I think all of North Texas,” Goff said. “I’m thrilled to be a part of it. It was a team effort. I want to keep emphasizing that. I’ve got so many people to thank. We’ve got a lot of work yet to do, but I can assure you we’re not going to let go.”

In other words, lots more sweat to go.

<https://fwtx.com/news/gig-em-the-aggies-have-shovels-in-the-ground-in-fort-worth/>

## **FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM**

### **‘So much momentum in Fort Worth.’ A&M breaks ground with big news of business partners**

JENNY RUDOLPH

June 22

At least three major companies will have a significant presence in downtown Fort Worth as part of Texas A&M-Fort Worth, and more could be on the way.

The Texas A&M University System broke ground Wednesday on the first building of its downtown campus. Leaders also announced new corporate partnerships at the groundbreaking ceremony with defense and aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, the defense and aviation company Elbit Systems of America, and the global eye care company Alcon.

A \$150 million, eight-story building will be the first of three planned for the project. The Law and Education Building will house Texas A&M’s law school and courses in engineering, health care, nursing and other subjects offered by Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health and Tarleton State

University.

The campus will be along Commerce Street across from the Fort Worth Water Gardens, near the convention center. Funding for the \$320 million project is coming from the university, the city, Tarrant County and private contributors.

Experts have said the downtown project could be the most significant economic development in the city in 100 years. Others say it could mark a major tipping point for downtown as more young adults look to live, study, train and work in the city.

Bobby Ahdieh, dean of Texas A&M School of Law, has said from the start that the project is an opportunity for Texas A&M and Fort Worth leaders to do something much bigger and more consequential than they realized was in front of them.

“None of us sitting here can possibly imagine when and how much and in what form (the campus) will produce,” Ahdieh told the crowd. “But we know it will change all of us and all of the communities of which we are a part. That’s what we celebrate today.”

John Sharp, Texas A&M chancellor, said the reason the campus is moving forward so quickly is because of strong collaboration with the city and county.

“This boom could be very long lasting because of what we’re embarking on here today,” Sharp said during the event.

Lockheed Martin was the first company to sign an agreement to partner with the university, Sharp announced. Sharp told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram details of the partnership are still being established.

For the second building, A&M will work with its partners, including Lockheed Martin, and ask them what they want in a lab space, what kind of equipment they’ll need and how they can tailor the curriculum properly, Sharp said.

Bridget Lauderdale, vice president and general manager of the F-35 Lightning II Program at Lockheed Martin, said the company has a long history of collaboration with Texas A&M.

“As one of the leading technical workforce employers in the Metroplex, having two locations here, Lockheed Martin sees the value of the Texas A&M University System expanding into the Fort Worth area,” Lauderdale said at the event.

Lauderdale said the partnership could include research programs, development of the talent pipeline and Lockheed Martin staff on campus for research and development.

“This represents a commitment to leverage the strengths of the best of both our communities to the benefit of our local community, to the benefit of the state of Texas, to our nation and to our nation’s allies,” Lauderdale said.

John Goff, chairman of the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership, has played a lead role in engaging with companies that could partner with the Fort Worth campus. Goff, who owns Crescent Real Estate LLC, was a driving force behind the project after former Mayor Betsy Price approached him for ways to help the city recover from the pandemic.

Goff said Elbit Systems of America, a defense and aerospace company, will have a presence on A&M's campus and is interested in hiring graduates. The company has U.S. corporate headquarters in Fort Worth and is a subsidiary of Israel-based Elbit Systems, which creates naval, land and airborne products for homeland security, defense and commercial applications.

Details of a partnership between Elbit Systems of America and Texas A&M are still being discussed, Goff said.

<https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article276569861.html>

## **DALLAS MORNING NEWS**

### **Texas A&M breaks ground on new Fort Worth campus with aim to close workforce gaps**

Valeria Olivares

June 22

FORT WORTH — Despite being home to several colleges and universities, Fort Worth is among the few large cities in Texas without its own institution boasting a prestigious ranking reserved for schools with the highest research activity.

Leaders of the Texas A&M University System plan to change that by building a new campus in the heart of Fort Worth's downtown, according to Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp.

More than a year after announcing plans to build the new campus, city and business leaders and Texas A&M officials kicked off construction of the Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus on Wednesday.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education has awarded what is commonly known as its Tier One designation — based on the level of research activity conducted at a university — to 11 Texas institutions.

That list includes Texas A&M; Baylor University; Rice University; Texas Tech University; the University of Houston; the University of North Texas; and the University of Texas campuses at Arlington, Austin, Dallas, El Paso and San Antonio.

"Fort Worth is the biggest city in the state that doesn't have a Tier One research university," Sharp said.

But Texas A&M system leaders don't just want to bring in high quality education and research. The new campus will aim to nurture job growth in North Texas by addressing workforce needs through collaboration with area industries, as well as research and education partners, Sharp said.

Lockheed Martin, an aerospace, arms, defense and information security company with a large presence in Fort Worth, is the first company to collaborate with the incoming campus to establish "an additional talent pipeline of quality engineers in Fort Worth," said Bridget Lauderdale, vice president of Lockheed Martin and a Texas A&M graduate.

The company will discuss the development of courses, workforce training and research programs with Texas A&M-Fort Worth. Students and staff also could get the opportunity to work with Lockheed researchers. Discussions with other companies are ongoing.

Texas A&M, Fort Worth and Tarrant County leaders are tapping into a "real gusher," said Texas A&M School of Law Dean Bobby Ahdieh. The university "will bring growth and opportunity and innovation to ... all of Texas for decades and decades to come," he said.

Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare said the move will also help grow the area's future talent pool, attract businesses and promote growth and advancement in Fort Worth and the county.

"Education is the cornerstone of prosperity," O'Hare said.

Texas A&M-Fort Worth's construction will start with a \$150 million, eight-story structure near the system's law school at 1515 Commerce St. A satellite location of UT-Arlington is a few blocks away.

Officials expect construction to be completed by 2025, when the campus will join 11 other universities that make up the A&M system. The law school will move into the new building, which will also house classes offered by Texas A&M, Texas A&M Health and Tarleton State University, which is part of the system.

Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker said the institution will help close gaps in the city and state's workforce in nursing, engineering and "career paths we don't even know of yet."

Programs that will be available at the Fort Worth campus include emergency response communication, medical technologies, advanced manufacturing, nutrition, biotechnology, medical laboratory science and nursing.

The campus' current plans include construction of two additional buildings by 2027 over four city blocks owned by the A&M system.

Fort Worth is home to three of Tarrant County College's five campuses, Texas Christian University, Texas Wesleyan University and the University of North Texas Health Science Center, among other institutions.

"We welcome Texas A&M to Fort Worth and anticipate a synergy between our institutions that

comes from collaboration in higher education,” TCU Chancellor Victor J. Boschini, Jr. said in a statement. The university values “the opportunities to combine our efforts with our Aggie friends for lasting economic impact that will benefit our city and the entire region.”

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2023/06/22/texas-am-breaks-ground-on-new-fort-worth-campus-with-aim-to-close-workforce-gaps/>

### **DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL (multiple sources)**

#### **Texas A&M-Fort Worth has officially broken ground, bringing with it opportunities galore**

Spencer Brewer – Staff Writer, Dallas Business Journal

June 21

Texas A&M-Fort Worth has broken ground, setting the stage for widespread educational, workforce and economic development impacts and opportunities across Fort Worth and North Texas.

Civic and business leaders turned dirt Wednesday morning in a ceremony that was years in the making. The presence of a Tier 1 research university in Fort Worth boosts the city’s prospects in everything from corporate relocations to educational attainment within the community.

Some have speculated that the new campus could shape some of the same dynamics that drove growth in Silicon Valley and other economic engines within the U.S.

The first building, called the Law and Education Building, will become the new home to Texas A&M’s fast-growing School of Law and house courses in engineering, health care, nursing and other subjects offered by Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health, and Tarleton State University.

The eight-story building, at a cost of \$150 million, will anchor a new research campus in southeast downtown Fort Worth.

The campus, covering four city blocks, will eventually include a Research and Innovation Building where the private sector, including some of the city’s largest employers, and the A&M System’s agencies can work together. The Gateway Building will house offices, more classroom and meeting spaces, and a conference center.

The Texas A&M University System has a stated goal to deliver the campus by 2027. Recently, A&M officials increased the budget for the Law & Education Building, from \$85 million to \$150 million.

The project originated several years ago, when Texas A&M University System leadership met with Fort Worth magnate John Goff and former mayor Betsy Price. Goff said he’s had about 100 meetings in his offices discussing how companies can capitalize on the upcoming campus.

“This adds a dimension that we’ve never had,” he said. “Great cities are often partly defined by their



educational systems, and specifically universities. Clearly we've got good universities in TCU and Texas Wesleyan, etc. But having a Tier 1 research university of the size and scope of A&M, and all the components they can bring, will really change how companies look at Fort Worth."

Several firms have already lined up for admission into the university. Lockheed Martin has signed a memorandum of understanding to partner with the Texas A&M University System. Other industry titans such as Elbit Systems of America and Alcon have also expressed a desire to partner with Texas A&M regarding the new campus.

The forthcoming campus greatly increases Fort Worth's chances of landing a corporate relocation, Goff said. Companies prioritize communities with high educational attainment, and any number of industries may find ways to collaborate with the Texas A&M University System.

"I just had a gentleman come up to me who's the CEO of a vertical-farming company," he said. "He wants to come on campus. I've never met him before, and he just walked up, introduced himself and said, 'We would like to be on the campus.' This is going to be huge."

The new campus will have widespread impacts on not just Fort Worth, but to the entire county, said Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare. The new campus will create a talent pipeline that communities across the county and region will have access to.

"When you have an institution of this quality, this magnitude, this history in your backyard, there's going to be more job opportunities," he said.

This spans opportunities created at the school itself as well as jobs created with relocations.

"This is certainly not a Fort Worth-centric thing," he said. "This is good for Tarrant County and, quite frankly, it's good for the whole region."

<https://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/news/2023/06/21/texas-a-m-fort-worth-campus-groundbreaking.html>

## **DALLAS INNOVATES**

### **Breaking Ground: Journey Begins for Texas A&M Fort Worth**

June 21

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in downtown Fort Worth today to mark the beginning of construction for Texas A&M Fort Worth.

Construction is initially starting with the campus' \$150 million Law & Education building, seen above. It will be the eight-story home for the Texas A&M School of Law, along with other academic offerings from Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health, and Tarleton State University.

The city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County are collaborating with the Texas A&M System on the building of two other buildings for the urban research campus, to be located on four downtown Fort Worth blocks owned by the A&M System.

The Law & Education Building is slated to be completed by 2025, and the first three campus buildings are scheduled to be completed by 2027.

“The A&M System is making a Texas-sized commitment to Fort Worth,” Chancellor John Sharp said when the campus was first announced two years ago. “Welcome to Aggieland North.”

‘A magnet for economic growth’

In January, the campus was given its official name—Texas A&M Fort Worth—and Sharp spoke to the economic impact the campus could have for the region.

“A Top 10 public research institution ensures Fort Worth’s future is rooted in the next economy driven by an educated workforce, whether it be lawyers, engineers, health care professionals or technology workers whose jobs don’t even exist today,” Chancellor John Sharp said in January. “Thanks to our partners, the city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, the Texas A&M System is investing in a unique public-private sector endeavor that will be a magnet for economic growth for the North Texas region.”

Lockheed Martin signs on to be part of campus programs

At Wednesday’s groundbreaking, it was announced that Lockheed Martin—a Fortune 500 company with a large aerospace presence in Fort Worth—is the first company to sign a memorandum of understanding related to the urban research campus. The organizations will discuss jointly developing education courses, workforce training, and research programs. This could include the possibility of Lockheed researchers working alongside the staff and students at Texas A&M-Fort Worth, the Texas A&M System added.

“It’s not often you break ground on one building while announcing potential tenants for a second building still on the drawing boards,” Chancellor John Sharp said in a statement. “It just demonstrates the commitment of the A&M System and our community partners to get this game-changer up and running quickly.”

Bridget Lauderdale, a Lockheed Martin vice president and a Texas A&M graduate who leads the company’s F-35 fighter jet program in Fort Worth, was at today’s groundbreaking.

“Lockheed Martin is proud to continue collaborating with Texas A&M University through this memorandum of understanding, establishing an additional talent pipeline of quality engineers in Fort Worth,” Lauderdale said in a statement. “Together, we will continue our joint, cutting-edge research to deliver innovative solutions for 21st Century security challenges, providing transformational capabilities in support of national security.”

Other Fort Worth companies could sign on soon

John Goff, a Fort Worth developer who chairs the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership, reportedly said that several other companies are discussing roles at the campus. Goff said CEOs of Fort Worth's Elbit America and Alcon have assured him they will be involved with Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

Mayor Parker: "exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our history"  
Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker spoke at the groundbreaking about what she saw as an historic event.

"The Texas A&M System is building exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our history," Mayor Parker said. "This groundbreaking today represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort Worth and North Texas for decades to come."

Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare saw things the same way.

"The Texas A&M System's project will be incredibly vital to the long-term success of Tarrant County. It will bring in multiple high-quality business relocations to partner with the university and will enhance an already first-class downtown," O'Hare said.

Edmond, Canada-based Stantec is serving as the architect of record for the Law & Education Building and will provide lab planning services on the project in partnership with the design architect, Pelli Clarke & Partners.

Construction management teams for the buildout are Turner Construction Co., CARCON Industries, Source Building Group Inc., and Dikita Enterprises.

<https://dallasinnovates.com/breaking-ground-journey-begins-for-texas-am-fort-worth/>

## **KDFW-TV**

### **Ground broken on Texas A&M-Fort Worth research campus**

FOX 4 Staff

June 21

FORT WORTH, Texas - Texas A&M broke ground Wednesday on its new research campus in Fort Worth.

The complex is on the eastern edge of downtown.

The incoming technology and innovation district will have three buildings and will take up four blocks.

It all means Fort Worth will no longer be the largest city without the presence of a public research university.

Construction is set to start this summer.

A&M hopes to have it up and running in 2025.

<https://www.fox4news.com/news/texas-am-fort-worth-groundbreaking>

## **KXAS-TV**

### **Texas A&M Fort Worth breaks ground with \$150 million dollar Law & Education building**

Sara Hummadi

June 21

A 3D rendering showing the proposed Law and Education Building (left-front) and a Research and Innovation Center (back-right) to be built in downtown Fort Worth.

Texas A&M Fort Worth began construction on its first building on Wednesday.

The university will be an urban research campus, built on private and public collaboration.

The \$150 million, eight-story Law and Education building will be home to the Texas A&M School of Law and other academic offerings.

Two additional campus buildings will also be constructed, a collaboration from the city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County with the Texas A&M System.

The second building will be the Research & Innovation building, and the third the Gateway Building -- which will hold offices, classrooms, meeting spaces, and a conference center.

Lockheed Martin, a Fortune 500 company, plans to discuss joint efforts on fronts of developing education courses and research programs, officials announced Wednesday.

The collaboration also includes the possibility of Lockheed researchers working in conjunction with staff and students at the campus.

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/texas-am-fort-worth-breaks-ground-with-150-million-dollar-law-education-building/3281876/>

**KTVT-TV****Construction begins on Texas A&M's Fort Worth campus**

June 21

University and city leaders held a groundbreaking Wednesday morning on the first building of Texas A&M's Fort Worth campus. The Law and Education building should be ready to open in 2025.

*CLICK LINK BELOW TO SEE VIDEO*

<https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/video/construction-begins-on-texas-a-ms-fort-worth-campus/>

**WFAA-TV****Texas A&M breaks ground on new Fort Worth campus in the works**

Texas A&M University broke ground on an education building, the first of its new campus planned for the city.

*CLICK LINK BELOW TO SEE VIDEO*

<https://www.wfaa.com/video/news/education/schools/texas-am-breaks-ground-on-new-fort-worth-campus-in-the-works/287-22306e0d-be5d-44f1-bf63-478e24d007ab>

**KBTX-TV (multiple sources)****Texas A&M-Fort Worth breaks ground on first building**

Katherine Griffith

June 21

FORT WORTH, Texas (KBTX) - Texas A&M broke ground on the first building at its Urban Research Campus in Fort Worth Wednesday.

The \$150 million, eight-story building, will be the home of the Texas A&M School of Law.

The Law & Education building will also hold classes for Texas A&M Health and Tarleton State University.

The building is set to be finished by 2025.

The Texas A&M system is also working with the city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County to build two additional campus buildings over four city blocks owned by the system.

The Research and Innovation Building is where several Texas A&M System agencies will work alongside private sector tenants, according to a press release from the Texas A&M University System.

The Gateway Building will house offices, more classrooms and meeting spaces.

Both the Research and Innovation Building and the Gateway Building are set to be finished by 2027.

“The Texas A&M System is building exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our history,” Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker said. “This groundbreaking today represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort Worth and North Texas for decades to come.”

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/21/texas-am-fort-worth-breaks-ground-first-building/>

## **THE BATTALION**

### **New A&M-Fort Worth campus begins construction**

Ana Renfroe

June 21

The Texas A&M University System announced that Texas A&M-Fort Worth broke ground on Wednesday, June 21 for their newest urban research campus via press release.

Construction began on the \$150 million, eight-story Law & Education Building that will serve as the main base of operations for A&M’s School of Law, as well as other system schools such as Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health and Tarleton State University.

The A&M System plans to construct two more campus buildings over four city blocks. The Research & Innovation Building will allow multiple A&M System agencies to work cooperatively with private sector tenants. The Gateway Building will contain classrooms, offices, meeting spaces and a conference center.

The Law & Education Building is planned to be completed by 2025, and construction is expected to be entirely completed for all three buildings by 2027.

In the press release, the new campus was described as “a first of its kind public-private collaboration intended to boost the regional economy while anchoring an innovation district in southeast downtown.”

The City of Fort Worth and Tarrant County are cooperating with the A&M System to continue construction.

“The Texas A&M System is building exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our

History,” Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker said. “This groundbreaking today represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort Worth and North Texas for decades to come.”

Tarrant County Judge Tim O’Hare agreed that the project will be incredibly vital to the long-term success of the county, bringing multiple high-quality businesses to relocate to form partnerships with the university.

“It’s not often you break ground on one building while announcing potential tenants for a second building still on the drawing boards,” A&M System Chancellor John Sharp said in the press release. “It just demonstrates the commitment of the A&M System and our community partners to get this game-changer up and running quickly.”

At the ceremony, Lockheed Martin was announced as the first company to sign a memorandum of understanding to discuss developing joint education courses, workforce training and research programs. Additionally, both will further discuss the possibility of Lockheed researchers working with students, staff and faculty on campus.

A&M Class of 1989 and Lockheed Martin’s Vice President, Bridget Lauderdale, spoke at the ceremony.

“Lockheed Martin is proud to continue collaborating with Texas A&M University through this memorandum of understanding, establishing an additional talent pipeline of quality engineers in Fort Worth,” Lauderdale said. “Together, we will continue our joint, cutting-edge research to deliver innovative solutions for 21st Century security challenges, providing transformational capabilities in support of national security.”

Several companies, such as Elbit America and Alcon, are discussing possible roles at the campus, but they have yet to sign a memorandum as of Wednesday, according to John Goff, a chair of the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership.

[https://www.thebatt.com/news/new-a-m-fort-worth-campus-begins-construction/article\\_124b7e10-1073-11ee-8746-8fa7617e4d39.html](https://www.thebatt.com/news/new-a-m-fort-worth-campus-begins-construction/article_124b7e10-1073-11ee-8746-8fa7617e4d39.html)

## **TAMU TODAY**

### **Texas A&M-Fort Worth Breaks Ground On First Building**

Texas A&M University System Communications

JUNE 21

Texas A&M-Fort Worth broke ground Wednesday on its first building for an urban research campus — a first of its kind public-private collaboration intended to boost the regional economy while anchoring an innovation district in southeast downtown.

The Texas A&M University System is beginning construction on its Law & Education Building, a \$150 million, eight-story home for the Texas A&M School of Law as well as other academic offerings by Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health and Tarleton State University.

The city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County are collaborating with the Texas A&M System to construct two additional campus buildings over four-city blocks owned by the A&M System. The second structure, the Research & Innovation Building, is where several Texas A&M System agencies will work alongside private sector tenants. A third structure, the Gateway Building, will house offices, more classroom and meeting spaces and a conference center.

At Wednesday's event, it was announced that Lockheed Martin, a Fortune 500 company with a large aerospace presence in Fort Worth, is the first company to sign a memorandum of understanding to discuss jointly developing education courses, workforce training and research programs, including the possibility of Lockheed researchers working alongside the staff and students at Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

"It's not often you break ground on one building while announcing potential tenants for a second building still on the drawing boards," said Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp. "It just demonstrates the commitment of the A&M System and our community partners to get this game-changer up and running quickly."

John Goff, a Fort Worth developer who chairs the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership, also reported several other companies are discussing roles at the campus but have not yet signed memorandums of understanding.

Goff said CEOs of Elbit America and Alcon, both Fort Worth companies, have assured him they will be involved with Texas A&M-Fort Worth.

Bridget Lauderdale, vice president of Lockheed Martin and a Texas A&M graduate who leads the company's F-35 fighter jet program in Fort Worth, attended Wednesday's groundbreaking. She spoke of Lockheed Martin's ongoing research agreement with Texas A&M University and its new memorandum of understanding with the new Fort Worth campus.

"Lockheed Martin is proud to continue collaborating with Texas A&M University through this memorandum of understanding, establishing an additional talent pipeline of quality engineers in Fort Worth," Lauderdale said. "Together, we will continue our joint, cutting-edge research to deliver innovative solutions for 21st Century security challenges, providing transformational capabilities in support of national security."

Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker and Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare, representing the A&M System's other partners in Texas A&M-Fort Worth, also spoke at Wednesday's event.



“The Texas A&M System is building exactly what Fort Worth needs in this moment in our history,” Mayor Parker said. “This groundbreaking today represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort Worth and North Texas for decades to come.”

Judge O’Hare agreed: “The Texas A&M System’s project will be incredibly vital to the long-term success of Tarrant County. It will bring in multiple high-quality business relocations to partner with the university and will enhance an already first-class downtown.”

Stantec will serve as the architect of record for the Law & Education Building and provide lab planning services on the project in partnership with the design architect, Pelli Clarke & Partners. The construction management teams are Turner Construction Co., CARCON Industries, Source Building Group Inc. and Dikita Enterprises.

The Law & Education Building will be completed by 2025, with the goal of completing the first three campus buildings by 2027.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/21/texas-am-fort-worth-breaks-ground-on-first-building/#:~:text=A%26M%20University%20System-,The%20groundbreaking%20ceremony%20for%20Texas%20A%26M,Worth%20on%20June%2021%2C%202023.&text=Texas%20A%26M%2DFort%20Worth%20broke,innovation%20district%20in%20southeast%20downtown.>

## **TEXAS TRIBUNE**

### **T-Squared: The latest batch of confirmed speakers for TribFest is all from Texas**

NATALIE CHOATE

June 21

The 2023 Texas Tribune Festival, happening Sept. 21-23, is just over three months away and we’ve already announced a stellar mix of speakers from across the U.S. that promise to excite and, yes, challenge you. Those speakers include U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul, former U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, “PBS NewsHour” co-anchor Amna Nawaz, former U.S. Rep. Will Hurd and Gretchen Carlson, a former Fox News anchor and co-founder of Lift Our Voices, among many others. (There are more to come — hold on to your hat.)

This week, we’re excited to welcome into our program another batch of great speakers — all of whom hail from Texas. These 30 local, regional and state lawmakers and industry experts will join us onstage at TribFest this fall to bring Texans closer to what is happening in their beloved state.

Newly announced Texas speakers include U.S. Rep. Sylvia Garcia, along with state lawmakers like state Sen. Robert Nichols, state Sen. Carol Alvarado, state Rep. Brooks Landgraf, state Rep. Senfronia

Thompson and state Rep. Andrew Murr. Attendees will also hear from city leaders including Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson, Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, and statewide leaders like Texas State Board of Education Chair Keven Ellis, Texas Water Development Board Chair Brooke Paup **and Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp**. See the speaker lineup announced to date.

Putting Texans and, thus, Texas at the center of programming at TribFest isn't new. We've always dedicated a large portion of the program to the conversations that are bubbling up in Texas communities and spilling out of the Pink Dome. What is new is the situation Texas finds itself in — a contentious year for the Texas Legislature, a historic impeachment trial, an unpredictable financial environment, a monumental 2024 election around the corner — and so on. We'll have the right people onstage at this year's Fest to talk it all through.

Our CEO Sonal Shah said it best when she said that The Texas Tribune is to be a voice for Texas, for Texans, and for those who want to know more about Texas and the role our state plays across the nation and across the world. There is no better stage for these conversations to happen than TribFest. Tribune readers — you need to be there.

Buy your tickets today, and we'll see you this September.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/22/texas-tribune-festival-texas-speakers/>

## **THE BATTALION**

### **Incoming A&M journalism director Kathleen McElroy expands on her plan**

Jack Lee

June 21

After more than 20 years without a journalism program, Texas A&M is making an effort to bring it back. Kathleen McElroy, Ph.D., who has been chosen to lead the revived school, has big plans.

McElroy, who spent over two decades as a professional journalist, said she was inspired to go into journalism education during her tenure at The New York Times.

"I was working on The [New York] Times web desk, and I was working with these amazing young people," McElroy said. "They were young people who were so smart ... I was already thinking about winding down my career, so I thought, I'll get a Ph.D. ... I love doing a little bit of research, but I really love being an administrator."

Regarding her goals as the incoming director of A&M's journalism school, McElroy said she aims to consult students, faculty and journalism professionals to develop an ambitious vision.

"I really have to talk to you all," McElroy said. "I've got to talk to faculty, and I've got to talk to people

in the industry. But, there's some really obvious, big goals.”

As director of the program, McElroy said she aims to modernize the journalism curriculum in accordance with A&M’s identity as a scientific powerhouse.

“[A&M] is a top research institute,” McElroy said. “How can we make journalism be more of a part of that? The term I use is that there will be no accidental journalism majors. So if you're here, you're gonna learn data, you're gonna learn coding. The whole idea is that, let's make use of what's here, so that [journalism graduates] are really competitive and attractive to places that are going to be looking for more from journalism majors.”

The new journalism school, McElroy said, should effectively connect students with major media outlets.

“That's another goal: more collaboration with publications on and off campus, and with publications all around the state,” McElroy said. “Making sure there's a relationship with places like New York and the West Coast and, you know, I say Austin, not that I want to turn this into U.T. East, but you know, Texas Monthly is there. [The] Texas Tribune is there. Making sure that if I can't bring you all there, that they come down here and see what we have.”

Another goal, McElroy said, is that A&M’s journalism department should benefit the surrounding area.

“We can produce journalism that serves communities,” McElroy said. “If, you know, Caldwell, if there was some story that needed to be done about Caldwell, we should be able to put [students] out there, and [they] can produce it.”

Despite journalism programs across the country declining in number, McElroy said students in the A&M program can thrive by presenting a complete range of opportunities in the field to students.

“[We’re] not the school of printing, [we’re] the School of Journalism,” McElroy said. “Not everybody who is in this major is going to go into journalism or working [at a newspaper], but it's great that [they] have these skills, and [they] can put them anywhere. If you want to go someplace that’s going to pay you more money than the newsroom, awesome. If you do want to work in a newsroom, we're going to make sure that you can find your spot,”

The job options available for journalism graduates in the modern media environment, McElroy said, range far beyond the traditional journalist position.

“It could be data,” McElroy said. “It could be audience [engagement], you know, like The New Yorker has people who work in audience, it could be working on games — I'm obsessed with games that are in, you know, The New York Times, or The Washington Post — or things that are like NPR and podcasts and all that.”

While the goals and possibilities outlined by McElroy present the modern field of journalism as a

very broad discipline, McElroy said the mission of the school will maintain its identity as all subfields of journalism have something in common.

“We're all telling truth-based stories in different ways,” McElroy said. “Even if you're a data journalist, you're taking that data, which means nothing to 99% of people, and you're gonna make it tell a story.”

McElroy said she is looking forward to working with groups across campus.

“I don't want to say we're gonna work with this department or that department because I need to talk to those folks,” McElroy said. “But, clearly we want to work with people who are in visualization, we want to work with people in data.”

McElroy said a crucial part of her plan as the incoming director is making herself available to the A&M community.

“I am going to be in my office, I'm gonna be walking around, I've always had an open door policy, wherever I am,” McElroy said. “I want to hold listening sessions, I think, is what a lot of people call them ... maybe [they'll] involve food and cookies.”

The new journalism school, McElroy said, will hopefully train professionals who provide an essential service for society.

“This isn't an unnecessary profession,” McElroy said. “I know your parents and your friends might think there aren't jobs — there are — they might think that [journalists] are evil people, and biased. We're not. To me, I think we're like nurses for democracy. We're needed like that.”

[https://www.thebatt.com/news/incoming-a-m-journalism-director-kathleen-mcelroy-expands-on-her-plan/article\\_897cc5ea-10ad-11ee-a412-dfe6067ba474.html](https://www.thebatt.com/news/incoming-a-m-journalism-director-kathleen-mcelroy-expands-on-her-plan/article_897cc5ea-10ad-11ee-a412-dfe6067ba474.html)

## **WTAW-AM**

### **College Station City Council Receives Update On The Return Of Texas A&M's Off Campus Student**

Housing Office

Bill Oliver

June 21

College Station city officials are optimistic about the progress of how Texas A&M is bringing back an office to assist students with off campus housing.

That was part of mayor John Nichols summary during the June 12th city council meeting of a national convention he attended with A&M officials.

Nichols says A&M has identified a director, and he expects it will take about a year for the office to be running smoothly.

City manager Bryan Woods says A&M has allocated five positions for the new housing office.

The College Station council supports the off campus housing office as a way of communicating to students, the city's ordinance restricting occupancy to no more than four unrelated residents.

<https://wtaw.com/college-station-city-council-receives-update-on-the-return-of-texas-ams-off-campus-student-housing-office/>

## **KLTV-TV**

### **Experts warn lone star tick could cause allergic reactions to meat**

Lorena Rivas

June 21

EAST TEXAS (KLTV/KTRE) - Wednesday is the first day of Summer and you need to be aware of the risk of bites from the Lone Star tick.

While the tick is commonly found in Texas, it actually gets its name from its appearance.

The "lone star" part of its name refers to the white dot on its back found on the female ticks.

One thing about this tick, it is not shy towards humans, since it's known to bite people.

According to the CDC, growing evidence shows that their bites can cause alpha-gal syndrome (AGS), which is also known as red meat allergy.

**"While they're feeding on us, they're giving us a protein, therefore causing an allergic reaction in the future," said Sonja Swiger an Agrilife Extension entomologist at Texas A&M. "When you try to eat meat and now your body reacts to it."**

The Alpha-gal is actually a sugar molecule found in most mammals, some meat, and milk.

However, it is not found in birds, fish, reptiles, or people.

The tick won't always transmit a disease or trigger this allergy but experts recommend removing it immediately.

**"When ticks, when they stay on us longer that increases that chance of them passing pathogens to us," said Swiger. "So it is recommended to remove ticks as soon as possible."**

Once removed, if the bite did give you a red meat allergy how you react to it varies from person to person.

According to the CDC, some of the symptoms people see are the following:

Severe stomach pain

Shortness of breath

Swelling of lips, throat, tongue, or eyelids

Experts say reactions vary from person to person, it can range from mild to severe and even life-threatening to some.

If you think you may have AGS, it is recommended to talk to your health provider.

Experts recommend avoiding wooded areas, where ticks could be found. If you do go, wearing jeans, socks or boots could help avoid getting bit.

<https://www.kltv.com/2023/06/21/experts-warn-lone-star-tick-could-cause-allergic-reactions-meat/>

## **THE JEWISH STAR**

### **Arab donors' \$10B to universities buys a lot**

Mitchell Bard

June 21

After decades of ignoring how foreign governments were using donations to universities, the Department of Education (DoE) finally launched an investigation in 2020 and published a report that found that some of the foreign sources of funding that are hostile to the United States “are targeting their investments (“gifts” and “contracts”) to project soft power, steal sensitive and proprietary research, and spread propaganda.”

The report concluded, “There is very real reason for concern that foreign money buys influence or control over teaching and research.” The department expressed particular unease about reported donations listed as anonymous from China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Russia.

When I wrote a report on the funding by Arab universities in 2021, 258 universities had received contributions worth nearly \$8.5 billion since 1986. The study concluded: Now that the danger has been identified by the Trump administration’s focus on foreign funding of universities, the question is whether the Biden administration will pursue the investigations with equal vigor or revert to the prior policy of ignoring noncompliance with reporting requirements.

Sadly, the Biden administration appears to have no interest in the subject and has made things worse by providing less information to the public about who is contributing to universities and how the money is being used.

The total contributions by Arab donors between 1986 and October 2022 have now reached nearly \$11 billion. More than 10,000 contracts and gifts were spread across 273 institutions. And these figures grossly underestimate the total. My report documents numerous unreported donations, such as gifts of \$20 million each to Harvard and Georgetown universities in 2005. In its 2019 and 2020 reports, the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) identified nearly \$3 billion in unreported funds, primarily from Qatar.

Until 2020, the DoE listed the country of the giftor but not whether a government source was the funder. Unless the university reported the donor, the gifts could come from individuals, companies, foundations or other sources within the country.

The latest report indicated that 37% of the donations were from government sources, and 12% were not. More than half (51%) — worth more than \$6.7 billion (62% of the total) — provided no information on whether they came from a government source. More than 90% of the funds contributed from Arab sources — nearly \$10 billion — have no specific donor listed. Even more disturbing, only one-fourth of all contributions, totaling almost \$2 billion, specified the purpose of the donation.

One of the gaping loopholes in the reporting requirement is that universities have been able to keep the specific sources of the donations they receive private.

Donors from four countries contributed 95% of all Arab giving and 23% of all foreign funding to universities. The top donor by far is Qatar, with 1,056 donations worth \$5.2 billion (48% of the Arab total), followed by the Saudis with 5,735 donations worth \$2.9 billion (28% of the total), the UAE with 1,159 donations worth \$1.3 billion (12% of the total) and Kuwait with 1,177 donations worth \$858 million (8% of the total).

Given the total of its contributions, it is not surprising the largest gifts and contracts have come from Qatar. In fact, of the top 25, all but three (from the UAE and one from Saudi Arabia) came from Qatar. The largest was a \$151 million contract reported in July 2020 to cover the budget for the establishment and operation of Weill Cornell Medicine in Qatar.

**Cornell received \$137 million and \$149 million the following two years for the same purpose. From 2012-19, Qatar signed contracts with Cornell each year for the peculiar amount of \$99,999,999. Other significant transactions from Qatar included ones for \$95, \$88 and \$83 million to Texas A&M for an unspecified purpose; \$84 million and \$77 million to Carnegie Mellon (and \$74,130,684 per year from 2016 to 2019); and eight other contracts worth more than \$50 million each to Cornell.**

The UAE made two \$75 million gifts to the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The largest Saudi gift was, strangely, to the University of Idaho for student tuition and fees.

Besides those universities, others that hit the motherlode in the Middle East include Georgetown (\$830 million), Northwestern (\$648 million), four campuses of the University of Colorado (\$578

million), Pennsylvania State University (\$254 million), Harvard (\$228 million) and George Washington University (\$201 million).

Some may wonder about Israel's contributions. The government, individuals, and companies made at least 925 donations (gifts/contracts) worth \$303 million dating to 2003. As in the case of the Arab donations, few of those from Israeli sources (8% worth \$22 million) describe their purpose.

The non-existent "State of Palestine" made 19 contributions worth \$9.3 million. This is troubling because it gives credence to the Palestinian narrative and is contrary to US policy which recognizes no such state.

Two other restricted contracts to Indiana University of Pennsylvania were from the "Palestinian Territory, Occupied" and none from the Palestinian Authority (PA). That same school, with an enrollment of 8,832, received all but five of the donations; three others went to Harvard and two to Brown. Each gift to Brown of \$643,000 in 2020 was to support a professorship in Palestinian Studies within Middle East Studies. No purpose was listed for the Harvard gifts. Ten donations to Indiana were restricted contracts for tuition and fees for students from "Palestine." The others were undocumented.

The DoE reports are not clear about the actual donors of the money. It appears none came from the PA itself. If any did, that would be a scandal given that the PA relies mainly on foreign aid to subsist and spends approximately \$270 million on salaries for terrorists in Israeli prisons and families of suicide bombers. Palestinians would rightly wonder why their money was spent in the United States.

The assumption has long been that Arab funding has had a malevolent impact on the academic study of the Middle East, particularly concerning Israel and radical Islam. Evidence supports this, which I documented in my book, "The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East."

It is impossible, however, to make judgments based on the raw data provided by the DoE since only 25% of the contributions list a purpose and 86% of those that do say the money was for financial aid or scholarships for students from the donor country. These donations totaled less than \$2 billion, meaning there is no public record of how 82% of foreign contributions were used.

In general, providing Arab students with scholarships to attend American universities is a positive way to introduce them to the United States and our democratic values. More than 34,000 students came from 11 Arab countries and the Palestinian Authority in 2020–21; more than half of the total were Saudis. While many Arab students are campus provocateurs engaged in promoting BDS and demonizing Israel, it would take a lot more investigation to determine which and how many are on campus thanks to the largesse of their governments and whether any are encouraged or paid to be political activists.

Out of more than 10,000 donations, only three were identified with a political purpose — two \$643,000 contributions to Brown in 2020 from a gift or in "The State of Palestine" to provide support for a professorship in Palestinian Studies within Middle East Studies and one for \$67,969 for the



same purpose from the UAE.

The report did not identify the donors, but an official from Brown acknowledged the Palestinian contributor was the Munib and Angela Masri Foundation. Beshara Doumani, a supporter of the anti-Semitic BDS campaign, was named the first occupant of the position. Doumani has since also become the president of Birzeit University, which is known for the activism of students associated with terror groups such as Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The relatively small number of professors who hold positions in more political fields funded by Arab donors and support BDS, such as Doumani, can potentially reinforce anti-Israel student activity. The evidence, however, is anecdotal rather than empirical. Most faculty who agitate against Israel do so without needing Arab funding as motivation.

When DoE published its report on foreign influence, US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos said too many colleges and universities are “underreporting or not reporting at all” and emphasized that if they “are accepting foreign money or gifts, their students, donors and taxpayers deserve to know how much and from whom.” More importantly, they should be informed about the use of the funds.

Universities are not transparent and must be held accountable. Unfortunately, the Biden Education Department has no interest in doing so.

<https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/arab-donors-10b-to-universities-buys-a-lot,22617?#:~:text=The%20total%20contributions%20by%20Arab,figures%20grossly%20underestimate%20the%20total.>

## **KILLEEN DAILY HERALD**

### **Former TC president to retire from Texas A&M-Central Texas**

DAVID STONE

June 21

Dr. Marc Nigliazzo, president at Texas A&M University-Central Texas, announced today he will retire August 31.

The university’s inaugural president, Nigliazzo was appointed to lead A&M-Central Texas by The Texas A&M University Board of Regents in April 2010. Nigliazzo grew the state’s first and only upper-level university into a recognized leader as the 10th of the 11 regional universities in the Texas A&M University System.

Chancellor John Sharp praised Nigliazzo for his accomplishments, noting that educational opportunities have expanded significantly for residents in Central Texas, statewide and nationally because of the careful growth and nurturing of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs — many of which are offered both on campus and online.

“The results of Dr. Nigliazzo’s leadership and dedication can be found in the hospitals, classrooms, businesses and military ranks around the county who boast his graduates,” Sharp said. “We thank him for more than a decade of service to The Texas A&M University System, A&M-Central Texas students, faculty and staff and more than 10,000 alumni.”

Nigliazzo is a native Texan raised in the Brazos Valley. He began his career as an English teacher, holding faculty appointments at both two- and four-year institutions. He chaired the Department of English & Philosophy at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and served as vice president and dean of instruction at Galveston College.

His first presidential appointment was also at Galveston College, with subsequent appointments as president of Temple College and Arizona Western College in Yuma, Arizona. He also served as a senior vice president at the University of New Mexico, where he was responsible for the university’s four branch campuses and for the start-up of UNM-West.

“It has been an incredible blessing to have made a career surrounded by people who genuinely love what they do,” he said.

“I am especially proud of how many of A&M-Central Texas’ students and alumni are the first generation in their families to seek and complete a university degree. Our University has always been committed to ensuring that everyone who wanted an undergraduate or graduate degree could find a home with us where their dreams and academic goals would be fulfilled and celebrated.”

[https://kdhnews.com/news/region/former-tc-president-to-retire-from-texas-a-m-central-texas/article\\_44fa5001-9cf8-5a4e-8d0c-5a8218b8ceda.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/region/former-tc-president-to-retire-from-texas-a-m-central-texas/article_44fa5001-9cf8-5a4e-8d0c-5a8218b8ceda.html)

## **KCEN-TV**

### **Texas A&M University-Central Texas President Marc Nigliazzo announces retirement**

Jacob Wallin

June 21

KILLEEN, Texas — Dr. Marc Nigliazzo, President of Texas A&M University-Central Texas, has announced he will retire on August 31.

Serving as the university's inaugural president, Nigliazzo was appointed by The Texas A&M University Board of Regents in April 2010.

The university said Nigliazzo "grew the state's first and only upper-level university into a recognized leader as the tenth of the eleven regional universities in The Texas A&M University System".

Texas A&M Central Texas Chancellor John Sharp said educational opportunities have expanded

under Nigliazzo for local and national students, which Sharp credits to the "careful growth and nurturing" of undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

"The results of Dr. Nigliazzo's leadership and dedication can be found in the hospitals, classrooms, businesses and military ranks around the county who boast his graduates," Sharp said. "We thank him for more than a decade of service to The Texas A&M University System, A&M-Central Texas students, faculty and staff and more than 10,000 alumni."

Nigliazzo is a native Texan who was raised in the Brazos Valley. He started his career in education as an English teacher. Nigliazzo also chaired the Department of English & Philosophy at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and served as vice president and dean of instruction at Galveston College.

Nigliazzo's first turn as a university president came at Galveston College, and he later served as president of Temple College in Temple, Texas and Arizona Western College in Yuma, Arizona.

Nigliazzo also served as a senior vice president at the University of New Mexico, where he was responsible for the university's four branch campuses and the start-up of UNM-West.

"It has been an incredible blessing to have made a career surrounded by people who genuinely love what they do," said Nigliazzo. "I am especially proud of how many of A&M-Central Texas' students and alumni are the first generation in their families to seek and complete a university degree. Our University has always been committed to ensuring that everyone who wanted an undergraduate or graduate degree could find a home with us where their dreams and academic goals would be fulfilled and celebrated."

<https://www.kcentv.com/article/life/people/texas-am-university-central-texas-president-marc-nigliazzo-retirement/500-ff8799bd-247e-4069-8f21-57528bebf665>

## **FORBES**

### **James Beard Nominee Chef Chris Williams To Open Historic New Concept**

Claudia Alarcón

June 21

Chef Chris Williams, a James Beard Award Nominee for Outstanding Restaurateur in 2022 and 2023 and founder of Lucille's Hospitality Group is behind three new culinary and cultural concepts to open in the Historic Eldorado Ballroom, one of America's oldest Black music venues. The revitalization project marks the group's first Houston concepts outside of Williams' nationally acclaimed restaurant Lucille's.

The landmark building, which has been under the ownership of Project Row Houses since 1999, underwent a complete restoration and rehabilitation thanks to a nearly \$10 million capital campaign led by PRH and partners. The new space, designed as a cultural community center, comprises three

concepts — Eldorado Ballroom, Rado Cafe & Market and the Hogan Brown Gallery — operated by Lucille’s 1913, the philanthropic arm of Lucille’s Hospitality Group.

**Williams opened Lucille’s in August 2012, in the Museum District of Houston, as a tribute to his great grandmother and culinary pioneer Lucille B. Smith — who is considered Texas’ first African American businesswoman, credited with everything from establishing one of the first college level commercial foods and technology departments in the U.S., at Prairie View A&M University to creating the first-ever All-Purpose Hot Roll Mix in the country.**

Classically trained in French, Mediterranean, West Indian and East African cuisine, Williams attended Le Cordon Blue culinary school in Austin, Texas, and soon began traveling to work in kitchens across the world. His insatiable hunger to learn everything about world cuisine unexpectedly led him back to his own family tree, where he discovered a history steeped in trailblazing culinary advances and his grandmother’s Southern recipes. The Eldorado project is the logical progression of his quest to revitalize Houston’s historic African American district.

Eldorado has a long, rich history in Houston’s Third Ward. In the fall of 1939, Anna Johnson Dupree and Clarence Dupree opened the storied space, providing area residents a place where they could enjoy performers, host events, and celebrate milestones with dignity and without discrimination.

The Eldorado hosted Houston-based musicians such as Sam “Lightning” Hopkins and Johnny “Guitar” Watson, as well as jazz and blues musicians including B.B. King, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Etta James, and Count Basie.

After the death of her husband, Anna Johnson Dupree sold The Eldorado as the neighborhood fell into decline in the 1970s. Hubert “Hub” Finkelstein, the founder of Medallion Oil Company, purchased The Eldorado to save it from destruction, donating the building in 1999 to Project Row Houses so that it could be preserved for the use of the community.

The re-imagined Eldorado Ballroom honors the historic venue’s legacy as a visual and spiritual symbol of the Third Ward community, serving as a living extension of the nonprofit’s mission to empower communities to discover a self-sustainable livelihood through cultural and culinary arts. It will serve as a home for both established and emerging musicians as well as a community-centered space for the neighborhood to host, gather, and celebrate. The Hogan Brown Gallery seeks to provide community-centered education and commerce for burgeoning local artists.

Named for its historic location under the Eldorado Ballroom, Rado Cafe & Market will serve as a hybrid all-day cafe and neighborhood market for the Third Ward community, bringing culturally conscious prepared foods, fresh groceries, locally sourced mercantile products and a bistro-inspired menu to the Emancipation corridor. The aim is to create a culinary hub that prioritizes healthy, affordable food access.

“This project is especially exciting because it’s allowing us to defy the expectations of what a restaurant group can be,” says Williams. “I grew up in Houston, so I’ve seen firsthand the talent and culture that the Third Ward community has produced. Our goal with the revitalization of The

Eldorado is to not only restore its place as the neighborhood's cultural celebration center but also give this community that has produced so much talent a place to access and showcase the fruits of its labor. We're ultimately striving to provide a platform that nurtures interest while cultivating empowerment."

Rado Cafe & Market and the art gallery are set to open next week, while The Eldorado Ballroom's official programming launch date is the first week of July.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/claudiaalarcon/2023/06/21/james-beard-nominee-chef-chris-williams-to-open-historic-new-concept/?sh=f8fce07315ba>

## **24/7 SPORTS**

### **2023 Texas A&M profile: Freshman S Dalton Brooks could be a small-town phenom on the big stage**

Jeff Tarpley

June 21

Texas A&M's 2022 season was much more of a downer than anyone could have anticipated given the fact that the roster was composed of four top ten recruiting classes and most recently the number one class of all time (per the 247 Sports Composite). Instead, injuries forced too many expected contributors off the field and too many of those highly touted freshmen onto it. The result was a 5-7 record and things seemed to get worse before they got better when about two dozen members of the roster (including about half a dozen players from that 2022 class) departed College Station in the weeks immediately following the season.

However, the reality is that the Aggies remain a talented program on paper. A&M returns 19 of 22 starters from the last game of the 2022 season (which was a win over then fifth ranked and SEC West champion LSU). ESPN's Bill Connelly has the Aggies seventh in the nation in returning production (per his calculations) as they bring back 80% of their production from last year (82% on offense and 77% on defense) and this includes former five-star quarterback Conner Weigman, their top two receivers, eight offensive linemen with starting experience, a three deep in the defensive front, and replacements both from within the program and outside of it in the portal to fill some losses in the secondary. New offensive coordinator Bobby Petrino is expected not only to improve the offense but enable head coach Jimbo Fisher to be a more effective game and program manager.

This series is a look at those players in terms how they were rated coming out of high school, how they got to Aggieland, how well they've played so far, and most importantly what we can expect from them in 2023.

Texas A&M signee and former Shiner star Dalton Brooks is one of those small town phenoms who's ability to do just about everything should serve both him as the Aggies well as he makes a transition to being a full time player on the back end of the defense.

#### WHAT DID A&M SEE IN HIM?

Brooks helped lead Shiner to Class 2A-Division I state titles as a sophomore and junior and then a regional final appearance as a senior. He was named the MVP of the 2022 Victoria Advocate All-Area team as he played running back on offense for Shiner and ran for 2,530 yards and 37 touchdowns, averaging over 10 yards per carry. He also had a pair of receiving scores as well. On defense, he recorded 120 tackles, four tackles for loss, five pass breakups and five interceptions, including one returned for a touchdown.

As a junior, the 6-foot-1, 190-pounder was just shy of 100 stops on the year. He also intercepted three passes, returning one for a touchdown, despite other teams doing their best to not throw anywhere near him. He was the District 13-2A-I unanimous MVP as well as Class 2A Offensive Player of the Year by the Texas Sportswriters Association (TSWA).

Brooks worked out at running back at Texas A&M's camp in the summer following his sophomore season. However, he signed with the Aggies to play safety.

#### RECRUITING RANKING

He wound up as a four star rated prospect in the 247 Sports Composite with a grade of 0.9577 which was 87th overall in the country. He was the third best athlete and the 16th best prospect in the state of Texas.

#### COMMITMENT TIME

Texas A&M joined the race for Brooks in February 2021 extending an offer. Since then, he made several trips to College Station including two summer visits each of the past two years. He was also in the building to watch the Aggies upset No. 1 Alabama last fall.

"We went up there and the atmosphere is crazy," he told 247Sports in the fall of 2021. "People are in there swinging, hooping and hollering. You really can't even hear yourself. I went to the Alabama game and that was one of the craziest games I've ever seen in my life."

He chose the Aggies last July over Alabama, Notre Dame, Penn State and Texas.

#### STRENGTHS

- Brooks' athleticism starts with speed (11.15 in the 100 meters in 2022) and explosion (45'7" in the triple jump, good enough for fourth in the state in Class 2A in 2022). He also had a personal best of 23'8.75" in the long jump in winning the event at the Class 2A Region IV meet as well as running on the 4 x 200 and 4 x 400 meter relays this spring.

- Brooks has a deceptively fluid running style that you may not describe as gliding but still doesn't make him appear as fast as he actually runs on the track or football field.

- He closes on the line of scrimmage as a runner and on ball carriers quickly as a defender.

- He may not project as a corner but his hips and change of direction via his footwork enable him to

extend his range as a deep defender or redirect quickly to another part of the field.

- As a deep defender, Brooks keeps his eyes upfield and diagnoses things quickly which enables him to play even faster than he times.

- He is a physical player on both side of the ball who gets downhill or to a receiver fast so that he can lower his shoulder and maximize the force of the blow he delivers.

- He has the hand/eye coordination to contest the ball in the air and the ball skills and hands to come down with it or least get a hand on it to prevent completions down the field. Brooks also has really good overall balance as an athlete.

#### SUMMARY

- Brooks is going to have to make an adjustment not just to college football but also a much higher level of football than he's used to playing at a smaller classification.

- On the other hand, second year man Jarred Kerr had to make the same adjustment and saw quite a bit of playing time and even in critical situations as a true freshman.

- He may have to change up his tackling style since he used his long arms to take smaller opponents down and deliver big blows in high school that he may not be able to do right away in college. He's also going to need to add mass which may come sooner than later since he's been a multi-sport athlete during his prep days.

- Overall, he projects as a do it all safety for the Aggies who should have a productive career.

<https://247sports.com/college/texas-am/longformarticle/texas-am-2023-football-dalton-brooks-profile-analysis-safety-211833956/>

## **THE BATTALION**

### **Flash forward: 2024 football schedule preview**

Hunter Mitchell

June 21

Well, that didn't take long.

Texas A&M and Texas squared off on the gridiron every year from 1915 to 2011. Then, after leaving the Big 12 for the SEC, it seemed the two schools would only face off in the occasional baseball game and Twitter thread. After a little over a decade, the two fated rivals are now set to face each other annually once more as Texas joins the SEC in 2024. Although the renewed rivalry is the marquee matchup, there are other points of interest on the recently-announced schedule.

## Roll Tide, no Tide

The SEC is arguably the most difficult football conference in the country, and there's one big, elephant-sized reason for that: the Alabama Crimson Tide. Having them on your schedule, like the Aggies have every year since 2012, has led to a few memorable upsets, like the Johnny Football legacy game in 2012 and the game-winning field goal in 2021. Despite these good memories for the 12th Man, the result is usually bitter defeat when playing Alabama.

Led by all-time great coach Nick Saban, Alabama has always been a dominant force in the SEC West. A&M has been well aware of the fact that the road to a College Football Playoff berth runs through Tuscaloosa, Alabama. However, whether by luck or design, the Aggies and Crimson Tide will not face one another come 2024, meaning that's one less part of the gauntlet that A&M will have to run through in the SEC.

## Apostolics vs. Aggies

The only real eye-opening non-conference game on the 2024 schedule is against a historic powerhouse, as the Aggies will welcome the Notre Dame Fighting Irish to College Station. The two schools only faced off five times prior, and only once has it been outside the state of Texas. Notre Dame leads the all-time series 3-2, but the last matchup was a 24-3 Aggie victory at home in 2001.

The real 'rivalry' between Notre Dame and A&M stems from 2020, when many of the Aggie faithful felt like they were snubbed of a CFP appearance as the Fighting Irish claimed the fourth and final spot over A&M. The one-sided resentment will finally culminate on the field, and Aggie fans will hope to let out some deep-seeded aggression.

## On the road again

The SEC road opponents for A&M seems, at the moment, a manageable one. A lot can change in a few years, but I can say with relative confidence that neither South Carolina nor Mississippi State will become national championship contenders by 2024. The Aggies will once again square off against Arkansas in AT&T Stadium in Arlington, in what will be the final installment of the Southwest Classic. Besides that, the only other two matchups will be a trip to The Swamp to face the Florida Gators and to Jordan-Hare Stadium to face Auburn.

Florida may be the toughest challenge right now, as, despite a down year in 2022, coach Billy Napier has multiple solid recruiting classes under his belt who will be sophomores and juniors by the time the Aggies come to town. Auburn is a true wild card, as it brings in former Ole Miss head coach and burner phone enthusiast Hugh Freeze. If he can get Auburn to the level he had the Rebels in in the 2010s, the trip to the Plains in '24 could prove to be a difficult one.

## Hatred, new and old

There are two games that most of the 12th Man have circled on their calendars with a maroon marker: Texas and LSU. While nothing needs to be said about the Texas matchup — there's decades



of hate buried there — LSU has emerged as a budding rival since A&M arrived in the SEC. The Tigers and Aggies seemingly always play each other close — except for 2019 — and often that’s one of the key indicators of a rivalry. Aggie fans can’t stop reliving and LSU fans can’t seem to live down the 2018 seven-overtime thriller that saw A&M win on a two-point conversion 74-72. Games like that don’t just happen in any annual matchup, and despite A&M’s old foe coming onto the scene in ‘24, there will certainly be no love lost between the Aggies and the Tigers.

[https://www.thebatt.com/flash-forward-2024-football-schedule-preview/article\\_333bd866-10a2-11ee-af90-f74bb7a1cd7b.html](https://www.thebatt.com/flash-forward-2024-football-schedule-preview/article_333bd866-10a2-11ee-af90-f74bb7a1cd7b.html)

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Texas A&M's Daniel Rodrigues advances to round of 32 at British Amateur**

EAGLE STAFF REPORT

June 21

SOUTHPORT, England — Texas A&M senior Daniel Rodrigues topped Sweden’s Simon Hovdal 3 and 2 to advance to the round of 32 at the British Amateur Championship on Wednesday at Hillside Golf Club.

A&M sophomore Jaime Montojo lost to Norway’s Gregory Lim Solhaug on the 19th hole.

Rodrigues will face England’s James Claridge on Thursday morning with the winner playing in the round of 16 in the afternoon.

Montojo and Rodrigues each finished at 4-under 139 in the stroke-play portion of the tournament to tie for 31st and advance to match play.

The Amateur Championship has been hosted by the R&A since 1885. The winner will receive invitations to next month’s British Open and next year’s Masters and U.S. Open.

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/golf/texas-a-ms-daniel-rodrigues-advances-to-round-of-32-at-british-amateur/article\\_427b413e-107c-11ee-8689-7b51626a5850.html](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/golf/texas-a-ms-daniel-rodrigues-advances-to-round-of-32-at-british-amateur/article_427b413e-107c-11ee-8689-7b51626a5850.html)

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THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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## **KAGS-TV**

### **Prairie View A&M University opens new \$70 million state-of-the-art engineering building**

Jordan Adams

June 22

PRAIRIE VIEW, Texas — Prairie View A&M University officially opened the doors for its brand new \$70 million engineering classroom and research building Thursday morning. It is the sixth addition to the university's Roy G. Perry College of Engineering complex.

"As the Dean of the College of Engineering, I will say that I believe that engineering is probably the signature program," Pamela Holland Obiomon said. "We have a long reputation for producing excellent engineers."

The majority of the over 100,000-square-foot facility is dedicated to classroom instruction with six instructional classrooms and 14 specialized labs. The lab spaces support things like space exploration, data analytics, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

"To think that we are now at the place where we are among the top in the nation to produce the highest number of some of the brightest people in the world fuels my excitement for where we are today," Prairie View University President Tomika LeGrande said.

According to Dean Holland, current enrollment for the School of Engineering is around 1,100 students. However, with bigger and better facilities now in the complex, they are planning to increase enrollment to 2,500 students.

"We're committed to discovery. We're committed to innovation and new knowledge. That's how you improve society," LeGrande said. "Prairie View is committed to that our faculty are committed to that and our students become the first consumers of that new knowledge."

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/news/education/local-schools/prairie-view-am-university-open-new-70-million-state-of-the-art-engineering-building/499-183108f8-5f8d-439e-ad01-5557f0ff3695>

## **FORT WORTH BUSINESS PRESS**

### **Groundbreaking: Construction begins for Texas A&M's new campus in downtown Fort Worth**

Marice Richter

June 22

Top leaders from the Texas A&M University System and Fort Worth joined together on Wednesday

to turn some dirt and celebrate the start of construction for the first building of Texas A&M-Fort Worth's new downtown research campus.

It's been a mere 18 months since the Texas A&M System announced its intentions to build the three-building urban campus across four city blocks owned by the Texas A&M System.

Texas A&M-Fort Worth is a public-private partnership as well as a collaboration between the Texas A&M System and the city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County. The campus will anchor an innovation district aimed at supporting business growth and workforce development.

Construction of the new campus will begin with the Law & Education Building that will replace the current Texas A&M Law School Building, which is more than 50 years old.

The eight-story building, with a price tag of \$150 million, will be paid for by the Texas A&M System. The university's Board of Regents approved the expenditure last month. It is expected to be complete in 2025.

The other two high-rise buildings will be built with funding from the university system, the city, Tarrant County and private investment.

The Gateway Building will contain more classroom and meetings spaces along with a conference center.

The Research and Innovation Building will house public and private research and development initiatives in engineering, defense, agriculture, telecommunications, health sciences and technology.

The facility will be home to the regional offices of several Texas A&M agencies, including the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, and the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

The complex will also provide space for academic programs offered by Tarleton State University as well as other Texas A&M disciplines, including engineering, emergency management and health sciences.

The entire campus is projected to be complete in 2027.

A key figure in all this is Bobby Ahdieh, who arrived in Fort Worth as dean of the Texas A&M University School of Law five years ago, bringing fresh ideas and an agenda that included real estate.

As a result, the law school is one of the fastest-rising in the country and was recently ranked 29th, on the list of the best graduate schools, according to the latest ranking by U.S. News & World Report.

Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp saw the potential for a law school when he first became chancellor in 2011. Texas A&M acquired the law school from Texas Wesleyan University a decade ago.

“At the time, it was unranked and has now risen in the rankings faster than any law school in history,” Sharp stated. “We won’t stop until it is ranked in the top 10 in America.”

The law school will be the centerpiece of the Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus but the vision for redevelopment of the area has grown significantly broader.

“We saw the opportunity for A&M to do something much more consequential,” Ahdieh said “It is a real game-changer.

Fortunately, he said, “John Sharp never met a big idea he didn’t like.”

The plan for the ambitious project was a team effort credited to the foresight of Fort Worth real estate and business magnate John Goff and former Mayor Betsy Price, who approached Texas A&M leaders about expanding the university’s footprint in Fort Worth, mainly because Fort Worth was the largest city in Texas without a major public research facility.

“We were looking for a way to get through the pandemic by creating more jobs and opportunities,” said Goff, who chairs the Fort Worth-Tarrant County Innovation Partnership, an outgrowth of Fort Worth Now.

“I called Bobby and showed him some land,” Goff said. “We climbed on top of the law school building to look around.”

Goff said he and Ahdieh discussed how Texas A&M’s talent and its reputation for educational and research excellence could be transformative for Fort Worth beyond a new law school building.

Before long, Goff and Price flew to College Station for a meeting with Sharp and others who agreed, Goff said, “to make this happen.”

At Wednesday’s celebratory groundbreaking, Goff announced that the CEOs of Elbit America and Alcon, both Fort Worth companies, have agreed to involvement with the research campus.

“Lockheed Martin is proud to continue collaborating with Texas A&M University through this memorandum of understanding, establishing an additional talent pipeline of quality engineers in Fort Worth,” said Bridget Lauderdale, vice president of Lockheed Martin and a Texas A&M graduate.

“Together, we will continue our joint, cutting-edge research to deliver innovative solutions for 21st Century security challenges, providing transformational capabilities in support of national security,” she said.

Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker, a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Law, said the Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus is “what Fort Worth needs at this moment in our history.

“This groundbreaking represents countless future careers in law, medical technology, nursing and

engineering, all of which are vital to meeting the need for a highly-skilled workforce in Fort Worth and North Texas for decades to come,” she stated.

Tarrant County Judge Tim O’Hare said the campus “will bring in multiple high-quality business relocations to partner with the university and will enhance an already first-class downtown.”

Stantec is architect of record for the Law & Education Building and will work in partnership with the design architect, Pelli Clarke & Partners. The construction management teams are Turner Construction Co., CARCON Industries, Source Building Group Inc. and Dikita Enterprises.

<https://fortworthbusiness.com/business/groundbreaking-construction-begins-for-texas-ams-new-campus-in-downtown-fort-worth/>

## **CONNECT CRE**

### **Texas A&M Fort Worth Begins to Take Shape**

Mike Boyd

June 22

Contractors have started work on the first structure of the state’s newest university campus, Texas A&M Fort Worth. The Law and Education Building has begun construction just east of the Fort Worth Convention Center. The \$150 million project will become the new home to Texas A&M’s fast-growing School of Law and house courses in engineering, health care, nursing and other subjects offered by Texas A&M University, Texas A&M Health, and Tarleton State University.

The campus, covering four city blocks, will eventually include a Research and Innovation Building where the private sector, including some of the city’s largest employers, and the A&M System’s agencies can work together. The Gateway Building will house offices, more classroom and meeting spaces, and a conference center.

The Texas A&M University System has a stated goal to deliver the campus by 2027.

<https://www.connectcre.com/stories/texas-am-fort-worth-begins-to-take-shape/>

## **DALLAS MORNING NEWS**

### **Photos: Texas A&M officials kick off construction of Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus**

June 22

*CLICK LINK BELOW TO SEE PHOTO GALLERY.*

<https://www.dallasnews.com/photos/2023/06/22/photos-texas-am-officials-kick-off-construction-of-texas-am-fort-worth-campus/>

## **UNIVERSITY BUSINESS**

### **Why a number of schools are opting to freeze tuition next year**

Alcino Donadel

June 22

**“It was a team effort, but the Regents, in particular, were focused on keeping college affordable in Texas,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Our students and their families will reap the benefits of their efforts.”**

As colleges and universities fight to attract a dwindling cohort of students to their institutions, one major obstacle standing in their way is their price tag.

The cost of a college education is a primary source of stress for students and parents applying for college and among those already enrolled. Additionally, The State of Higher Education 2023 report found that the cost of a degree or credential was the main roadblock inhibiting U.S. adults from enrolling.

As a result, several colleges, universities and systems have recently approved tuition freezes to offset burdening students with more of a financial commitment. When Utah Gov. Spencer Cox proposed this strategy to the Utah Legislature ahead of the 2023 general session, he noted that increases in tuition and fees are outpacing inflation and median household incomes.

Purdue, for example, has agreed to its twelfth consecutive year of freezing tuition, set below \$10,000. The university estimates that this decision has saved students more than \$1 billion on educational and living expenses since 2013. Additionally, the University of Vermont estimates that its fifth year of tuition freezes will save students \$163 million.

However, unless an institution receives an exorbitant amount of tuition revenue or handsome endowment awards, most public institutions cannot afford to set a tuition freeze without state funding. And that’s precisely what three college systems have recently received, signaling a rejuvenation in state support for higher education.

**This past Monday, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott approved a record \$1.19 billion in new spending for the Texas A&M University System, according to KBTX. A huge component of that package, which is the first ever to eclipse \$1 billion in new state funding for the state, will go toward freezing tuition and fees for residents.**

**“It was a team effort, but the Regents, in particular, were focused on keeping college affordable in Texas,” said John Sharp, Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System. “Our students and**

**their families will reap the benefits of their efforts.”**

Similarly, the University of Alabama System in June announced it would be freezing tuition and fees across its three institutions, which Gov. Kay Ivey made possible by signing the Education Trust Fund Bill, appropriating \$672 million for the UA System. Minnesota’s state legislature also invested \$292 million into its state colleges and university system. This decision comes at the heels of last month’s decision to make college tuition free for Minnesota residents whose families make less than \$80,000 a year.

However, freezing tuition may not be the end-all-be-all solution to making college more attractive to potential students. The Hechinger Report found that tuition freezes net costs for the institution’s wealthiest student while raising it for lower-income students who need the most assistance. The Hechinger Report also found that tuition freezes can affect an institution’s ability to.

<https://universitybusiness.com/why-a-number-of-schools-are-opting-to-freeze-tuition-next-year/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIt%20was%20a%20team%20effort,the%20benefits%20of%20their%20efforts.%E2%80%9D>

## **TEXAS TRIBUNE**

### **At least four people killed after tornado hits Matador, a small town outside Lubbock**

JAYME LOZANO CARVER

June 22

At least four people are dead and nine are injured after a tornado hit Matador, a small town of nearly 800 people northeast of Lubbock, late Wednesday night.

The tornado was brought on by several severe storms in the region. A video from a local storm chaser showed significant damage to the small town in the Texas Rolling Plains. Matador Mayor Pat Smith told CBS News that crews were digging people out of rubble in the aftermath — and carried some bodies away.

The tornado struck around 8 p.m., which made it difficult to immediately assess the full extent of the damage. When first responders arrived on the scene, three people were dead and seven of the 10 injured people were transported to Lubbock hospitals by EMS. One of the injured died at the hospital.

Nicki Dempsey was heading home with her daughter when she noticed how dark the sky was to the north of their house. She thought it was hail or rain, since she didn’t see anything on the radar. Then she heard the faint sound of sirens and told her family to get in the basement as quickly as they could.

“It sounded like a freight train was coming into our house,” Dempsey recalled. “I said at one point,



‘There goes the back porch,’ because I could hear it getting ripped off.”

The tornado didn’t stop at her back porch — the roof of the home was torn off, exposing the basement to the storm. Dempsey and her family were standing to the side of the basement, which still had its ceiling from the garage above, but they could see the rain and debris covering the stairs. Dempsey said the whole ordeal took two or three minutes but felt much longer.

“We waited a few minutes until we saw the sky was blue, so we pushed everything to the side as best we could and climbed to the top of the stairs,” Dempsey said. “We had to push the door open to get out because everything from the kitchen had been thrown against the door.”

By the end of the storm, Dempsey’s family lost half of their home. On Thursday, they were digging through the remains, trying to salvage what they could. Their home will have to be torn down, she said, but she’s grateful they’re alive and for all the donations and help flowing into the town. She would like to see more plastic totes donated, though, so families can keep the belongings they have left in a safe place.

Multiple state and local agencies have sent police, fire and EMS resources to Motley County, where Matador is, to help with search and rescue efforts. Derek Delgado, public information officer for Lubbock Fire Rescue, said he has never seen so many agencies working together on one disaster.

Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration in response to the Matador tornado.

The declaration added Motley as well as Fisher, Jones, Kent, Nolan and Stonewall counties. The addition of the latest five brings a total of 21 Texas counties under a disaster declaration as a result of recent severe weather.

“Matador is a very small town, and it wiped away vehicles, buildings and homes,” Delgado said. “For a town this size, it not only has a physical impact because it just blew away the infrastructure, but the economical impact is something that will be very significant.”

The destruction came less than a week after another deadly tornado struck the Panhandle town of Perryton, killing three people and injuring more than 100 others.

Sgt. Johnny Bures with the Texas Department of Public Safety said people in Matador had just a few minutes to seek shelter. First responders are working on clearing out debris and getting the power back on by the weekend. A substation was destroyed in the tornado, knocking out electricity for the entire town. This is a big concern, as the region has endured sweltering, triple-digit temperatures for several days.

“These folks are rural, so without power, they’re going to have a hard time trying to cool down, especially as they’re trying to collect all their belongings,” Bures said. “So check in with your neighbors, make sure they have utilities they can use so they don’t get sick or worse.”

**Delgado said the tornado appears to have hit the west side of town and barreled through to the**

**south side. Texas A&M Task Force 1 is conducting secondary searches of the town and will later assess the damage.**

**“The Texas Task Force is there making sure that we’ve cleared every piece that we can to make sure that we didn’t have anybody left behind,” Bures said. “So today, we’re making sure that we clear all that first, before we really get down to moving all the broken pieces away and get to rebuilding.”**

According to the National Weather Service in Lubbock, the storms in nearby towns such as Jayton had wind gusts of 100 miles per hour and softball-size hail. Jayton, about 62 miles south of Matador, was also under a tornado warning Wednesday night.

Annette Hollinsworth lives in nearby Roaring Springs and owns New To You, a consignment store, in Matador. Since her business was still standing, she was offering clothes to anyone in Matador that needs them. She’s relieved to see the outpouring of help and donations to the community.

“There’s been people from out of town come in and help clear away the damage or however they’re needed,” Hollinsworth said.

There has been extensive damage to the town, including leveled homes, destroyed gas stations and half of Matador Diner, one of the few restaurants in town. By Thursday afternoon, DPS troopers closed off public access to the town.

Hollinsworth said Matador has had so many supplies donated that it needs money to recover now. The Community Foundation of West Texas has created a relief fund for survivors of the Matador tornado. Donations can also be made through any Happy State Bank branch. Those who donate must state it is for the Matador relief fund.

For the people impacted by the tornado in Matador, a cooling center has been opened at the Motley County Senior Citizens Building.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/22/texas-tornado-matador/>

## **KFDA-TV**

### **Amarillo agencies assisting in Matador after devastating Tornado**

Devyn Darmstetter

June 22

MATADOR, Texas (KFDA) - Agencies from all over the panhandle are coming together to provide aid to the town of Matador after a tornado struck last night.

It was absolutely heartbreaking to see all of the wreckage and debris from homes scattered across

the town.

Surrounding cities and towns from all over Texas, including Amarillo, came out to help with search and rescue, provide food and water to those affected, and help clean up.

I asked Stephen Hamilton, the general manager of K3 Towing out of Amarillo and Childress, what the most shocking sites were while working through the night in Matador.

"It's probably gonna be the car hauler," said Hamilton. I asked him what the car hauler was like, his response: a pretzel,

Not only did Hamilton help with search and rescue and clean up in Matador, he also worked in Perryton after the tornado there a week ago.

'Seeing all the people going through all their belongings and all their stuff scattered everywhere. it'll get you a little bit," says Hamilton.

He says the community of Matador is going to need all the help they can get.

"All the houses we've come across that were in the path are gone. I mean, it didn't just, you know, blow a roof off or not like out there pretty much leveled. So most of the people in the path don't have anything. so anything they made anybody can bring will help them. It'll take them a long time to recover," explains Hamilton.

**Texas A&M Forest Service is assisting Lubbock County along with Matador Fire and other local cooperators.**

**"We have a TIFMAS strike team that is backfilling fire calls. So this way the Matador Fire Department can focus on their stuff, helping out the families and helping out the community in their community. So we've taken that burden off of that," says Angel Lopez, Public Information Officer for Texas A&M Forest Service.**

The entire town of about 600 people is without power. Crews are working to restore it back as quickly as possible.

<https://www.newschannel10.com/2023/06/23/amarillo-agencies-assist-after-matador-tornado/>

## **THE EAGLE**

**Governor Abbott sends Texas A&M agencies to respond to Matador tornado**

June 22

Several Texas A&M agencies are responding to Governor Greg Abbott's disaster declaration for the

city of Matador and other impacted communities from Wednesday's severe storms and tornadoes that caused significant damage to homes and businesses.

The Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (Task Force 2 and Public Works Response Team) is sending search and rescue teams and personnel and equipment to support local public works needs; the Texas A&M Forest Service is sending Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System firefighters and engines and an Incident Management Team; and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is sending personnel supporting local officials with needs assessments, according to a press release from the governor's office.

The disaster declaration will support Texas' response and recovery efforts to extensive damages in 21 Texas counties, including the following counties added Thursday: Motley, Nolan, Fisher, Jones, Kent and Stonewall counties, according to a Thursday press release.

"There is no force more powerful than Texans helping Texans, and this updated disaster declaration will help the State of Texas swiftly respond to communities devastated by last night's severe weather and tornadoes in West Texas," Abbott stated in the press release.

Additional counties may be added to the declaration as damage assessments are completed.

[https://theeagle.com/news/a\\_m/governor-abbott-sends-texas-a-m-agencies-to-respond-to-matador-tornado/article\\_1d68b748-1133-11ee-8c05-fb842a706527.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/news/a_m/governor-abbott-sends-texas-a-m-agencies-to-respond-to-matador-tornado/article_1d68b748-1133-11ee-8c05-fb842a706527.html#tncms-source=login)

## **KFDA-TV**

### **Abbott issues disaster declaration for Matador**

June 22

MATADOR, Texas (KCBD) - Gov. Greg Abbott has issued a disaster declaration for Matador following a deadly tornado that swept through the town.

The governor's office issued the following statement:

Governor Greg Abbott today updated the state's disaster declaration for Matador and other Texas communities that continue to be impacted by severe storms and tornadoes causing significant damage to homes and businesses. The disaster declaration will continue to support Texas' response and recovery efforts to extensive damages in 21 Texas counties, including the following counties added today: Motley, Nolan, Fisher, Jones, Kent, and Stonewall counties.

"There is no force more powerful than Texans helping Texans, and this updated disaster declaration will help the State of Texas swiftly respond to communities devastated by last night's severe weather and tornadoes in West Texas," said Governor Abbott. "I ask all Texans to join Cecilia and me as we pray for the Matador community and families who tragically lost a loved one during last night's

horrific storm. I thank all of our brave first responders and emergency response personnel who are working to help their fellow Texans navigate the aftermath of this severe weather event.”

Additional counties may be added to the declaration as damage assessments are completed.

Overnight, at the Governor’s direction, TDEM deployed the following state emergency response resources to support tornado response operations in Matador:

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (Texas A&M Task Force 2): Search and Rescue Teams  
Texas Division of Emergency Management: Emergency Management and Operations Technology personnel to support local response operations and coordinate state resource requests from local officials

Texas Department of State Health Services (Texas Emergency Medical Task Force): Ambulance bus with Medical Incident Support Teams and ambulances

Texas Department of Public Safety: Texas Highway Patrol Troopers

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: Texas Game Wardens

Texas A&M Forest Service: Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System firefighters and engines and an Incident Management Team

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (Texas A&M Public Works Response Team): Personnel and equipment to support local public works needs

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service: Personnel supporting local officials with needs assessments

Texas Department of Transportation: Personnel to support road closures and debris clearing from roadways; Fuel Support

Additionally, local fire departments in the region have deployed personnel and rescue assets through mutual aid.

Texans impacted by these devastating storms and tornadoes are encouraged to complete TDEM’s Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool (iSTAT) self-reporting damage survey to help state and local officials identify damages and determine the state’s eligibility for federal disaster assistance. The survey is available in both English and Spanish and can be accessed by visiting: [damage.tdem.texas.gov](https://www.tdem.texas.gov/damage).

<https://www.newschannel10.com/2023/06/22/abbott-issues-disaster-declaration-matador/>

## **KXXV-TV**

### **Young minds dive into STEM summer camp at Texas A&M**

Diamond Dickson

June 22

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Young minds are hard at work on Texas A&M University's campus, where Aggie STEM summer camps are underway. The camps aim to heighten students' passion for STEM, and to deepen their learning skills.

Reid Wright is going to be in the eighth grade this upcoming fall, and he is an avid problem solver.

"I like science and math and I find it interesting," Wright said.

"I like solving problems and figuring out solutions."

Headed into the sixth grade, this is Rush Matthews' first solo summer camp.

"I have independence, because this is my first camp I've gone to without my parents," Matthews said.

The summer camp has existed for over a decade — focusing on STEM development for third through 12th graders.

"It attracts students to STEM majors, and helps them pursue a STEM degree when they get to college," said Dr. Niyazi Erdogan, Project Coordinator of Aggie STEM.

A popular attraction is making s'mores out of a handmade oven.

"Learning how like the light reflects off of the tin foil and how the black paper absorbs the heat — that's really really interesting to me," said camp attendee, Cam Butler.

"We're supposed to make a contraption that can reflect the sunlight and make the s'mores and heat it up and melt it," Matthews said.

Various activities and workshops sparked an interest in campers of all ages — like Rebecca Roeh, who's going into her junior year of high school.

"We've been building towers," Roeh said.

"We made hands that can catch a paper ball, out of paper and yarn and cardboard. We made solar ovens that can cook marshmallows using only the sun."

With a group full of curious minds and tenacity, they're exemplifying the odds of hands-on experiments by making a hand machine.

"We had to make a hand to pick it up and catch it and throw it back [a ball of paper]," Wright said.

"Mine worked. It was pretty hard, but I overcame the challenge."

Dr. Erdogan has worked with the program since 2010.

Now over 2,000 campers have participated, and are counting getting a front row seat to the college experience.

“They have been staying in the college dorms,” Dr. Erdogan said.

“They have been eating in the dining halls on campus, they have been transporting with the university buses — they have been experiencing full college life.”

At the end of this week, campers will walk away with STEM-filled minds, and have an achievement awards ceremony with their loved ones to look forward to.

<https://www.kxxv.com/brazos/young-minds-dive-into-stem-summer-camp-at-texas-a-m>

## **WTAW-AM**

### **Congressman Michael McCaul on WTAW**

Chelsea Reber

June 22

Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX) visits with WTAW’s Scott DeLucia about Anthony Blinken’s trip to China, global issues, Chinese immigrants being stopped at our borders, Iran in the nuclear discussion, money for Texas A&M’s hypersonic research, and more during his appearance on The Infomaniacs on Thursday, June 22, 2023.

*CLICK LINK BELOW TO LISTEN.*

<https://wtaw.com/congressman-michael-mccaul-on-wtaw-13/>

## **TEXAS SCORECARD**

### **Taxpayer-funded Universities Hold Training to Promote LGBT Ideals**

Ryan Hughes

June 22

Some public Texas universities are offering an LGBT training for students.

The Safe Zone Project is a two-hour long program that instructs students on how to include LGBT “philosophies” into their lives and then promote those values to the world.

**This program is taught in many taxpayer-funded colleges, such as Texas Tech, Texas A&M International, University of Texas Austin, UT Tyler, and UT Dallas.**

According to the UT Tyler website, “The Safe Zone mission is to promote an environment where the

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community and their allies flourish intellectually, socially, and emotionally.”

However, the Safe Zone Project curriculum is not backed by actual evidence, as the organization claims that using evidenced-based curriculum is “not something that aligns with our goals for this project.”

The training calls for individuals to persuade their employers or the publications they work with to remove non-inclusive language from their material. Coercing people to attend their meetings and join the training is also encouraged.

“We fully endorse the use of light bribery to get those seats filled. Once you have ’em in the room, that’s when you get to do your thing!” the organization’s website reads.

The Safe Zone Project group also acknowledges that these teachings go against some people’s moral and social Christian backgrounds:

Safe Zone activities are, by their nature, challenging to the social and moral upbringing that participants have experienced.

In Texas’ taxpayer-funded colleges, these trainings are already being used to promote LGBT ideology.

UT Austin uses Safe Zone’s training to teach students how to “learn and practice describing the differences between assigned sex, gender identity, gender expression, [and] sexual orientation.” At UT Tyler, students participating in the Safe Zone Project read about “transgenderism” and do self-examinations, as well as read about policies and laws that affect the LGBTQ+ community.

Students are encouraged to apply these teachings when interacting with others and to spread LGBT ideas and visions across campus—and the state.

Each of Texas’ public university systems is overseen by a board of regents, appointed by Gov. Greg Abbott and confirmed by the Texas Senate.

<https://texasscorecard.com/state/taxpayer-funded-universities-hold-training-to-promote-lgbt-ideals/#:~:text=In%20Texas'%20taxpayer%2Dfunded%20colleges,%5Band%5D%20sexual%20orientation.%E2%80%9D>

## **AXIOS**

### **The rise of extreme tourism**

Erica Pandey

June 22



Adventurers around the world are shelling out big bucks to travel to remote — and often dangerous — parts of the Earth.

The big picture: Several factors, including new technologies and post-pandemic demand, are driving a surge in extreme tourism.

The world's wealthiest thrill-seekers are pushing tourism to its limits.

The expedition to the wreckage of the Titanic that went missing this week is just the latest example. Each of the five passengers paid \$250,000 to travel nearly 2.5 miles deep into a remote part of the Atlantic Ocean to tour the ruins.

The newest entry on the menu of potentially dangerous, extremely expensive travel — a trip to space — might cost millions.

A journey to the South Pole is just under \$100,000, the Wall Street Journal reports.

**"There are very few places on the planet that people have never been, and the demand for a unique trip increases its price and value," says James Petrick, a professor at Texas A&M who studies tourism and recreation.**

Where it stands: New technology — like advanced spaceships and submarines that can explore the depths of the ocean — is creating new opportunities for extreme travel, alongside pent-up demand.

"With COVID, people were cooped up for so long," said Courtney Iannuccilli, VP of marketing at Active Adventures, which organizes small group trips to destinations in the Americas, New Zealand and the Himalayas. "People are thinking, 'Do your bucket list now because you never know if you won't be able to do it.'"

**What they're saying: "There have always been people who are wired to take risks," Pertick said. "They just have more things to do now."**

Case in point: Nepal issued a record number of permits to summit Everest during the most recent climbing season, the Journal notes.

The global adventure tourism industry is expected to balloon from \$322 billion in 2022 to more than \$1 trillion in 2023 as more companies seek to bring tourists to thrilling destinations, according to Grand View Research.

**What to watch: The metaverse — where a virtual reality headset would allow you to tour any place on Earth — might offer an alternative to the real risks of adventure for some customers, Petrick said.**

**"It takes the death out of it but still gives you the excitement."**

<https://www.axios.com/2023/06/22/titanic-submarine-space-everest-extreme-travel-danger>

## **TEXAS STANDARAD**

### **Feds reviewing best way to conserve East Texas forests**

Sara Willa Ernst, Houston Public Media

June 22

U.S. Forest Service land in Texas is not a home to old growth forest. An inventory published by the Biden Administration in April showed that trees in their latest developmental stage are absent from the four national forests in the state (Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Sabine and Angelina) that are concentrated in East Texas, just above the Houston and Beaumont metro areas.

This comes after The White House ordered two federal agencies to survey the land and quantify the number of acres of old growth and mature forest in the country last year. The study did, however, find significant acreage of mature forest, the stage before old growth. 400,000 acres or nearly 60 percent of land managed by the U.S. Forest Service in Texas, which includes forest and grasslands, is mature forest. These trees are mainly loblolly and shortleaf.

Now, the federal government is in the next stage of rethinking policy surrounding old growth forest across the country in the wake of climate change. It's asking the public to submit comments until July 20th reacting to the information revealed by the inventory and weighing in on how old growth and mature forests should be managed.

"Our forest ecosystems and communities are struggling to keep up with the stresses of climate change, whether it's fire, drought, or insect infestations, it is clear that we must adapt quickly," said Homer Wilkes Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment of the USDA, which includes the Forest Service, in a press release.

Houston Public Media

National Forest land is used in several ways, including recreation, conservation and commercial production. 88 percent or 557,441 acres of National Forest and Grassland in Texas is suitable for timber production.

**The lack of old growth forest on federal land goes back to the late 1800s. When Texas first became a state, most public land was doled out to private landowners, according to Karl Flocke, a Woodland Ecologist at Texas A&M Forest Service.**

**"There's not a whole lot of old growth trees because most of that was logged prior to even being federal land," Flocke said. "(The trees were) cut and left without any reforestation, so there are vast areas in East Texas that were no longer forests,"**

**It wasn't until the 1930's that the federal government started buying back some of this land and**

**reforesting it, making these forests at most 90 years old.**

**This map shows a partial picture of the mature and old growth forest landscape in Texas because the federal government only owns a small sliver of land in the state. About 95 percent of land in Texas is privately owned, Flocke said.**

U.S. Forest Service land use in Texas ranges from conservation to recreation to commercial logging. The stated mission of the agency is to sustain biological diversity, ensure water and soil quality, provide economic benefits to nearby communities and recreation for the general public.

Over 20 percent of all East Texas saw timber is produced on National Forest land, according to an email from an agency spokesperson.

Environmentalists are trying to steer commercial activity away from mature and old growth forests. Conservation of older trees is the priority in the face of climate change.

“When you cut down that old tree, you’re taking away a value that cannot be replaced by that young tree on any meaningful timeframe,” said Patrick Hunter, an attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center. “It’s great to plant a new tree there, but that tree is not going to store anything close to the amount of carbon that old trees stored, or hundreds of years.”

He said these trees are vital to storing carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that is contributing to global warming. National Forests in East Texas show how long it’s taking to recoup these benefits.

When these trees are logged, there are several other trade offs too, he added.

“Younger trees are less resistant to wildfire generally,” Hunter said. “They are not as effective at purifying water. They don’t provide the same important biodiversity values that old forests have.”

Rob Hughes heads the Texas Forestry Association which represents private landowners and businesses. The group doesn’t have a position on old growth management here because there is so little federal land in Texas.

However, the group does have an interest in how the U.S. Forest Service land is managed, whether it’s old growth or not.

“In Texas, the management of the national forest here greatly affects their neighbors,” Hughes said.

Hughes is pushing for the Forest Service to better prioritize its management of pests and wildfires that can impact the health of private forestland nearby.

<https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/feds-reviewing-best-way-to-serve-east-texas-forests/>

## **FARMS.COM**

### **Wheat Breeding Students Across U.S. Receive Texas Drone Training**

June 22

Before they can fly, collect data and help build the strongest public wheat breeding program possible, a group of students from across the nation needed to learn the software and techniques of wheat phenomics gathering by unmanned aircraft system, UAS.

Students involved in public wheat breeding programs around the U.S. participated in the first Wheat Coordinated Agricultural Project workshop to learn about collecting and processing phenomics data using unmanned aircraft systems. (Texas A&M AgriLife drone photo by Shannon Baker)

Students involved in public wheat breeding programs around the U.S. participated in the first Wheat Coordinated Agricultural Project workshop to learn about collecting and processing phenomics data using unmanned aircraft systems. (Texas A&M AgriLife drone photo by Shannon Baker)

That was the purpose of the recent Wheat Coordinated Agricultural Project, WheatCAP, workshop held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo. WheatCAP, led by the University of California, Davis, is in its fourth round of U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture funding — \$15 million over five years.

Texas A&M AgriLife is leading the creation of a UAS-Hub and connection with a cloud-based database for the project, which brings together public wheat breeding programs in 22 institutions across the U.S. The team will coordinate technical aspects of drone data collection and submission for all the breeding programs.

“Processing big data is a bottleneck for many programs, but Texas has made a lot of progress in this area, and the processing is automated,” said Amir Ibrahim, Ph.D., Bryan-College Station, Texas A&M AgriLife Research wheat breeder and professor in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Bryan-College Station. Ibrahim serves as AgriLife Research’s lead on WheatCAP.

Student involvement important to future of public wheat breeding

A large component of the project is to involve students in research. Students from across the U.S. are being trained in all aspects of traditional plant breeding and equipped with experience in and knowledge of the newest UAS technology to collect plant height, canopy cover, canopy volume and vegetation indices for wheat.

“Standardized high spatiotemporal resolution data collected over the growing season at multiple locations will enhance our understanding of growth dynamics and genotype by environment interactions,” Ibrahim said. “At this point, some programs will send raw data, and others will be more advanced.”

Ismail Olaniyi, graduate research assistant, Purdue University, helped with the instruction of students during the Texas A&M AgriLife-led UAS phenomics workshop in Amarillo. (Photo courtesy

of Jinha Jung)

Ismail Olaniyi, graduate research assistant, Purdue University, helped with the instruction of students during the Texas A&M AgriLife-led UAS phenomics workshop in Amarillo. (Photo courtesy of Jinha Jung)

Twenty-five students from 19 universities attended the first training in Amarillo, where the purpose was to train as many as possible with the basics of UAS high-throughput phenotyping.

Katherine Running, WheatCAP education coordinator from North Dakota State University, said this is the first phenomics workshop for the students. They will attend a genomics workshop later in Raleigh, North Carolina.

“The students came for hands-on data collection and analysis training,” Running said. “They will take this training back to their own research projects now. We hope to give them better tools to collect more data and conduct stronger data analysis, which, in turn, informs the breeding efforts that develop better-adapted wheat for their areas.”

One student reported in a post-training survey that “it touched on basic and very important steps to collect high-quality UAS data. Also, I learned some great techniques to process most of that data I acquire, which was my goal in coming to this workshop.”

#### Hands-on training

Most of the students at the Amarillo training were novices, said Shannon Baker, AgriLife Research certified pilot and a program manager in the wheat breeding program, Amarillo. Only about 15% had a significant amount of experience.

Students from public wheat-breeding programs across the U.S. participated in a Texas A&M AgriLife-led UAS training in Amarillo. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Kay Ledbetter)

Students from public wheat-breeding programs across the U.S. participated in a Texas A&M AgriLife-led UAS training in Amarillo. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Kay Ledbetter)

And while the biggest issue certainly was data processing and how to manage the massive amounts collected by UAS, Baker said there was a great interest in flying the UAS as well.

“We presented the training in the order that data collection occurs,” she said. “We detailed how to lay out field trials for data collection, preparing the UAS equipment and planning the mission in the classroom before heading to the field. In the field, we stressed the importance of ground control points and demonstrated the recommended equipment.”

Baker said they flew two multispectral sensors on two separate UAS, as well as an RGB sensor for a total of three flights.

The second day of the training dialed in on uploading data to the UAS HUB, how to orthomosaic the

images and delineate plot boundaries to give students experience in extracting data that they can take back to their labs and analyze their own data.

“The most complex step was walking through extracting data from the delineated plots,” she said. “We finished with a discussion of what traits interest breeders and what to focus on when returning to the lab.”

The last session ended with a discussion led by Jackie Rudd, Ph.D., AgriLife Research wheat breeder, about how the Texas A&M AgriLife wheat breeding program integrates UAS data into the line advancement and variety development decisions.

“Grain yield and bread-making quality are still invaluable for variety selection, but the UAS data give us new insights into growth rate and stress response, assuring that new varieties will meet producer expectations,” Rudd said.

Texas A&M AgriLife strong

Other AgriLife Research team involved in the project and the training were Shuyu Liu, Ph.D., geneticist, Amarillo; and Juan Landivar, Ph.D., center director, Mahendra Bhandari, Ph.D., remote-sensing crop physiologist, Jose Scott, engineer/programmer, and Francisco Gaona, research assistant, all at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Corpus Christi.

Also on the teaching team was Jinha Jung, Ph.D., assistant professor of civil engineering, Purdue University, who was formerly an AgriLife Research scientist in Corpus Christi and a key part to building the data analysis and interpretation part of the Texas A&M AgriLife UAS pipeline. He was joined by Ismail Olaniyi, graduate research assistant, Purdue University.

<https://www.farms.com/news/wheat-breeding-students-across-u-s-receive-texas-drone-training-196059.aspx>

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Texas A&M AgriLife collaboration seeks to help restore native landscapes**

SARAH FULLER

June 22

From agricultural conversion and invasive species to rapid urban development, America’s native grasslands face no shortage of challenges.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, in partnership with the Texas Native Seeds Program, is working to address those challenges through a 100% online, self-led Native Seeding Certification course.

A 2021 report by the U.S. Geological Survey estimates a 90% reduction in native grasslands found

throughout the southeastern U.S., with some imperiled grassland types approaching close to a 100% loss.

The drastic reduction of these diverse ecosystems has resulted in a steep decline of native fauna, including birds. In 2022, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and North American Bird Conservation Initiative reported that U.S. grassland birds are among the fastest declining avian species, with a 34% reduction seen since 1970.

The native seeding course is designed to empower landowners and natural resource professionals with vital skills and information needed to undertake native grass restoration projects.

Participants can register at <https://tx.ag/NativeSeed>. The fee is \$100, and participants have a full year to complete the course and take a final exam to earn the certification.

The course curriculum covers all aspects of native grass restoration—from soil health and seed selection based on ecoregion to seedbed preparation, equipment acquisition and grass management. Further, the course provides insight into how the reintroduction of native grasses can aid landowners in achieving their land management goals.

Megan Clayton, AgriLife Extension rangeland specialist and professor in the Texas A&M Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management, Uvalde, and

Anthony Falk, the Dan L. Duncan Endowed Director of Texas Native Seeds, are co-instructors for the course.

Supporting diverse land management goals and professional development

“From the perspective of livestock producers, grazing native plants increases the likelihood of green, nutritious forage availability throughout the majority of the year,” Clayton said. “It’s also beneficial for producers who want to manage for livestock and wildlife, as introduced forage monocultures are not conducive for most wildlife.”

These native plant communities typically require fewer inputs, such as fertilizer, herbicides and irrigation, as compared to introduced grass pastures, she said. This translates to economic savings in addition to ecological benefits.

Studies also show that the restoration of native grasses and associated species can lead to accelerated carbon storage on agriculturally degraded lands, stabilize soil and offer greater drought resistance.

In addition to private landowners, the course allows agencies and resource professionals the opportunity to augment the services they provide.

“Many agencies and private companies contribute to managing land in Texas either by directly assisting landowners or through the management of state-owned properties and roadsides,” Clayton

said. “This course gives a detailed overview on native planting considerations and provides new and seasoned personnel alike with the latest and greatest information.”

Chancey Lewis of Cameron, a wildlife biologist and owner of Native Texas Wildlife Service LLC, earned the Native Seeding Certificate in 2022 and said he continues to utilize the course resources provided.

“This course is not only extremely helpful for folks like me, but it is also a great resource for landowners who want to learn about native grasses and what they can expect throughout the restoration process,” Lewis said.

About the Texas Native Seeds Program

Housed within the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, the Texas Native Seeds Program is a non-profit research and development program that works to support native plant restoration across Texas.

To best serve Texas’ drastically different ecoregions, the program is divided into six collaborative regional projects focused on developing commercially available, locally adapted native seed sources, while also conducting applied restoration research and educational outreach.

Participants may enroll in the course throughout the year. For more information, contact Clayton at [megan.clayton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:megan.clayton@ag.tamu.edu).

[https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/texas-a-m-agrilife-collaboration-seeks-to-help-restore-native-landscapes/article\\_4b28b7ec-115f-11ee-85ce-872123a1ab1a.html#:~:text=Texas%20A%26M%20AgriLife%20collaboration%20seeks%20to%20help%20restore%20native%20landscapes,-SARAH%20FULLER%20u&text=From%20agricultural%20conversion%20and%20invasive,face%20no%20shortage%20of%20challenges](https://theeagle.com/news/agriculture/texas-a-m-agrilife-collaboration-seeks-to-help-restore-native-landscapes/article_4b28b7ec-115f-11ee-85ce-872123a1ab1a.html#:~:text=Texas%20A%26M%20AgriLife%20collaboration%20seeks%20to%20help%20restore%20native%20landscapes,-SARAH%20FULLER%20u&text=From%20agricultural%20conversion%20and%20invasive,face%20no%20shortage%20of%20challenges).

## **PC MAG**

### **Harvard's New Computer Science Teacher Is a Chatbot**

Emily Dreibelbis

June 22

Harvard embraces generative AI in the classroom, adopting it as an official learning tool for its flagship coding course.

Starting this fall, students enrolled in Computer Science 50: Introduction to Computer Science (CS50) will be encouraged to use AI to help them debug code, give feedback on their designs, and answer individual questions about error messages and unfamiliar lines of code.



“Our own hope is that, through AI, we can eventually approximate a 1:1 teacher [to] student ratio for every student in CS50, as by providing them with software-based tools that, 24/7, can support their learning at a pace and in a style that works best for them individually,” says CS50 professor David J. Malan, as reported by The Harvard Crimson(Opens in a new window).

It's a swift turnaround from the last school year: Harvard did not have an AI policy at the end of the fall 2022 semester.

The new approach will not use ChatGPT or GitHub Copilot, both of which are popular among programmers. Malan says the tools are "currently too helpful." Instead, Harvard has developed its own large language model, a "CS50 bot" that will be "similar in spirit," but will focus on "leading students toward an answer rather than handing it to them," he says.

CS50 is also available for non-Harvard students to take on the online platform edX(Opens in a new window). The new AI policy will extend to the edX version. "Even if you are not a student at Harvard, you are welcome to “take” this course for free by working your way through the course’s eleven weeks of material," says the site. Teachers at other institutions can also license the material for their own courses.

“Providing support that’s tailored to students’ specific questions has long been a challenge at scale via edX and OpenCourseWare more generally, with so many students online, so these features will benefit students both on campus and off,” Malan says.

The adoption of generative AI by one of the nation's top universities adds a new wrinkle to the use of tools like ChatGPT in an academic setting. Since ChatGPT launched in November 2022, teachers and professors have struggled with students turning in work generated by it.

**One professor at Texas A&M University-Commerce refused to grade work he believed was "ChatGPT shit." Tools to detect AI-written work have also gained popularity, but they focus on text, not programming languages.**

“We’ll make clear to students that they should always think critically when taking in information as input, be it from humans or software,” Malan says. “But the tools will only get better through feedback from students and teachers alike. So they, too, will be very much part of the process.”

<https://www.pcmag.com/news/harvards-new-computer-science-teacher-is-a-chatbot>

## **TEXAS BORDER BUSINESS**

### **Governor’s Small Business Summit in Kingsville, June 29th**

June 22

AUSTIN, Texas – Governor Greg Abbott today announced the next 2023 Governor’s Small Business

Summit will be held in Kingsville on Thursday, June 29. The Governor’s Small Business Summits aim to help Texas small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs reach new heights by connecting them with the resources and information needed to start, strengthen, and grow a business.

“We are proud to bring the Governor’s Small Business Summit to the Kingsville community next week as we continue to build upon our legacy as the best state in the nation for business,” said Governor Abbott. “Our state’s record of economic success is a testament to the ingenuity and innovation of the many small business owners in Texas. As we bring more opportunities and tools for growth to small business owners across Texas, we are forging an even brighter economic future for our state.”

The Governor’s Small Business Summit – Kingsville provides Texas small business owners and entrepreneurs key insights on critical business topics and the opportunity to network with other business owners and meet experts who can share timely, relevant, and actionable advice on a multitude of small business topics. The event will be co-hosted by the Governor’s Office of Economic Development and Tourism, the Kingsville Chamber of Commerce, and the Texas Workforce Commission.

Governor’s Small Business Summit – Kingsville

Thursday, June 29, 2023 at 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Texas A&M University Kingsville – Memorial Student Union

1050 W. Santa Gertrudis St.

Kingsville, TX 78363

Panel Topics:

Access to Finance & Funding

Cybersecurity: Protecting Your Company in a Digital Economy

Marketing & E-Commerce Essentials

Recruiting & Retention of Employees

Registration is \$20 and includes access to all sessions, a keynote speaker panel, resource providers, and complimentary headshots.

For more information and to register: [gov.texas.gov/business/event/the-governors-small-business-summit-kingsville](https://gov.texas.gov/business/event/the-governors-small-business-summit-kingsville)

<https://texasborderbusiness.com/governors-small-business-summit-in-kingsville-june-29th/>

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Texas A&M's Daniel Rodrigues falls in round of 16 at British Amateur**

June 22

SOUTHPORT, England — Texas A&M senior Daniel Rodrigues advanced to the round of 16 at the British Amateur Championship before bowing out Thursday at Hillside Golf Club.

But not without a fight.

Rodrigues opened the day with a 3 and 2 victory over England's James Claridge in the round of 32 during the morning session.

Then in the afternoon, Rodrigues and Ireland's Alex Maguire staged a 23-hole marathon in the round of 16. Maguire took a 2-up lead on No. 10, but Rodrigues won three of the next five holes to go up one hole on No. 15. The duo went back and forth with Maguire winning No. 18 to send the match to extra holes and birdieing No. 5 for the victory.

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/golf/texas-a-m-s-daniel-rodrigues-falls-in-round-of-16-at-british-amateur/article\\_b1836f46-114b-11ee-81b5-83ad197ddf0c.html#tracking-source=home-top-story](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/golf/texas-a-m-s-daniel-rodrigues-falls-in-round-of-16-at-british-amateur/article_b1836f46-114b-11ee-81b5-83ad197ddf0c.html#tracking-source=home-top-story)

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Texas A&M football lands commitment from 2024 4-star TE from Illinois**

June 22

The Texas A&M football team landed a commitment from 2024 tight end Eric Karner from Elmhurst, Illinois, on Thursday.

Karner (6-foot-5, 220 pounds), is a four-star recruit and the No. 9-ranked player in Illinois for the class of 2024, according to the 247Sports Composite rankings. He took an official visit to A&M on June 16, according to 247Sports.

A&M now has eight commits in its 2024 recruiting class, including six from out of state.

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/football/texas-a-m-football-lands-commitment-from-2024-4-star-te-from-illinois/article\\_6ff8a868-1117-11ee-86d0-072010e8f912.html#tncms-source=login](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/football/texas-a-m-football-lands-commitment-from-2024-4-star-te-from-illinois/article_6ff8a868-1117-11ee-86d0-072010e8f912.html#tncms-source=login)

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THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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## **KBTX**

### **RELLIS campus hosting 4th annual drive-in firework, drone show**

By Katherine Griffith

Updated: 14 hours ago

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - You are invited to attend the 4th annual drive-in fireworks and drones show at the Texas A&M RELLIS campus this 4th of July.

The parking lot will open at 6:30 p.m. and the show will start at 9 p.m..

WTAW will broadcast patriotic music synced to the fireworks and drones.

If you can't make it out, KBTX will broadcast the show on the CW8 Aggieland. You can also find it on our Facebook page.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/29/rellis-campus-hosting-4th-annual-drive-in-firework-drone-show/>

## **THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**

### **With race-based admissions no longer an option, states may imitate Texas top 10% plan**

Now that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled the practice unconstitutional, admissions experts say other states could look to Texas' Top 10% Plan as a way to diversify their student bodies.

by Kate McGee

June 29, 2023 | Updated: 11 hours ago

More than 20 years ago, when the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals banned the use of affirmative action in college admissions in its jurisdiction, those trying to diversify Texas public universities panicked, fearing that the ruling would undo years of modest progress they had made increasing the number of students of color at the state's top public universities.

The impact of the law was immediate. At the University of Texas at Austin, Hispanic enrollment dropped by 15% in one year, while Black enrollment dropped by 25%.

To curb that decline, Texas lawmakers created a "race-neutral" program known as The Top 10% Plan, aimed at giving a broader group of Texas students opportunities to attend state universities by

automatically admitting those who graduated in the top 10% of their high school classes.

The policy exploited the existing racial and ethnic segregation of Texas public high schools, allowing universities to accept students from different areas of the state and a wider array of schools without explicitly considering students' race. Ever since, the plan has faced criticism from suburban parents, state lawmakers and university leaders who believe it makes it harder for students in well-resourced schools to get admitted to the state's flagship universities.

Researchers found the plan never succeeded in regaining the racial diversity lost after the 1996 ban on race-conscious admissions at UT-Austin or Texas A&M University's main campus in College Station, nor has it meaningfully changed which high schools are sending students to those schools. But supporters say it helps provide equal access to the state's top schools, though they say it is not a standalone solution to increase diversity among the student bodies.

Now, two decades later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Thursday that the use of race in college admissions at two universities, Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, violates the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, effectively ending race-based considerations in college admissions nationwide.

Following that ruling, admissions experts say percentage plans, including Texas', could get more attention from other states despite the questionable diversity gains by the Texas plan.

"[T]he effectiveness of percentage plans to make a large, aggregate change in enrollment demographics remains an unsettled issue," according to an upcoming paper on how state policymakers can respond to the Supreme Court's ruling. Its authors are James Murphy, deputy director of higher education policy at Education Reform Now, a national education nonprofit, and researcher Virginia Carr Schneider.

"However, percentage plans can have a significant impact on the opportunities of students of color, which, given the lack of evidence for negative effects of percentage plans, means they could still provide benefits, making their implementation worthwhile."

A plan is born

Texas' Top 10% Plan was developed in 1997 with the help of Hispanic activists and lawmakers after the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that banned the use of race in admissions in the three states within its jurisdiction, including Texas.

The late state Rep. Irma Rangel, a Democrat from Kingsville, filed a bill that required each public university in the state to automatically admit any students who graduated in the top 10% of their graduating classes.

Critics, including many conservative lawmakers, thought the rule was unfair to white students from well-resourced high schools who might have a harder time reaching the top 10% of their classes. They were also concerned it would send more underprepared students to Texas universities,

particularly the flagships, UT-Austin and Texas A&M.

Rangel pointed out that rural high schools struggled to send white students to UT-Austin, as well as students of color, which helped her cobble together a coalition of Black and Hispanic liberals and rural conservatives to narrowly pass the measure. Then-Gov. George W. Bush signed it into law.

While California and Florida also have percentage plans, Texas' plan is unique because it allows students in the top 10% of their graduating class to choose which school to attend, rather than assigning them a school.

Six years later, in 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court nullified the 5th Circuit's decision when it upheld the use of affirmative action in college admissions in a case involving the University of Michigan. That allowed Texas universities to consider race again, but The Top 10% Plan also remained.

Eventually, state lawmakers grew concerned that the plan created unintended consequences for UT-Austin, which was accepting more and more of its freshman class through The Top 10% Plan, which meant that there was less space for other students, including out-of-state students or student athletes.

Ultimately, the state Legislature created a carve-out for UT-Austin in 2009, specifying that 75% of each freshman class must be admitted under The Top 10% Plan while the remaining 25% would be admitted through a holistic review process that considers factors such as grade point average, extracurriculars, personal essays and race. That change means the university had to shrink the number of students automatically admitted. Last year, UT-Austin automatically accepted students in the top 6% of their graduating class.

This year, state lawmakers removed a provision in state law that would have forced UT-Austin to admit all students under The Top 10% Plan if a court decision banned the use of race in college admissions. With Thursday's ruling, UT-Austin can continue to enroll 75% of students through The Top 10% Plan, but it can no longer consider race when accepting the other 25% of the freshman class.

Results so far

When the Top 10% law initially went into effect, the results were positive. Students enrolled under the law had a higher freshman year grade point average than other students, and the number of Black students increased by 44% and the number of Hispanic students grew by nearly 10% at state universities.

But over time, as more data became available to review, researchers started to find that not much had changed in terms of who was enrolling at the state's flagships.

In 2020, two researchers looked at 18 years of data to see whether the law increased access to Texas' most selective public universities, UT-Austin and Texas A&M.

They found a slight increase in the number of non-suburban high schools that sent students to those schools, but ultimately determined The Top 10% Plan did not meaningfully change which high schools sent students to UT-Austin or Texas A&M prior to the law's implementation. The researchers also found that there continued to be more high-achieving students from well-resourced high schools enrolling at the flagships compared with students from other high schools.

Still, supporters argue that scaling back or scrapping the plan would make it harder to create a more diverse student body. According to a data analysis by the Intercultural Development Research Association, the vast majority of Black, Hispanic and Asian students at UT-Austin are accepted through The Top 10% Plan, while the university's holistic review process disproportionately favors white students.

Data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board also shows The Top 10% Plan hasn't helped UT-Austin or Texas A&M reflect the demographics of the state's 18- to 22-year-olds.

In 2009, 51% of UT-Austin freshmen were white and 23% were Hispanic, while the state's 18- to 22-year-old population was 41% white and 41% Hispanic. By 2020, that age group was 32% white and 48% Hispanic statewide; UT-Austin's freshman class was 32% white and 31% Hispanic that year.

At Texas A&M, the gaps were even wider: 55% of the 2020 freshman class was white while 26% were Hispanic.

Meanwhile, Black students made up 7% of the freshman class at UT-Austin and 3% of Texas A&M's freshman class in 2020 — significantly lower than their 13% share of the 18-22 population.

Stella Flores, a higher education and public policy expert at UT-Austin, said that Texas' percentage plan is not a silver bullet to achieving more diverse student bodies.

"But it doesn't mean it can't be amended or supported with more funding, better recruitment and better outreach so that it can work," she said.

Higher education policy experts say that for percentage plans to work, schools also must recruit students from underrepresented groups and create a welcoming environment for them. That could be more difficult in Texas after state lawmakers passed a bill this year banning diversity, equity and inclusion offices at public universities, said Dominique Baker, a higher education policy professor at Southern Methodist University.

"Some might say the exact office that is supposed to spearhead brainstorming about this and focusing on this has now been declared illegal in the state of Texas," Baker said.

Following the Supreme Court's ruling, researchers also say the Texas model might not work in other states where racial segregation is not as extreme.

"Indeed, most evidence confirms that the amount of segregation in states that use Top X% Plans is not enough to produce the levels of racial and ethnic diversity achieved under race-based



admissions policies,” researchers Kalena Cortes at Texas A&M and Daniel Klasik at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill wrote in a 2020 paper on The Top 10% Plan.

And some higher education policy experts say it’s likely The Top 10% Plan could be the next focus of debate in Texas college admissions. A 2017 bill that died in the Legislature, for example, would have let UT-Austin accept only 30% of its students through the plan rather than 70%.

“That’s coming,” said Murphy with EdReform. “The attacks will come for percentage plans, inevitably.”

Emily Berman, a constitutional law expert at the University of Houston Law Center, said it's possible that those against the use of race in admissions could file lawsuits accusing universities of using "race-neutral" policies for the specific purpose of creating racial diversity.

"It wouldn't surprise me if [opponents] come back and say, even race neutral mechanisms shouldn't be allowed if their purpose is to achieve more racially diverse student bodies," she said, adding that she thinks this argument could be made against Texas' Top 10% Plan.

Disclosure: Texas A&M University, the University of Houston and the University of Texas at Austin have been financial supporters of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in the Tribune’s journalism.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/29/texas-college-top-ten-percent-plan-supreme-court/>

## **THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS**

### **Can colleges admit racially diverse classes without affirmative action?**

The Supreme Court struck down decades of legal precedent that allowed for colleges to consider race in the admissions process.

By Marcela Rodrigues

9:49 AM on Jun 29, 2023

College administrators are reevaluating how they can admit racially diverse classes, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled colleges are no longer allowed to consider race in the admissions process.

The 6-3 ruling came after decades of legal precedent that allowed colleges to consider race as one of many factors in the admissions process. This practice has been commonly known as race-conscious admissions or race-based affirmative action.

Those who oppose race-based affirmative action argue that the practice is not necessary in 2023 and that colleges discriminate against white and Asian American applicants. Some call it “reverse discrimination.”

Supporters of affirmative action argue that the decision will be a major setback for racial equality in the United States. For almost half a century, many colleges adopted a holistic approach to admissions.

“Holistic admissions means that you look at a student within their broader context, and that’s how you assess admissions,” said Dominique Baker, an associate professor of education policy at Southern Methodist University.

Their context includes the opportunities they were given in the high school they attended, which is often dictated by their neighborhood.

Race was one of many factors considered in the process, based on colleges’ interest in admitting a diverse class, which became legal when the court first heard a case on college admissions, Baker said.

#### Bakke case

In the 1978 case, Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke, the court ruled that colleges are not allowed to reserve spots for students of a certain race, but they are allowed to consider race as one of many factors reviewed in the holistic admissions process.

The case set precedent that increasing diversity on campuses is a “compelling interest,” because students of all races learn better when exposed to diversity.

In a 2003 case, the court struck down a case against the University of Michigan, reinforcing the Bakke decision.

Meanwhile, nine states have banned the use of race in admissions: Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Washington. The first one was California in 1996.

The University of California and the University of Michigan, in briefs filed with the court in October 2022, said they have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on alternative ways to improve diversity, but that they have struggled to meet their goals.

#### Alternative measures

The leadership of the University of California system stated that alternative measures have helped with increasing geographical and socioeconomic diversity, but that hasn’t translated into more racial diversity.

Two of California’s most selective public colleges, University of California, Berkeley and UCLA, had their Black and Latino enrollment drop by half within two years of the policy change.

Some alternative strategies include focusing on low-income and first-generation college students,

requiring additional essays that would demonstrate an applicant's background, eliminating test score requirements and automatically admitting the top students from every high school in a given state, a measure Texas has already adopted.

But class-based affirmative action doesn't mean that a class of freshman students will be racially diverse.

#### Class-based approach

Michael K. Young, a law professor and former president of Texas A&M, explained that when using a class-based approach, colleges are still likely to admit more white students because there are more white people in the total population.

Research has found that class-based affirmative action does not achieve the same level of racial diversity as race-based affirmative action.

The court's decision predominantly impacts highly competitive colleges, Young said. Most applicants, regardless of race, are denied admissions to these institutions.

"Harvard educates a stunningly small percentage of human beings," said Young, who attended Harvard Law School. "Texas A&M educates more students than all the Ivy League and Stanford combined."

Harvard's website states that in recent admissions cycles, 4,000 applicants were ranked first in their high school class, 8,000 had perfect grade-point averages and 20,000 scored 700 or above on the SAT math test (out of 800).

But the undergraduate class only offers about 2,000 spots, which means that thousands of applicants with the best academic credentials were rejected, regardless of race.

Unlike Harvard, the majority of colleges in the U.S. accept all or most applicants. Dallas College's acceptance rate is 100%, while the University of Texas at Dallas accepts 87% of its applicant pool.

Meanwhile, the University of Texas at Austin only accepts 29% of applicants and Rice University has an even lower acceptance rate of 9%.

But a concern among supporters of race-conscious admissions is that the court's decision could have a chilling effect on policies and programs unrelated to admissions.

Baker said that in the aftermath of Michigan banning race-conscious admissions in 2006, some colleges changed programs that offered scholarships for Black and Hispanic students.

"Colleges were scared of litigation," Baker said. "There is the letter of the law and what colleges decide to do to protect themselves."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2023/06/29/can-colleges-admit-racially-diverse-classes-without-affirmative-action/>

## **USA TODAY**

### **What students can expect after Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action**

By: Alia Wong, Marc Ramirez, Itzel Luna

Published 5:12 a.m. ET June 30, 2023

Big changes are coming to how elite colleges choose future students – and how those applicants vie for coveted seats.

A Supreme Court ruling Thursday concluded that Harvard and the University of North Carolina violated the 14th amendment to the Constitution by considering students' race as one of many factors in admissions decisions. This form of affirmative action, which is common at the country's several hundred highly selective institutions, is no longer allowed.

Students of color say the decision is devastating and sharply changes their outlook on the admissions process. "It made me wonder immediately, how is this going to affect my senior year?" said Rikka Dimalanta, 17, who will be a senior this fall in Los Angeles. "If our identity as students isn't going to be taken into account, what else am I supposed to put on my application?"

There are other ways for colleges to pursue diversity goals, however, and for students of color to access those institutions, including in some cases by bringing race into the conversation.

Here's an early look at how college admissions could change.

For most colleges, business as usual

While this decision is historic, it's important to note it won't mean much for many colleges. Of the more than 1,000 institutions that use the Common Application, just 70 admit fewer than 25% of their applicants, CEO Jenny Rickard has said.

And plenty of schools are in one of the states that banned affirmative action in college admissions before this week's ruling, including Arizona, California, Florida and Michigan. Arizona State University quickly declared Thursday that it was one of those institutions that won't be affected. It "will have no impact on the diversity of the Arizona State University student body or ASU's commitment to having a student body which reflects the population of the State of Arizona," the university said.

How the decision affects college admissions tests, essays

Even before the pandemic, a growing number of highly selective colleges began making standardized test scores an optional part of applications. One of the hopes was that it would lead to a more

diverse student population. Then when the pandemic hit, test-optional policies became the default for logistical reasons: As of this past spring, submitting SAT or ACT scores was still optional at most schools.

Although studies have shown the shift away from these tests has meant only small changes in what the student body looks like at small, private institutions, experts predict the court's affirmative action decision to cement the policies. And that could mean more emphasis on personal statements and essays – an area where race often comes up.

Observers have focused on one line in particular from the ruling: “Nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”

However, the justices also wrote – directly challenging the dissent – “universities may not simply establish through application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today.”

“For any students my age – myself included – this decision doesn’t prevent us from talking about the way that race has impacted us,” said Aina Marzia, 17, a rising senior in El Paso, Texas, who was infuriated by the court's decision. “It’s just that we don’t have a box to check for our application this fall.”

Anurima Bhargava, a civil rights lawyer who formerly served with the U.S. Department of Justice, urged future applicants not to shy away from highlighting their racial identity when applying to colleges.

“It’s not that diversity isn’t something that universities can pursue. It’s not that you can’t tell your own stories, stories of your racial experiences, about your identity or your background,” she said in a discussion Thursday hosted by Whiteboard Advisors, a research and consulting firm. “How universities are going to take account of that is still going to be a question for them, but it’s not that students can’t tell those kinds of stories.”

Jeff Selingo, a higher education journalist who spent a year behind the scenes with college admissions officers, said one next step for those gatekeepers is to deliberate what to make of students whose essays deal with race.

What does this mean for legacy admissions?

Another item for college officials to deliberate: legacy admissions, the practice of giving preference to applicants whose family members attended the institution.

Richard Kahlenberg, a progressive scholar who served as an expert witness for the plaintiffs in the Harvard and UNC cases, said he believes at least some elite colleges will abandon the practice now that they can no longer consider race in admissions.

“If our identity as students isn’t going to be taken into account, what else am I supposed to put on

my application?"

Rikka Dimalanta, who will be a high school senior this fall in Los Angeles

Before, he said, affirmative action allowed them to achieve some racial diversity without necessarily ensuring their campuses were socioeconomically diverse as well. One study found more than half of Harvard's students, however racially diverse, for example, came from the top 10% of the country's income distribution. Another analysis found that 43% of Harvard's white admits in 2019 were legacy students, recruited athletes, children of faculty and staff or on applicants affiliated with donors.

Before, he said, affirmative action allowed them to achieve racial diversity without necessarily ensuring their campuses were socioeconomically diverse as well. One study found more than half of Harvard's students, for example, came from the top 10% of the country's income distribution. Another analysis found that 43% of Harvard's white admits in 2019 were legacy students, recruited athletes, children of faculty and staff or on applicants affiliated with donors.

Some highly selective universities, including in states that banned affirmative action, already had stopped practicing legacy admissions. They include the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, Los Angeles. Elsewhere, Texas A&M University and the University of Georgia also have ended the practice.

In remarks denouncing the court's ruling, President Joe Biden also said he is asking the federal Education Department "to analyze what practices help build a more inclusive and diverse student bodies and what practices hold that back, practices like legacy admissions and other systems that expand privilege instead of opportunity."

A shift to using affirmative action – in recruitment

The onus will be on colleges to recruit from a wide range of communities at the front end of the admissions process, said Forrest Stuart, the vice president of enrollment management at Lafayette College.

"This is really about building a diverse applicant pool," Stuart said. "There's nothing in the decision that I've seen that says you cannot ensure that the applicant pool is representative of all backgrounds." Lafayette, a small private college in Pennsylvania where about a quarter of students are people of color, has under Stuart's leadership partnered with community-based organizations to ensure students from underrepresented backgrounds put their names in the hat as well.

"It really helps because you're then choosing from a broader base," said Stuart, who expects this affirmative action-esque approach to recruitment to gain more popularity as colleges work to ensure diversity on campus without considering race in the actual admissions process. "If your net is cast wide enough and broad enough on the building of your applicant pool, I don't think it's going to be as difficult for us – at least at Lafayette."

Biden also encouraged colleges to build a diverse class by factoring in applicants' family's income

and where they grew up and to consider students' experiences with hardship or discrimination, including racial discrimination.

Counselors: Colleges need to send a new message to students

Without proactive measures like diversifying applicant pools, educators worry, many students who would've applied in an affirmative action world will decide it's not worth it.

At the American School Counselors Association, Executive Director Jill Cook has been fielding lots of questions. Many counselors are worried students of color will decide against applying to their reach or dream schools because they don't think they'll get in. What if some students choose not to apply at all, perceiving higher education to no longer be a welcoming place? (Legislation seeking to ban diversity, equity and inclusion programs at colleges can make the campuses seem even less inviting.)

There are also high school counselors who worry about the reverse – students overexerting themselves and applying to too many schools because they fear their chances of getting in are reduced after the court's ruling.

David Hawkins, chief education and policy officer for the National Association for College Admission Counseling, said his group will continue to urge high school counselors to push students to meet with admissions officers at their schools of interest.

“Colleges are looking for a diverse group of students, and the decision should not discourage students at all from applying,” Hawkins said. “We will be swimming against the tide, and it can be discouraging. But we also want to ensure that students know it won't change the fact that colleges are looking for them.”

Some students may take that message to the extreme.

Allen Koh, founder/CEO of Cardinal Education, an educational consulting firm in California catering to the very affluent, said he's seen mostly white clients move to states like Montana and Wyoming to pursue a perceived geographic advantage based on what they see as a desire on the part of elite universities to boast student enrollment from all 50 states.

“Harvard calls these states ‘sparse country,’ and different universities call them different things,” he said. “But if you think about the sparse population that ‘sparse country’ implies, the pool of students you're going after isn't very large. So they actually get a significant advantage.”

Can anything really replace what the court struck down?

Probably not.

Education experts say universities will likely become less diverse as a result of the ruling, and while the court nonetheless acknowledged the importance of diversity in higher education and left the door open for schools to achieve it through other measures, such efforts could take years to see

results – if at all.

“Those measures will be expensive and take years to bear fruit,” said Jennifer McAward, an associate professor of law at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. “In the meantime, we are likely to see a substantial drop in racial diversity at highly selective universities.”

Some point to California, where voters in 1996 passed a proposition prohibiting race-conscious college admissions. Despite numerous outreach efforts, University of California system officials have been unable to restore enrollment to levels of diversity representative of the state.

“The shortfall is especially apparent at UC’s most selective campuses,” they wrote in an amicus brief filed to the Supreme Court last summer, “where African American, Native American and Latinx students are underrepresented and widely report struggling with feelings of racial isolation.”

And even with race conscious admissions for years, Black enrollment in college has dropped nationwide over time.

At elite colleges, admissions will always feel 'arbitrary'

According to Mitchell Chang, a UCLA chancellor and professor of higher education and organizational change and Asian American studies, the decision will do little to make college admissions seem more equitable.

“There’s always going to be this sense that it’s unfair,” he said, pointing to the Ivy League and other elite schools that admit fewer than 10% of their students and enroll classes of just a few hundred people. “If we remove race-conscious admissions, it’s not like these institutions are going to accept more students. The numbers and percentages of winners will remain the same.”

“Someone’s always going to be upset that they didn’t get admitted yet were highly qualified,” he continued, “because in many ways, when you’re trying to select between hyper-qualified people, the difference between getting in and rejected is almost arbitrary.”

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2023/06/30/affirmative-action-ruling-college-admissions-what-students-can-expect/70371168007/>

## **KAGS**

### **'They will not be able to focus on race in any way, shape or form' | Texas universities speak on Supreme Court striking down affirmative action**

Some universities say they have never used race as a factor in the admission process, but others will now have to make change. So, what does this mean going forward?

Author: Sydney Dishon

Updated: 9:00 PM CDT June 29, 2023



TEXAS, USA — The U.S. Supreme Court struck down affirmative action in higher education on Thursday, ending race-conscious admission programs at colleges and universities across the country.

The court overturned admissions plans at Harvard and the University of North Carolina. The vote was 6-3 in the UNC case and 6-2 in the Harvard case.

6 News spoke to many Central Texas universities including Baylor, Texas A&M Central-Texas and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor who say race has never been a factor in their admission process.

However, others like SMU and The University of Texas at Austin say the ruling will create change on their campuses.

Below is an excerpt from a statement by SMU President R. Gerald Turner about the Supreme Court decision on the use of race in university admission practices.

Despite the implications this ruling may have on policies and practices at SMU and every other college campus in America, we will continue to be a welcoming and supportive community. We will determine how the specifics of the high court's ruling will affect the consideration of race in our enrollment efforts. We will meet this challenge while continuing to build a community that mirrors our global society – a campus where every Mustang is valued and feels a sense of belonging.

Associate Professor and Chair of Political Science Department at SMU, Joe Kobylka said it's important to note, when schools try to put together their incoming class, "they will not be able to focus on race in any way, shape or form."

Issues and Crisis Communications Senior Manager at the University of Texas at Austin Brian Davis also sent 6 News a statement regarding the Supreme Court decision:

Since the Supreme Court's 2016 ruling in Fisher v. University of Texas, The University of Texas at Austin has continued to recruit and enroll consistently stronger classes composed of students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and improved graduation rates among all students, especially those who are underrepresented or first-generation. While doing so, the University has lawfully been considering race among many factors as part of its comprehensive and holistic admissions process. UT will make the necessary adjustments to comply with the most recent changes to the law and remains committed to offering an exceptional education to students from all backgrounds and preparing our students to succeed and change the world.

The reason the high court ruled against using race as a factor in admissions is because they said it violates the Constitution under the Equal Protection Clause.

"Under the Equal Protection Clause that guarantees equal protection law to every person in the United States, the government is not ordinarily permitted to draw distinctions based on race," Texas A&M Central-Texas Associate Professor of Political Science Jeffrey Dixon said.

The court also said the Constitution is colorblind, meaning no governmental policy or law can use

race.

"The test for affirmative action, any kind of program that uses race, is strict scrutiny, compelling state interest," Kobyłka said. "Chief Justice Roberts said for the majority, and this position held the votes of six members of the court, Chief Justice Roberts said that race is never a compelling interest in educational institutions and educational admissions."

Moving forward universities say campuses will try to adopt policies that achieve diversity, bringing in a broader range of students.

"Whether it's targeting underrepresented geographic areas, whether it's targeting schools that serve largely minority populations, whether you're looking at socioeconomic factors or looking at what Roberts refers to as personal factors, what those programs look like and how they are implemented will then be part of the next wave of litigation," Kobyłka added.

While the ins and outs are still unknown, professors believe the decision will have ripple effects in higher education for a long time.

They still encourage students, no matter how this pans out, to apply to the school you desire, even though the change can be scary.

"Emphasize in the objective or the subjective parts of the of the application, your experiences whatever they may be, whether they involve cheerleading student government, dealing with sexism, dealing with racism, build that into your story of yourself as you sell yourself to the schools," Kobyłka said.

"The court made clear that you can have a system of affirmative action, which allows people to talk about challenges that they have overcome and admits disproportionately people who have overcome challenges, that is not the same as race-based affirmative action," Dixon concluded.

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/news/education/texas-universities-speak-supreme-court-affirmative-action/500-5fb38510-a1e2-4750-9fbb-9439606e4a34>

**KXXV**

**Supreme Court affirmative action decision will not affect Texas A&M, Baylor University**

By: Brianna Smith

Last updated 9:45 PM, Jun 29, 2023

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — The U.S. Supreme Court ended affirmative action Thursday, getting rid of race-based admissions to public and private colleges and universities.

In a 6-3 decision against the University of North Carolina and a 6-2 decision against Harvard

University, the action was considered unconstitutional.

But the decision will not affect the admissions process at Texas A&M and Baylor University.

Neither university uses race as a factor in its admission decision but uses merit.

The use of race in admissions is prohibited, according to Texas state law.

Baylor provided a statement stating the university uses a "holistic approach" that looks at grade point average, class rank, academic achievements, extracurricular activities and personal essays and letters of recommendation.

Jeffery Dixon, an associate professor of political science at Texas A&M University Central Texas, says the ruling will affect some universities like University of Texas in Austin and other out-of-state universities.

"If Texans want to attend a university elsewhere say Harvard, that would be a potentially major issue for them," Dixon said.

Dixon says affirmative action was created to make admissions fairer.

"The Supreme Court had ruled previously that having a diverse classroom provides a better educational experience for everyone, not just minorities, but also the majority," Dixon said.

"Today's Supreme Court decision says that alone is insufficient."

Although neither university was affected by the decision, both universities say it is committed to enrolling students with diverse perspectives and experiences.

<https://www.kxxv.com/brazos/supreme-court-affirmative-action-decision-will-not-affect-texas-a-m-baylor-university>

## **TAMU COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

### **Texas A&M Team Honored With 2022 Vanadium Award**

The award-winning work involving researchers from the Departments of Chemistry and Construction Science found that the versatility of the element vanadium and related chemistries enables technologies that lower carbon dioxide emissions and result in a greater economy of materials use across a variety of industries.

June 29, 2023

By Shana K. Hutchins

An interdisciplinary team of Texas A&M University scientists has been honored with the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining's (IOM3) 2022 Vanadium Award recognizing the year's most outstanding paper describing innovative research related to the metallurgy and technology of the game-changing element vanadium and its alloys.

The paper, published in the Cell Press journal *iScience*, details results from a cross-college collaboration involving faculty and students from the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Architecture who were investigating the rich interconnectedness of resource criticality and the interesting tension between materials needed for the energy transition and innovations urgently required in hard-to-abate sectors.

Through a combination of solid-state and materials chemistry analyses and energy and building-information modeling, the team determined that vanadium can contribute to the production of lighter, stronger and more durable steels while also reducing the environmental impacts and overall carbon footprint of steel manufacturing. Their extensive study examines the carbon and energy impact of a single critical element, vanadium, across different industries, including construction, long-duration energy storage with redox flow batteries and vehicle lightweighting.

"This is the highest award for publications that have anything to do with vanadium, our very favorite element and muse, so we are super excited," said Texas A&M chemist Dr. Sarbajit Banerjee, whose Department of Chemistry-based research group has been working for the past several years with that of Dr. Manish Dixit's in the Department of Construction Science to explore the vanadium-related possibilities with respect to steel production and safe energy storage, among other frontiers. "This is also the first time that IOM3 has gone beyond traditional materials science and metallurgy journals. We are delighted to be chosen and beyond grateful to our research sponsor Vanitec and to the vanadium community for their support."

Each year, IOM3 presents a range of awards, medals and prizes to recognize personal achievement, published work and contributions to the institute, knowledge, outreach and profession. The Texas A&M team along with their fellow recipients will be formally recognized at the 2023 IOM3 Awards Day, set for December 7 in London.

Banerjee and Dixit were co-authors on the research, which was led by their respective graduate students — 2022 Texas A&M chemistry Ph.D. graduate Dr. David A. Santos '19, now a senior research specialist with Dow, and 2022 Texas A&M civil engineering Ph.D. graduate Dr. Pranav Pradeep Kumar '22, a current research associate with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

"The Vanadium Award holds a special significance for us, as it highlights the importance of quantifying the role of metals in enabling technologies that drive the decarbonization of industries," Santos said in a recent LinkedIn post celebrating the honor. "This recognition is a significant milestone not just for the team, but also for the industry. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our entire team, to Vanitec for supporting this work and to Cell Press for believing in the vision."

The team's paper, "Assessing the role of vanadium technologies in decarbonizing hard-to-abate

sectors and enabling the energy transition," can be viewed online along with related figures and acknowledgements. Their work, which built on earlier results made possible through seed funding from the Texas A&M X-Grants Program, was supported in part by Vanitec. Santos, who served as lead author for the paper, was funded through a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (Grant No. 1746932).

"Vanadium has proven itself time and again as a critical mineral in the energy transition supporting decarbonized global energy supply and construction," said John Hilbert, CEO of Vanitec. "The cutting-edge research undertaken by Texas A&M University is testament to this. Thanks to the efforts of research institutions, Vanitec's member companies and the greater vanadium community, the strategic importance of vanadium is increasingly being recognized around the world. Congratulations to Professor Banerjee and his team on this well-deserved accomplishment."

iScience is the interdisciplinary journal from Cell Press publishing across life, physical, earth and health sciences. Now in its fifth year, iScience has become a destination for advances that push the boundaries of interdisciplinary and pave the way for impactful research.

<https://artsci.tamu.edu/news/2023/06/news-post.html>

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Texas A&M to receive six new electric buses via \$9.65 million grant**

EAGLE STAFF REPORT

17 hrs ago

In 2025, Texas A&M University will receive six new electric buses and three new electric charging stations as part of a \$9.65 million Brazos Transit District grant through a federal Department of Transportation grant, according to Texas A&M Today.

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The new buses will replace six outdated diesel ones while providing the university with a more economical mode of public transportation.

According to Texas A&M Today, the acquisition of the new buses is part of A&M Transportation Service's goal of providing sustainable transportation.

The Federal Transit Administration Buses and Bus Facilities/Low or No Emissions grant was submitted through a partnership between the university and the Brazos Transit District.

[https://theeagle.com/news/local/texas-a-m-to-receive-six-new-electric-buses-via-9-65-million-grant/article\\_a34dea60-16ae-11ee-81af-17a6ebd5d948.html](https://theeagle.com/news/local/texas-a-m-to-receive-six-new-electric-buses-via-9-65-million-grant/article_a34dea60-16ae-11ee-81af-17a6ebd5d948.html)

## **TEXAS A&M TODAY**

### **Texas A&M University To Acquire Six Electric Buses Through Grant Partnership With Brazos Transit District**

The new buses, expected on campus in 2025, will provide a substantial cost savings over their diesel counterparts.

Texas A&M Transportation Services

June 29, 2023

Texas A&M University Transportation Services will receive six new electric buses and three charging stations as part of a \$9.65 million grant awarded to Brazos Transit District through a federal Department of Transportation grant.

The new electric buses will replace six aging diesel buses and provide substantial operational savings over their diesel counterparts. The new buses are expected to be on campus in 2025.

“We are delighted to receive this grant and for the opportunity to add to the three electric buses we currently have in service. These additional buses will expand our electric fleet to nearly 10 percent of our total bus inventory,” said Peter Lange, associate vice president for Transportation Services. “We are grateful to Brazos Transit District for its commitment and dedication throughout this process and to our elected officials for their efforts in making this possible.”

The grant marks another milestone in Transportation Services’ commitment to providing sustainable transportation options. Last fall, Texas A&M University was reaccredited as a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly University, and this year, Transportation Services’ Mobility Master Plan Implementation Team was awarded the university’s Sustainability Champion award.

The Federal Transit Administration Buses and Bus Facilities/Low or No Emissions grant proposal was submitted in partnership with Brazos Transit District, which received funding for three electric buses. This achievement illustrates how impactful partnerships can be in enhancing services and improving mobility options for everyone in the Bryan-College Station community.

For more information about the grant, visit the Federal Transit Administration website. Brazos Transit District’s news release about the grant award is available [here](#).

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/29/texas-am-university-to-acquire-six-electric-buses-through-grant-partnership-with-brazos-transit-district/>

## **TEXAS A&M TODAY**

### **Texas A&M Expert Stresses Need For Preparedness This Hurricane Season**

Andrew Dessler says coastal residents should be less concerned about the number of storms and more concerned about their overall strength.

By Luke Henkhaus, Texas A&M University Division of Marketing and Communications

June 29, 2023

Tropical storms Bret and Cindy both dissipated over the weekend after catching the attention of meteorologists and the public as the first recorded pair of storms to form simultaneously in the tropical Atlantic in the month of June.

Despite this historic opening to the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season, predictions are still calling for a “near-normal” number of hurricanes this year, with an emerging El Niño event expected to suppress storm formation in the Atlantic.

Still, Texas A&M University climate scientist Dr. Andrew Dessler says communities along the coast can’t afford to let their guard down.

“It only takes one storm to ruin your day,” said Dessler, a professor in the Department of Atmospheric Sciences and director of the Texas Center for Climate Studies. “If you live in a place that could be affected by a hurricane, the most important thing is to be prepared. Figure out your hurricane plan and be ready for a storm to impact you.”

Rather than focusing on the expected number of storms each season, Dessler said these communities are better off considering the overall destructive power of each storm, and the potential impact on their homes, lives and livelihoods. As Dessler explains, global warming is making hurricanes more dangerous in several key ways.

“First,” Dessler said, “as global temperatures rise, so do sea surface temperatures, providing more energy to fuel hurricane development and potentially leading to more intense storms.”

Rising temperatures also cause more water to evaporate into the air, he said, creating hurricanes with significantly higher rainfall amounts.

“Additionally, climate change contributes to rising sea levels, which can exacerbate the destructiveness of storm surges associated with hurricanes,” Dessler said. “A higher baseline sea level means that storm surges can reach further inland, causing more extensive flooding.”

These trends will only worsen as global temperatures continue to increase, he said, though it’s not clear how climate change will impact factors like El Niño/La Niña events, which influence the number of storms that form each year.

“We don’t really know what will happen with the number of hurricanes,” Dessler said. “We might see fewer hurricanes in the future.” But even if this is the case, the devastating power of the storms that do form will necessitate proactive measures by scientists and government officials.

Preparing For The New Normal

Dessler laid out the following steps that coastal communities can take to mitigate the damage caused by increasingly destructive hurricanes:

- “Infrastructure needs to be updated and reinforced to withstand these stronger storms. This could involve improving drainage systems to handle increased rainfall, reinforcing buildings to withstand stronger winds, and constructing seawalls or other barriers to protect against higher storm surges.”
- “Development should also take into account the increasing risk of hurricanes. This could mean reconsidering the suitability of building in areas particularly vulnerable to storm surges or flooding.”
- “Improved forecasting and early warning systems can also play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of hurricanes. Better forecasts can give people more time to prepare or evacuate, potentially saving lives and reducing property damage.”
- “Last, public education is key. Ensuring that people are aware of the risks posed by hurricanes and know what to do when a hurricane is imminent can significantly help in reducing the overall impact of these events.”

Dessler said this kind of multifaceted approach is crucial for adapting to a warmer world — and protecting the millions of people who find themselves in the path of a hurricane each year.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/29/texas-am-expert-stresses-need-for-preparedness-this-hurricane-season/>

## **TEXAS A&M TODAY**

### **Be Mindful Of Firework Safety This Fourth Of July**

Protect people and pets this Independence Day by following advice from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension experts.

By Blair Fannin, Texas A&M AgriLife Marketing and Communications  
June 29, 2023

Every year, Americans gather with friends and family to celebrate Independence Day. As the holiday approaches, experts with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Disaster Assessment and Recovery, DAR, Unit are encouraging Texans to take precautions with firework safety.

#### **‘Fundamental Preventative Measures’**

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is simply leaving it to the professionals, said Payton Morris, AgriLife Extension a DAR agent serving the South Central Texas region.

“In the case that fireworks are allowed in your location, there are fundamental preventative measures to take to ensure that the fun does not turn into fire,” Morris said.



The following are suggested safety tips:

- Read and follow all instructions on firework labels.
- Set fireworks off in open places away from dry and tall grass, vehicles, and buildings. Keep first aid kits, water hoses and fire extinguishers on hand and nearby.
- Never allow young children around fireworks or sparklers. Ensure that older children are always supervised. Light fireworks away from close contact with people and or flammable objects.
- Be mindful of your surroundings. For people in rural areas, consider making firebreaks, a gap in vegetation to slow down the progression of a wildfire or fire outbreak. In suburban areas, stay observant of the distance between houses and the projected velocity of fireworks.
- Prepare animals, such as pets and or livestock, because they are very susceptible to loud noises.

### Consult A Veterinarian

Richard Griffin, an AgriLife Extension DAR agent serving the north region of South Texas, said contacting veterinarians prior to firework events is advisable to ensure protective behavioral health.

“The vet could even prescribe sedative pills to keep animals from the ‘fight or flight’ response,” Griffin said. “If the local veterinarian is unavailable days before the holiday, consider keeping your pet in the laundry room or near a television to drown out loud noise.”

Disposing and cleaning of fireworks after their use is equally as important to safety, he said. It is also important not to leave fireworks out overnight, as old flames could spark.

“Never re-light an already used firework.” Griffin said. “Instead, allow everything to cool down or douse it in water. Remove all significant pieces and throw away anything recyclable.”

In all, DAR agents say the best practice is to assess your situation and take the necessary precautions to avoid danger this Fourth of July.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/29/be-mindful-of-firework-safety-this-fourth-of-july/>

## **HOTEL MANAGEMENT**

### **Texas A&M to offer hotel management undergrad degree track**

By Alicia Hoisington

Jun 28, 2023 06:11pm

Texas A&M University has obtained approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish a new Department of Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism, a revamped version of

the previous Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences.

The newly minted department is set to provide three undergraduate degree tracks, specifically in hospitality, hotel management and tourism. Currently, the department provides certificates in professional event management, recreation and park management, hospitality management and tourism management, along with Master's and Doctoral degrees in the same areas.

The changes were designed to cater to the shifting demands of the hospitality and resort industry on a local, national and international scale, according to Texas A&M University President M. Katherine Banks. The objective is to equip future leaders in the hospitality, hotel management and tourism.

#### Leading the Department's Transformation

The department's helm will be taken by Brian King, who has been with the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences since January 2022. King has a blend of academic and industry experience from his diverse roles in hospitality, human resource development and marketing to international agencies, offering him a well-rounded understanding of destination management and tourism.

“We knew we could achieve a lot by bringing together faculty resources to help mobilize the visitor economy in Texas, attracting global interest and recognition,” said King. “This transition for the department solidifies the approach and opens more doors for our faculty and students to benefit the hospitality industry locally, statewide and nationally.”

The department is planning to expand on its nearly 60 years of globally recognized expertise in resource management and tourism sciences. The plan includes accommodating changing demographics and the increasingly global population of Texas to leverage the booming industry. This renewed emphasis will enable faculty and students to utilize their skills to positively impact the industry at various levels.

The new department will officially launch on Aug. 15. This fall, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is also set to welcome its largest incoming freshman class, who will have the opportunity to join the Hospitality, Hotel Management and Tourism program.

The department will have its hub in the Aplin Center, which will act as an experiential learning lab for students involved in hospitality, retail studies and food product development programs. Groundbreaking for the Aplin Center is scheduled for fall 2023.

<https://www.hotelmanagement.net/human-resources/texas-am-offer-hotel-management-undergrad-degree-track>

## **Texas wildfires burn through 2,000 acres in past week, prompt evacuations amid heat wave**

A blaze in Palo Pinto County, about 100 miles west of Dallas, covers more than 1,000 acres.

By Lana Ferguson and Zaeem Shaikh

Updated at 8:18 PM on Jun 29, 2023

Update:

Updated 8:06 p.m.: Revised to include new information from the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Authorities have issued evacuations Thursday as firefighters across the state work to extinguish dozens of wildfires as a heat wave scorches the Lone Star State.

Texas A&M Forest Service firefighters responded to three wildfires Wednesday in Palo Pinto, Nolan and Navarro counties.

The wildfire in Palo Pinto, known as the Storage Fire, prompted evacuations Thursday afternoon for people in the Gaines Bend, Sportsman's World and Hell's Gates communities. The fire is moving toward the Gaines Bend community and threatening 150 homes, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

It covers roughly 1,000 acres in Palo Pinto County, about 100 miles west of Dallas, and was 30% contained as of Thursday afternoon, according to the agency.

Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday afternoon that the state mobilized resources to help combat the fire.

The Brazos Volunteer Fire Department, one of the agencies that responded to the blaze, posted a video on Facebook of the fire near State Highway 16 and W. Hells Gate Drive just south of Possum Kingdom Lake.

Mineral Wells Fire & EMS posted photos on Facebook showing a plume of smoke over the massive fire.

"Low humidity, high temps, and rough terrain are all obstacles being faced as numerous area fire departments attempt to extinguish the fire," the post said.

The cause of the fire has not yet been determined, Texas A&M Forest Service spokeswoman Erin O'Connor told KXAS-TV (NBC5).

Palo Pinto County is no stranger to wildfires. Last year alone, fires tore through 16,328 acres in the county but didn't cause any serious injuries.

Recent hot, dry weather has created an ideal environment for fires, illustrated by the uptick of blazes in recent days. A heat dome parked over the majority of Texas and the central and southern United States creates a high-pressure environment with little to no chance of rain.

“Wildfire activity has increased over the past week as the state continues to experience triple digit temperatures and drying vegetation,” the Texas A&M Forest Service said Thursday. “Over the past seven days, Texas A&M Forest Service and local fire departments have responded to 45 wildfires for 2,056 acres burned.”

A total of 650,712 acres were scorched throughout Texas in 12,211 wildfires last year.

Officials in rural areas with a history of wildfires have prepared for the possibility of outbreaks, telling residents to take proactive steps like paying attention to burn bans; clearing their property of overgrown shrubs and vegetation that could fuel fires; and reviewing resources on fire preparedness like community wildfire protection plans.

<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/texas/2023/06/29/texas-wildfires-burn-through-2000-acres-of-land-in-past-week-amid-sweltering-heat-wave/>

## **GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY**

### **Texas Training Prepares Police to Respond to Cyber Crime**

Residents and businesses often call 911 to report cyber crimes, yet officers in smaller jurisdictions aren't always prepared to identify cyber incidents, collect digital evidence or identify the relevant laws involved.

June 28, 2023

By: Jule Pattison-Gordon

A resident or business that's suffered a ransomware attack or other cyber crime might react the same as they would to other crimes: by calling 911.

But in Texas' smaller, rural communities, the officers first arriving on the scene often don't know what to do.

“We were hearing from the West Texas law enforcement folks that their deputies or the officers would go out there and just would kind of be like, ‘I’m sorry, we can’t really investigate that; we really don’t know what to do/how to handle that,” said Chris Jett, a training manager at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) who previously worked in local law enforcement.

“I think a lot of cyber crime, probably, in Texas is being under reported just because the first responders — the first ones on the scene — just don’t know how to handle it, how to identify it, and which laws apply,” Jett said.

This problem came to the state's attention last year, when one of the Texas Councils of Government (COGs), or regional planning commissions, first raised the issue, said Tony Sauerhoff, the state's deputy CISO and cybersecurity coordinator. When Sauerhoff asked the state's other 23 COGs about their experiences, they all reported the same struggle.

Texas officers aren't required to learn much about cyber crime, said Gretchen Grigsby, director of government relations for the state's law enforcement regulator, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE).

"The world of cybersecurity and cyber crime investigations is rapidly evolving, and many courses exist in this space," Grigsby said in an email. "At this time, however, the only statewide requirements are a couple of references in the basic peace officer course related to identity theft and missing or exploited children."

A new free training aims to help fill the gap.

The Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) reached out to TEEX, and the two teamed up to tackle officers' cyber knowledge gap. They jointly created an Introduction to Cyber Incident Investigation for Law Enforcement course and launched it last week as a free, four-hour online training.

The course is asynchronous so that officers "can take it whenever, on a slow night or something like that," Jett said.

The new course isn't obligatory, but officers get continuing education credits for completing it, and it can provide much-needed guidance.

The training guides officers on topics like handling digital evidence, preventing and recovering from cyber incidents, responding to cyber incidents, and understanding which state criminal offenses apply to cyber attacks.

The course is particularly designed for smaller law enforcement agencies, which are the ones least likely to have their own cyber crime investigators, Jett said. It aims to give the small agencies the resources to start their investigations. Depending on the severity of the incident, those agencies may wish to then get in touch with others, like state or federal cyber units or larger localities that have their own cyber crime units and can help analyze the digital evidence.

The training was originally envisioned for the uninformed officers who would be the first ones arriving on the scene and taking a report, but it can be helpful to others, too. It could help telecommunicators taking residents' 911 cyber crime calls better know what questions to ask, for example, and administrators who brush up on cyber may then be better positioned to identify where personnel need additional cyber trainings, Jett said.

#### FIRST RESPONDERS' CYBER NEEDS

When an officer arrives at a home or small business to respond to a cyber crime, they are immediately faced with practical questions they haven't always been prepared to address.

Questions can be things like, "what to do with the computer — it's as simple as that," Sauerhoff said. "Whether to shut down the computer or not shut down the computer. How to close it up and

transport it, and where to transport it to. Who to call for support. Those types of really, really basic things that cyber professionals kind of take for granted. We've had to start there."

The training explains things officers should look for when doing an initial cyber incident investigation, Jett said. For example, "if it's the computer system that's compromised, treating that as the crime scene — so documenting what's on the screen, what devices are attached, who's had access, etc., etc. Just the typical investigative questions, but in the context of dealing with a cyber incident," he said. The course also explains the kinds of digital evidence to look for and how to collect it, if needed.

The materials cover another fundamental issue, too: helping officers identify whether a cyber incident has indeed occurred and whether it counts as a crime, Jett said. Computer breaches are specifically dealt with in Texas penal code, for example, and other non-cyber-specific laws may apply to a particular incident, too, such as those around theft, fraud and child pornography.

Course participants also get a guide to additional resources, including contact information for state and federal cyber divisions they may wish to engage with. A cyber crime that appears to be part of a nation-state attack or which impacts critical infrastructure should be reported to federal authorities, for instance.

Finally, the course prepares officers with some basic cyber hygiene guidance to pass on to the constituents who had called 911, to help reduce the chance of being re-victimized.

While the training is aimed at dealing with cyber crime, it can also help officers respond to other crimes as well: In today's digital-infused world, most offenses involve digital evidence that officers need to know how to collect, Jett said.

"Even crimes that aren't specifically a cyber incident are going have digital evidence attached to them," Jett said. "[For example,] if somebody's keeping records of their bad deeds on their computer or their phone [or] thumb drives, things like that."

## DESIGNING THE TRAINING

Texas DIR and TEEK designed and tested the training's content and course flow with input from COGs and local law enforcement representatives like a sheriff and a police officer from a small city, Sauerhoff said. Jett expected partners would revisit the course in about a year to update content, as the cyber landscape is frequently changing.

The state and TEEK have just started getting the word out, with Jett planning to promote it at a sheriff's conference in July. In the first six days since the course's launch, 21 people signed up, Jett said.

The offering is also freely available to the general public, although Sauerhoff noted that sections about the Texas penal code may feel a bit dry to them.

## **TAMUC**

### **A&M-Commerce's Pearson Honored with TAMUS Veteran Support Award**

By Ryan Scott

June 28, 2023

A Texas A&M University-Commerce staff member was recently honored with an award celebrating his commitment to serving student veterans.

Dustin Pearson, veteran services manager at A&M-Commerce, received the 2022-23 Faculty/Staff Veteran Support Excellence Award from The Texas A&M University System.

The award is presented each year to an A&M System employee who directs the growth of student veterans, serves as an advocate for student veterans or veteran issues, and develops, implements or supports programs that enhance student veteran success.

In the Spring 2023 semester, more than 400 veterans were enrolled at A&M-Commerce. The total number of military-affiliated students—meaning veterans, active duty military, reservists, national guard, spouses and dependents—was 771.

A Hunt County native, Pearson served in the United States Army from 2003 to 2008. He originally served with the 2nd battalion, 9th infantry regiment in South Korea before joining the 101st Airborne/327th infantry regiment as an 11 Bravo Infantryman.

He served in Iraq, where he was wounded in combat in 2005. The recovery from his injuries lasted about six months. During his military service, he earned a Purple Heart, Air Assault Wings and Expert Infantry Badge.

Pearson initially struggled to find work after leaving the Army.

“At the time, there weren't a lot of jobs for people coming out of the Army, especially infantrymen,” Pearson said. “I decided to apply myself academically and utilize my G.I. Bill to attend A&M-Commerce.”

He graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 2012. After working a few jobs in the short term, he was hired at A&M-Commerce in 2015. He was drawn to the opportunity to help student veterans navigate college life.

“For me personally, there were some struggles as a student,” Pearson said. “It was not ideal to be a 30-year-old veteran when most of your classmates are traditional students right out of high school. There isn't a whole lot in common to help you connect.”

He continued: “But I found camaraderie with other veterans at the university, and after graduating I found that I really wanted to be in a position to help veterans succeed in a university setting.”

While working at A&M-Commerce, Pearson also earned his Master of Social Work degree from the university in 2019.

Pearson stated that he was surprised, honored and humbled to be chosen for the A&M System award.

“It's very humbling to be honored in such a way because I know there are a lot of people working in the A&M System that do a great service for veterans,” Pearson said. “I just have to say that I couldn't do what I do to support our students without assistance from many other people on campus. It is a team effort.”

All recipients of this A&M System award receive a certificate and plaque, along with a \$250 donation to the recipient's local student veteran association or campus veteran services office to support a student veteran program or event.

<https://www.tamuc.edu/news/am-commerces-pearson-honored-with-tamus-veteran-support-award/>

## **MY HIGH PLAINS**

### **West Texas A&M University professor's book helps first-generation college students**

by: Erin Rosas

Updated: Jun 28, 2023 / 10:53 AM CDT

CANYON, TEXAS (KAMR/KCIT) — A recent announcement from West Texas A&M University detailed a faculty member's new book which provides advice to students “facing fears about being the first in their family to attend college.”

George Pacheco Jr., an associate professor of communication, along with additional WT colleagues, speaks directly to first-generation college students in the book “First-Gen Stories for Success,” available in hardback and ebook formats from Kendall Hunt Publishing.

“I want them to see themselves walking down a path that others have successfully crossed,” Pacheco said. “We wrote this directly to students, not to academics.”

The book, according to the announcement, features 12 chapters that discuss the balance between the goal of students and their family's plans, along with ways to create a path to success.

“When I looked around, there was nothing available like this,” said Pacheco, the founding adviser for WT's F1RSTGEN student organization and himself a first-generation student. “I want this book to



help these students find their way by learning from the authors' own stories. I hope the students see themselves in those shoes."

The announcement noted that WT was named as one of 53 institutions around the country to the 22-23 First-Gen Forward cohort in March 2022.

"First-Gen Stories," includes collaborations with the following authors:

Shanna Peeples, WT's John G. O'Brien Distinguished Chair in Education;  
Nancy Garcia, assistant professor of media communication;  
Lisa Garza, associate professor of sociology; and  
Jonathan Cordova, program coordinator for Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships.

<https://www.myhighplains.com/news/local-news/west-texas-am-university-professors-book-helps-first-generation-college-students/>

## **THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**

### **UT-Austin only Texas public university affected by Supreme Court's ending use of race in admissions**

No other public universities use race as a factor, but Texas private schools like Rice and Southern Methodist University will be impacted.

by Kate McGee

June 29, 2023 | Updated: 17 hours ago

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Thursday that the consideration of race in college admissions violates the U.S. Constitution, effectively ending the way that many universities across the country have tried to increase diversity on college campuses and reversing years of court precedent.

In a 6-3 vote, the court found the admissions policies at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill violated the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

In the decision, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority that the admissions programs at both schools were "well intentioned and implemented in good faith."

But, he said, "the Court has permitted race-based college admissions only within the confines of narrow restrictions: such admissions programs must comply with strict scrutiny, may never use race as a stereotype or negative, and must — at some point — end," adding that the admissions systems at both schools "fail each of these criteria."

In Texas, the decision will largely impact the University of Texas at Austin, which was the only public

university that considered race in undergraduate admissions, and multiple private universities, such as Rice University in Houston and Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

In a statement, Rice University said the university is “greatly disappointed that schools will no longer be allowed to consider race as a factor in admissions.”

“But, as one justice observed today, ‘Deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life,’” President Reginald DesRoches and Provost Amy Dittmar wrote in an email Thursday to the Rice community, quoting Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. “For that reason, we are more resolute than ever that every day at Rice, we will pursue and celebrate the excellence that a richly diverse student body, filled with its manifold experiences, brings to our community of scholars.”

The UT-Austin did not respond to a request for comment.

The two lawsuits were brought by the group Students for Fair Admission, which is led by legal strategist Edward Blum, a crusader against college admissions processes that consider race in any way.

Blum is the same strategist who convinced Texan Abigail Fisher to file a lawsuit over a decade ago against UT-Austin, arguing the school unfairly discriminated against her by denying her admission while accepting students of color who she argued were less academically qualified. The court narrowly sided with UT-Austin at the time.

In one lawsuit, SFFA alleged the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill violated the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause — which prohibits governmental entities from discriminating based on race — by considering race in admissions when it’s not the only way for the school to achieve a diverse student body. The Supreme Court has previously ruled that race-conscious admissions are acceptable only if there is not a “race-neutral” alternative that is adequately achieving diversity.

In the second case, SFFA alleged that Harvard University violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which bars the federal government from providing money to private entities that discriminate based on race. Blum alleged that Asian American students are less likely to be accepted into the private university than similarly qualified students of other races.

In a statement, Lily Trieu, interim executive director of Asian Texans for Justice, said the group is disappointed in the court's decision.

“Eliminating affirmative action reinforces the model minority myth, which not only falsely implies that AAPIs (Asian American Pacific Islanders) as a whole do not face racial injustice, but that all AAPI communities’ experiences are the same,” she said. Combined with Texas lawmakers’ recent ban on diversity, equity and inclusion offices at state universities, she added, “the affirmative action ban will make it harder for Texas AAPIs to fully thrive and be represented.”

In a minority dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that the decision “rolls back decades of

precedent and momentous progress. It holds that race can no longer be used in a limited way in college admissions to achieve such critical benefits.”

“In so holding, the Court cements a superficial rule of colorblindness as a constitutional principle in an endemically segregated society,” she added.

Roberts argued in the majority opinion that any consideration of race by universities must meet “strict scrutiny” and that they don’t do a good job connecting their admissions processes and the goals they are pursuing.

The universities’ main response to these criticisms is “trust us,” Roberts wrote. “They assert that universities are owed deference when using race to benefit some applicants but not others. While this Court has recognized a ‘tradition of giving a degree of deference to a university’s academic decisions,’ it has made clear that deference must exist ‘within constitutionally prescribed limits.’”

He also said the universities are not able to adequately prove that a student’s race is never considered a “negative” in the admissions process, which is required under the Equal Protection Clause.

Finally, Roberts said the schools’ use of race did not have a “logical end point,” citing a 2003 Supreme Court ruling that upheld the use of race in admissions but said the court expected the practice would be unnecessary in 25 years. The justices said the ruling does not apply to military academies, citing “potentially distinct interests.”

But Roberts did note that nothing in the court’s ruling “should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise. But ... universities may not simply establish through application essays or other means the regime we hold unlawful today.”

Emily Berman, a constitutional law expert at the University of Houston Law Center, said that means universities can consider race in the context of an individual applicant’s experience with race.

“What you can’t do is say, because this student is Black and therefore adds to the diversity of the class, that makes them a more desirable candidate than someone who is not,” she said.

Stella Flores, a higher education and public policy expert at UT-Austin, said the ruling would “decimate” the pool of students of color, particularly in areas like graduate school, science, technology, engineering and medical fields.

With the Texas Legislature’s passage this year of a bill banning diversity, equity and inclusion offices at state public universities, “we already dug our own hole, and this is going to make the hole deeper,” she said. “We’re actually the second-most-diverse state in the nation, and we’re majority Latino. So we’re going to have to get really creative in educating our population and providing more resources.”

## A long legal history

The American public has debated whether universities should consider a student's race when deciding to admit them ever since affirmative action was introduced after the Civil Rights Movement to correct racial imbalances in education and the workforce born out of a segregated society. Since then, the nation's highest court has weighed in periodically on the legality of the policy and narrowed its scope but has allowed it to stand for nearly 60 years.

In the past, the Supreme Court has chipped away at particular admissions policies but ultimately has repeatedly ruled that universities can consider race in admissions if they meet certain legal tests. For example, universities must ensure that considering race is an educational benefit to the broader student body and that there isn't another way to achieve diversity that doesn't consider race.

The first major challenge came in the 1970s, when a white student who was denied admission to the University of California's medical school twice challenged the school's policy to set aside a certain number of seats for students of color.

The Supreme Court banned the use of racial quotas in admissions in that case, but it also ruled that universities could consider race as one of many factors in a college application, including students' GPA, standardized test scores, personal essays, letters of recommendation and extracurricular activities.

Yet experts say the perception that universities still use racial quotas or decide to admit some students solely based on their race has persisted. Legal challenges have, too.

In 1996, opponents of race-conscious admissions saw their first legal victory — this time, in Texas.

Cheryl Hopwood, a white woman, sued UT-Austin after she was denied admission to the university's law school, arguing the university was using a segregated application system for students based on race that violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The district court judge said that admissions policy needed to go but still allowed for the university to consider race in admissions in other ways. Hopwood, along with three white men who joined the lawsuit, appealed the decision to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which sided with the students. The Supreme Court rejected a request to hear the case, which meant that state universities in the 5th Circuit's jurisdiction could not consider race in college admissions.

A few years later, the Texas Legislature created a new plan to mitigate some of the predicted impacts of the end of affirmative action in college admissions. Lawmakers created what's known as The Top 10% Plan, which automatically admits Texas high school students who graduate in the top 10% of their class to the state's public universities.

The rule was designed to promote diversity at the state's top universities by pulling in students from high schools across the state. Texas public schools are largely segregated, so the thinking was that recruiting students from schools with varying racial and ethnic compositions would help build diversity on college campuses. Over time, lawmakers created a carve-out policy for UT-Austin.

Because the school gets so many applicants, it is required to accept only high school students in the top 6% of their graduating classes.

The ban on affirmative action in college admissions in Texas didn't last long. In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled in the case *Grutter v. Bollinger* that the University of Michigan could consider race in its law school admissions, nullifying the 5th Circuit's decision and allowing UT-Austin to reintroduce race-conscious admissions in some cases. Ultimately, UT-Austin became the only public university in Texas to consider race in undergraduate admissions. The University of Houston Law Center also considers race in its admissions. In a statement, University of Houston spokesperson Chris Stipes confirmed the school would stop considering race in admissions given the ruling.

In 2008, UT-Austin again found itself at the center of a legal challenge to race-based admissions when Fisher sued the university after she was denied admission, arguing she was unfairly discriminated against because of her race.

Currently, UT-Austin admits 75% of its class through The Top 10% Plan and the other 25% through a holistic process that considers multiple factors, including race. Fisher argued that The Texas Top 10% Plan was doing a good job helping the university achieve diversity and race should not be considered when UT-Austin admits the remaining 25%.

Ultimately, the court narrowly sided with UT-Austin, finding that The Top 10% Plan's ability to diversify the student body was limited. But the justices did say that the school should continuously review its processes to ensure that the school is not using race beyond the strict ways set by previous court rulings, including using it only when there is a compelling educational benefit to creating a diverse student body.

The Supreme Court's rulings Thursday come at a pivotal moment in the history of how college campuses consider race and diversity. Across the country, conservative politicians and policymakers have started to push back against the growth of diversity, equity and inclusion offices on campuses, offices that were created to ensure students from underrepresented backgrounds — including but not limited to race — feel welcome.

This year, Texas became the second state in the country to ban such offices, training and programs. Experts worry that the ban on those efforts, combined with the end of race-conscious admissions, could cement the impression that students of color are not welcome in the state's higher education institutions and walk back decades of efforts to build more diverse campuses.

Texas lawmakers respond

In the hours after the decision, Texas lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle weighed in on the court's ruling. The Texas Black Legislative Caucus and Mexican American Legislative Caucus released statements condemning the decision.

"We acknowledge the history of our country and this decision presumes no historical barriers have been in place for the advancement of all Americans. We have a responsibility to affirmatively include

those historically excluded,” said Rep. Victoria Neave Criado, D-Dallas, who chairs the Mexican American Legislative Caucus. “MALC will continue to fight for our growing Latino communities, the highest share of our state’s population and the 49.3% of Texans under the age of 18 who are Latino, to have access to higher education.”

Meanwhile, Rep. Carl Tepper, R-Lubbock, filed a bill that would ban using “an applicant’s race, color, or any other protected characteristic under applicable state or federal law as a factor in making admissions decision,” as well as in government hiring in the state. The legislation appears largely symbolic, as Gov. Greg Abbott has added only property taxes to the topics lawmakers can pass bills on during the second special session that began this week.

### What’s next

Broadly, education policy and admissions experts across the state and country are concerned that eliminating race-conscious admissions could have larger impacts on the already slow progress many universities have made to diversify their student bodies. If schools cannot consider race in admissions and they aren’t allowed to create offices or programs that help students from underrepresented groups succeed, some also worry about the long-term impacts on graduation rates for students of color who might not get the support they need or even enroll in the first place.

During this year’s regular legislative session, in anticipation that the Supreme Court could end race-conscious college admissions this summer, Texas lawmakers passed a bill to help UT-Austin prepare for that outcome.

The bill eliminated part of the state education code that said that if a court ends race-based admissions, the cap on the percentage of students accepted through The Top 10% Plan must be lifted. Without the cap, UT-Austin would see a large influx of students and wouldn’t be able to accept any students outside those who graduate in the top 10% of their high school classes, including out-of-state students or student athletes. By removing that piece of the education code, UT-Austin was allowed to keep its current method of accepting students in place, regardless of the Supreme Court’s decision on race-based admissions.

While some think top 10% plans could be a model for other states to spur diversity in their college campuses, some higher education policy experts also believe percentage plans like The Top 10% Plan could be the next focus of debate in Texas’ college admissions.

Ever since its inception, The Top 10% Plan has faced fierce opposition from some students and parents in middle- to upper-class suburban high schools, where they argue it’s harder to graduate in the top 10%. In the past, Gov. Greg Abbott and some state lawmakers have signaled a willingness to adjust the plan to give schools like UT-Austin more latitude to select their freshman classes.

Flores, the UT-Austin higher education expert, said the future of college admissions for underrepresented students now depends on the courage of higher education leaders.

“They’re really going to have to lead with character and integrity,” she said. “Leaders are the ones

that are going to provide the pipeline of who we are as a nation.”

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/29/supreme-court-affirmative-action-ruling-texas/>

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The Texas A&M University System

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## **SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS**

### **What Texas A&M Aggies get wrong about UT Longhorns, in their words**

Not all Longhorns are hippies, y'all.

By: Sarah Martinez

July 2, 2023

The rivalry between the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University began in 1894 when the proud schools first played each other on the football field. Living in Texas comes with the assumption that you're either a Longhorn or an Aggie, a rivalry that is embedded into Texas culture through hand signals, school colors, and proud chants from each university. The two Texas schools haven't played each other since 2011, yet the competition remains strong.

Or does it?

A recent Texas A&M graduate was curious to hear what Aggies get wrong about their competition, asking Longhorns about common misconceptions the College Station crowd gets wrong about the University of Texas at Austin.

"That UT is mega liberal," said [u/italiancowboy27](#).

"That we're hippies," laughed [u/megatron1882](#).

"That we sip tea," added [u/Susan\\_Thee\\_Duchess](#), referencing the century-old diss that Aggies made toward the University of Texas at Austin (the "rich" school).

"That we all dislike or look down on your school. A&M is fantastic," admitted [u/loseranon17](#). "Y'all have good rankings in a lot of things and aren't that much lower than us."

Others chimed in comments that may be surprising to outsiders.

"Not a misconception per se but I did my undergrad at A&M and grad school at UT so I can speak to that," offered [u/Volume-Straight](#). "I'd say 50-75% of being an Aggie is hating the longhorns. Whereas maybe 5% of being a longhorn is about hating the Aggies; the vast majority spend 0% of the time thinking about the Aggies (or OU for that matter)."

"Hell even the Aggie War Hymn mentions UT. They did try to have the song focus less on UT but it never caught on," reminded [u/DaLinkster](#). "It was so weird the end of the graduation ceremony, this one last shared moment we have as students, is spent with UT living rent free in their heads."



“I think the hatred goes pretty much in one direction and while the sports has the addition of the fun rivalry I watched growing up, it isn’t anything more than that to us,” stated u/BurntOrangeAndVerde.

“That we care what they think,” summarized u/Glittering-Event7781 in a burn.

Ouch.

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/lifestyle/article/aggies-texas-longhorns-misconceptions-18179194.php>

## **NAVASOTA NEWS**

### **Texas A&M To Make Determination On Pay Raises**

June 30, 2023

by Kenny Graves

The Texas legislature approved a five percent increase for each of the next two years for all state agency employees. But the legislature is leaving it up to the individual universities to determine pay raises for their employees. Texas A&M’s Chief External Affairs Officer, Susan Ballabina, says leadership is meeting with the Board of Regents at the end of July.

Ballabina says it gets complex because there are eight state agencies within the Texas A&M University system, but the university has to wait until programmatic budget review to announce what its plan will be.

<https://navasotanews.com/texas-am-to-make-determination-on-pay-raises/>

## **THE EAGLE**

### **Commandant explains why Corps of Cadets won’t march-in to Kyle Field after 2023**

By: Alex Miller

Jun 30, 2023 Updated Jul 1, 2023

The Corps of Cadets march-in is a hallmark of pregame festivities for Texas A&M home football games, but a change is coming soon for the game day ritual: No more march-in to Kyle Field.

The final Kyle Field march-in will be Oct. 28 when A&M hosts South Carolina and it will be the only time this season the Corps will march into and around the Aggies’ hallowed grounds, according to an announcement by Corps officials on Wednesday.

Commandant and Brig. Gen. Patrick Michaelis posted a note on the change to social media after the

announcement and said those who have been to a Kyle Field march-in for the last decade will realize their mental image and reality are vastly different.

“The Corps has been marching into a basically empty Kyle Field stands for quite some time,” Michaelis wrote on social media. “Why? SEC rules prevent anyone that comes into a football stadium from leaving the stadium 90 minutes before play — therefore few actually watch the March-Ins. Further: at the same time the stands are empty, the football teams are warming up on the field as we are marching in.”

For that reason, Michaelis went on to say that doesn’t meet the mark for him. Instead, he explained he would rather have the Corps front and center of the entire university with tailgates around campus.

To that measure, the Corps will have campus march-ins prior to home games against New Mexico (Sept. 2), Louisiana-Monroe (Sept. 16) and Alabama (Oct. 8). A march-in through Aggie Park will be held Sept. 23 when the Aggies host Auburn. The Veterans Review will be at Simpson Drill Field on Nov. 11 prior to A&M’s game vs. Mississippi State. And the Aggies’ home finale against Abilene Christian will feature a West Campus march-in.

During the final march-in to Kyle Field, the Corps will be joined by hundreds of former cadets as part of Corps Reunion Weekend.

“Marching into an empty football stadium with teams warming up is not where we need to be,” Michaelis wrote. “This was a hard and easy decision to make. Hard because of the nostalgia and tradition — fully knowing it would not be received well. Easy because of the reality of the sheer lack of attendance of march-ins. Easy because of the positive effect we have when the Corps marches in front of all Aggies. I realize why this forum is the way it is, but I hope you understand some of the logic in the decision making. I recognize it is not popular. But I also realize it is right.”

Some Aggies replied to Michaelis’ post and disagreed with the move. Others were sad to hear the tradition is changing. Some thanked Michaelis for his transparency on the move.

“I regret the death of the tradition, but I support the change, given current stadium rules,” wrote Dean Brown, A&M Class of 1977 and former Aggie Band member, in a Facebook comment replying to Michaelis’ post. “As long as the Corps still marches to and attends the game as a unit, that’s the important thing. Even when I was a cadet 50 years ago, almost no one was in the stadium for the March-in.”

[https://myaggienation.com/am\\_news/corps-of-cadets-ending-march-ins/article\\_5e7fa818-3052-501b-bd5f-c6273b52e488.html](https://myaggienation.com/am_news/corps-of-cadets-ending-march-ins/article_5e7fa818-3052-501b-bd5f-c6273b52e488.html)

## **Focus at Four: A&M expert talks prevention following malaria diagnosis in Texas**

Malaria is caused by a parasite that spreads through bites from Anopheles mosquitoes.

By Heather Falls and The Associated Press

Published: Jun. 29, 2023 at 3:46 PM CDT

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says millions of U.S. residents travel to countries where malaria is present every year.

About 2,000 cases of malaria are diagnosed in the United States annually, mostly in returned travelers.

Travelers to sub-Saharan Africa have the greatest risk of both getting malaria and dying from their infection. However, all travelers to countries where malaria is present may be at risk for infection.

The Florida Department of Health has issued a statewide mosquito-borne illness advisory after four locally contracted cases of malaria were reported along the Gulf Coast south of Tampa.

This week, a health alert issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also noted that another case has been detected in Cameron County, located in South Texas.

The cases mark the first time there has been a local spread of malaria in the United States in 20 years.

“What we expect that that means, is that an infected person with malaria was present in the United States, probably through travel and then a mosquito bit that person and picked up the parasite and transmitted it to another person,” said Dr. Rebecca Fischer, an assistant professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health.

Health officials say the four Florida residents received treatment and have recovered. Fischer said the state of Texas is monitoring and practicing mosquito control efforts.

“In the case of Texas, where this occurred, we know that their mosquito control efforts are really good,” said Fisher. “So it’s unlikely that a mosquito carrying malaria will make it outside of that area.”

Malaria is caused by a parasite that spreads through bites from Anopheles mosquitoes. It causes fever, chills, sweats, nausea and vomiting, and headaches.

“Symptoms can take a long time to show up,” said Fisher. “Treatment is available for this disease, and if it’s not eliminated from the body, this particular parasite can cause recurrent illness over time.”

You can find out more about malaria on the CDC’s website.

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/06/29/focus-four-am-expert-talks-prevention-following-malaria->

## **TEXAS A&M TODAY**

### **Texas A&M Nuclear Chemist Will Receive SURA Distinguished Scientist Award**

Southeastern Universities Research Association recognizes Sherry Yennello for expanding 'knowledge of the forces shaping our universe.'

By Texas A&M University Division of Marketing & Communications

June 30, 2023

The Southeastern Universities Research Association will honor nuclear chemist Dr. Sherry Yennello of Texas A&M University with a SURA Distinguished Scientist Award at its August meeting in Washington, D.C.

SURA is a consortium of 56 universities that fosters collaborations to enhance its members' abilities to take on significant, transformative scientific research projects that no single institution can handle independently. The Distinguished Scientist Award is given to scientists who are conducting exceptional research in disciplines related to SURA's programs. Nominations are peer-reviewed by a committee and voted upon by SURA's board of directors.

Yennello is University Distinguished Professor and holder of the Cyclotron Institute Bright Chair in Nuclear Science, College of Arts and Sciences. She is also a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society and the American Chemical Society.

"Dr. Yennello is recognized globally as a leading scientist in her field," Texas A&M Vice President for Research Jack G. Baldauf said. "As director of Texas A&M's Cyclotron Institute, she has made transformational contributions to the world's understanding of nuclear reactions induced by radioactive nuclei. The research community at Texas A&M is proud to say that she is our colleague."

In one pioneering experiment, Yennello studied how reactions can redistribute neutrons and protons inside neutron-rich nuclei. This opened a new frontier for studying the effects of the neutron-to-proton ratio on the dynamics and thermodynamics of neutron-rich matter.

Also, her study of heavy-ion reactions was crucial to deciphering a significant gravitational-wave signal observed in August 2017 by scientists in the United States and Europe.

In addition, Yennello oversees a leading U.S. program in developing alpha-emitting radioactive isotopes, which are transforming nuclear medicine, as an effective treatment against inoperable tumors.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/06/30/texas-am-nuclear-chemist-will-receive-sura-distinguished-scientist-award/>

**KRIS**

**Port of Corpus Christi donates \$50,000 to support programs at TAMU-CC**

By: Javier Guerra

Last updated 6:25 PM, Jun 30, 2023

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tx — Over the years, the career path for geospatial engineering and land surveying has seen a decline in interest, but the Conrad Blucher Institute for Surveying and Sciences at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi is looking to change that.

Seneca Holland, a geospatial analyst with the Conrad Bluchar Institue said recently, it's been hard to fill open positions.

"The average age of surveyors in the state of Texas is 59 years old. They're going to want to retire soon, so they're going to want to hire people that are highly trained," Holland said.

Several high paying jobs continue to go empty.

"Currently in the Coastal Bend, we have these high paying jobs that are going unfilled because we just don't have the workers for geospatial engineering and land surveying to fill these positions," she said.

The institute has a plan in place to help get younger people interested in this career path and it is all thanks to a \$50,000 donation from the Port of Corpus Christi.

"We're looking at developing curriculum for the geospatial engineering and land surveying career technical education pathway, which is being taught at Texas independent school districts around the state," she said

There are only two school districts in Texas with geospatial engineering and land surveying programs — one of them is at Tulo-so-Midway ISD where James Landin graduated this past school year.

"It's an amazing pathway and you're not really going to work, you're going to enjoy what you're doing and what you're making," Landin said.

Landin is a research assistant with the institute. He decided to further his career by getting into the program this fall and he hopes other students will follow.

With the donation, the goal is to have summer camps available for middle school students, STEM workshops for educators and help put together curriculum for the CTE pathway.

<https://www.kristv.com/news/local-news/port-of-corpus-christi-donates-50-000-to-support-programs-at-tamu-cc>

## **VALLEY CENTRAL**

### **Texas A&M Kingsville receives \$20M for future Hispanic agriculture leaders**

by: Jesse Mendez

Updated: Jun 30, 2023 / 03:34 PM CDT

HARLINGEN, Texas (ValleyCentral) — Texas A&M University Kingsville announced Friday it was awarded a \$20 million grant by the United States Department of Agriculture.

According to the university's news release, this is the largest single grant received by the university in its history. The grant will directly fund education and workforce development initiatives for Hispanic students seeking to enter the agricultural vocation.

"The pathway created by this program is one that ensures student success, preparing students for careers within the USDA and federal-level careers in agriculture, which are vitally important to regions like ours," said Robert Vela, President of Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

The grant award comes as part of a \$262.5 million investment in higher education institutions as part of the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act.

<https://www.valleycentral.com/news/local-news/texas-am-kingsville-receives-20m-for-future-hispanic-agriculture-leaders/>

## **AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS**

### **WT President Wendler writes 6th in series on regional universities**

By Walter Wendler

Published 4:09 a.m. CT July 2, 2023

Special to the Amarillo Globe-News

Sixth and final in a series on strengths of regional universities.

Regional universities are associated with the places in Texas that produce the food, fuel and fiber that nourish, power and clothe our state and nation. They frequently serve rural populations and help the people of these regions attain their aspirations. In Texas, about half of all college graduates come from regional institutions. These widely dispersed institutions that comprise the vast majority of universities in Texas provide educational accessibility to a wide range of students that might face barriers to attending one of the larger publicly funded institutions in the typically more metropolitan service areas. They are often less expensive and provide much of the human capital required to move Texas forward.

They also have a significant economic impact on the surrounding regions. They create job opportunities on campus and off campus. The hundreds of thousands of students who attend regional universities in Texas provide economic impact to a wide range of geographic locations within the state borders. The economic impact is expanded as workforce development is a focus of regional institutions that are responsive to job opportunities in markets within the regions of service; unlike major flagship universities that serve a national and international audience. The focus of regional campuses is regional folks. That does not mean that the institutions are isolated socially or intellectually. West Texas A&M University serves students from 49 states and 63 nations—no myopia in West Texas. But our first cause is always service to the Panhandle, as stated in our long-range plan WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World.

Community engagement, the aspect of university influence that creates a strong sense of belonging in various parts of the state, is critical to any appropriately focused regional university. Public lectures, workshops, cultural events and other activities that expand dialogue, understanding and engaged community are part of the mission of regional institutions. Likewise, research and innovation in regional universities can have a powerful local impact if regional institutions focus on regional needs. For example, the state legislature during this legislative session has committed an additional \$6 million to an existing \$4 million initiative to understand better and enhance the food animal production industries of West Texas. Additionally, WT's doctorate in education program is dedicated to the leadership and management of the smaller school systems in Texas, and there are thousands. Likewise, our nursing and health sciences programs are focused on the critical needs of healthcare delivery in widely dispersed populations. These are just a few examples of how regionally focused initiatives provide distinctiveness for study at WT and provide benefit to the extended community.

Social mobility, what I sometimes refer to as engaged citizenship, is a great strength of regional institutions because it provides opportunities for individuals from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds to bootstrap themselves into careers and fields of study that change the trajectory of family lives, one person in one family at a time. At WT, we are convinced that the value system of the Texas Panhandle has a powerfully important impact when reinforced through courses of study in our University that value and appreciate the strength and sustenance of the region. Regard for others, trust, family life, faith, public and private virtue, patriotism and compatriotism, a performance culture responsive to hard work, rugged individualism and personal responsibility make the Texas Panhandle what it is. And responsive and reflective regional universities such as WT aspire to sustain, promulgate and enhance these deeply embedded value systems that are the foundation of our region, our state and nation.

The stakeholders that benefit from the strength of regional universities are many. Local and regional government alumni, community members, industry and business leaders, education associations and many other important groups that help sustain a free society are nourished by strength in regional universities.

For WT to be effective, it must first unapologetically focus on serving the Panhandle. Trying to imitate the more significant, prestigious public or private international research universities will not serve regional institutions well. It is a fool's errand. Neither will such aspirations serve the state of

Texas, which has made a significant commitment to the people of the various regions in the state through the funding and support of regional universities.

WT is proud to be a member of this group of regional institutions that, combined, serve nearly half of the people in Texas who pursue a college education mirroring national averages. These facts are also substantiated nationally. We have a role to play at WT. We will play that role head-on.

<https://www.amarillo.com/story/opinion/columns/2023/07/02/wendler-commentary-regional-universities-are-powerhouses-for-growth/70366880007/>

## **THE TEXAS TRIBUNE**

### **Nearly 1.4 million Texans could be impacted by U.S. Supreme Court decision blocking student loan forgiveness**

The court ruled in favor of the six GOP-led states that alleged President Joe Biden overstepped his authority with his loan forgiveness plan.

by Kate McGee

June 30, 2023 | Updated: 3 PM Central

Nearly 1.4 million Texans poised to have some or all their student debt canceled by the federal government will have to continue paying off their loan balances after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Friday that the Biden administration's student loan forgiveness plan is unconstitutional.

The court handed down opinions in two cases challenging President Joe Biden's authority to issue his loan forgiveness plan under the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act. In a 6-3 ruling, the court ruled in favor of the six GOP-led states that alleged Biden overstepped his authority as president with his loan forgiveness plan.

The court unanimously ruled that the two Texas students who said the federal government did not provide a public comment period for them to register their dissent did not have standing to sue and threw out their case.

In *Biden v. Nebraska*, the court ruled that Biden did not have the authority to issue the forgiveness plan under the HEROES Act, a federal law passed in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that allows the education secretary to change student loan programs for those affected by the attack. In 2003, Congress extended the law so the federal government could provide loan relief to students impacted by war or a national emergency.

When Biden released his plan last August, he said he had the power to provide student loan relief to students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, a national emergency.



“The HEROES Act allows the Secretary to ‘waive or modify’ existing statutory or regulatory provisions applicable to financial assistance programs under the Education Act, but does not allow the Secretary to rewrite that statute to the extent of canceling \$430 billion of student loan principal,” Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the majority opinion.

The ruling means all students with debt will need to resume repaying their loans in October.

It is a major blow for Biden, who promised during his presidential campaign that if elected he would address student debt.

On Friday afternoon, Biden announced that the administration started a new regulatory process to provide student debt relief under the Higher Education Act, which would give Education Secretary Miguel Cardona the ability to "compromise, waive or release loans under certain circumstances," the president said, adding that it is a longer process that allows for public comment.

Biden also announced a 12-month "on-ramp" repayment plan where lenders would not refer a borrower who misses a payment to credit agencies, allowing them to avoid default on their loans, which can have a long-term impact on someone's credit score.

Former President Donald Trump initially paused student debt payments at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Trump and Biden have since extended the pause nine times. But earlier this month, the federal government announced that interest would start accruing again in September with payments resuming in October.

Under Biden’s plan, individuals earning \$125,000 or less annually would see \$20,000 in student loan debt erased if they received a federal Pell Grant to help pay for college. Those who took out loans but did not qualify for those federal grants would have \$10,000 eliminated from their student loan debt. The loan forgiveness program, which applies to borrowers regardless of whether they earned degrees, was halted in November as the cases made their way through the courts.

In the dissenting opinion, Justice Elena Kagan wrote that the court’s decision overstepped the authority Congress granted to the U.S. Secretary of Education under the HEROES Act.

“In establishing the loan forgiveness plan, the current Secretary scratched the pre-existing conditions for loan discharge, and specified different conditions, opening loan forgiveness to more borrowers,” she wrote. “That may have been a good idea, or it may have been a bad idea. Either way, the Secretary did only what Congress had told him he could.”

Data from the office of Federal Student Aid shows that as of March, Texas has 3.8 million residents with student loan debt totaling \$127.3 billion. Texas has the second-highest amount of borrowers and debt, behind California, where nearly 4 million students owe \$149.7 billion.

In 2021, 56% of students who graduated from four-year public universities in Texas had approximately \$25,000 in student debt, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Biden’s decision to forgive more money for low-income students who qualified for federal

Pell Grants would have especially impacted low-income borrowers and people of color, who are more likely to qualify for federal financial aid and carry higher amounts of student loan debt.

In a statement, the Texas chapter of Democrats for Education Reform slammed the court's back-to-back decisions to strike down the loan forgiveness plan and Thursday's decision to end the use of race in college admissions.

While first-generation college students, students from low-income families and students of color begin to navigate back-to-back Supreme Court decisions designed to undermine their ability to access the transformative power of higher education, advocates and policymakers must redouble our efforts to create effective and affordable pathways to higher education and career training for ALL students," said Garry Jones, the group's executive director.

Meanwhile, more right-leaning groups praised the ruling as victory for "separation of powers and the rule of law."

The Court correctly held that when Congress gave the executive branch the power to "waive or modify" certain provisions of law, it did not grant the power to make basic and fundamental changes that transform federal student-loan policy," said Thomas Berry, a research fellow at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. "The Framers designed our system so that such fundamental questions would be debated and decided in Congress, and that is where such decisions must be made."

The Supreme Court heard two cases challenging Biden's plan earlier this year. One was filed by six GOP-led states, not including Texas. In that lawsuit, the states argued that Biden used the pandemic as a pretext to deliver on a campaign promise, exceeding his authority as president. During oral arguments, the federal government argued that the states do not have standing to argue their case.

In his opinion Friday, Roberts said that Missouri, one of the states that sued, did have standing because the forgiveness plan would've cost a nonprofit student loan servicer set up by the state called \$44 million annually in fees.

"[W]here a State has been harmed in carrying out its responsibilities, the fact that it chose to exercise its authority through a public corporation it created and controls does not bar the State from suing to remedy that harm itself," Roberts wrote.

The second lawsuit was filed by the Job Creators Network Foundation on behalf of two Texas students who argued the program was illegal because it didn't allow for a public comment period. In November, a federal judge in Texas agreed with the plaintiffs and struck down the plan. The Justice Department has argued it did not have to ask for public comment.

The Job Creators Network Foundation is a conservative advocacy group bankrolled by Home Depot co-founder Bernie Marcus. In the lawsuit, those borrowers alleged they were not given an opportunity to voice their disagreement with the program's eligibility criteria.

Alexander Taylor, one of the plaintiffs who graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas, is not eligible for \$20,000 in forgiveness because he did not receive a Pell Grant, which is only available to low-income students, and therefore would have been entitled to \$10,000 off his student loans.

The other plaintiff, Myra Brown, has privately held loans that are no longer covered by Biden's plan. Earlier in the program's existence, commercially held loans like Brown's could be consolidated into loans borrowed directly from the federal government rather than a lender, which meet the eligibility requirements of Biden's program, but the Education Department changed this policy after fielding multiple lawsuits from conservative states.

Brown graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso and the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Student loan forgiveness has long been a major policy objective among Democrats. Its backers say student debt is holding back graduates from economic mobility and discouraging potential students from pursuing levels of education that could improve their financial prospects.

But Republicans have argued that loan forgiveness is unfair to students who have paid off their loans and that it could pour more cash into the economy and exacerbate inflation. They also protest against using tax dollars from Americans who never went to college to help those who did. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott wrote in a letter in September that student loan forgiveness would harm the working class.

In a statement, U.S. Rep Lloyd Doggett, who represents Austin, said the ruling gives more urgency to national efforts to make higher education more affordable for students and families.

"Crushing debt is crushing the future of those trying to buy a home, start a family or save for retirement," he said. "This decision will not deter our efforts to overcome GOP obstruction and make higher education more affordable while providing relief to Americans as they continue to bounce back from the pandemic."

<https://www.texastribune.org/2023/06/30/texas-supreme-court-biden-student-loans-ruling/>

## **ESPN**

### **Universities, NCAA see pros and cons of new state NIL laws**

By: Dan Murphy, ESPN Staff Writer

Jul 1, 2023, 07:00 AM ET

The way Texas A&M athletic director Ross Bjork sees it, his department is taking on a new role in helping athletes make money from name, image and likeness deals starting this month: matchmaker.

Bjork and his staff won't serve as athletes' agents, but as of July 1, a new law taking effect in Texas clears the way for them to get more directly involved in pairing athletes with local companies or thick-walleted fans. The law also provides the Aggies and other schools in Texas with some new ways to encourage fans to open those wallets.

Bjork's comfort level with their new reality is miles away from the hands-off approach he felt was necessary two years ago when athletes first started making NIL money.

"It's a big shift, honestly," Bjork told ESPN in an interview earlier this week.

He's not alone. Athletic departments have overcome their initial wariness and are growing eager to get more involved in the NIL marketplace to help athletes navigate an evolving set of rules -- and to make sure their teams stay competitive in recruiting. However, with each additional step toward helping direct the flow of money from fans to athletes, the schools move closer to paying players directly, a line that separates the NCAA from professional sports.

The NCAA's national office believes parts of the new law in Texas step over that line. Texas is one of a handful of states, including Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, among others, to pass laws in recent months that clash with the NCAA's stance in seeking to protect the ability of schools to get more involved.

Without a clear nationwide set of rules, each new state law presents an opportunity for lawmakers to give their schools a leg up on rivals in raising money for athletes, and therefore in recruiting the best talent.

Bjork and his colleagues view this shift as the best way to help their athletes make the most of the market without getting themselves into trouble.

"I think it just puts the universities and the marketplace and donors in a position to work closely together," Bjork said. "We can't throw up our hands and say that this is not happening. The more we're involved in this, to me, helps make sure it can be done the right way."

NCAA president Charlie Baker and his staff disagree. They view the state-by-state competition as a "race to the bottom."

"Those laws are seeking competitive edges. They are not seeking to improve outcomes for student-athletes," said Tim Buckley, NCAA senior vice president of external affairs. "People recognize the need to transform college sports, and we're making some real changes to get that done. But state-by-state, this race to the bottom, it's not the right way to realize that change."

What does the new Texas law allow?

The Texas law, similar to laws in other states, opens the door for fundraising organizations that traditionally raise money for athletic departments to pay athletes via NIL deals. The fundraising groups, such as the 12th Man Foundation at Texas A&M or the One Razorback Fund at Arkansas, are

legally separate entities from the schools, but most have an established hand-in-glove working relationship with the athletic department, which leads the NCAA to view them as "an extension of the university" and therefore too closely associated to pay athletes.

The law allows fundraising groups in Texas to distribute perks and benefits to fans who donate to an NIL fund. Both Texas and Texas A&M told fans in late June that donors who provide money to NIL funds will receive points in a ranking system that determine priority status for home game seating, postseason tickets to events and other perks. Ranking systems already exist at many fundraising operations, but points were previously given only for donations that went directly to the athletic department.

"[It's] providing some value, providing some incentive for donors to support student-athletes," Bjork said.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Texas law includes a clause that makes it illegal for the NCAA and its conferences to punish any school in the state that takes full advantage of these new capabilities. Laws in Oklahoma and Missouri are among other states with similar clauses.

How do the laws help schools in Texas?

Industry experts say that the overwhelming majority of NIL money flowing to athletes -- roughly 80 to 90% -- in the past year has come through deals with collectives rather than through athletes endorsing a product. Most of the dollars raised by collectives come from fans who are more motivated by seeing their teams remain competitive in recruiting than whatever nominal benefit they receive in exchange for their money.

Collectives, and the schools they support, are concerned that fans won't sustain the same level of spending without getting some more value in return, according to Jason Belzer, the founder of SANIL, a company that helps operate roughly two dozen collectives at a variety of schools.

At Texas Tech, for example, a collective called The Matador Club has deals in place to provide \$25,000 to all 120 of the Red Raiders football players in the coming year. Cody Campbell, the group's founder, said it has raised roughly \$8 million to give to those athletes as well as members of the basketball, baseball and softball teams. Campbell said the new law in Texas will help the collective partner with the school's private fundraising arm, which adds legitimacy to their sales pitch to fans. He thinks the new incentives will help them sustainably hit that \$8 million figure in future years.

Belzer said he believes collectives will have to start offering more -- exclusive access to interviews with players, for example -- to keep the money flowing. He said regardless of what strategies the collectives use to find new revenue, those that have help from their state's laws will be in the best shape.

"Universities are going to keep pushing the needle," Belzer said, "and the ones with state laws are going to push it the most."

What is the NCAA's argument against these new laws?

While the new laws in Texas and elsewhere give schools permission to offer new perks or work more closely with their fundraising arms, the NCAA is not asking schools to break state laws. The laws don't say that they must do those things. The NCAA's recent letter tells schools that if they take full advantage of everything permitted in a new law, they will be violating the association's rules.

Buckley, who joined the NCAA's national office when Baker took over as president in March, said the recent letter is meant, in part, to serve as a reminder that schools themselves create and agree to follow the NCAA's rules -- they aren't imposed by the national office.

"It's important to remember the NCAA and the conferences are voluntary organizations and the volunteers set the rules for those organizations," Buckley told ESPN. "Until a member of this volunteer organization makes those changes, the national office staff will continue to enforce the rules that are on the books."

The universities have opted to lobby for changes in state laws rather than attempt to rewrite the rules of their own voluntary organization. That approach might be faster or easier than navigating the cumbersome NCAA rule-making process, and it also gives the states at least a temporary competitive edge over their competition in states without laws.

The NCAA letter told schools it was "not fair to those schools who follow the rules" for the association to refrain from punishing others that feel they are protected by a state law.

"Schools who do not like the application of a particular rule should work through the NCAA governance process to change that rule," the letter said.

What's the alternative to state-by-state competition?

Buckley said the competitive nature of state laws provides an example of why the NCAA and many leaders across college sports are pushing for Congress to pass a federal law that would set up national standards for NIL rules.

Buckley said the NCAA wants a federal law that protects athletes from predatory agents who take large fees or sign them to long-term deals that might not be in a young player's best interest. He said the new state laws aren't designed to improve the outcome for athletes.

Opponents to federal legislation argue that competition in the NIL market has created more ways to deliver money to athletes. Competition from different states is what initially forced the NCAA to allow athletes to make NIL money two years ago.

"We're not seeking any type of restrictions," Buckley said. "What we're looking for are basic consumer protections. I haven't seen a state law passed on the NIL front that puts together any meaningful consumer protections."

However, the proposed legislation coming from Capitol Hill in recent weeks goes far beyond measures to protect athletes from shady agents. For example, members of both the House and Senate in June suggested that athletes should have to wait several months after arriving on campus to sign any NIL deals.

When asked if the NCAA supported those types of restrictions being considered by Congress, Buckley said it was "too early to say."

How could these changes impact other legal challenges to the NCAA's rules?

A fan pays money that lands in the hands of a football player at their favorite school. In exchange, the fan earns points to get a better seat inside that school's football stadium. While there are clear layers of legal paperwork in place to make sure that money never passes directly through a school's hands on the way to its athletes, it doesn't take a great leap to see how these groups are all working together.

Bjork and his colleagues believe there is still a clear line that separates college athletes from employees of their schools in this scenario. The question, though, is whether federal judges or members of the National Labor Relations Board will feel the same way. Federal courts and the NLRB are expected to rule at some point in the next couple years on whether college athletes are legally employees of their schools, conferences or the NCAA.

"I think that's part of why the NCAA has toed the line," said Maddie Salamone, an attorney who works in college sports. "They don't want to bend on anything because they are afraid of how the court will view them bending on their own rules."

As schools push to get more involved, they are trying to thread the needle between helping athletes as much as possible while stopping short of any intervention that would convince the courts that they should be treated as employees.

"Those are the moving parts that we're all navigating right now," Bjork said. "How can we get to a place where we have a legally defensible, collegiate model, whatever that might be? Does more need to happen for the student-athletes? Clearly it does, right?"

What happens next?

The NCAA's letter in June serves as notice that the association intends to pursue sanctions against schools that allow closely-associated fundraising groups to raise NIL money and offer perks in exchange for contributions. Shortly before that letter was sent, Bjork and Texas athletic director Chris Del Conte both told fans they intend to offer those perks.

"The state law is going to govern how we do business," Bjork told ESPN earlier this week. "...And we'll continue to be as aggressive as we can."

If both sides stick to those positions, the NCAA likely will seek sanctions against some of these

schools. The schools then would sue the NCAA. A judge, or a series of judges, would then be left to decide whether the NCAA is unfairly restricting its schools or if state law was unfairly restricting the NCAA's ability to enforce the voluntary rules of its private organization. Lawyers familiar with past NCAA cases say it's not immediately obvious who would win that battle.

It does, however, raise a bigger question: If the college sports industry reaches a point where a small faction of the richest schools that voluntarily agreed to play by the NCAA's rules are challenging those standards in court, why don't they simply part ways?

Advocates for reform in college sports in recent years have increasingly suggested that splitting off the top-tier of college football from the rest of the NCAA could help to quell a good deal of the current unrest in their industry. Disagreements like the one brewing with these new state laws, could help build momentum for that type of divorce.

When asked if the NCAA might eventually just revoke membership from some schools, Buckley said that was too much of a hypothetical to consider. Bjork, likewise, wasn't ready to weigh in on whether Power 5 programs like Texas A&M would be better served leaving the association.

"I'll answer that in six months when you come back to me," he said with a smile. "To be determined. No, no, I won't give you my thoughts on that one."

Then again, it was less than two years ago when Bjork and most of his colleagues would have felt unready to talk about getting directly involved in helping their athletes with NIL deals.

[https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/37940566/universities-ncaa-nil-laws-texas-texas-am](https://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/37940566/universities-ncaa-nil-laws-texas-texas-am)

## **TEXAS A&M ATHLETICS**

### **Texas A&M Boasts Record 84 Student-Athletes on First-Year SEC Academic Honor Roll**

Jun 30, 2023

By: Brandon Collins, Athletics Communications

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Texas A&M was represented by a school record 84 student-athletes on the 2022-23 First-Year SEC Academic Honor Roll, announced by SEC commissioner Greg Sankey on Friday.

The 2022-23 First-Year SEC Academic Honor Roll includes student-athletes from 15 different sports. The Aggies totaled 318 student-athletes during the 2022-23 academic year on the Fall, Winter, Spring and First-Year Honor Rolls.

"Our student-athletes exhibit a competitive nature that is evident in their continued accomplishments in athletics and academia," Associate Athletics Director of Academic Services Dr.



Dan Childs said. "We are eager to watch their continued success and assist them in doing so."

Baseball led all Aggie sports with 19 first-year academic honor roll selections. The previous record was established during the 2019-20 academic year when A&M totaled 59 student-athletes on the first-year honor roll.

The following criteria was followed:

- (1) A student-athlete must have a grade point average of 3.00 or above for either the preceding academic year (two semesters or three quarters) or have a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or above at the nominating institution.
- (2) If a student-athlete attends summer school, his/her grade point average during the summer academic term must be included in the calculation used to determine eligibility for the Academic Honor Roll.
- (3) Student-athletes eligible for the Honor Roll include those receiving an athletics scholarship, recipients of an athletics award (i.e., letter winner), and non-scholarship student-athletes who have been on a varsity team for two seasons.
- (4) Prior to being nominated, a student-athlete must have successfully completed 24 semester or 36 quarter hours of non-remedial academic credit toward a baccalaureate degree at the nominating institution.
- (5) The student-athlete must have been a member of a varsity team for the sport's entire NCAA Championship segment.

#### Texas A&M First-Year SEC Academic Honor Roll

##### Baseball (19)

Evan Aschenbeck – Geographic Information Science and Technology

Hank Bard – University Studies Leadership

Blake Binderup – Sport Management

Travis Chestnut – Psychology

Lucas Davenport – Finance

Maxwell Debiec – University Studies Leadership

Luke Jackson – Sport Management

Lucas Kelly – Business Administration

Kaeden Kent – General Studies

Carson Lambert – Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences

Justin Lamkin – Sport Management

Jace LaViolette – Sport Management

Shane Sdao – Business Administration

Joshua Stewart – Management

Tab Tracy – Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences

Stanley Tucker – Sport Management

Justin Vossos – Business Administration

Troy Wansing – University Studies Leadership

Kasen Wells – Business Administration

##### Women's Basketball (1)

Janiah Barker – University Studies Journalism Studies

Equestrian (11)

Skyler Allen – University Studies Journalism Studies

Kendall Austin – Biology

Kaitlyn Bloom – Animal Science

Meagan Braun – Kinesiology

Gracie Casebolt – Animal Science

Josie Eckert – Animal Science

Laina Hanaghan – General Studies

Alexandra Leong – General Studies

Clara Nemeth – Business Administration

Devan Thomas – Business Administration

Katherine Triantos – General Studies

Football (2)

Ethan Moczulski – Business Administration

Lebbeus Overton – Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences

Men's Golf (1)

Jaime Montojo Fernandez – Business Administration

Women's Golf (3)

Mia Nixon – Sport Management

Allyn Stephens – General Studies

Antonia Zacharovska – Kinesiology

Soccer (2)

Eloise Descheneaux – Business Administration

Isabella Lister – General Studies

Softball (6)

Aiyana Coleman – Animal Science

Allie Enright – Sociology

Amari Harper – Kinesiology

Emily Leavitt – Education

Madison Preston – Leadership Education, Theory, & Practice

Keely Williams – Education

Men's Swimming & Diving (6)

Matthew Aigner – Public Health

Connor Foote – Construction Science

Garret Green – General Studies

McKennzey McDonald – Business Administration

Shawn Mohseni – Biomedical Engineering

Baylor Nelson – University Studies Journalism Studies

Women's Swimming & Diving (7)

Hadley Beeson – Business Administration

Giulia Goerigk – Business Administration

Rachel Love – Biomedical Engineering

Joslyn Oakley – Sociology

Lydia Palmer – Kinesiology

Blakely Schuricht – University Studies Journalism Studies

Victoria Taylor – University Studies Journalism Studies

Men's Tennis (1)

Grant Lothringer – Business Administration

Women's Tennis (1)

Elizabeth Boyer – General Studies

Avery Esquivel – Psychology

Men's Track & Field (9)

Chandon Chhikara – Marketing

Kyle Easton – Computer Science

Blake Harris – Business Administration

Jaden Harris – Business Administration

Landon Helms – Sport Management

John Mann – Business Administration

Francesco Romano – Computer Science

Ethan Sanders – Construction Science

Spencer Werner – Agricultural Communications & Journalism

Women's Track & Field (8)

Leeah Burr – General Studies

Ana De La Garza – Education

Brooke Forbes – Genetics

Abbigail Hirth – Allied Health

Amanda Hogan – Business Administration

Emma Little – Business Administration

Siena Palicke – Microbiology

Ava Riche – Sport Management

Volleyball (7)

Molly Brown – Nutrition

Lexi Guinn – Business Administration

Lauren Hogan – Kinesiology

Mia Johnson – Forensic Science

Eleni Karakasi – Nutrition

Caroline Meuth – Entrepreneurial Leadership  
Ava Underwood – Business Administration

<https://12thman.com/news/2023/6/30/center-for-student-athlete-services-texas-am-boasts-84-student-athletes-on-first-year-sec-academic-honor-roll.aspx>

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The Texas A&M University System

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## **THE TEXAS TRIBUNE and MSN NEWS**

### **As race-neutral college admissions begin, Texas counselors work to convince students of color they still belong**

Story by Alexa Ura and Kate McGee

3 July 2023

Brown. Tufts. The University of Southern California.

Heading into her senior year, Sydney Vallair had zeroed in on her top choices and felt “ahead of the game” when it came to applying for college.

The 17-year-old spent her junior year learning the ins and outs of the application process and how she could best position herself to leave southwest Houston for a top-tier university. With the help of EMERGE, a nonprofit that works to get high-performing students from underserved communities to selective schools, she went on campus tours and met with college students with similar backgrounds. Her personal statement was basically finished, she scored high on multiple Advanced Placement tests, and she racked up extracurriculars inside and outside of school.

But when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision declaring the use of race in college admissions as unconstitutional, her confidence was initially shaken.

“Affirmative action is very important for me as a Black student,” Vallair said. The ruling, however, left her confused about how it would “affect not only my admission process but those after me.”

The college application process has always been a stressful and opaque process, especially for students from underrepresented backgrounds eyeing top schools. Thursday’s decision by the high court has thrown in whole new layers of uncertainty. As colleges and universities rethink their approaches to admissions, students of color are having to rethink everything from the subjects of their essays to the schools they’re targeting.

Meanwhile, the Texas counselors helping them say they must double down on their messages of encouragement. One thing remains unchanged, they’re telling students: These schools still want you.

It's an effort that will be particularly crucial in a state like Texas, where two-thirds of public school students are Latino or Black.

"Colleges are still looking for you guys," Aisosa Ede-Osifo, a counselor through the nonprofit Academic Success Program who is embedded at a high school in Dallas, said she is telling her students. "Even if the politics of this country might seem otherwise or say otherwise, colleges still need to cultivate an environment where you can exchange ideas from people who are different from themselves."

On Thursday, the court ruled along ideological lines in two cases that the methods that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Harvard University use to consider race in admissions violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, effectively ending affirmative action along racial lines at public and private universities across the country.

In Texas, the decision clearly impacts private universities and the University of Texas at Austin, the only public university to consider race in undergraduate admissions. But it will also affect the many elite schools across the country that look to the state's big cities and border regions to attract students of different races and backgrounds.

In the Supreme Court opinion handed down Thursday, Chief Justice John Roberts said a "student must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual — not on the basis of race." But he added that the ruling should not prohibit schools from considering an applicant's discussion of how race affected their life, positively or negatively.

The decision — at least in the immediate aftermath — has already caused some students to question how much of their lived experiences they should bring into their applications.

On Friday, Keira Bradley was struggling with how to console herself.

Also part of EMERGE's college prep program, the 16-year-old was going over the draft of her personal statement that focused entirely on her identity as a Black girl. Describing the experience of a tough hike up a Wyoming mountain, she wrote about navigating life at a predominantly white school before transitioning back to classrooms with other Black and Latino students.

Struggling with the elevation change and the steepness of her climb, she described finally looking out at what she said was a beautiful view.

"I think for my life, I'm just waiting for the moment where I can overlook the mountains again in the world," said Bradley, who wants to pursue a career as a psychologist for the military.

Now, she's rethinking the statement altogether.

The court's decision, experts said, makes room only for more flattened views on race in college admissions without acknowledging the systemic ways in which students' lives are affected by racism.

"It creates an idea of the world where structural racism doesn't exist and we're only focusing on interpersonal racism," said Dominique Baker, a higher education policy expert at Southern Methodist University. "Even if a student has never been called a racial slur to their face, we still have a country that's been organized in order to disadvantage that student through our housing, throughout our health care, through our education systems. So it's inappropriate because it is sort of doing the work of trying to make a lot of the ways racism works in our country [invisible]."

Ede-Osifo said while she's uncomfortable with the idea of asking students to "trauma dump" the darkest parts of their lives into their college applications, she also thinks it's important to encourage students to share their lived experiences in their applications, even if they aren't positive.

She points to one of her students who just finished her first year at Harvard University.

"It's important for her to tell her story to the students of Harvard, who come from the northeast, who've never had to struggle or wonder where the electricity bill money's going to come from, wonder whether their parents are going back to Mexico," she said. "I don't necessarily think we're exploiting but rather telling the truth that needs to be heard."

Those types of stories are not uncommon among students in Texas public schools, in which the majority of students today are Latino and considered economically disadvantaged. School resources are far from equitable — even as school districts across the state work to increase opportunities for students. The state's education system was built on a legacy of disparities and long-winding fights for equity. And racial integration and school funding increases have generally come when the courts forced the state's hand.

This has resulted in vast educational gaps between students of color and white students, often within the same school district or campus. Black and Latino students have remained more likely to read below grade level. Trailing white students through graduation, many of them leave the public education system unprepared to succeed in college.

Their families, meanwhile, are far more likely to live in poverty and often lack the higher levels of education to help them navigate school and the college application process.

These disparities often make it crucial for high-performing students from lower-income families to look to selective universities out of state — the institutions whose admissions policies will most likely be affected by the court’s decision — from which they typically obtain more generous financial aid packages.

But Thursday’s ruling, EMERGE CEO Anastasia Lindo Anderson said, could also push colleges interested in diversity to enact more holistic reviews of prospective students, which could benefit students from underrepresented backgrounds. That could mean further cementing the move away from factors like standardized test scores. It might also present an opportunity for increased partnerships between elite universities and local organizations working with students who already qualify for their schools but simply need the tools to get through the admissions process.

“I do understand that this is a hard time for students, but I think that what students will hear from their counselors and college access organizations like EMERGE is that the colleges want you there,” Lindo Anderson said. “They have signaled to us they are going to continue to figure out how to bring a student body that reflects our nation.”

For students unable to consider schools out of state, the question is whether Texas will respond to the new challenge — and whether schools that claim to value diversity have the courage to continue those efforts in a state that has become hostile to efforts that explicitly try to help students of color, LGBTQ+ students and faculty of color.

Al Kauffman, a longtime civil rights litigator, recalled the drastic drop in Black and Latino enrollment after opponents of race-conscious admissions saw a temporary legal victory in 1996 that briefly banned state universities from considering race.

In response, Latino lawmakers and activists pitched what’s known as the Top 10% Plan.

Under the rule, which was adopted by the Legislature, Texas high school students who graduate in the top 10% of their class are guaranteed admission to the state’s public universities. Because Texas high schools remained so segregated, they reasoned, automatically pulling in students from schools with varying racial and ethnic compositions — as well as socioeconomic composition — would help build diversity on college campuses.

Outside of the Top 10% Plan, Texas universities largely accept students through a holistic review process that considers a multitude of factors in their applications, including grade point average, personal essays, extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation and standardized test scores, if required. They often consider certain circumstances about a student’s life that put their academic achievements in better context. That could include anything from a student’s socioeconomic status, family responsibilities or whether they are



the first in their family to apply to college, to the languages spoken at home or personal challenges.

But at UT-Austin, Black and Hispanic students make up only about 30% of the student population, half the share that they represent in K-12 schools. At Texas A&M University, which never reinstated affirmative action after the 1996 ruling, the share is even lower.

Universities have room to make changes in response to the Supreme Court's ruling, namely by reducing their emphasis on factors like standardized test scores that often reflect longtime disparities, said Kauffman, who is now a law professor at St. Mary's University.

"There's no doubt this decision is going to make it harder to have a diverse student population, but I don't think it's going to make it impossible," Kauffman said, noting that universities can still consider how individual students say they've been affected by race. "I think they're just going to have to set policies to more likely admit a diverse student body by restructuring admission policies, which is within their power."

Data shows that states that have banned race in admissions saw immediate drops in the number of students of color applying and enrolling. Large, selective public universities in California and Florida both saw Black student enrollment decrease following bans on affirmative action in college admissions.

A Washington Post analysis found that schools that are less selective get more diverse in the wake of bans on the use of race in college admissions. This might not be good for students of color, however, because selective schools tend to have more resources to support students through graduation. UT-Austin has an 82% eight-year graduation rate and access to an endowment worth more than \$40 billion. Texas Southern University, a historically Black public school in Houston, has an endowment of less than \$100 million and a 33% graduation rate.

However, the politics for broader change in Texas are different today than in 1996. This year, Texas lawmakers banned diversity, equity and inclusion offices — training and programs that support underrepresented groups on campus specifically related to race, gender and sexual orientation — after critics contended these offices pushed left-wing ideology onto students and valued social justice rather than merit on the college campus.

While there could be opportunities to continue programs for specific groups like first-generation college students or low-income students, higher education experts fear the backlash to overt efforts to build diverse, inclusive environments on campus will make schools hesitant to support and sustain such programs and will deter students from enrolling. Ede-Osifo, the college counselor in Dallas, said many of her students of color want to leave Texas to attend college.

“Whether or not they fully understand what’s happening with the politics of Texas, they do understand that the Texas state government is not wanting students to be at those institutions [and] not wanting to support Black and brown students at Texas public institutions,” Ede-Osifo said.

At Aldine Independent School District in the Houston area, Charlotte Davis, who retired last year as assistant superintendent of student support services, said counselors often worked with students who felt defeated by the prospect of considering college even before they began filling out admissions applications.

Working in a district where roughly 90% of students are considered economically disadvantaged — 30 percentage points higher than the statewide figure — Davis said she saw firsthand the importance of giving students who lacked the same opportunities or resources as others even “that little edge.”

“We’re in a political climate that hasn’t communicated that we care about you being a Black or brown student,” Davis said. “You have to encourage students to do their best ... to use this as an opportunity to show I am good enough, I am smart enough. That I can do it.”

## **FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM**

### **Mandatory evacuations rescinded, Palo Pinto County wildfire 85% contained**

BY JAMES HARTLEY

JULY 02, 2023 2:30 PM

A wildfire that has burned nearly 1,000 acres in Palo Pinto County is now 85% contained and the mandatory evacuation order for three communities has been rescinded, authorities said.

The evacuation order for Gaines Bend, Hells Gate and Sportsman World in the Possum Kingdom Lake area were rescinded Friday, according to the county’s website. The Texas A&M Forest Service said Sunday the fire had consumed an estimated 950 acres and was 85% contained.

PK Lake, a popular getaway for people who live in Dallas-Fort Worth, is about 110 miles northwest of downtown Fort Worth.

The blaze, dubbed the Storage Fire by the forest service, started Wednesday and burned around 200 acres. By Thursday, the fire had spread to 600 acres, then the estimate was upped to 1,000 acres. Mandatory evacuations were ordered Thursday and efforts to get residents

out of those neighborhoods continued through Friday until the order was rescinded.

The fire's spread was worsened Thursday by the "extreme behavior" of the fire brought about by wind speeds. Still, firefighters were able to deploy aerial resources to combat the wildfire's spread, using airplanes to dump suppressant as a preventative measure.

The Texas National Guard used Blackhawk military helicopters equipped with firefighting capabilities to assist myriad of other local, regional and state agencies in stopping and containing the flames.

Fire departments from Fort Worth, Grand Prairie and other DFW cities sent assistance as well. The Forest Service said Friday that two strike teams from Fort Worth were sent to help in efforts to extinguish the fire.

#### THE START OF WILDFIRE SEASON

While containment is high and most firefighting efforts are focused on locating and quashing hot spots, the danger isn't over.

On Thursday, Gov. Greg Abbott raised the Wildland Fire Preparedness Level to Level 2, saying in a news release that extreme heat and dry conditions in recent weeks has left most of Texas with wilting, dry grass that could provide fuel to any fire leading to a rapid, uncontrolled burn.

State resources were deployed under the governor's orders Thursday to assist fire crews in Palo Pinto County and warned that fireworks and other celebratory activities for July 4th could result in accidental i fires.

Accidental ignition of wildfires can also come from vehicles. Chains connected to a vehicle that scrape the roadway can send sparks in to dry grass just waiting to ignite. Vehicles with hot under-carriages driving over dry grass can also create flames.

Throwing burning cigarettes on the ground, even if they are left on concrete or asphalt, could start flames if the cigarette is blown into something that can act as fuel. Leaving fires, such as with a grill or fire pit, unattended could also start a wildfire.

#### POSSUM KINGDOM'S FIRE HISTORY

The Possum Kingdom Lake area isn't a stranger to wildfires.

Last year, two separate fires ravaged the area. The 1148 fire in Possum Kingdom Lake was started when a glass bottle in a trashcan magnified the sunlight and ignited a piece of paper. A rare way for wildfires to start, but not something unheard of.

The fire destroyed five homes and 500 acres of land, leaving a hilltop near the lake bald with burnt trees and land.

The wildfire in Palo Pinto County dubbed the Lazy Fire burned up 1,500 acres and threatened but didn't damage homes in the Possum Kingdom Lake area. That fire led to authorities shutting down Texas 16 at U.S. Highway 180 in the county as thick juniper fueled the blaze.

The forest service listed juniper trees as one of the fuels for the Storage Fire this past week.

The Lazy Fire was started as a controlled burn at the Set Ranch but got away from the people conducting the burn.

In addition to the fires last year, the Possum Kingdom Lake subdivision The Cliffs was ravaged by a fire in 2011. Named the 101 Ranch Fire, it left the rubble of 39 homes in its wake.

One of those property owners, Larry Anderson, told the Star-Telegram in 2011 that he barely escaped the flames that burned up more than 6,500 acres.

"There's a lot of devastation out there," Anderson said at the time. "There's 200-year-old trees gone. It's not a pretty sight."

## **KILGORE NEWS HERALD**

### **Texas A&M Forest Service encourages safety during the Fourth of July holiday**

Special to the News Herald

3 July 2023

As Texans make plans to celebrate the Fourth of July, Texas A&M Forest Service encourages everyone to be careful with any outdoor activity that may cause a spark.

Excessive heat over the past two weeks has resulted in grasses drying across portions of North, Central and Southern regions of Texas. Areas with dry grass may support wildfire activity due to accidental ignitions from fireworks or other activities that cause a spark.

Conditions will improve Sunday through early next week, with temperatures falling below 100

degrees F and increased chances for rainfall. Lower temperatures and opportunities for rain will keep the potential for wildfire ignitions low statewide through the July 4th holiday.

Though wildfire activity potential will be lower across the state next week, Texas A&M Forest Service and local fire officials are advising members of the public to be cautious with outdoor activities.

Approximately 90 percent of wildfires are caused by humans and their activities, and Independence Day is one of the top days for reported wildfires.

“On average, 128 wildfires ignite each year on July 4 in Texas. Fireworks have the potential to ignite wildfires and have done so in past years,” said Wes Moorehead, Texas A&M Forest Service Fire Chief. “We encourage all Texans to be cautious while you celebrate with your family and friends. Do your part to prevent wildfires and be safe this holiday.”

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public show hosted by professionals. If you plan to set off your own fireworks, please follow these safety tips:

Before you celebrate, always check and comply with local government officials for any burn bans or other restrictions.

Read and follow all warnings and instruction labels on fireworks.

Use fireworks only under close adult supervision and in safe areas away from structures, dry grass and brush.

Keep a hose, bucket of water and wet towels nearby in case of a malfunction or fire.

Dispose of used fireworks in a bucket of water.

Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially glass or metal.

To help prevent wildfires during hot and dry conditions:

Avoid parking and idling in tall, dry grass. Catalytic converters can get hot enough to ignite the grass under a vehicle.

Ensure chains and other metal parts aren't dragging from your vehicle — they throw sparks.

Avoid placing your grill near flammable vegetation or materials, never leave your grill unattended, and ensure coals are completely extinguished when you are done.

Note: Burn bans and fireworks restrictions are determined by county government. Texas A&M Forest Service does not determine, set or lift these restrictions.

## **THE ROLLING STONE**

### **Lyle Lovett, Country Music's Most Mysterious Man, Can't Stop Rambling**

It's hard to get to know the fiercely private songwriter, but his on-the-road photographs and a new tour shed light on what keeps him going

BY GARRET K. WOODWARD

2 July 2023

STANDING BEHIND A camera atop a tripod onstage at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts in Franklin, North Carolina, Lyle Lovett peers into the viewfinder and pauses for a moment before hitting the shutter button.

Lovett's road manager yells loudly, "Fire in the hole," as the room goes silent, the only subsequent sound being the click of the camera. The entire scene repeats itself a handful of times before Lovett is satisfied with how the empty venue, soon-to-be-packed with concertgoers, is portrayed.

"In terms of every type of expression you might engage in, it's just all the same," Lovett tells Rolling Stone. "It's all connected."

For over a decade now, Lovett has been snapping images of each and every single stage he's played. Initially, he viewed it as a way to maintain a presence on social media without seeming self-indulgent or self-congratulatory. But, nowadays, he finds the act of photography a sort of full-circle thing.

"My parents had this little Argus camera when I was a boy, and they were always fine with me playing with [it]," Lovett says. "In 1978, I bought a Nikon, which I still have. It was my last film camera. I've been shooting with a Sony [lately]. I keep a camera with me all the time — I love taking pictures."

Whether it's still photographs or poignant melodies, Lovett is a conduit of people and place, emotions and sentiments. It's a timeless task for Lovett, where detailed images of daily life or eternal musings are captured and offered up to the world at large.

"With anything I present, you could draw a straight line to another medium, whether it's a song or a picture," Lovett says. "It's important to me to be consistent. The reason it's

important is I'm just getting to be myself."

Peeling back the layers of Lovett's vibrant career, it's easy to see why he's remained a cherished act in the realms of Americana, country, and folk music since he first emerged on the national scene in the mid-1980s: "consistency" and "being yourself."

"I feel so privileged in my job, in that I get to go around and just be myself all the time — warts and all, for better or for worse," the 65-year-old says. "There's never a point in what I'm doing that I have to, you know, pretend or act a certain way. Playing and singing, making up a song or taking a picture, it's all the same thing."

Last month, Lyle Lovett & His Large Band embarked on a new nationwide tour. Kicking off in Kentucky, the journey seemingly hits every corner of the lower 48 states and parts of Canada before wrapping up in Texas in late August.

"It's all a work in progress. You're just trying to do your best to figure out what to do next and how to continue to keep your audience's interest," Lovett says. "The great thing about working with talented people is that you get together and collaborate — new ideas come forward, so I'm always excited about that."

Once fall rolls around, Lovett will again pack his bags and hit the road, but this time as a solo act, just his voice, a guitar and whatever magic may occur by happenstance. He'll be joined for several dates by John Hiatt, then a handful of shows with Leo Kottke.

"The bottom line is that [touring] is how I make my living. I never sold enough records to ever get a mechanical royalty from a record sale," Lovett says. "But having the record deals I've had and having my records out in the world has given me a touring life."

To note, Lovett will also headline the 16th edition of the Cayamo music cruise March 1 through 4, 2024. Dubbed "A Journey Through Song," the sold-out affair will include Lake Street Dive, Billy Bragg, Nikki Lane, Rodney Crowell, Hiss Golden Messenger, the War and Treaty, the Mavericks, and Lucius. Lovett is a passionate, if unlikely cruiser.

"[The cruise] is a great gig. It's all the fun of going to a festival. You get to see performers you don't always get to see, all in one place," Lovett says. "And you can't go anywhere [but the boat], so it's all about association and genuine interaction. That's the appeal of it for performers and for the audience."

In conversation, Lovett is affable and introspective. He'll answer a posed question with a meticulous response, one filled with wonderment and excitement. And it's those same characteristics within Lovett's curious soul that have remained since his teenage days of

playing guitar with a high school buddy at a now long-gone steak and seafood restaurant in his native Houston.

The year was 1976 and Lovett was just 18. From there, he enrolled in Texas A&M University in College Station. Studying journalism, Lovett covered local events, campus concerts, and city meetings, a camera always in-hand.

And all the while, Lovett kept finding small shows to play along the way. No matter what Lovett was doing academically or socially, his guitar remained, so did a constant urge to book another date.

“I just enjoyed [performing]. And I was probably trying to convince myself I could do it [early on],” Lovett says. “The only way I could convince myself that I could do it was to always have a gig booked. I just tried to have something booked all the time, that was my [business] model.”

Soon enough, he was couch-surfing in the musical bastions of Austin and Nashville, slowly scratching at the surface of the possible prospect of becoming a singer-songwriter.

“David Lloyd had this established band around Austin in [the late 1970s]. And they used to invite me to come open for them without being booked by the clubs they were playing,” Lovett says. “And I stayed at David’s house more than I stayed anywhere. That was the difference between being able to play gigs for 50 bucks a night or not.”

The camaraderie that Lovett found with other aspiring or long-time musicians in Houston, Austin, and Nashville is what set the tone for his own endeavors. “For me, it was incremental steps, there was never a big leap forward,” Lovett says. “It was more of getting positive encouragement at every step along the way that made me want to keep going.”

Whatever the future held for Lovett, he was simply, happily along for the ride — hell or high water, his fate had been sealed.

“I was really fortunate to get to know some of my heroes personally: Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, Willis Alan Ramsey, Michael Martin Murphey,” Lovett says. “No matter the generation, there are people who appreciate quality and appreciate good music, real musicianship. Those people find each other and they make good things happen.”

Skip ahead almost four decades. A handful of Grammy wins, several signature songs like “If I Had a Boat” and “This Old Porch” (written with Robert Earl Keen), and widely acclaimed albums, coast-to-coast tours and numerous TV/film appearances later, Lovett stands as an American musical institution — always evolving, constantly shifting into the next project.



Packing up his camera gear backstage at the Smoky Mountain Center, Lovett readies himself and his longtime band for the impending performance. Pop open the guitar case. Switch out the blue jeans for dress clothes. Go over the setlist. Walk down the hallway and toward the bright lights on the other side of the curtain.

“If what you can do can make someone in the audience [think about] their own life, if somebody can take my words and relate it to his or her own experience, then that’s what you hope for,” Lovett says. “My favorite compliment is not, ‘I love the second line in the third verse of that song.’ It’s, ‘Gosh, I remember exactly what I was doing the first time I heard your song.’”

And yet, Lovett himself looks at the entire trajectory of his personal life and artistic pursuits as all “one thing” — a single, continuous moment of being.

“There’s songs I’m playing that I made up when I was 17 years old, and I’ll keep playing as long as folks show up,” Lovett says. “[Life] is like writing [a song]. You start out thinking, ‘OK, this is going to be about this.’ And, as you get into it, it can change or it can develop, it can become more layered — all of that can happen once you’re inside of it, whatever ‘it’ is.”

## **CLICK 2 HOUSTON**

### **Former Texas A&M sports announcer Chace Murphy dies**

By: Brittany Taylor

3 July 2023

HOUSTON — The Texas A&M community mourned the loss of sports announcer and media personality Chace Murphy.

Murphy spent nearly two decades calling games for Texas A&M’s football and men’s basketball.

He was known at Kyle Field for his distinctive “first down” calls.

Murphy also served as the news director at WTAW and a host of their radio show “The Infomaniacs.”

“He was an authoritative newsperson, which was important,” Scott DeLucia, Infomaniacs Radio Host, told KBTX. “He took on responsible jobs. You heard his voice and narrations all over town. You immediately knew that was Chace Murphy. He was a hard and diligent worker,

had the tremendous gift of a voice, and sense of humor. You put it together and I think we will all remember him for that.”

- - -

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## **Crossroads Today**

### **Fentanyl Crisis: Unmasking the Deadly Wave, a 25 News Now Extra**

Adam Seibel

July 9

VICTORIA, Texas - Jackpot, Tango, and Murder 8 are street names for the deadly drug fentanyl. You may have heard of fentanyl recently because it's infiltrated America at an alarming rate. The Texas Department of State Health Services reports that since 2019, fentanyl-related deaths among Texans have increased more than 500%.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, synthetic meaning it's a chemically created substance, and opioid referring to a type of drug that is used for pain-relieving properties.

Dr. Joy Alonzo is a Clinical Assistant Professor at Texas A&M Health Science Center and says opioids have a high risk of abuse and dependence.

"Opioids are extremely effective at controlling pain; unfortunately, they have a side effect of causing euphoria," said Dr. Alonzo.

Fentanyl can produce effects such as euphoria, pain relief, confusion, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, and respiratory depression.

It's 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine, and can be fatal in very small doses, just take a look at this, that amount you see on the pencil tip is a potentially lethal dose.

Extremely addictive, it's not long before Fentanyl is able to claim another victim chasing a high they'll never reach again, causing tolerance and dependence.

"And if you stop getting it, you will then go through withdraw. In the case of opioids, withdraw is extremely uncomfortable. Not considered particularly life-threatening, but you will wish you were dead," said Dr. Alonzo.

In many cases people, particularly young adults, in the range of 13 to 18 may purchase what they think is Xanax, Adderall, or a Percocet when in reality it's a pill that appears to be a Xan, Addy, or Perc that's been cut with fentanyl.

Popular apps like Snapchat and Instagram allow users to find dealers, and then apps like Cashapp and Venmo allow them to pay their dealer, so this whole process has been streamlined and easier than ever to get illicit drugs, a nameless, faceless process.

“The days of shaking hands with your dealer, actually knowing who you’re buying the illicit drug from, are over,” said Dr. Alonzo.

These counterfeit tablets are extremely good replicas as well, so it can be difficult to even tell if what you got is fake or not.

“I’ve been a pharmacist for 40 years and I can’t tell the difference. I know that the DEA guys tell me they can’t tell the difference, looking at the tablet that’s a game we play, is this real or is this fake, you’re not able to tell,” said Dr. Alonzo.

It is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the United States with 6 out of 10 illegal fentanyl tablets sold in the U.S. contain a potentially lethal dose.

T. Michael O’Connor was the former Sheriff of Victoria County and in 2020 was sworn in as the U.S. Marshal of the Southern District of Texas, so he and his team are fighting the fight against the cartel who traffic in Fentanyl across the border...and he says it all boils down to one thing, money.

“It’s commerce. It’s all about commerce. They care less of the consequences of their businesses, and so the cartel in China, as well as other Asian countries are all in the business together for trafficking...humans and drugs,” said O’Connor.

So why would drug dealers want to sell something that kills their customers? Because Fentanyl is that cheap to make it still yields a much greater profit margin even with the occasional loss of a few users, to them it’s not lives their concerned with but dollar signs.

Even smaller towns like Goliad, whose population is under 2,000, is used as a stop to traffic in deadly drugs, just ask Goliad sheriff Roy Boyd who sees it firsthand.

“Texas is being invaded, it’s being invaded by cartel, and organized crime. It’s far worse than anybody realizes. These organizations have businesses throughout our communities, they’ve set up shop all throughout Texas, even the small jurisdictions such as Goliad,” said Sheriff Boyd.

Chelsea Chanslor struggled with mental illness and addiction to fentanyl, overdosing multiple times and is lucky to still be here today to tell her story.

“I had walked down the stairs after snorting a pill, and once I got to the bottom of the stairs, that’s when I collapsed,” said Chanslor.

Naloxone or commonly known as Narcan is an easy-to-use medication that reverses an opioid overdose, saving countless lives and being one of the few, but effective tools we have against Fentanyl.

“You put it up somebody’s nostril. Watch this. That’s it you just saved somebody’s life,” said Dr. Alonzo in a demonstration showing how to use Narcan.

She’s since been clean and hasn’t relapsed since becoming a mother, and looking into her son’s eyes gives her hope.

“I see everything good that I was never able to do, if that makes sense. I see everything that my addiction took from me, and it gives me a sense of what I could get back... that I thought was long gone,” said Chanslor.

Many professionals that deal with Fentanyl like Dr. Alonzo and members of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area fear that the problem will get worse before it gets better but they continue to fight the fight.

“There have been a many of times where I encourage my personnel that don’t quit, just believe that what we’re doing, we’re staying in the fight, and most people would think it’s too overwhelming, but we will continue to fight the fight,” said O’Connor.

Texas has launched it’s “One Pill Kills” campaign to educate the public just how dangerous Fentanyl is and to put a face to these victims, in an effort to hopefully fight back against the deadly drug that is killing Americans.

There are resources available to help those in need who may be struggling with addiction or mental health, just call 988, a crisis lifeline available in both Spanish and English...because all it takes is that one bad batch or deadly dose of fentanyl to kill you, and there’s no coming back from that.

Watch this 25 News Now Extra, Fentanyl Crisis: Unmasking the Deadly Wave Thursday, July 13 at 10 p.m. with 25 News Now Weekend Anchor Adam Seibel.

[https://www.crossroadstoday.com/news/fentanyl-crisis-unmasking-the-deadly-wave-a-25-news-now-extra/article\\_3c9116ba-1ed0-11ee-9e2c-9b627a3b0a91.html](https://www.crossroadstoday.com/news/fentanyl-crisis-unmasking-the-deadly-wave-a-25-news-now-extra/article_3c9116ba-1ed0-11ee-9e2c-9b627a3b0a91.html)

**Forbes**

**30 Highly-Respected Public Universities That Accept Over 50% Of Students Who Apply**

Shaun Harper

July 10

Harvard University was one of two institutions at the epicenter of the recent U.S. Supreme Court cases on race-conscious admissions practices. Last year, its acceptance rate was 3% overall, 34% for applicants whose family members are alumni, and 42% for donor-related applicants, according to new evidence furnished in court documents contesting the Ivy League school’s legacy admissions process. Public discourse about Affirmative Action often defaults to the most highly-selective colleges and universities. Beyond the Ivies and other private research universities like MIT, Stanford, University of Chicago, Duke, Northwestern, and USC, do most Americans even know how selective the overwhelming majority of our nation’s other higher education institutions are, particularly public schools that taxpayer dollars support? Probably not.

The University of North Carolina was the other institution targeted in the Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) lawsuit that made its way to the Supreme Court. UNC Chapel Hill, the public university system’s flagship, received 56,341 applications for undergraduate admission last year; 17% of those applicants were accepted. In 2003, our nation’s highest court ruled in a pair of Affirmative Action cases against the University of Michigan; its acceptance rate was 18% in 2022. The University of Texas is another large public university against which an Affirmative Action lawsuit made its way to the Supreme Court. Last year, UT Austin accepted 31% of students who applied.

The University of California, our country’s most selective public higher education system, was devastated by a 1996 ballot measure that struck down the consideration of race in admissions. In 2022, Berkeley and UCLA received a combined total of 278,010 applications – their acceptance rates were 11% and 9%, respectively.

Because UNC, Michigan, Texas, Berkeley, and UCLA have gotten so much attention for legal challenges to their admissions policies and practices, there’s likely a presumption that other public flagships and similarly-sized institutions are just as selective. Most aren’t.

Here are 30 highly-respected large public universities that, according to an open-access U.S. Department of Education database, accept more than half of students who apply:

University of Alabama – 80%

Arizona State University – 90%

University of Arizona – 87%  
University of Arkansas – 79%  
University of Colorado – 81%  
University of Connecticut – 55%  
Indiana University – 82%  
Iowa State University – 90%  
University of Iowa – 86%  
Louisiana State University – 76%  
University of Kansas – 88%  
University of Kentucky – 95%  
University of Massachusetts – 64%  
Michigan State University – 88%  
University of Minnesota – 75%  
University of Missouri – 79%  
University of Nebraska – 79%  
The Ohio State University – 53%  
University of Oklahoma – 73%  
Oregon State University – 83%  
University of Oregon – 86%  
Penn State University – 55%  
Purdue University – 53%  
Rutgers University – 66%  
University of South Carolina – 64%  
SUNY - University at Buffalo – 68%  
University of Tennessee – 68%  
Texas A&M University – 63%  
University of Utah – 89%  
Virginia Tech – 57%

At least three things about this list are noteworthy. First, it doesn't reflect the only U.S. colleges and universities that admit more than half of applicants. There are thousands more.

Second, high admit rates are good because our nation benefits from having large numbers of college-educated citizens. Selectivity is about how many students an institution rejects. Public four-year colleges and universities, as well as community colleges, exist to educate the public. Taxpayers' dollars help these campuses fulfill their public purpose. Hence, it's praiseworthy when a school admits as many promising students as it has the capacity to serve well. On average, these 30 universities graduate 76% of their students within six years, which is far above the national average.

Third, admitting more than half of applicants isn't an indicator of low institutional quality.

These 30 universities were selected because they're well known. Many Americans recognize their names (especially among residents in states where the campuses are located) and think of them as good schools. I have a master's degree and Ph.D. from Indiana University — I know for sure that it's a spectacular institution, and I'm actually proud that it rejects only 18% of promising prospective Hoosiers who apply for undergraduate admission.

All the schools on my list are research universities, which means they're serious academic environments in which extraordinary scientific discoveries are made and solutions to vexing social problems are rigorously pursued. Surely, federal and state governments wouldn't continuously invest billions of dollars into centers, institutes, and labs at these places if the universities themselves were low quality.

Also, among research institutions, membership in the Association of American Universities is highly coveted. The prestigious organization has only 69 U.S. members, including every Ivy League University and many other highly-selective privates. Among the 30 public schools on my list, 17 are AAU members. The average admission rate across these particular AAU research universities is 76%. Certainly, having such high undergraduate admission rates doesn't make them unworthy of membership in the most elite association for our nation's top research universities. These institutions prove that access and quality don't have to be mutually exclusive. In fact, high undergraduate student acceptance rates help make these public institutions excellent.

While these 30 universities ought to be applauded for the access they offer to so many Americans, it's important to acknowledge which citizens disproportionately benefit. On average, 64% of undergraduates on these campuses are white. Given that the average admit rate is 75%, selectivity can't be used to justify the lack of racial diversity in student bodies at these institutions – so, what is the explanation?

In this post-Affirmative Action era we need more universities to employ legally allowable strategies to broaden access and ensure that more students of color are recruited, retained, supported, and graduated. Black students, for example, comprise only 5% of undergraduate enrollments across these 30 institutions. My analysis of publicly-available NCAA data shows that, on average, Black men comprised 56% of football and men's basketball teams, and Black student-athletes made up 42% of women's basketball teams on the 30 campuses.

Taken together, these numbers show that flagships and other highly-respected public universities aren't as exclusive as many people might think; that Black undergraduates are underrepresented on these campuses; and that these 30 institutions know how to find Black students when they want them to play on football and basketball teams. Admissions officers at these universities who generally do a commendable job of recruiting applicants would benefit from adapting methods that coaches employ to find extraordinarily talented and



academically admissible Black students. It's possible and legal, especially if more institutions discontinue the use of standardized tests in their admissions processes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shaunharper/2023/07/10/30-highly-respected-public-universities-that-accept-over-50-of-students-who-apply/?sh=44ee931f5722>

## **Stateline**

### **Campus diversity will be a struggle without race-based admissions, history shows**

Elaine Povich

July 5

States that have tried to enroll more Black and Hispanic students in state universities without using race-based admissions policies have seen the numbers of those students slip — especially at elite institutions.

Nine states had affirmative action bans before last week's U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking it down nationwide. Those states and others have tried various strategies to maintain diversity without using race-based admissions. They include costly recruitment drives, guaranteed admission to high-ranking high school students and the elimination of preferences for relatives of alumni.

Those strategies have had an impact. But overall, they haven't been as effective as more explicit race-based preferences, illustrating how difficult it will be to maintain diverse campuses in the wake of last week's decision.

Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Washington had affirmative action bans in place before the high court ruled.

California, the nation's largest state and one of its most diverse, has received the most attention.

Shortly after affirmative action ended in California in 1998, state universities began guaranteeing admission to most UC campuses to the top-performing students from most California high schools. The state university system also shifted to a more holistic admissions review process that considered students' academic achievements "in light of the opportunities available to [them]."

And California also began spending more on recruitment. In total, the state has spent about a

half-billion dollars on more comprehensive reviews and recruiting since the ban was put in place, according to an amicus brief UC filed in the Supreme Court case. “But funding for these programs has declined over time, and resource constraints limit UC’s ability to expand these programs,” according to the brief.

At the state’s most elite campuses, Berkeley and UCLA, Black and Hispanic enrollment plummeted in the first years after the ban. But Black and Hispanic enrollment fell less dramatically, and recovered more quickly, in the rest of the UC system.

Today, Black enrollment in the UC system as a whole is 4.5%, compared with a statewide population of about 5%. Hispanics are 22.5% of UC students, compared with about 40% of the statewide population.

At Berkeley, Black students were 3.6% of new undergraduates last fall, while Hispanic students were 21%. At UCLA, 8% percent of new undergraduates were Black, while 22% were Hispanic.

“California has not identified a silver bullet that maintains racial diversity at the same level as race-based affirmative action,” said Zachary Bleemer, an assistant professor of economics at Princeton University, who has extensively studied California’s experience.

Bleemer estimates that California’s automatic admission program and its more holistic review process “tend to increase Black and Hispanic enrollment by about a third of what race-based affirmative action would be.”

He added that while states with less-selective schools, such as Oklahoma and Nebraska, have reported that ending affirmative action didn’t have much of an effect on minority enrollment, that’s because “most students were getting in already.”

The Supreme Court ruling will have the greatest impact at “quite selective schools with robust affirmative action programs,” Bleemer said, citing schools such as the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, Georgia Tech and the Ohio State University.

Like California, some other states, such as Texas and Florida, have implemented automatic admission programs for top-performing students.

Texas implemented its Top 10% Plan after the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 1996 banned affirmative action in college admissions in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. In 2003, the Supreme Court nullified that decision, freeing Texas universities to consider race again. But Texas kept its plan in place.

The idea behind the plan is that since many Texas high schools are mostly Black or Hispanic,

offering automatic admission to many state universities for the top 10% of students from every Texas high school would boost diversity at those schools.

But a 2020 working paper examining 18 years of data from Texas found that the program “did not result in meaningful changes” in which high schools in the state sent students to the flagship state universities, the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M. As a result, it had little impact on the racial diversity of the two schools.

“The purported high school representation benefits of the policy appear to be overstated and may not go as far as advocates might have hoped in terms of generating equity of access to the flagship campuses in the state,” the paper concluded.

In 2020, the student population at UT-Austin was 24.2% Hispanic, compared with 40% of the state population. The Black student percentage was 5.3%, compared with a Black state population of 13.4%.

Florida’s Talented Twenty program, launched in 1999, grants automatic admission to one of a dozen state institutions to students who graduate in the top 20% of their class, regardless of SAT or ACT scores. The data on the success of the program is mixed.

From 1999 to 2007, the share of Black freshmen at the University of Florida increased from 11% to 14%, and the overall percentage of Black undergraduates increased from 7% to 10%. But at Florida State University, the percentage of Black students declined from 11% to 9%, and it dropped from 13% to 12% at the University of South Florida, according to statistics cited recently by the Tampa Bay Times.

In 1999, Hispanics made up 16% of public high school seniors and 14% of university freshmen. In 2008, those numbers were 22% and 18%, respectively.

But in past decades, Black and Hispanic students have become increasingly underrepresented at state universities.

In the spring of 2021, 20% of seniors in Florida public high schools were Black. That fall, they made up 10% of freshmen at Florida’s 12 public universities. From 2010 to 2021, the share of Black freshmen at the University of Florida fell from 9% to under 5%. The percentage fell from 11.5% to 7.2% at the University of South Florida, the Times said.

Michigan voters in 2006 approved a constitutional amendment prohibiting state colleges and universities from granting “preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin.” In an amicus brief filed in the Supreme Court case, the University of Michigan said that since then it has “discontinued even the limited

consideration of race in holistic admissions programs.”

Instead, the university has employed what it described as “persistent, vigorous, and varied efforts to increase student-body racial and ethnic diversity by race-neutral means” — with limited success.

Michigan did not pursue a percentage plan like California, Florida and Texas; except for the Detroit area, there are relatively few majority-minority schools in the state. But it did continue to give a leg up to applicants from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and those who were the first in their family to go to college. It also bolstered recruiting and outreach by, among other things, hosting workshops for high-school counselors, maintaining a recruiting office in Detroit and coordinating campus visits.

Before the ban took effect, underrepresented minorities were about 13% of Michigan undergraduates. That percentage declined to less than 11% in 2014. The current share is about 13.5%, slightly above the pre-ban percentage. However, it is a different story for specific groups, including African Americans.

Black enrollment has declined from 7% in 2006 to roughly 4% in 2021, a reduction of 44%. During the same period, the total percentage of college-aged Black people in Michigan increased from 16% to 19%. And Native American enrollment is down by 90%, according to the university.

“The University’s persistent efforts have not been sufficient to create the racial diversity necessary to provide significant opportunities for personal interaction to dispel stereotypes and to ensure that minority students do not feel isolated or that they must act as spokespersons for their race,” the brief stated.

While affirmative action opponents are cheering last week’s ruling, advocates are now focused on how to boost minority enrollment without it.

Jessie Ryan, executive vice president at the Campaign for College Opportunity, an advocacy group that aims to give all Californians the opportunity to go to college, said the focus must now be on high school preparation for higher learning.

“We will continue to advocate for scaling high-impact practices that result in greater racial equity,” she said in an email, including access to college preparation curriculum, universal completion of financial aid forms, and test-optional admissions policies.

<https://stateline.org/2023/07/05/campus-diversity-will-be-a-struggle-without-race-based-admissions-history-shows/>

**FOX 4 KDFW**

**Firefighters back working Palo Pinto County wildfire after it rekindled**

Rebecca Butcher

july 9

PALO PINTO CO., Texas - Firefighters are back in Palo Pinto County working on a wildfire that rekindled.

The so-called Storage Fire was once at 95% containment, but it rekindled on the east side and moved across containment lines.

New ground crews and aircraft are responding to contain the growth and protect nearby homes.

On Sunday, a crew of 18 firefighters worked to douse the remaining embers of the Storage Fire' that burned 975 acres in Palo Pinto County.

The fire is now 80% contained.

The fire continues to burn and fire crews have been working for 11 days to contain it.

"This is the Storage Fire that we're driving past now. This is part of the original fire itself. We're driving into where the fire actually slumped over this line," said Adam Turner, with Texas A&M Forest Service.

Turner said the terrain is steep and difficult, which makes it even more difficult for the fire crews to get to and to extinguish the flames.

Friday, embers of the Storage Fire crossed over a section of the fire line.

In order to battle it, a crew of 18 firefighters had to hike into the line and establish a new line, doing it mostly on foot.

Sunday morning's rain did help douse the flames.

"They are hiking around this whole eastern side of this fire and they are working to uncover any smoke they can find, any heat that's left, and they're going to do absolutely do what they can to dig it up, put water on to it, put dirt onto it, and make sure that it gets out," Turner

explained.

The Forest Service believes the wildfire is "human caused," but the exact cause is not yet known.

Mandatory evacuations were issued on June 29 and slowly lowered over the next few days for three communities south of Possum Kingdon Lake, Hell's Gate, Sportman's World, and Gaines Bend.

"At one point, they were saying might want to pack a bag, so she packed some bags. When I got home around 6, 6:30, it was bad," recalled Eric Neal, who lives nearby.

While there were no homes destroyed by the wildfire, a barn and shed were damaged.

"They pulled out all stops and stopped it. The 737 dropped the wonderful pink stuff. It coated our property, but it saved our property," Neal added.

Neal is thankful that his home and barn were saved by the pink retardant, a chemical that slows down or stops the spread of a destructive fire.

"We spent the night out that first night because there were hotspots everywhere. It took about three pressure washers and six to eight hours of running them, continually to clean the pool decks," Neal said. "Praise God, the whole time you did it because we could've been sweeping up ashes."

There have been no reports of anyone being injured in the fires.

Meanwhile, firefighters say windy days could cause more embers to cause issues, but crews will not be working overnight Sunday.

<https://www.fox4news.com/news/palo-pinto-county-wildfire-rekindles>

### **Morning Ag Clips**

#### **Heat Management in Our Landscape**

Cary Sims, County Extension Agent for agriculture and natural resources for Angelina County.

July 9

ANGELINA CO., Texas — As summer just started a couple weeks ago on June 21 and officially

ends on September 23, I thought it would be of interest to look at how our landscapes can thrive in our difficult summers.

Our part of the world has some wonderful landscapes, which often come with the challenge of thriving in intense heat. Throughout the summer, our area faces scorching temperatures that demand innovative strategies for heat management. Thankfully, by using well adapted plants and our own design choices, our landscapes can not only survive but also flourish amidst the blistering sun.

First, let's plant only well adapted plants or native plants. I know this may not be exciting for many, but these plants have adapted mechanisms to conserve water. Utilizing drought-resistant plants in landscaping helps to minimize water consumption, reducing the strain on water resources.

Xeriscaping, a landscaping approach developed in response to water scarcity, plays a crucial role in heat management. By utilizing water-efficient plants, reducing turf areas, and incorporating mulch to minimize evaporation, xeriscaping significantly reduces water usage while maintaining aesthetic appeal. This technique is widely adopted in southern landscapes to combat heat and save on the water bill.

Find a way to incorporate additional shade. We are certainly blessed with worlds of trees. Trees and their abundant shade often are the downfall of lawns which find it hard to grow, but trees and their canopies create shade for cooler microclimates. If you don't need more trees, consider adding arbors, pergolas, and umbrellas in your outside spaces to shield against the sun, enabling you and your family to enjoy the outdoors while staying protected.

Perhaps most difficult for me to wrap my head around is the design of outdoor structures. Indeed, I have a fire pit in our backyard, but I only chose to use that for a few months out of the year. What I long for is an airy structure with an outdoor ceiling fan. One thing I don't think we get enough of is wind. And well placed fans are much needed for outdoor relaxation.

Often overlooked are water features, such as fountains, ponds, and small waterfalls. These are not only visually appealing but also help cool the surrounding environment. The process of evaporation from these water sources aids in lowering ambient temperatures. In addition to their aesthetic value, these features act as natural "evaporative coolers," providing relief from the heat while creating a soothing atmosphere.

Lastly, your irrigation system plays a vital role in managing heat stress in southern landscapes. Modern irrigation techniques, including drip irrigation and smart controllers, deliver water directly to the roots, minimizing evaporation and water waste. Moreover, sensors and weather-based irrigation controllers adjust watering schedules based on real-time weather

conditions. This prevents overwatering and optimizes plant health.

We are no strangers to heat and our landscapes have found innovative ways to cope with and adapt to the challenges posed by extreme heat. Native plants, xeriscaping, shade structures, water features, efficient irrigation systems, and hardscaping techniques can collectively contribute to the management of heat stress. By implementing some combination of these strategies, we can continue to enjoy the beauty of our backyards, even amidst soaring temperatures. While others worry over climate change, we can find ways to enjoy the outdoors and survive our summer heat.

The Angelina County Extension office will be holding their Noon Gardening Program on July 18 on “Water Conservation in the Landscape”. The program will be from 12- 1 pm. Our guest speaker is Chanelle Svehla, County Extension Agent in Sabine County. She will be discussing irrigation strategies for the landscape. This event is hosted by local Volunteer Master Gardeners.

<https://www.morningagclips.com/heat-management-in-our-landscape/>

## **Morning Ag Clips**

### **What Is West Nile Virus?**

July 9

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Recent rainfall has led to a mosquito population increase across all regions of Texas. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts advise individuals and pet and animal owners to be mindful of West Nile Virus, WNV, a mosquito-borne virus that is prevalent in the U.S., and its effects.

The substantial amount of rainfall across Texas has heightened concern over growing mosquito populations. Emergency management meetings are being held to discuss recent flooding and standing water. The risk of mosquito-borne diseases like malaria and WNV has increased.

J.D. Ragland, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agriculture and natural resources agent in Randall County, said it was announced during one of those recent meetings that WNV testing confirmed positive results in Randall County.

Protecting yourself and your animals

Ragland advised individuals to be vigilant of their surroundings to reduce the risk of



transmission.

“Standing water in nearby lakes, trenches or even household items like flowerpots and wheelbarrows should be removed,” Ragland said.

He also advised that backyard pools, if not in use, should be drained for the most precaution.

“People with household pets should monitor their movements, and try to limit them to indoor places,” Ragland said.

People should also be aware of their whereabouts and of clothing, he said.

“It is important to wear long sleeve clothing and long pants,” Ragland said. “Most important is the constant application and reapplication of mosquito repellent with ingredients like DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus and picaridin, as they are EPA-registered. Mosquitoes actively feed at dusk and dawn, so remain indoors during those times as much as possible.”

#### Medical preventions

There are annual vaccinations for animals that counteract WNV. According to the Timber Creek Veterinary Hospital, most veterinarian hospitals offer core vaccines administered to all pets that work against tetanus, rabies, encephalomyelitis and WNV.

It is recommended for already vaccinated horses to be vaccinated in the spring, or a suitable time before the mosquito season. “If a horse has not been previously vaccinated, the initial dose should be administered as soon as possible.” Ragland said.

If you believe you or your horse have been infected, watch for the following symptoms:

#### Symptoms in horses:

High fever.

Incoordination; stumbling, staggering and/or sluggish.

Inability to stand.

Off feed, no desire to eat.

Acute death.

#### Symptoms in people:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the majority of people infected do not develop any visible symptoms. Of the few people who do, they can expect to see:

High fever.

Headache.

Neck stiffness.

Disorientation.

Muscle weakness.

In extreme cases, convulsions, numbness, paralysis and coma.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has additional guidelines for WNV safety precautions.

Health officials throughout Texas are continuing WNV testing. The Texas Department of State Health Services, DSHS, has reported the recent Texas counties with West Nile activity that can be found here: [DSHS West Nile graph](#).

For more information on WNV in animals, visit the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at <https://tvmdl.tamu.edu/>.

<https://www.morningagclips.com/what-is-west-nile-virus/>

## **Houston Chronicle**

### **TAMIU PD Chief Perez completes new chief development program**

July 9

Texas A&M International University Chief of Police Cordelia G. Perez joined 115 new police executives from across the state in the completion of the New Chief Development Program Class No. 70 offered by the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville June 26-30.

The New Chief Development Program is devoted to the professional development of first-time chiefs of police. The new chiefs receive professional development tailored for new police executives. The course provides leadership development designed to enable chiefs to avoid pitfalls, perform more effectively and be better departmental resource managers.

It also provides valuable peer networking to build shared experience foundations. Most importantly, LEMIT is the only training provider and the NCDP the only course to fulfill the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement training requirements for Police Chiefs as outlined in The Education Code, Section 96.641.

Among the specialized topic training Chief Perez and NCDP classmates received were: property and evidence room management, developing and managing a budget, and the

development of effective policies and procedures.

Perez said the LEMIT NCDP training provided insight and established links with colleagues across the state.

“Despite my 31 years in law enforcement, the higher education space in policing is new to me,” Perez said. “I found that the NCDP Course presented helpful insight and, perhaps most importantly, welcomed me to a network of peers that I know I can rely upon to continue that insight if needed.”

In 1993, the 73rd Texas Legislature renamed LEMIT in honor of State Representative Bill Blackwood. Blackwood, a Texas A&M University graduate, served in the Texas Legislature from 1984-93. A staunch supporter of law enforcement, he sponsored legislation providing death benefits for the families of police officers killed in the line of duty and legislation creating LEMIT. Upon his passing in 1993, LEMIT became The Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas.

For 30 years, the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas has been committed to providing exceptional education, professional development, research and services to the law enforcement community to inspire excellence in leadership and management for 21st Century law enforcement agencies.

Perez joined TAMIU in September of 2022. Her impressive career includes service to the Laredo Police Department, leadership in community policing and advocacy for and outreach to victims of crimes. Perez is a proud TAMIU alum (2014). The mother of two sons, she’s the first female Hispanic Chief of Police at TAMIU and is currently the sole female police chief in the 11-campus Texas A&M University System.

Perez leads a full-service, 24/7 Police Department tasked with providing an environment that fosters opportunities for personal responsibility and growth, and an educational and protective backstop for exploration by all TAMIU students, faculty, staff and visitors. The department enforces university policies as well as local, state and federal laws.

To learn more about the university’s police department, visit [tamiu.edu/adminis/police](https://tamiu.edu/adminis/police). For more on LEMIT, go to [lemitonline.org](https://lemitonline.org).

<https://www.chron.com/local/article/tamiu-police-chief-perez-completes-new-chief-18191258.php>

**Killeen Daily Herald**

**Advocating Acceptance: A&M-Central Texas coordinator presents research at National ADA Symposium**

Karen Clos

17 hours ago

Chastity Gaddy, 32, is at the age where she is reaping the rewards of a life spent accumulating wisdom. Newly hired as the access and accommodations coordinator with student affairs at Texas A&M University-Central Texas, she has the look of a person who is exactly where she was meant to be, and her words are her testament to that truth.

“Being able to serve our students with disabilities and see them flourish and bring all of their innate talents forward to their dreams of a degree is so fulfilling,” she said. “When I think about what I get to do on a day-to-day basis, and who I get to do it with and for, I’m filled with purpose.”

Gaddy recently attended the National ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Symposium in Kansas City, representing A&M-Central Texas, and presenting on the topic of how to encourage the development of ethics and multicultural competencies for higher education professionals.

As one who has found her purpose in higher education as the result of her own university journey, Gaddy and her research focus on the importance of inclusiveness in student activities and events, a topic she believes is both necessary and often overlooked.

“Sometimes, well-intentioned and dedicated people at colleges and universities work hard to provide meaningful activities and events to strengthen the sense of community among students,” she said. “I’m hopeful that my presentation will be a helpful reminder to keep the needs of students with disabilities in mind because they have a lot to contribute and bring with them a strong sense of their respective communities, too.”

Stephanie Legree Roberts, executive director of the A&M-Central Texas Warrior Center for Student Success praised Gaddy for her research and its relevance, adding that it was significant that she was invited to present at such a prestigious conference as the National ADA Symposium.

“One of the things we knew about Chastity when we hired her is that her commitment to our students matches the same commitment that the university has and the same commitment that we see from so many others here on campus.”

Also a recent recipient of the A&M-Central Texas Distinguished Student Leadership Service

Award, Gaddy said that she remains inspired by her own experience as a former student and alum from Savannah State University in Georgia where she was embraced and mentored by members of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

“When I was a student, I learned firsthand how important building a sense of community was, and I found myself, my strengths, and my future both in and out of the classroom,” she said. “I will always value what I learned about myself through those social activities, and I work every day here at the university so that students with disabilities experience that same sense of acceptance and community.”

[https://kdhnews.com/news/advocating-acceptance-a-m-central-texas-coordinator-presents-research-at-national-ada-symposium/article\\_a387466e-1dd6-11ee-b45b-1bf0e1f6beda.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/advocating-acceptance-a-m-central-texas-coordinator-presents-research-at-national-ada-symposium/article_a387466e-1dd6-11ee-b45b-1bf0e1f6beda.html)

## **MSN**

### **Projecting where Aggie prospects could land in the 2023 MLB Draft**

Pete Hernandez

July 9

The 2023 MLB Draft kicks off on Sunday, July 9, and carries through Tuesday, July 11, in Seattle. This marks the second straight year that the event has coincided with the MLB All-Star Game, and it could also feature a handful of Texas A&M prospects.

Ahead of the start of Round 1 of the draft, which opens at 5 p.m. CT on Sunday, Texas A&M will have no shortage of potential prospects who could, realistically, hear their names called. Granted, the top of the draft is arguably reserved for the likes of LSU’s Paul Skenes, Dylan Crews, and Florida’s Wyatt Langford, who are all expected to be off the board in the top five. But once it’s all said and done, a handful of Aggies could be making their way to the big leagues next year.

#### Texas Program Will Give You Solar Panels If You Live In These Zips

Outfielders Brett Minnich and Jordan Thompson, relievers Matt Dillard (LHP) and Carson Lambert (RHP), and second baseman Austin Bost all saw their college eligibility come to a close and will look to make the jump to the majors.

Additionally, LHPs Evan Aschenbeck, Will Johnston, Brandyn Garcia, RHP Nathan Dettmer, shortstop Hunter Haas, third baseman Trevor Werner, first baseman Jack Moss, and utility Ryan Targac have a chance to become professional.

Dettmer, Haas, and Moss all made the first stop on that journey after showcasing their skills at the MLB Draft Combine last month in Phoenix.

As shared through GigEm247, here is a look at which former, current, and potentially future A&M players are in the MLB.com Top 250 and ESPN Top 300 prospect rankings. The slot value for each projected pick is included as well.

#### MLB.com Top 250

Round 3, No. 79: Flower Mound (Texas) Marcus outfielder Caden Sorrell – \$901,500

Round 5, No. 146: Villa Park (Calif.) High outfielder Gavin Grahovac – \$429,400

Round 6, No. 188: Haas – \$295,000

Round 7, No. 198: Dettmer – \$271,600

#### ESPN Top 300

Round 3, No. 77: Sorrell – \$930,600

Round 6, No. 180: Grahovac – \$314,800

Round 6, No. 187: Dettmer – \$297,400

Round 7, No. 201: Haas – \$265,500

Round 7, No. 216: Montgomery County (Texas) Lake Creek RHP Weston Moss – \$235,000

Round 9, No. 261: Targac – \$182,100

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/mlb/projecting-where-aggie-prospects-could-land-in-the-2023-mlb-draft/ar-AA1dDvsp>

#### **Yahoo Sports**

#### **Texas A&M football's preseason USA TODAY Sports Coaches Poll rankings since 2000**

Cameron Ohnysty

July 10

Texas A&M Football has seen its fair share of ups and downs since the 2000 season, and since the end of Head Coach R. C. Slocum's 13-year reign, the Aggies saw a mix of epic lows and exciting highs, culminating with quarterback Johnny Manziel's 2012 Heisman-winning season, and an 11-2 finish.

Since 2000, Texas A&M has been ranked in the USA TODAY Sports AFCA Coaches Poll nearly a dozen times, while the program has cycled through a total of three coaches since, as current Head Coach Jimbo Fisher is entering his sixth season after enduring the dreadful 5-7 campaign in 2022. Since 2018, the Aggies have been ranked four straight seasons in the preseason rankings but have yet to live up to their lofty expectations since his arrival.

The USA TODAY Sports AFCA football coaches poll is produced weekly throughout the regular season with a voting panel consisting of 65 Football Bowl Subdivision head coaches. The panel randomly chooses from a pool of coaches who indicated interest in participating. From a points perspective, A first-place vote is worth 25 points; second place is 24 points, and 1 point for the team at No.25.

<https://sports.yahoo.com/texas-m-football-preseason-usa-100002170.html>

## **MSN**

### **Texas A&M's Most Important SEC Game This Season? Answer Might Surprise You**

Casey Smith

July 8

We all know Texas will be the Texas A&M Aggies' most important Southeastern Conference game when the Longhorns join the league in 2024, but what about this upcoming season?

On3 went up and down the conference and, while Arkansas' most important SEC game in 2023 is in the Southwest Classic against Texas A&M, the Aggies' biggest league matchup this upcoming season is against the Auburn Tigers.

"Jimbo Fisher needs Ws, plural — especially in SEC play," On3 wrote. "The Aggies are just 6-10 in conference play the last two seasons, so they would be well-served to get off to a fast start vs. league opponents in 2023. Auburn has a first-year head coach, a brand-new staff and a new-look roster that will still be coalescing the first month of the season, so Fisher & Co., cannot lose — at home no-less — to the Tigers before a three-game stretch of Arkansas (in Arlington), Alabama and at Tennessee."

The Aggies are 5-6 against the Tigers since joining the SEC in 2012, losing five of the last seven games outright.

Last year, Auburn ran for 270 yards on Texas A&M in a 13-10 slugfest. The two will meet at Kyle Field Sept. 23 after three consecutive non-conference matchups against New Mexico, Miami and Louisiana-Monroe.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/ncaafb/texas-a-ms-most-important-sec-game-this-season-answer-might-surprise-you/ar-AA1dA0xl>

## **MSN**

### **Greg McElroy Names SEC Coach Who Must Have 'Big Year'**

Kameron Duncan

July 9

College football is a "what have you done for me lately" sport, and no conference encompasses that idea more than the SEC. Coaches are evaluated on a year-to-year basis, with only the best of the best having any true job security.

One of the coaches on the hot seat is Jimbo Fisher from Texas A&M. Fisher is 39-21 in five seasons at A&M, and he hasn't won more than nine games in a season yet.

In the most competitive conference in the country, and in the most football-crazy state in America, that's simply not going to get it done.

That's exactly why ESPN's Greg McElroy is saying Fisher needs a successful season in 2023.

"I think that Jimbo Fisher, in order to continue the financial support that he's received from his boosters, he needs to have a winning season," McElroy said on his Always College Football show.

"If for whatever reason they fall flat again and they disappoint again, then we can't point to the youth. We can't point to the inexperience. We can't point to this, we can't point to that. We can only point to the head coach, and he needs to have a big year to break through."

Fisher has been great at bringing talent in, as A&M is consistently among the top recruiting classes, but they haven't been able to put it all together.



If he can do that this season, he's got a great chance of keeping his job.

<https://www.msn.com/en-sg/sport/other/greg-mcelroy-names-sec-coach-who-must-have-big-year/ar-AA1dC2pD>

## **MSN**

### **Chris Cortez Removes Name From Transfer Portal, Returns To Texas A&M**

Cole Thompson

July 9

Chris Cortez thought about leaving Texas A&M baseball, but had a change of heart at the final moment.

One day after entering his name in the transfer portal, Cortez will remove his name and head back to Blue Bell Park for the 2024 season. The news was first reported by the Bryan-College Station Eagle and later confirmed by A&M coach Jim Schlossnagle.

Cortez, a native of Las Vegas, will have two years of eligibility remaining with his next team after joining the Aggies in 2022. He's expected to remain in the running for one of the four starter positions next spring, including a spot on the weekend rotation.

Known for his high-heating fastball, Cortez posted a 3-1 record with a 7.34 ERA in 2023. The right-hander excelled with the heat, posting a fastball that consistently ran in the high 90s and even reached triple digits on more than one occasion.

Command was Cortez's biggest problem, often leading to shorter outings and later a demotion to the bullpen. As a sophomore, he struggled with consistency in a pitcher's counts, walking 40 batters against 39 strikeouts in 41.2 innings.

He also posted a 2.06 WHIP, the second-highest on the team behind fellow sophomore Robert Hogan (3.13).

Pitching as a whole for A&M was a concern in 2023. The Aggies posted a team ERA of 5.66 with 633 strikeouts against 591 hits allowed. Schlossnagle also consistently switched up his No. 2 and No. 3 pitchers in the weekend rotation behind junior Nathan Dettmer, making 12 changes during the regular season.

Cortez's return should add an even more veteran feel to the pitching staff entering 2024.

Freshmen Justin Lampkin and Shane Sdao came on strong in the second half of the season and should be front-runners to start in the rotation. Sophomore Troy Wansing was exceptional in four of his final five outings, allowing two hits and a walk against 10 strikeouts.

With Cortez electing to return, the Aggies are set to lose seven players to the transfer portal. A&M added eight newcomers this offseason, including Fairfield third baseman and 2023 MAAC Player of the Year Charlie Pagliarini.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/mlb/chris-cortez-removes-name-from-transfer-portal-returns-to-texas-a-m/ar-AA1dBUWY>

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The Texas A&M University System

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## KAGS

### Texas A&M Foundation names David Dunlap as new Board of Trustees member

Matthew Gromala

July 10

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — David Dunlap '83 has been named a new member of the Texas A&M Foundation Board of Trustees. He will replace outgoing trustee Kathleen Gibson '81, who has served on the board of trustees since 2016.

“When I received the call about my nomination, I was incredibly humbled,” Dunlap said in a press release from the Texas A&M Foundation. “I try to actively give back to Texas A&M not just through my resources but also through my time and experience because I attribute much of my success to this university and the lessons I learned here. Serving on this board will allow me to do that in a powerful way. I’m grateful for the opportunity.”

Dunlap is an energy executive who currently lives in Houston, and previously worked in leadership roles for BJ Services from 1984 to 2010 and Superior Energy Services from 2010 to 2021. During his time at Texas A&M, he also was a part of the Corps of Cadets, and was a part of the band outfit A-Battery and the Ross Volunteers.

“David is the quintessential Aggie leader,” said Tyson Voelkel '96, president and CEO of the Texas A&M Foundation. “He’s a character-driven businessman who has proven time and time again his ability to make decisions and unite people toward a common goal. His passion for this university, decades of executive experience and deep relationships across campus make him a great addition to our board as we work together to build a brighter future for Texas A&M.”

Dunlap has also earned a number of accolades at Texas A&M. He was inducted into the Corps Hall of Honor in 2018, and has served on the 12th Man Foundation's Board of Trustees, the President's Board of Visitors for the Corps of Cadets, the College of Engineering Advisory Council, and the Department of Petroleum Engineering Board.

The Dunlap Drill Field at the John D. White '70 – Robert L. Walker '58 Music Activities Center is named in his honor due to his generous support for the center’s construction as well.

“My passion for some time has been to make sure that Aggie students get every opportunity they can to really engage in the full leadership experience that Texas A&M offers,” Dunlap said when asked about his personal goals as a trustee. “We have a culture on this campus that produces graduates who have not only achieved academically but have also proven themselves as leaders outside the classroom. I want to help enhance those opportunities so that our students are even more prepared to lead in the public and private sectors.”

<https://www.kagstv.com/article/news/local/texas-a-m-u/tamu-foundation-new-board-of-trustees-member/499-3997eca7-9a05-402f-b91a-a51c2af1c7ac>

## **KBTX**

### **Texas A&M Foundation names new Board of Trustees member**

Katherine Griffith

July 10

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (KBTX) - The Texas A&M Foundation is welcoming a new member.

David Dunlap, class of '83, will replace outgoing trustee Kathleen Gibson who served from 2016 to 2023.

Dunlap is an energy executive out of Houston who has previously held leadership positions at BJ Services and Superior Energy Services, according to a press release from The Texas A&M Foundation. The Dunlap Drill Field at the Music Activities Center on Texas A&M's campus is named in his honor.

"When I received the call about my nomination, I was incredibly humbled," Dunlap said. "I try to actively give back to Texas A&M not just through my resources but also through my time and experience because I attribute much of my success to this university and the lessons I learned here. Serving on this board will allow me to do that in a powerful way. I'm grateful for the opportunity."

Before his nomination to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, Dunlap served on the 12th Man Foundation's Board of Trustees, the President's Board of Visitors for the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, the College of Engineering Advisory Council and the Department of Petroleum Engineering Industry Board.

The Foundation says one of Dunlap's goals is to emphasize strengthening the student experience.

"My passion for some time has been to make sure that Aggie students get every opportunity they can to really engage in the full leadership experience that Texas A&M offers," he said. "We have a culture on this campus that produces graduates who have not only achieved academically but have also proven themselves as leaders outside the classroom. I want to help enhance those opportunities so that our students are even more prepared to lead in the public and private sectors."

<https://www.kbtx.com/2023/07/10/texas-am-foundation-names-new-board-trustees-member/>

## **Texas A&M Today**

### **Former Student, Houston-based Energy Leader Appointed To Foundation Board**

Bailey Payne

July 10

The Texas A&M Foundation has announced that David Dunlap '83, the energy executive who previously held leadership positions at BJ Services and Superior Energy Services, joined its Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2023. Dunlap, who resides in Houston, earned a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering from Texas A&M University in 1983.

"When I received the call about my nomination, I was incredibly humbled," Dunlap said. "I try to actively give back to Texas A&M not just through my resources but also through my time and experience because I attribute much of my success to this university and the lessons I learned here. Serving on this board will allow me to do

that in a powerful way. I'm grateful for the opportunity."

For Dunlap, Texas A&M and the oil and gas industry are family traditions. His father, Donald Dunlap '58, and uncle, Wayne Dunlap '51, both graduated from the university with engineering degrees and participated in the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band, inspiring David to follow in their footsteps during his time in Aggieland. Continuing their legacy in the Corps of Cadets, he joined the band outfit A-Battery and the Ross Volunteers, excelling in the honor guard as his father had two decades before. In 2018, Dunlap was inducted into the Corps Hall of Honor.

After graduation, Dunlap worked for BJ Services from 1984 to 2010, taking on various engineering, operations and management positions — including executive vice president and COO — before moving to Superior Energy Services, where he served as president and CEO until 2021. Throughout his career, Dunlap prioritized community service and industry involvement, participating in The Woodlands Children's Museum Board, The John Cooper School's Board of Trustees and the National Petroleum Council, among other advisory positions. In 2013, Ernest & Young presented him with the Transformational CEO Award for the United States Gulf Coast Area as part of its Entrepreneur of the Year awards program.

"David is the quintessential Aggie leader," said Tyson Voelkel '96, president and CEO of the Texas A&M Foundation. "He's a character-driven businessman who has proven time and time again his ability to make decisions and unite people toward a common goal. His passion for this university, decades of executive experience and deep relationships across campus make him a great addition to our board as we work together to build a brighter future for Texas A&M."

Before his nomination to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, Dunlap served on the 12th Man Foundation's Board of Trustees, the President's Board of Visitors for the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, the College of Engineering Advisory Council and the Department of Petroleum Engineering Industry Board. The Dunlap Drill Field at the John D. White '70 – Robert L. Walker '58 Music Activities Center is named in his honor due to his generous support for the center's construction. He and his wife, Anne, have six children, and four (Margaret '11, Elizabeth '18, Theresa '22 and Mary '22) have graduated from Texas A&M.

When asked about his personal goals as a trustee, Dunlap emphasized strengthening the student experience. "My passion for some time has been to make sure that Aggie students get every opportunity they can to really engage in the full leadership experience that Texas A&M offers," he said. "We have a culture on this campus that produces graduates who have not only achieved academically but have also proven themselves as leaders outside the classroom. I want to help enhance those opportunities so that our students are even more prepared to lead in the public and private sectors."

Dunlap replaces outgoing trustee Kathleen Gibson '81, who served on the board from 2016 to 2023.

<https://today.tamu.edu/2023/07/10/former-student-houston-based-energy-leader-appointed-to-foundation-board/>

## **The Eagle**

### **Brazos Valley rural areas underserved in reproductive care, women's health**

Caroline Wilburn

14 hours ago

Pregnancy for many Texas women can become a difficult situation as expecting mothers across the state struggle to find adequate care for themselves and their child.

That's the scenario a recent study depicts of Texas, ranking the state 49th in the country for reproductive care and women's health.

The Commonwealth Fund's 2023 Scorecard ranked Texas just above Mississippi and New Mexico — the study included the District of Columbia — based on 12 indicators of the quality of care women, mothers and infants receive. The ranking points to an increase in preventable maternal deaths, especially for women of color.

Robin Page, an associate professor in Texas A&M University's School of Nursing, said Texas' low ranking may be a result of its large size and high number of rural communities.

"Because Texas is so large, we're a very vast state with a lot of rural areas that are highly underserved," she said. "We know by nearly every metric that compares rural versus urban, rural communities tend to fare worse and that is really more of an access issue. They just don't have care available in those areas."

The state's rural areas are often maternity care deserts, meaning expectant mothers may have to travel far distances to receive medical care, or go without it, Page said. This issue is something the school of nursing is aiming to tackle, specifically in rural communities of the Brazos Valley, she said.

"Here at the school of nursing, we take our status as a land grant university very seriously," Page said. "Meaning that we have particular strengths in the area of serving the underserved communities, and also rural communities. We have a number of initiatives here at the school of nursing that specifically focus on rural and/or underserved areas."

As of 2020, Brazos County was not considered a maternity care desert, but surrounding counties Grimes, Burleson, Madison and Leon were considered areas with low access to maternity care, according to March of Dimes Peristats.

March of Dimes, a nonprofit organization that uses research, education and advocacy to promote the health of mothers and babies, gave Texas a D-minus for preterm birth with 11.4% of babies being born prematurely.

Alicia Lee, Director of MCH Collective Impact at March of Dimes, said the organization is working to improve the disparities in women's health care across the state.

"We fight each and every day for the health of both mom, her baby and the support person and the family," Lee said. "We believe that to have healthy communities, we have to have healthy pregnancies and healthy families. We, right now, live in a country where it is dangerous and we're in a crisis for women who are giving birth. We know that crisis is even larger for our communities of color and it's important to us to change that trajectory."

In Brazos County, 18.4% of infants are born to women who received inadequate care during pregnancy, according to March of Dimes data. Adequacy is measured by the Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization Index which uses information about timing of prenatal care, the number of visits and the infant's gestational age.

One of the A&M School of Nursing's initiatives, the Program of Excellence for Mothers, Children and Families (POEMCF), was created to improve the care of pregnant women, infants, children, youth and families across the

state.

March of Dimes works closely with POEMCF to lower the maternal morbidity rate in Texas, specifically lowering the rate of women who suffer from high blood pressure during pregnancy, Lee said.

“In working with our partners across the state with organizations, with community-based organizations, with hospitals in the Bryan-College Station area, specifically working with the Nurse-Family Partnership Program out of Texas A&M, we’ve received funding from our funders, the corporate partners, and the like to build a hypertension kit,” she said. “Then that hypertension kit, we are providing a blood pressure monitor as well as other tools and information for our partner organizations to then share and provide and give to their patients.”

The Nurse-Family Partnership, another initiative by the school of nursing, offers support to first-time mothers by connecting them with specially trained nurses who work with vulnerable moms starting early in their pregnancy through the child’s second birthday.

The partnership aims to support the mental health of expecting and current mothers, Page said, as suicide is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality. In Texas in 2022, 5% of maternal deaths are the result of suicide, according to the National Library of Medicine.

“Let’s say they had a perfectly healthy pregnancy, normal delivery, healthy baby, yet, they feel depressed,” said Page, who specializes in maternal mental health research. “There’s a lot of stigma about that. It’s like, ‘Well, why are you feeling depressed? You just had a healthy pregnancy and a healthy delivery, and you have a healthy baby. You have no reason to be depressed.’ So, a lot of times women didn’t talk about it, they just kind of kept it to themselves and you could say they suffered in silence.”

Though it may be disheartening to see data showing the amount of new and expecting mothers who struggle with anxiety and depression, Page said it brings attention to the serious issue of poor mental health that may come along with pregnancy.

“We just have more data available, more information that people are reading about and hearing about, and people are shocked,” she said. “It’s like, ‘Oh, my gosh, that’s so sad to think about, that a woman may have been suffering in silence and just didn’t know where to go or felt too ashamed to ask for help.’ Sometimes, the partner might not recognize the symptoms or might not also know where to go or might also feel ashamed, so it’s a complex issue, but definitely, one that we have to keep looking at to see how we can help new mothers.”

New and expecting mothers can receive Medicaid coverage for up to two months after giving birth. With the start of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, expecting mothers received benefits from Medicaid for an extended three years as a result of the federal government’s Public Health Emergency Declaration. Continued coverage expired May 11, leaving many mothers scrambling for insurance.

In order to extend Medicaid benefits for new and expecting mothers, Rep. Toni Rose of Dallas authored Texas House Bill 12, which extends medical and mental health coverage from two months to 12 months. Signed by Gov. Greg Abbott on June 16, HB 12 extends aims to combat the rising death rate of new mothers in Texas.

In 2013, a majority of maternal deaths were women previously enrolled in Medicaid programs who were unable to receive critical postpartum care after the two-month extension deadline. Additionally, 31% of pregnancy-related deaths took place between 43 days to a year after the end of a pregnancy.

In a statement released by Rose's office, the representative shared how postpartum deaths affect Black women at a higher rate compared to their white counterparts.

"While all women are impacted, severe maternal morbidity and delivery hospitalizations involving hypertensive disorder disproportionately affects Black mothers in Texas," the statement read. "Although Black women made up only 11% of live births across the state, 31% of all maternal mortality deaths were among Black women."

Rose said she believes this legislative change will lower the rate of preventable medical issues in Texas mothers.

"I'm elated that women will be able to maintain comprehensive care postpartum," she said in the statement. "I am confident this measure will help eliminate our state's upward trend of postpartum deaths by providing health care earlier to women with medical and mental health issues."

As a result of preventable death, nearly 200 families across the state have been left without a mother, Lee said.

"Those are actual children who no longer have them because of what could have been a preventable death," she said. "When our report says 90% of deaths could be preventable by the change of at least one circumstance. ... It's going to take all of us working together and collaboratively in order to make those changes for our communities."

In addition to lowering the rate of preventable deaths, Lee said extended coverage will help the nearly 1 in 5 mothers who suffer from postpartum anxiety or depression receive the care they need.

"If she doesn't have that insurance coverage, she doesn't necessarily have the ability to pay for mental health counseling with a licensed social worker, with a physician or to get the medication she may need," she said. "With this extended coverage, she will be able to access that for 12 months. ... And in Texas, we are excited that approximately 480,000 individuals will now have coverage for up to a year after delivery, which is huge."

Nearly 1 in 4 women of child-bearing age are uninsured in Texas, according to March of Dimes Peristats. Undocumented immigrants face added barriers when looking for help or coverage during pregnancy, as they often don't qualify for state programs and services for expecting families, Page said.

For expectant mothers who cannot receive Medicaid, such as undocumented immigrants, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Perinatal is a state government program created to bridge the gap in maternal health care for individuals not eligible for Medicaid and is available to undocumented immigrants. With CHIP Perinatal, newborns receive additional care including regular checkups, immunizations and prescriptions, but mothers stop receiving care 60 days after giving birth.

Page said this causes many undocumented mothers to go without care as they continue to struggle with postpartum-related issues long after the 60-day deadline.

"I see this a lot in the clients, the patients, who I care for at the prenatal clinic," Page said. "We see a lot of undocumented immigrants in that clinic and it's really tough because we know that 60 days after they have their baby, they're going to get dropped from any kind of insurance. If they do have a complication or a problem, or we need medication to treat depression, something like that, there's not a whole lot of resources for them, because they're going to lose their insurance after 60 days. In particular, those immigrant women really fall through the cracks."



Despite disappointing data and low rankings, Page said she believes the future of women's health care in Texas is heading in the right direction.

"I think there are good things on the horizon," she said. "We know that programs like Nurse-Family Partnership can help. We know that the state is funding those programs, and the more people we can get into programs such as that, I think the better off the Texas women will be. So, there's hope."

[https://theeagle.com/news/local/business/health-care/brazos-valley-rural-areas-underserved-in-reproductive-care-women-s-health/article\\_a3b79d06-1d0d-11ee-8a59-7b8b5fab9271.html](https://theeagle.com/news/local/business/health-care/brazos-valley-rural-areas-underserved-in-reproductive-care-women-s-health/article_a3b79d06-1d0d-11ee-8a59-7b8b5fab9271.html)

## **Yahoo News**

### **The 'Quiet Disease' Lingerin**

Melinda Wenner Moyer

July 10

If your spit is sometimes tinged pink at least a couple of times a week after you brush or floss, it's possible you have early-stage gum disease. This condition can also have other surprising symptoms — or none.

"It's a very, very quiet disease," said DRodrigo Neiva, chair of periodontics at Penn Dental Medicine.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly half of American adults older than age 65 show signs of gum disease, and 9% have severe gum disease, known as periodontal disease.

When left untreated, gum disease can become more difficult to remedy. "Patients may eventually end up losing their teeth," Neiva said. And some research has connected periodontal disease with other health conditions, such as dementia, diabetes and heart disease.

Early gum disease is called gingivitis, and it is characterized by inflammation of the gums, also known as gingiva.

"It is caused by bacteria on teeth — plaque — that release products that irritate the gums," said Deborah Foyle, interim department head of periodontics at Texas A&M University School of Dentistry.

Good oral hygiene is key to preventing gum disease, because it removes plaque from the teeth before bacteria can harm the gums. Often, people develop gingivitis because they aren't brushing and flossing adequately. Sometimes, only parts of the gums become affected — especially the gums around the backs of the teeth where people often don't brush as well, Neiva said.

Dentists can diagnose gingivitis by using a special instrument that measures the distance between gums and teeth, said Y. Natalie Jeong, professor and chair of the department of periodontology at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. Larger spaces are indicative of the condition.

When gingivitis is left untreated, the bacteria can invade and destroy the tissues under the gums, causing advanced gum disease. "The bone supporting the teeth starts to break down, leaving the roots of the teeth exposed and sensitive in some cases," Foyle said. "Spaces develop between the teeth, and the teeth start to get loose."

People who smoke, have diabetes or grind their teeth have an increased chance of developing gum disease, Jeong said. Some medications, such as steroids, and certain epilepsy and cancer drugs, can also increase the risk. Genetics can also make people more or less susceptible, she noted.

People who rarely get cavities may be more likely than other people to get gum disease, too, Neiva said. That's because the bacteria that cause gum disease outcompete and suppress the bacteria that cause cavities.

"It's very common to see patients with very, very advanced periodontal disease not having a single cavity," he said.

Gingivitis often goes unnoticed because it doesn't cause pain. But people with gingivitis may notice that their gums bleed when they brush or floss, Neiva said. The part of the gums adjacent to their teeth may also look red rather than pink.

Smokers with gingivitis may not experience any bleeding or other symptoms, Jeong said. "People tend to think, 'OK, my gums never bleed, I should be just fine,'" she said — but that's a misconception.

Regular brushing and flossing can help prevent gum disease, but once gingivitis has set in, good oral hygiene at home may not be enough. That's because the bacteria may have started to accumulate below the gum level, Neiva said. In these cases, a professional cleaning and, sometimes, antibiotics, can treat — and cure — gingivitis.

Once gingivitis has progressed into more advanced periodontal disease, people's gums may start to recede, causing their teeth to look longer, Jeong said. They may also experience increased sensitivity around the gums. Their teeth may not fit together the same way when they bite because they have shifted, and they might have chronic bad breath. Eventually, their teeth may start to loosen and even fall out.

Advanced periodontal disease can be incurable. Dentists and periodontists can, however, recommend treatments that slow down or prevent further gum and bone loss. They may also deep-clean the roots of affected teeth and recommend gum surgery.

Keeping your gums healthy is ultimately simple: Brush twice a day, floss once a day and see your dentist for cleanings at least every six months, Neiva said.

"The sooner we detect it," he said, "the more we can do."

<https://news.yahoo.com/quiet-disease-lingering-mouths-174424347.html>

## **TEEX**

### **TEEX Hosts Ribbon-Cutting Event for Les W. Bunte Jr. Administration and Classroom Complex**

July 10

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS – On Thursday, July 6, more than 300 people came to Brayton Fire Training Field in College Station as Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) celebrated the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new Les W. Bunte Jr. Administration and Classroom Complex.

The first level of the 38,692-square-foot building houses an interactive lobby, adjustable classroom pods with interactive learning technology, an EMS pod, a recruit pod and a gift shop. Staff offices are located on the second floor, along with a computer lab and parents' room. The new classrooms seat up to 660 students, more than doubling the previous capacity.

The building is named for Chief Les W. Bunte Jr., a long-time leader in the Texas fire service. Chief Bunte started his career with the Austin Fire Department (AFD) in 1973 and was promoted through the ranks, serving as assistant chief from 1994-2002. While a full-time firefighter with AFD, he also led the Georgetown Fire Department, serving as their fire chief from 1977 to 1994.

In addition to his impact on the state of Texas, Chief Bunte also made significant contributions to TEEEX, beginning as a guest instructor at TEEEX's Annual Municipal Fire Training School in 1976. In 2003, after he retired from AFD, he was appointed division director of Fire and Emergency Services at TEEEX, where he served until 2011.

Under Chief Bunte's leadership, TEEEX's Fire Training School became increasingly focused on its core values and identity. As Chief Bunte recognized the importance of certification for firefighters, he enhanced and developed new certification programs. Moreover, he identified leadership as another critical area for the fire service and worked to create the first annual Leadership Development Symposium in 2009. The symposium now attracts more than 1,000 leaders in all areas of emergency services. The new building is a testament to Chief Bunte's leadership and dedication to TEEEX and the Texas Fire Service.

The TEEEX Brayton Fire Training Field is located near the Texas A&M University campus. Established in 1929 and expanding over the years, it is part of a 297-acre facility that attracts more than 45,000 emergency responders annually for training in firefighting, rescue, emergency medical services and hazardous materials.

<https://teex.org/news/teex-hosts-ribbon-cutting-event-for-les-w-bunte-jr-administration-and-classroom-complex/>

## **AgriLife Today**

### **Texas A&M AgriLife Research hosts USDA Undersecretary, U.S. Representative in El Paso**

July 10

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso on July 7 hosted federal policymakers and collaborators in the new Rio Grande Colonias U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Regional Food Business Center, led by Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

A roundtable discussion among the group — comprised of about a dozen organizations along Texas' and New Mexico's international borders — centered on the mission of the new USDA center to facilitate food business opportunities in the underserved communities.

Jennifer Moffit, USDA undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs, led the discussion with U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-El Paso; Beth Racine, Ph.D., director of the Texas A&M AgriLife center at El Paso; and Ricardo Samaniego, El Paso County Judge.

The roundtable session reviewed how the Regional Food Business Center will benefit colonias. Participants discussed the efforts their respective organizations will undertake to combat food insecurity across the USDA center's coverage region.

"It was a strong turnout and show of support for the important work of this new food business center," Racine said. "The discussions were fruitful, and our team is excited to embark on realizing the vision of the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center."

Participants in the roundtable discussion included La Semilla Food Center, University of Texas Health Center for Community Health Impact, People Fund, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement, Feeding Texas, Border City Distribution, Desert Spoon Food Hub and University of Texas-El Paso among others.

A collaboration to expand business opportunities in colonias

Headquartered at the Texas A&M AgriLife center in El Paso, the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center is one of 12 new USDA centers that will provide coordination, technical assistance and capacity building. Its goal is to help farmers, ranchers and other food businesses access new markets and navigate federal, state and local resources — closing gaps to success across the U.S.

USDA announced \$400 million in funding for the 12 centers in September 2022, with \$30 million to establish the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center.

"It was great to be here in El Paso and be able to meet with the organizations that are uniting to design the work of the Rio Grande Colonias Regional Food Business Center," Moffit said. "Communities need and deserve a strong local food system — one that brings more of the food dollar back to farmers and ranchers, builds resilient and diversified markets, creates local jobs, and provides nutrition security for all."

"I believe very strongly in locally led solutions, that we achieve more when people who are established and trusted in the region are empowered. And today, with the partners I met with, I see a recipe for success. Partnerships, locally led initiatives, innovative producers and communities working to build a shorter food value chain — this is a recipe for success."

Escobar said the visit once again "underscores the Biden Administration's commitment to investing in our communities where we need it most."

"As Congress begins considering the farm bill reauthorization, I'm proud to reiterate the need to increase federal funding and representation for families in El Paso's colonias, strengthen food supply chains, and support and bolster our local farms," Escobar said.

Samaniego added, "The County of El Paso is thrilled to join our Texas A&M AgriLife center in the establishment of the Regional Food Business Center. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves in service to area producers and entrepreneurs — putting their unique products on the map, while addressing food insecurity among the most vulnerable populations throughout Texas and New Mexico."

What's next

Collaborators in the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center will now work to increase its roster of collaborators and colonia stakeholders along the U.S.-Mexico border. Immediate next steps of the

center will be to hire staff, develop a governing structure using collective impact principles, build awareness of the new center, and identify eligible small- and medium-sized food and farm businesses that may benefit from the center's work.

<https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2023/07/10/texas-am-agrilife-research-hosts-usda-undersecretary-u-s-representative-in-el-paso/>

## **Feedlot Magazine**

### **June Heat Stress Hurts Texas Agriculture**

Adam Russell

16 hours ago

A June heat wave caused agricultural conditions to decline around much of the state after steady improvements over the previous month, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts.

May rains dramatically improved soil moisture conditions in many drought-stricken areas of Texas, but triple-digit temperatures and little to no rain in June were trending many areas back toward drought. Various crops around the state were showing stress from high temperatures and lack of soil moisture, and livestock gains likely experienced heat-related declines.

Heat wave takes toll on Texas crops

The heat wave was especially harsh in the southern half of the state, where some areas experienced record temperatures.

All plants and vegetation experience heat stress during extreme daytime and nighttime temperatures like Texas experienced over recent weeks. Heat and inadequate soil moisture can stress plants, damage their cell membranes and disrupt metabolic efficiency during processes like photosynthesis and respiration, said Lee Tarpley, Ph.D., AgriLife Research plant physiologist, Beaumont.

But the combination of high daytime and nighttime temperatures can also economically damage commodity crops, especially during sensitive growth periods like pollination and flowering.

Tarpley said the heat wave was rough on late-planted rice along the Coastal Bend. Yield potentials were high following good spring rains, but the heat arrived at a sensitive development stage for some fields – pollination. High temperatures can also negatively impact the viability of pollen, which can influence how the ultimate crop sets and fills out.

Similar setbacks are occurring in cotton fields that were setting bolls during the heat wave. Stressed cotton plants were aborting bolls in an attempt to hang on as heat indexes near 120 degrees put plants in survival mode, said Josh McGinty, AgriLife Extension agronomist, Corpus Christi.

Cotton crops were having difficulty withstanding the heat over the previous three weeks without adequate moisture, he said. Boll losses were especially bad in dryland fields where soil moisture levels have continued to decline. But even irrigation has not been enough as nighttime lows rarely dropped below 80 degrees.

McGinty said high nighttime temperatures were not allowing cotton plants to shed the heat, which was causing plants to increase respiration. Increased respiration takes resources away from developing bolls.

“Small bolls are the first that the plant will sacrifice when energy reserves are depleted, but if the trend continues, larger bolls will be shed,” he said. “That shedding is evident with small bolls littering the ground in cotton fields.”

Not all the news about the arid conditions was bad. Larry Stein, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension horticulturist, Uvalde, said cantaloupe and watermelon fields in the Winter Garden and Central Texas were producing high-quality, super-sweet fruit. Irrigated vines were thriving, and brix counts were rising under the dry, hot conditions. Brix is the measurement of sugar in fruit.

But overall, Stein said conditions are declining, even for irrigated crops. Heat is not the problem though, it’s the lack of moisture.

“Vegetation is starting to burn up,” he said. “If you can maintain sufficient moisture for plants then they can cool with transpiration from the leaves, but the problem I see with the heat is stress and the other problems like spider mites and aphids, and everything takes its toll.”

#### Heat impacting livestock production

The heat wave took a toll on more than just crops. Jason Cleere, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, Bryan-College Station, said cattle performance in high temperatures typically declines. Higher nighttime temperatures make it a challenge to get their core body temperature down. Their grazing may also reduce as they try to avoid activity in the sun.

Cleere said Texas heat shows the importance of choosing cattle adapted to more tropical conditions like breeds with Brahman influence.

Forage production for hay, silage and grazing was very good over the last month, Cleere said. Producers were having problems with delays due to rain and excess moisture prior to the heat wave, but the arid conditions were sapping soil moisture levels quickly.

Cleere said it is critical that cattle have adequate shade and fresh water during hot conditions. A cow can drink 20-40 gallons of water per day, depending on the moisture in the grass they are consuming. Cattle should have enough shade to spread out and cool down.

“A small shade structure where they can all barely fit under might be worse than no shade if they’re piled up,” he said.

#### June among hottest, coolest for parts of the state

John Nielsen-Gammon, Ph.D., Texas state climatologist and Regents Professor in the Texas A&M Department of Atmospheric Sciences, Bryan-College Station, said the heat wave produced eight “all-time” temperature and heat index records, from Tahoka to Cotulla. June was one of the 10 hottest on record for South Texas.

Most of the state recorded multiple days over 100 degrees, including half the month of June along the Texas-Mexico border up to Midland, five days in triple-digits in Dallas/Fort Worth and Bryan-College Station and three

days in Houston.

Conversely, it was cooler than normal in northern parts of the state and one of the coolest Junes on record in Dalhart, near the top of the Texas Panhandle.

“It’s not the hottest summer so far,” he said. “But it’s been quite a bit more humid from all the rain in April and May, and that is where people are really feeling the heat.”

Nielsen-Gammon said high humidity and temperatures contributed to heat indexes well beyond 100 degrees. The dew point, the temperature at which dew forms, was around 70-75 degrees in Central Texas, which translates into an “icky” heat.

But the heat wave has also included a dry spell for much of the state, Nielsen-Gammon said. The same high-pressure system that kept the weather hot kept thunderstorms away from most of the state. The heat has sapped topsoil moisture from previous rains quickly in some areas of the state.

This drying down puts many areas at risk of returning to drought conditions following the earlier rains that had significantly reduced the amount of severely dry conditions, Nielsen-Gammon said. Dry conditions also contribute to higher temperatures because there is no evaporative cooling in the air.

“If we don’t get a decent amount of rain in the next few weeks, we will see more vegetation turning brown and crops suffering,” he said. “The Panhandle and East Texas have gotten enough rain, but the areas that are marginally out of drought are definitely at risk of slipping back.”

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries:

#### CENTRAL

There was limited rainfall coupled with another week of 100-plus degree days with even higher heat indexes. Soil moisture levels were short. Dry and hot conditions were affecting all crops. Hot, dry wind depleted soil moisture quickly. Pastures were beginning to turn brown. Hay baling continued but slowed due to the lack of new growth. Rangeland and pasture ratings were poor to fair. The wheat harvest was winding down, and corn silage harvest was underway. Sorghum fields were colored. Cotton was mostly in bloom. Some dryland sesame fields were planted. Fiber hemp was holding on in the heat but needed rain to improve fiber yield. Fly and tick numbers started increasing. Livestock were in good condition.

#### ROLLING PLAINS

A few areas caught much-needed rains and relief from high temperatures. However, most areas reported extremely hot and dry conditions. Wheat harvest and cotton planting were completed. Cotton looked poor so far in areas that did not receive rain. Rain was needed to maintain or improve livestock grazing conditions and fill water tanks.

#### COASTAL BEND

Topsoil moisture continued to decline with hot, dry conditions. Corn was in the dry-down stage. The dry-down stage was sped up by the last three weeks of 90-plus degree days and dry weather. Sorghum harvest was underway, and some corn was being harvested. Rice was 75% headed out. Pecan trees began shedding nuts

due to dry conditions. Most first cuttings of hay were complete. Rangeland and pasture conditions continued to decline. Improved pastures were drying up fast. Livestock markets were holding strong, and cattle were doing well, but rain was needed for grass growth.

#### EAST

Above-average temperatures and lack of rainfall caused soil moisture levels to dry up quickly. Subsoil conditions were adequate, but topsoil conditions were short to adequate. Pasture and rangeland conditions were good overall. Hay production continued and above-average yields were reported. Rain will be needed for continued grass growth for hay and grazing. Livestock were in fair to good condition. Some areas were experiencing growing grasshopper numbers. Wild pig activity and damage continued.

#### SOUTH PLAINS

Farmers continued to benefit from showers that delivered trace amounts of rain up to 1.2 inches across the district. Heavier rainfall totals were reported in western parts of the district. Cotton was in good condition, and corn was progressing well. Most farmers had to do very little irrigating due to the rainfall. Cattle were in good condition and taking advantage of the improved grazing.

#### PANHANDLE

The week was extremely hot with field conditions drying out fast, and temperatures reaching at or above triple digits. Irrigation systems were running where water was available. Producers were busy trying finish up planting and replanting summer crops. Wheat harvest was underway with average to slightly above average yields in irrigated fields. All crops needed rain. Corn was coming along but slightly behind on maturity levels compared to average years. Cotton was struggling in some areas and wilting under the extremely hot conditions, but other areas reported the crop was in good condition. Most pastures and rangeland were in good condition after recent rains helped grasses. Livestock were also in good condition with supplemental feeding happening on a very small scale. Producers finished baling hay and wheat that replenished hay supplies.

#### NORTH

Pasture and rangeland conditions were fair to excellent for most counties. Both subsoil and topsoil moisture were short to adequate. Light showers were reported by several counties. More rain would help crops through the extremely high temperatures. Wheat, corn, grain sorghum and soybeans all looked good. Bermuda grass was cut and baled. Insect pressure was increasing. Nuisance flies were heavy in the livestock area and house flies were thriving. Pockets of grasshoppers were in the pastures. Livestock conditions were good and continuing to improve.

#### FAR WEST

Temperatures were in the triple digits before dropping into the upper 90s with a few isolated showers that delivered trace amounts of rain. Cooler temperatures toward the end of the week eased the stress in cotton that had been suffering since it emerged. Irrigation was not keeping up with demand, and subsoil moisture was very short. Despite cooler temperatures, hot, dry winds continued to blow, which damaged crops and prevented herbicide applications. The earliest planted cotton was blooming. Some grain sorghum fields were beginning to head out, and melons should be ready for harvest soon. The first picking will most likely be light this season. Early planted corn looked decent as it pollinated before the extreme heat. However, later-planted



corn showed poor kernel set and most all fields were burning up due to lack of moisture and not enough irrigation to keep up with demand. Pastures and rangelands were drying up rapidly and there was very little grazing available. Ranchers shipped all lambs off, and some goats were left to market. Ranchers continued to supplement livestock diets.

#### WEST CENTRAL

Conditions were extremely hot and humid with high temperatures over 100 degrees. Isolated locations received trace amounts of rain up to nearly 1 inch, but soil moisture levels were declining in most areas. The heat was taking a toll on crops and pastures. Grasses were turning brown. Fields that were not plowed were too hard to work. Hay harvests continued, and producers were cutting Sudan grass. Pasture and rangeland conditions were declining rapidly and showing signs of heat stress. Livestock body conditions were holding, and a few producers were putting out hay bales. Stock tanks were running low on water. Cattle prices were steady to higher, and demand for stockers was high. Producers finished planting and replanting cotton. Cotton progress ranged from squaring to emerging. Irrigated cotton and early planted dryland fields were in good condition but will need rainfall soon. Some young cotton was struggling along with corn and sorghum. Wheat harvest was complete. Pest pressure was increasing. The pecan crop outlook was poor to good depending on the variety.

#### SOUTHWEST

A heat wave continued to put high stress on agricultural production. Hot, humid conditions persisted, but rain ranging from 0.5-6.5 inches was reported over the weekend. Several locations reported 1-2 inches of rainfall. The rainfall will benefit later-planted corn and grain sorghum crops, cotton and pastures. Grain sorghum was coloring. Pecans were progressing. Grasshopper numbers remained high due to dry weather conditions; however, no significant damage was reported. Cotton was squaring but needed rain before plants begin to drop squares. Hay was being cut and baled, but rangeland and pasture conditions were declining in areas. Livestock markets were consistently high. Cooler temperatures were in the forecast.

#### SOUTH

Conditions were very hot. Topsoil and subsoil moisture levels continued to decline. Irrigated cotton continued to develop and started to set bolls. Peanut planting was completed, and fruit and vegetable production was slowing. Early planted peanuts were pegging. Corn fields were in the denting stage or drying down. Grain sorghum, sunflower and corn harvests were underway in some areas, and yields looked good. Dryland and irrigated cotton were showing heat stress, and plants were showing wilted leaves and shedding bolls and squares. Whiteflies were reported in cotton. Citrus and sugarcane were being irrigated. Sesame fields looked good. Hay grazer and Bermuda grass fields were being cut and baled, and producers continued to provide supplemental feed. Livestock conditions remained good, but pastures were burning up. Hay supplies were improving from recent production. Livestock and wildlife were in good condition, but body conditions were in decline due to heat stress. Quail pairs had not produced hatchlings. Rangeland conditions were declining. Beef cattle markets reported higher sale volumes as producers culled deeper. Producers were supplying water for livestock and wildlife.

[https://www.feedlotmagazine.com/news/industry\\_news/june-heat-stress-hurts-texas-agriculture/article\\_e3c0b1ce-1ea9-11ee-9ba6-bfd16ad97fae.html](https://www.feedlotmagazine.com/news/industry_news/june-heat-stress-hurts-texas-agriculture/article_e3c0b1ce-1ea9-11ee-9ba6-bfd16ad97fae.html)

## **KWTX**

### **What possible \$18 billion property tax relief could mean for central Texas**

Jasmine Lotts

July 10

WACO, Texas (KWTX) - Texas Lawmakers agreed on a deal worth about \$18 billion to bring property tax relief to homeowners and businesses.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan announced a deal this morning after a months-long standstill.

Experts like Rob Tennant, an accounting professor for Texas A&M University-Central Texas, said this is a win-win for the taxpayer and the economy.

“It will definitely infuse a large amount of cash back into the Texas economy. It will help families that have been struggling with the rapid rate of growth within the last five years.”

School districts affect the value of nearby homes.

The president of the Waco Association of Realtors, Mike Sims, weighs in as more than \$12 billion will be spent on reducing the school property tax rate for homeowners and businesses.

“That’s where the biggest reduction is coming from. The state is going to be funding the schools from their budget, instead of the homeowner’s budget.”

Senator Paul Bettencourt, the author of Senate Bills 2 and 3, said regular homeowners will save about \$1,266 in year one and \$1,312 in year two, while those who are disabled or over the age of 65 will save a little more on their school district property tax bill.

More than 5 million Texas homeowners will get a \$60,000 increase in their homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000. That tax break reduces your homes taxable value.

“It’s almost three times larger of the exemption. Less of your house is being taxed, is the simple way of putting it,” said Tennant.

As part of a temporary three-year program, the value of rental or commercial properties worth less than \$5 million cannot go up more than 20%.

The biggest concern for investors? What happens when the three years are up?

“In later years there’s uncertainty because for it to continue, the legislature would have to extend it,” said Tennant.

“10 years from now, are they going to be able to do this? Right now, they can because of that rainy day fund they have. So hopefully they’re able to do this during the downturn,” said Sims.

Local experts said some property relief is necessary because most homeowners in central Texas cannot afford

their property taxes.

<https://www.kwtx.com/2023/07/11/what-possible-18-billion-property-tax-relief-could-mean-central-texas/>

## **KKYR**

### **A&M-Texarkana Receives Funding For New Degrees & Outreach Programs**

July 10

Texas A&M University-Texarkana has received some great news about the funding for Phase 3 of its Better East Texas Initiative (BET3) from the 88th Texas Legislature.

The Legislature has set aside \$4.9 million to go toward academics and outreach programs to our area.

There are four academic programs that will be developed through BET 3.

Doctorate of Nursing Practice, Master of Healthcare Administration, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and Master of Science in Engineering Management.

This is a great opportunity for our area. These degrees aren't offered in our area. The closest schools are two to four hours away to study these majors.

The other great program that will receive funding from BET3 are outreach programs at A&M-Texarkana. These programs help with labor shortages and economic needs in our area.

The East Texas Stem Center benefits from this as well with TAMU-Texarkana's engineering and computer science and work with local schools and encourages students to go into STEM majors because of the growing need of that profession in our area.

A&M-Texarkana will also work with Texarkana College and Regional Economic Development, Inc. (AR-TX REDI) to help support business startups and entrepreneurial activity in the area too.

Texas A&M University-Texarkana President Dr. Emily Cutrer said in a press release;

“Texas A&M University-Texarkana is grateful to the 88th Texas Legislature for its continued support of our Better East Texas initiative and particularly appreciative of the leadership and support of Representative Gary VanDeaver and Senator Bryan Hughes. Because of their investment in these new degree and outreach programs, the economic, healthcare, and educational future of East Texas and beyond is brighter.”

<https://kkyr.com/am-texarkana-receives-funding-for-new-degrees-outreach-programs/>

## **Amarillo Globe News**

### **WT police warns of reported stalking incidents on or near campus**

July 10

The University Police Department at West Texas A&M University announced reports of another possible stalking incident on or near campus last week after reports surfaced earlier this year.

On July 5, the university "was made aware of domestic violence and stalking incidents occurring in on- and off-campus locations, including a residential facility," a news release notes. "The incidents were reported to have begun in June 2023, continuing into July."

Crime victim rights and options and domestic violence information were provided. Title IX is aware of the reported incidents, according to the university.

How to help and what to look out for in cases of stalking or abuse

The police department notes that a few signs of an abusive relationship or stalking include:

Assaultive abuse may be physical, emotional and/or verbal.

Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you.

Makes unwanted phone calls, texts, or social media posts.

Assaultive abuse may include damaging property, throwing objects, punching walls, kicking doors, etc.

Here's how you can help prevent such incidents:

Bystanders play a critical role in the prevention of sexual and relationship violence. Make the choice to intervene, speak up, or do something about it.

Believe someone who discloses sexual assault, abusive behavior, or experience with stalking.

Watch out for friends and fellow students or employees who look like they could be in trouble or need help.

Ask if they are ok.

Stalking Resource Center <https://victimsofcrime.org/stalking-resource-center/>

<https://www.amarillo.com/story/news/2023/07/10/west-texas-am-domestic-violence-and-stalking-incidents-reported/70399498007/>

## **The Eagle**

### **Three Texas A&M baseball players selected during the second day of 2023 MLB draft Travis Brown**

12 hours ago

Texas A&M third baseman Trevor Werner was following the 2023 Major League Baseball draft on his iPad, but technology didn't produce the alert that let him know he had been selected in the seventh round by the Kansas City Royals.

His mom screamed from another room in the house.

"I knew something had gone off, and she came over and gave me a big hug, and then I saw my name," Werner said. "It was pretty surreal."

Werner was one of three Aggie baseball players selected during the second day of the MLB draft Monday,

including pitcher Nathan Dettmer and shortstop Hunter Haas. Monday consisted of Rounds 3-10 of the 20-round event. No Aggies were taken in the first two rounds on Sunday's opening night.

Haas, an Arizona State transfer, heard his name called first as the 120th overall pick (fourth round) by the Tampa Bay Rays. The Oakland Athletics took Dettmer with the 139th pick (fifth round), followed by Werner as the 199th pick (seventh round) by the Royals.

Both Werner and Dettmer confirmed with The Eagle their desire to move on to professional baseball and sign with the teams that drafted them. The A&M baseball program also expects Haas to forego his senior season and sign with the Rays.

Werner unexpectedly was announced on the draft broadcast as a two-way player, but he said teams have expressed interest in his ability to pitch. He pitched out of the bullpen for the Aggies during his freshman season, going 2-0 with a 7.71 ERA in 9 1/3 innings, while boasting an upper-90s fastball. He struck out 11 batters.

While playing with the Cape Cod League Brewster Whitecaps this summer, he said scouts asked to seem him throw off a mound.

"They're still in on the position side, but the arm has always been there," Werner said. "So they're intrigued by that as well."

Werner hit .251 with a .348 on-base percentage and .459 slugging percentage over his four seasons at A&M. He had 21 home runs and 97 RBIs.

He joins former Aggie starter and 2020 fourth-overall pick Asa Lacy in the Royals organization. Werner said he knows the Royals have a knack for moving successful prospects through the minors quickly, citing 2019 second-overall selection and Texas native Bobby Witt Jr. as an example.

"It's going to be good to see Asa around at some point," Werner said. "Working out with him and getting to know him at A&M in my time there was cool. Getting to see him in a Royals uniform and getting to join him maybe at some point, it would be pretty surreal and a full-circle moment."

Prior to the draft, Werner said he reached out to former A&M starter Micah Dallas for advice on the transition from amateur to professional ball. Dallas was drafted by the Athletics in the eighth round last year.

"He's a five-tool athlete," Dallas said of Werner. "I think Trevor and Dettmer are some of the biggest steals of the draft, because they weren't in the position before the draft where they wanted to be, but with the right development and stuff, they're going to be in the big leagues in a couple of years."

While sitting alongside Lake Tahoe on Monday, Dallas said his phone started blowing up with text messages out of the blue. Then he realized his former rotation mate and buddy Dettmer was selected by the Athletics.

"I was super stoked," Dallas said. "I started telling all the guys about him and that I think he's going to be a good fit."

Before his name was called, Dettmer was sitting on his couch surrounded by family, imagining what life could be like in the Athletics organization. A's scouts had been interested in Dettmer when he graduated from San

Antonio Johnson, but they fell by the wayside over the years to follow, so his selection by the organization came as a little bit of a welcomed surprise, he said.

“Right when it happens, my heart just exploded,” Dettmer said. “That’s just how I felt. I hug my whole family. My grandparents, my parents ... they just started crying.”

Dallas transferred to A&M from Texas Tech prior to the 2022 season and formed a quick bond with Dettmer. Dallas initially said the bond was based on their combined desire to compete and shared work ethic. But when neither was on the mound, television cameras frequently caught the pair keeping things loose in the Aggie dugout.

“That’s how we get going with each other,” Dallas said. “He’s going to fit in just nice here. All the guys here are pretty goofy, and we love to joke around with each other and not take it too seriously when you don’t need to.”

Their similar personalities drew the two pitchers together initially and will hopefully push them to greater heights in the future, Dettmer said.

“We just hit it off,” Dettmer said. “We have the best time together. I just love that guy, and I think we’re also similar competitively. It’s going to be fun if we’re on the same time or competing for a spot. We’re just going to make each other better.”

Dettmer was a key part of the Aggie weekend rotation the last two years. In three seasons at A&M he went 10-9 with a 5.27 ERA, 196 strikeouts and 94 walks. Opponents hit .271 against the right-hander.

Dallas said some of the Athletics’ scouting team reached out to him about Dettmer prior to the draft, and he put in a good word for his friend. After they secured the pick, an A’s scout texted Dallas to let him know they added the Aggie to the organization.

Should Dettmer follow Dallas’ path, he will report to the Arizona Complex League before getting assigned near the end of the season. There is a chance both could finish out the season with the Class A Stockton Ports.

“He’s going to be a great addition, and I couldn’t stop smiling when I saw that,” Dallas said.

Dettmer said it felt a little like destiny.

“I’m a huge believer that everything happens for a reason, and I’m going to this organization because he’s already there, and I can have a guy who I can ask some questions if I need it, who has already been through a year before me,” Dettmer said. “So I can pick his brain on some things and maybe get help.”

Though they never played in Aggieland together, Haas joins a Rays organization that also features former A&M pitcher John Doxakis.

Haas led the Aggies in walks this season with 39, while hitting .323 with 10 home runs and 46 RBIs.

“Only got one year with him at A&M, but what an impact he had in his one year coming from Arizona State, following [hitting coach] Mike Earley from there,” Werner said. “His immediate impact on the team and showing what he could do in the SEC got him to where he’s at now.”

While the Aggies lost three players to the draft, they gained two important commitments in Gavin Grahovac and Caden Sorrell, who both confirmed on social media they will pull their names from the draft and play college ball.

Grahovac, an outfielder from Orange, California, is ranked the 10th-best outfielder in the class of 2023 and second in the state of California, according to Perfect Game. Sorrell, of Flower Mound Marcus, is the 19th-best outfielder in the country and the ninth-best overall player in Texas, according to the same recruiting service.

The draft concludes beginning at 1 p.m. Tuesday with Rounds 11-20. A&M juniors Jack Moss and Ryan Targac and seniors Austin Bost, Brett Minnich, Jordan Thompson and Carson Lambert each have a chance to hear their name called.

[https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/baseball/three-texas-a-m-baseball-players-selected-during-the-second-day-of-2023-mlb-draft/article\\_45bd0af2-1f78-11ee-b11c-074851e4e741.html?utm\\_source=theeagle.com&utm\\_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm\\_medium=PostUp&utm\\_content=6988668&utm\\_email\\_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248](https://theeagle.com/sports/college/aggiesports/baseball/three-texas-a-m-baseball-players-selected-during-the-second-day-of-2023-mlb-draft/article_45bd0af2-1f78-11ee-b11c-074851e4e741.html?utm_source=theeagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter-templates%2Fdaily-headlines&utm_medium=PostUp&utm_content=6988668&utm_email_eh1=ef1db143f9a25ee1415561bdc20fcc45ecca248)

## **The Eagle**

### **Cessna: Texas A&M did a good job of recruiting Terry Price twice**

12 hours ago

The best decision in Kevin Sumlin's six years as Texas A&M's head football coach was going with Johnny Manziel as starting quarterback over Jameill Showers. But maybe the smartest decision by the former Aggie coach was hiring Terry Price as an assistant.

Price was a popular hire because he played at A&M, but at the time he wasn't the home-run hire of Sumlin's first staff, which also included offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury, defensive coordinator Mark Snyder, co-defensive coordinator Marcel Yates and running backs coach/recruiting coordinator Clarence McKinney.

Eleven seasons later, Price hands-down had the biggest impact on the program. Sumlin was smart enough to get him here, and current head coach Jimbo Fisher saw the same thing in keeping Price.

"A coach will impact more young people in one year than the average person will do in an entire lifetime," evangelist Billy Graham said.

That goes double for the 55-year-old Price, who died last month reportedly of cancer. The defensive line coach made his players better, and they respected him. He could get in their face because off the field he was one of their best friends. The coaches he worked for loved him because he shot straight. He told them what he thought they needed to hear, not what they hoped to hear. Price walked his talk 24/7, and no one tried to change him — they just envied him.

"I've never heard a bad story about Terry Price," Fisher said at Price's Celebration of Life at Central Baptist Church. "I never heard a bad comment about Terry Price. We all should be so lucky."

Price's character and personality made him an excellent recruiter, which is the main reason he was brought

home by Sumlin, who as an assistant Oklahoma from 2003-07 kept recruiting against Price, who was at Auburn.

"I ran into him at Atlanta. This guy was everywhere," Sumlin said. "We were at the same schools every day, and then I'd call guys at night, and they'd say, 'Well, coach, I'd like to visit, but I already got a visit to Auburn.'

"I'd say, 'Who's recruiting you?' They'd say, 'Coach Price.'"

Sumlin would call the next recruit and the next recruit with the same result.

"Finally, we got together and he said, 'Let's get something to eat,'" Sumlin said. "He knows everybody everywhere in Atlanta, right ... little bitty hole in the wall places, good food, mostly barbecue."

Sumlin was glad when they started butting recruiting heads in Memphis, thinking the playing field would be level. It wasn't even close. Price early in his coaching career along with other staff members formed a barbecue-cooking team called "The Pigskins." Price along with longtime Auburn and Ole Miss defensive tackle Don Dunn won first place in the Memphis May International Festival's World Barbecue Cooking Contest one year with Price's ribs placing in the top 10.

"I'm finally getting ahead of this guy in Memphis, right?" Sumlin said. "But no, he's there winning a damn barbecue contest."

Price managed to land recruits OU wanted.

Sumlin, though, was good enough recruiter and coach under OU's Bob Stoops to get hired as head coach at Houston, where he had great success, going 35-17 from 2008-11. Sumlin also wasn't recruiting much against Price, who had moved to Ole Miss for the 2009-11 seasons. But a few days after Sumlin was named head coach at A&M in December 2011, he called Price, who had been hired at Texas Tech.

"We're a perfect fit," Sumlin said. "I know this guy is a great recruiter. I know he's a great D-line coach. I know he is a former student of Texas A&M. So we're a fit."

It turned out to be a tough sale.

Veteran head coach Tommy Tuberville, who also coached at Ole Miss and Auburn, had taken care of Price and his family. Tuberville gave Price his first big break, plucking him from Western Kentucky to Ole Miss in 1995. When Tuberville was hired at Auburn in 1999, he took Price with him. Tuberville resigned at Auburn after the 2008 season with Price hired by Houston Nutt at Ole Miss. Nutt was fired late in the 2011 season but allowed to finish it. Price then landed with Tuberville, who had been at Texas Tech two seasons.

Price and his wife, Kenya, were indebted to Tuberville, but Sumlin also is a good recruiter and starting selling A&M during that first call.

"I said to TP, go to the window and look outside," Sumlin said. "What do you see?"

It was snowing, coming down hard sideways because of the wind.

"It's Lubbock," Sumlin said. "And anybody who knows TP knows that he can't stand to be cold. He'd look for mittens and gloves if it's below 60 degrees outside."



Sumlin also sent Price a text of College Station's weather conditions: 75 degrees and ideal.

"I don't know," Price said. "We're here. We're with Coach Tuberville."

Sumlin told Price to again look out the window.

"He's like, 'You're right,'" Sumlin said. "I said, 'We're going to send a plane for you. I gotta go recruit. I gotta a couple visits, but we're going to send a plane for you. You just be on it, and when I get back, we'll sit down and talk about everything else.'"

Price later called Sumlin, saying he had doubts though his bags were packed.

"We're going to get on the plane," Price said. "But it's going to take some work with Miss Kenya."

Sumlin was able to land Price with help from retired A&M head coach R.C. Slocum, who was defensive coordinator under Jackie Sherrill when they recruited Price out of Plano.

"Terry calls me and he says, 'Coach, I'm in a bind,'" Slocum said. "I'm out here at Tech with Coach Tuberville and Coach Sumlin called and he wants me to come to A&M."

Slocum asked Price what he wanted.

"I'd really like to go to A&M, but it's kind of awkward," Price said.

Slocum supplied the final selling point.

"I said Terry, let me tell you something, son," Slocum said. "If A&M were to call Coach Tuberville today and say we want you to be our head coach, he'd be down here before the sun's down. I said you go in there and have your mind made up, because he'll try to lean on you. But you go in there and tell him you're going back to A&M. You're going back home."

Price was hired by Texas Tech on Dec. 12. He didn't make the jump to A&M official until the middle of February. What a steal. He did yeomen's work for the Aggies for more than a decade.

"I've enjoyed watching him coach," Slocum said. "He's such a wonderful guy. Winning championships and all that is a lot of fun for coaches, but the real meaning in coaching is seeing those guys that you'd had ... develop and grow."

Slocum and Sherrill took pride in playing a part in the man that Price became and now the players who Price coached are ready to become his disciples.

Former A&M defensive end Damontre Moore during his reflections quoted Rudyard Kipling's "for the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack."

Price challenged his players to be committed. Now it's up to them to continue Price's legacy and values, Moore said.

"Not only in football," Moore said, "but in being a man and being a person, be committed to that. [We] are his

pack. This wolf right here, he led us and he guided us. Well, now is our time as a pack to be here for Miss Kenya, for [his sons]. It was a tree that he built. I came from his tree. Myles [Garrett] came from his tree. Y'all are [from] his tree. And guess, what? Now it's time for y'all to sprout your roots and go on and do whatcha you're gonna do."

#### FIRST RECRUITMENT

Price's first commitment to A&M was different as well.

Legendary Plano coach Tom Kimbrough and Price's family allowed no college recruiting visits, calls or contact during the football season. Anyone not abiding would be out of the running for Price's services.

At the end of the season, Kimbrough and the Prices would decide what schools would make a home visit.

Slocum said it was possibly the easiest recruitment, because they weren't allowed to do anything. Price's father, Otis, informed A&M they'd have an in-house visit.

Approximately a week after the home visit, A&M learned Price would make one of his first campus visits to A&M, which would come on the last weekend a recruit could visit before national signing day.

"I said that's good, except you realize that all those other schools will be doing everything they can do to keep y'all from coming to A&M," Slocum said. "They said, yeah, that's probably true, but they'll be out of the picture."

Price's recruiting visit included a first and last for Slocum — Price showed up in a coat and tie.

A&M couldn't take much credit for Price's character. That came ready made.

"He was what he is and was," Slocum said. "When he showed up, he had great training. He came from a great family. We never had one problem out of him. He was a great influence for the guys he played with."

Sherrill knew more about a player from meeting his mother than any recruiting tape, and Willena Kimpson Price was at the top of the list.

"You can see a great athlete make plays, but you have no idea about the character," Sherrill said, adding that he knew immediately Price admired, respected and loved his mother. "There was not a time in 38 years that on a phone call or in a personal meeting that he didn't talk about his family, his wife and his two kids, but he always ended talking about his mom."

Price's mother was one of the last to speak at Saturday's service, thanking so many people for the care and attention "to my sweet baby."

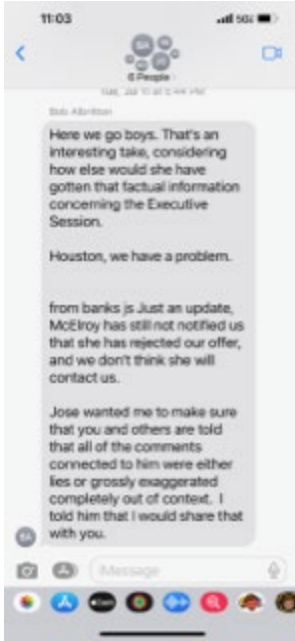
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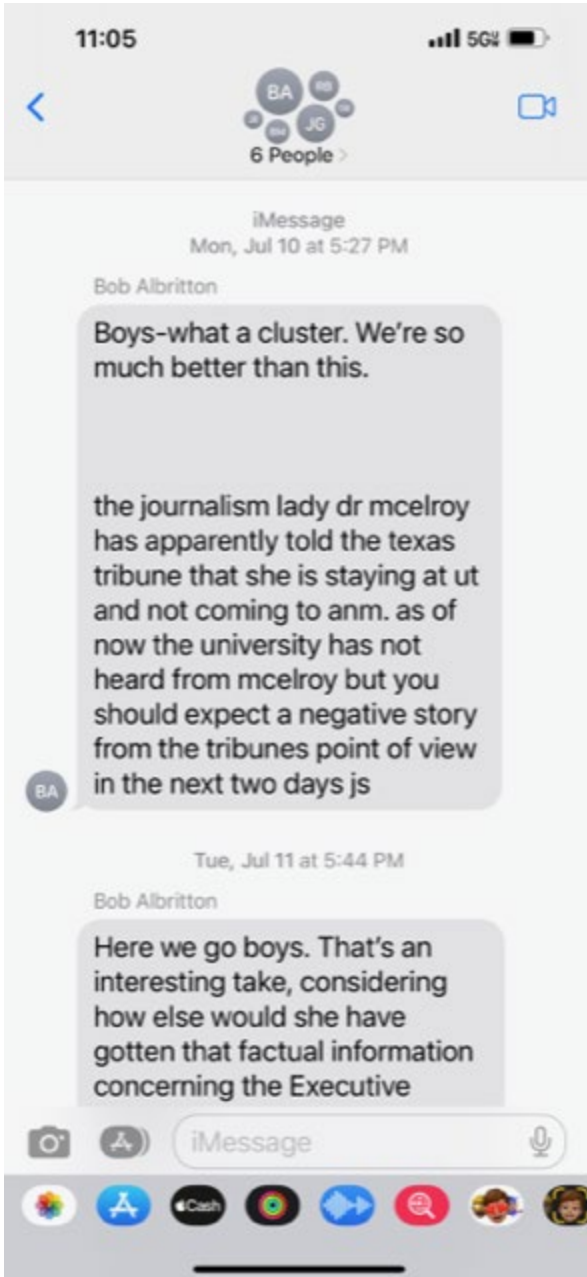
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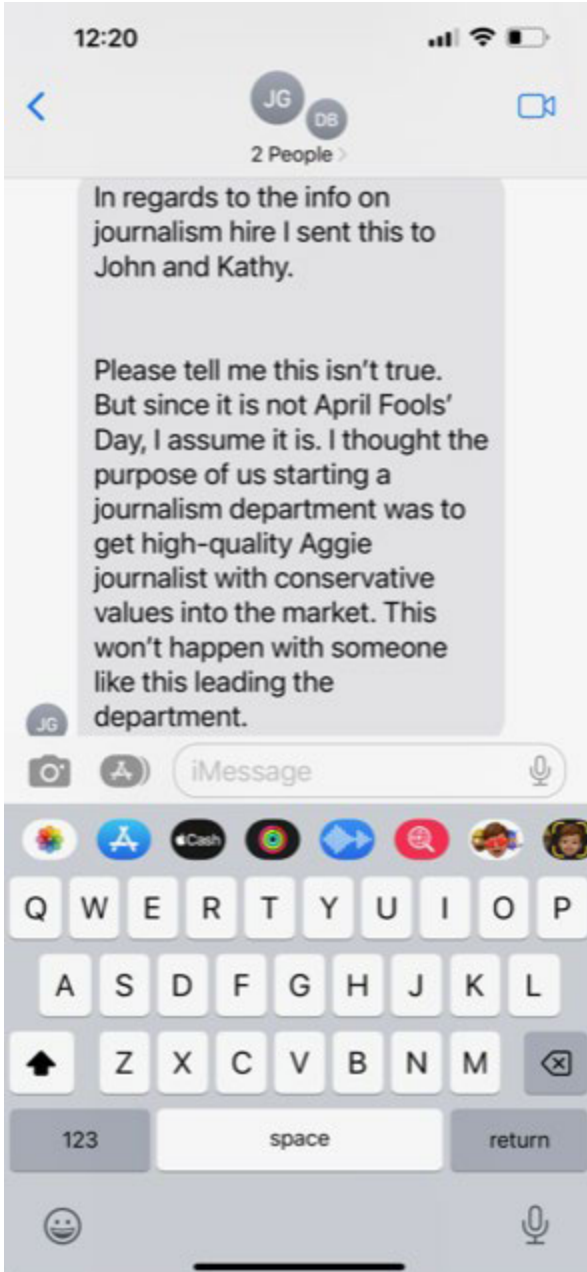
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The Texas A&M University System

**Caution: This e-mail is from an external sender.**







Photo

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john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**New Texas A&M  
journalism director  
Kathleen McElroy to  
return to Texas**

theeagle.com

no tribune story yet  
Could care less about  
Texas Tribune articles but  
do want to know if she is  
coming to A&M or staying  
at ut  
We should not have to  
wait to read about it in the  
press



Text message



TAMUS-04



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

in an out

Tue, Jul 18 at 6:20 AM

fyi banks just told me texas tribune doing open records request on journalism hire js the journalism lady dr mcelroy has apparently told the texas tribune that she is staying at ut and not coming to anm. as of now the university has not heard from mcelroy but you should expect a negative story from the tribunes point of view in the next two days js



Text Message



TAMUS-05





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**New Texas A&M  
journalism director  
Kathleen McElroy to  
return to Texas**

theeagle.com

no tribune story yet  
Could care less about  
Texas Tribune articles but  
do want to know if she is  
coming to A&M or staying  
at ut  
We should not have to  
wait to read about it in the  
press



Text Message



TAMUS-06



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john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

in an out

Tue, Jul 18 at 6:20 AM

fyi banks just told me  
texas tribune doing open  
records request on  
journalism hire js  
the journalism lady dr  
mcelroy has apparently  
told the texas tribune that  
she is staying at ut and  
not coming to anm. as of  
now the university has not  
heard from mcelroy but  
you should expect a  
negative story from the  
tribunes point of view in  
the next two days js



Text Message



TAMUS-07



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**Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then watered down the offer...**

[texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.



Text Message



TAMUS-08




Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.

Too bad Texas taxpayers are still funding her...

**Michael Quinn****Sullivan** [twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Tribune article. Who would this person be?

sciences, jose Luis bermudez, warning her that there were people who could force leadership to



Text Message



TAMUS-09



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd... &gt;

Tribune article. Who would this person be?

sciences, Jose Luis Bermudez, warning her that there were people who could force leadership to fire her and he could not protect her.

The call came one day after the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents met and discussed personnel matters in executive session, according to a posted agenda. The board discussed McElroy's hiring with Texas A&M President M. Katherine Banks, according to a person familiar with the situation.

According to McElroy, Bermudez told her that her hiring had "stirred up a hornet's nest," that there were people against her and that, "even if he hired me, these people could make him fire me ... that the president and the chancellor, no one can stop that from happening," she said.

Ultimately, he advised her to stay in her tenured role at UT-Austin.

from banks js Just an update, McElroy has still not notified us that she has rejected our offer, and we don't think she will.

Text Message

TAMUS-010

Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

from banks js Just an update, McElroy has still not notified us that she has rejected our offer, and we don't think she will contact us.

Jose wanted me to make sure that you and others are told that all of the comments connected to him were either lies or grossly exaggerated completely out of context. I told him that I would share that with you.



Text Message



TAMUS-011



Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;



**Texas A&M recruited a UT professor to revive its journalism program, then watered down the offer...**

[texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)

A win for Aggies! The leftwing "journalism" professor / DEI advocate that A&M tried to recruit won't be taking the job. After she was exposed by @TexasScorecard for her racist beliefs, she decided staying at UT was a better fit.



Text Message



TAMUS-012



Photo

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**Celebrated new leader for  
A&M journalism rescinds  
acceptance over 'hostile  
environment'**

kbtx.com

Seems she's contacted  
everyone but us  
This is the statement.  
President asked me to  
share with you so you can  
share with regents if  
needed.

Statement from Texas  
A&M University:



Text Message



TAMUS-013





Photo

[Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

Statement from Texas A&M University:  
There are limits on what we can discuss given the threat of litigation. A number of things have been reported that are either inaccurate or misleading. Texas A&M initially offered a tenured full professor position subject to approval through our established process. It was determined through a mutual agreement that a professor of practice position was more appropriate given her experience within the journalism industry. Dr. McElroy officially applied for the professor



Text Message



TAMUS-014



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

discussion.  
We discovered Dr. McElroy's intent to stay at the University of Texas through media inquiries. At that time, we made another attempt to reach out to her, which was unsuccessful. We regret any misunderstanding and wish Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors. We are continuing to work on building a great journalism program.

John B. Bellinger  
Dear Madam: This has been successful in producing the university to make policy changes. But to make a lasting difference, we need to effort stronger understanding. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news. It would be a lot of good if we could share a card, for other day news.

Rudder Association..... 🙄  
Last time i spoke to them i got a standing ovation . there was one guy badmouthing banks and i



Text Message



TAMUS-015



Photo [Done](#)

john.bellinger@bellingerfamilyltd.... &gt;

during hiring processes to insure this situation will not be repeated.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to our plans to develop an excellent journalism degree program. As always, I am greatly appreciative of the faculty senate and your partnership to insure that, as you noted, Texas A&M University remains a premier institution with an outstanding reputation.

Sincerely,

M. Katherine Banks  
President, Texas A&M  
University



Text Message



TAMUS-016



8:49

📶 LTE 🔋

New iMessage

Cancel

To: Bill Mahomes

iMessage

Thu, Jul 20 at 9:47 PM

On the phone

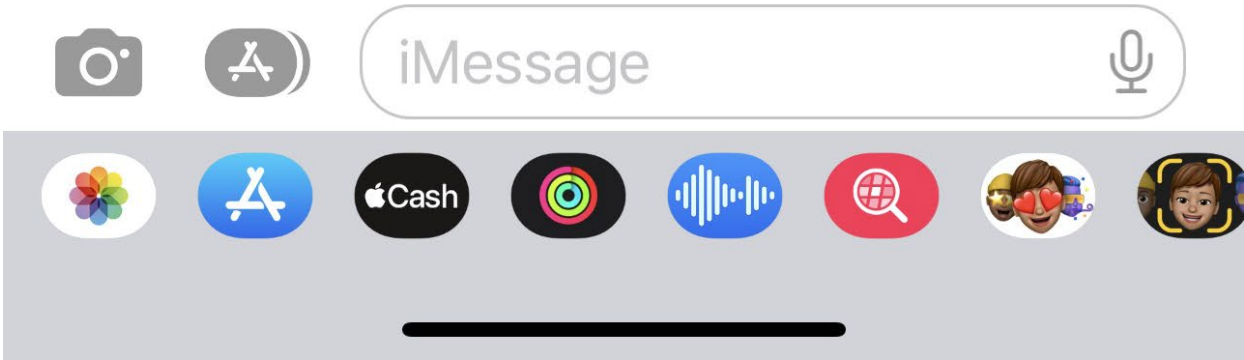
No doubt 🤔

Call me if you can. I will be up.

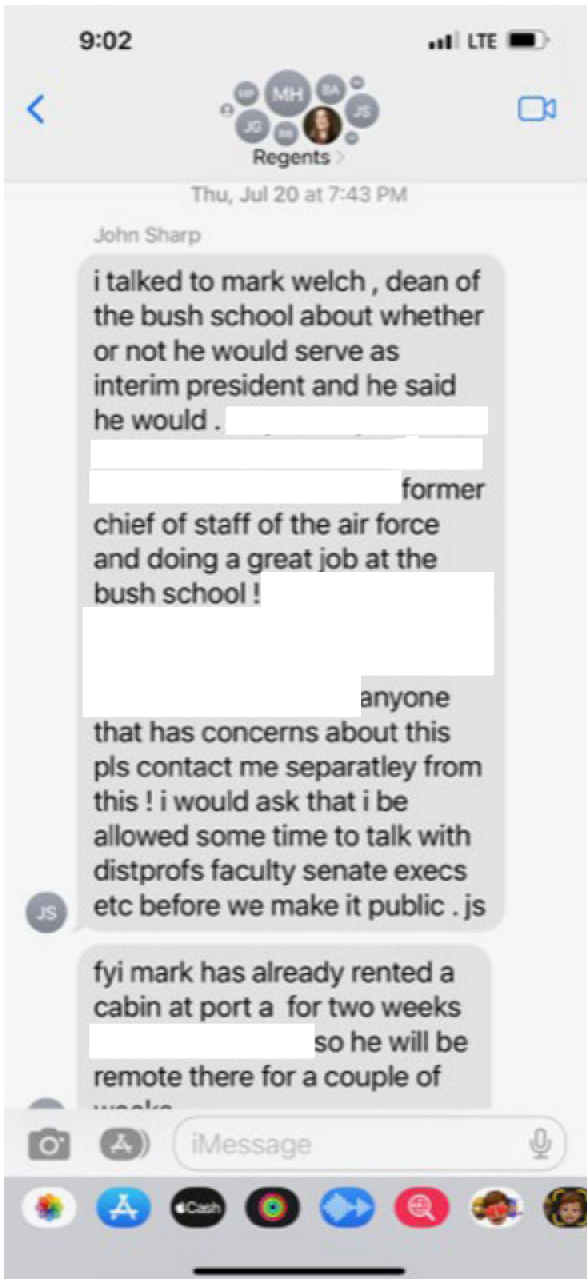
Yesterday 11:34 AM

Can we visit around 2:15?

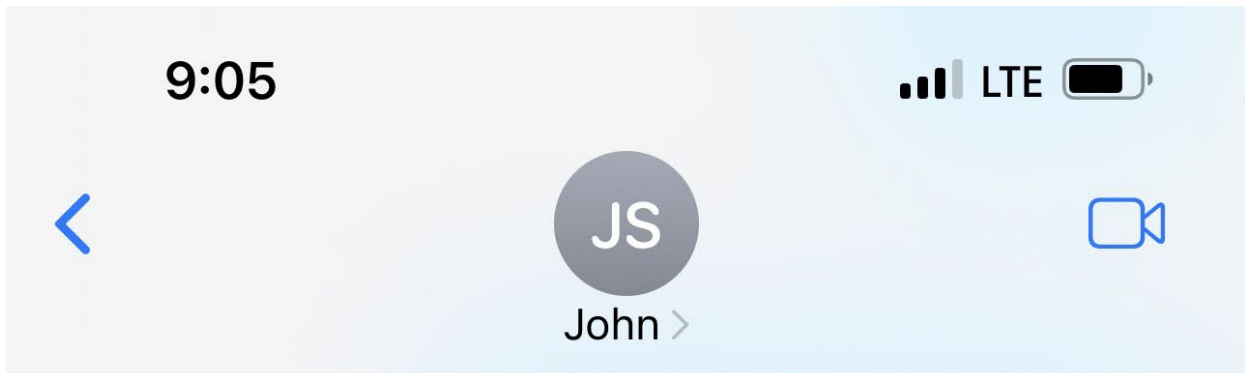
Delivered



Sent from my iPhone



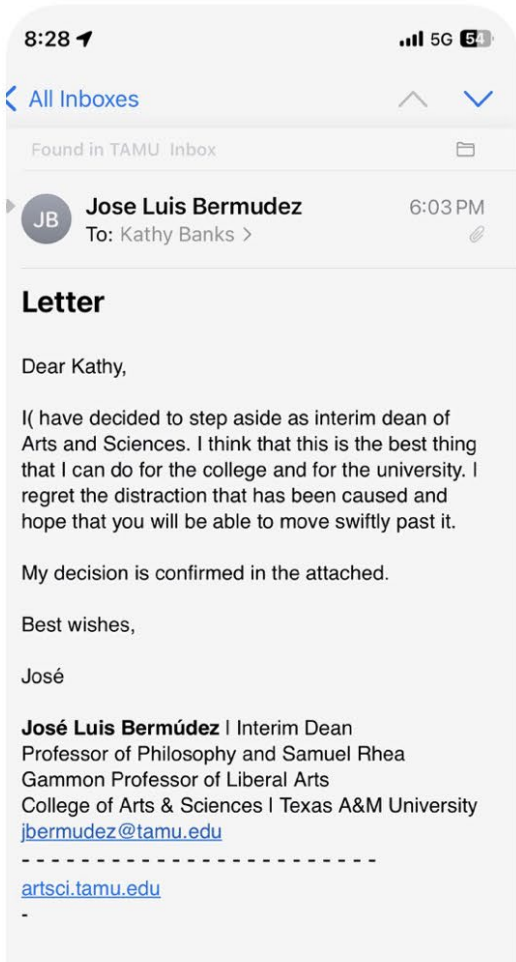
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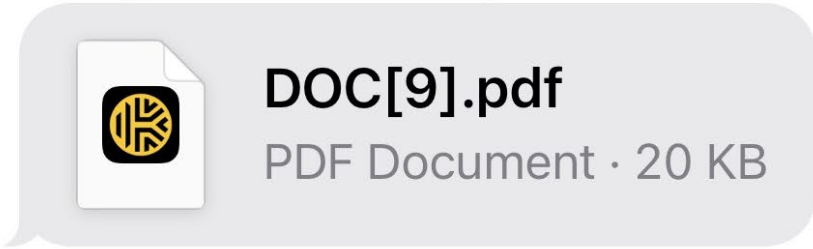
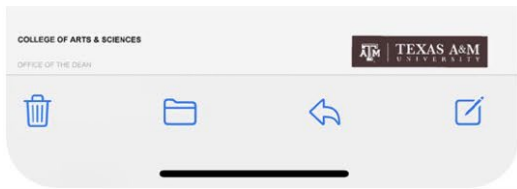


I didn't get the resignation letter. Can you resend it?

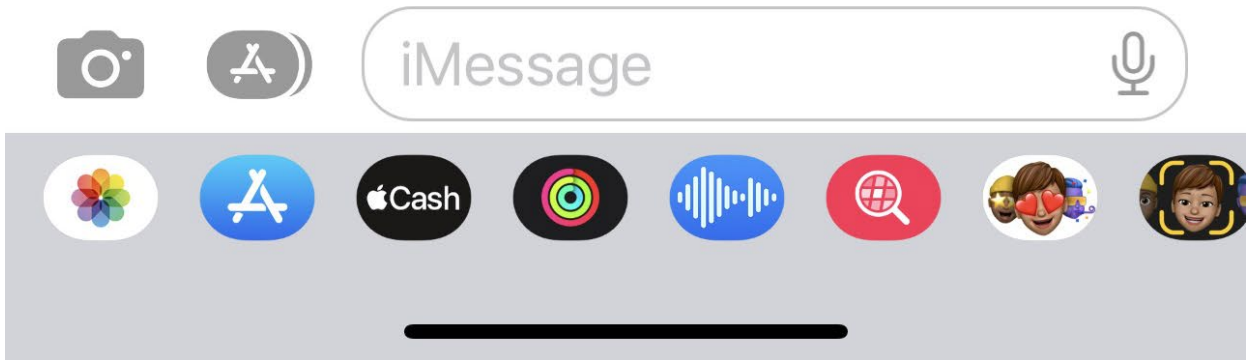
Delivered

yes





🌙 John has notifications silenced



Sent from my iPhone



Seems she's contacted everyone but us

This is the statement. President asked me to share with you so you can share with regents if needed.

Statement from Texas A&M University:

There are limits on what we can discuss given the threat of litigation.

A number of things have been reported that are either inaccurate or misleading.

Texas A&M initially offered a tenured full professor position subject to approval through our established process. It was determined through a mutual agreement that a professor of practice position was more appropriate given her experience within the journalism industry.

Dr. McElroy officially applied for the professor of practice role. She was issued a standard one-year draft offer letter to be a professor of practice. She also received a 3-year administrative offer letter. She was told we were open to further negotiation and discussion.

We discovered Dr. McElroy's intent to stay at the University of Texas through media inquiries. At that time, we made another attempt to reach out to her, which was unsuccessful.

We regret any misunderstanding and wish Dr. McElroy well in her future endeavors. We are continuing to work on building a great journalism program.



Adam C. Kolawinski

Matt Poling TRA has been successful in pressuring the university to make policy changes. But to make a lasting difference, we need to effect changes in leadership. It would do a lot of good if we could claim a scalp for after this fiasco. I'd love it if were Sharp, but I'd settle for Bermudez. It would be a start.

11/11/2017



Rudder Association....☺

lAst time i spoke to them i got a standing ovation . there was one guy badmouthing banks and i shut him down pretty hard. maybe this is the guy fyi js

The Black Former Students group is planning a virtual town hall for next week. Will be announced shortly.

Washington Post investigative reporter now wanting all our data on minority students, faculty and staff now, a decade ago and 25 years ago.

i told ray to keep y'all apprised of this chit chat w mcelroy's lawyer fyi js  
Speaker Hammond,

Thank you for your input and I welcome the opportunity to address the issues you brought forward.

I agree, outside influence can be problematic during faculty searches and appointments. We have clear and successful processes and policies documented in our University Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures (SAPs) that should be strictly followed for all faculty related deliberations. The Rules and SAPs were designed to insure that faculty searches are conducted in a fair and unbiased manner with faculty input at all stages in the process.

Like you, I am disappointed and concerned about the negative media coverage and wish that the employment negotiations had continued along the traditional path. I, along with my leadership team, sincerely regret any miscommunication that contributed to this result, particularly in the area of DEI legislation. We are currently assessing our communication pathways during hiring processes to insure this situation will not be repeated.

Looking ahead, I remain committed to our plans to develop an excellent journalism degree program. As always, I am greatly appreciative of the faculty senate and your partnership to insure that, as you noted, Texas A&M University remains a premier institution with an outstanding reputation.

Sincerely,

M. Katherine Banks  
President, Texas A&M University

12:57



2 People >

getting quality people  
journalist with conservative  
values into the market. This  
won't happen with someone  
like this leading the  
department.

JG

David Bagget

DB

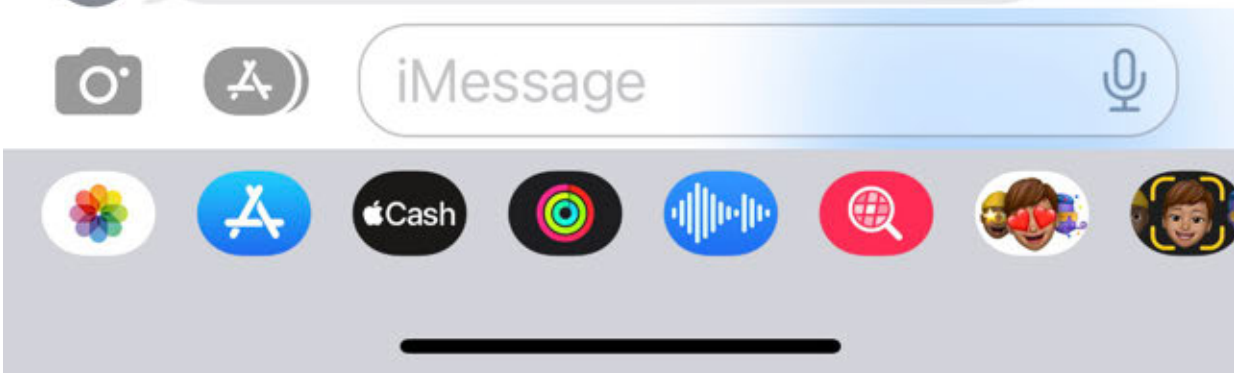
Based on limited info, I agree.

Jay Graham

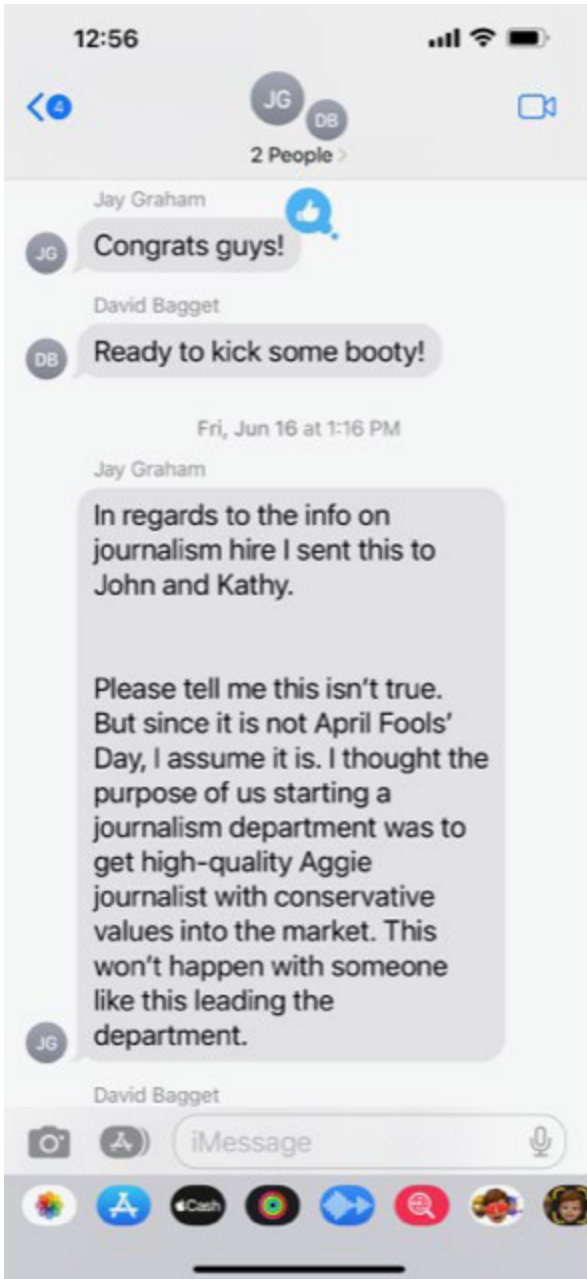
They need to hear from all of  
us. This is unacceptable and  
we can't allow it to happen!  
Kathy told us multiple times the  
reason we were going to  
combine arts and sciences

together was to control the liberal nature that those professors brought to campus we were going to start a journalism department to get high-quality conservative Aggie students into the journalism world to help direct our message. This won't happen with this kind of hire!

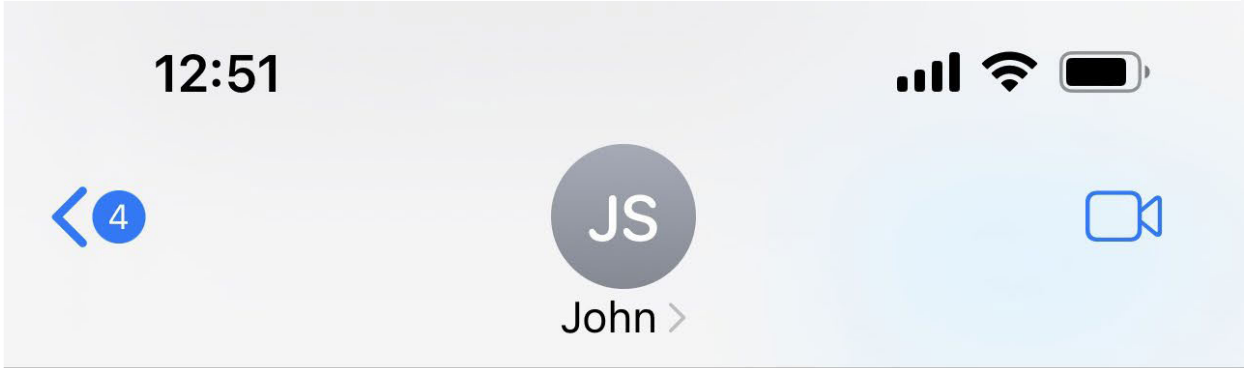
JG



Sent from my iPhone



Sent from my iPhone

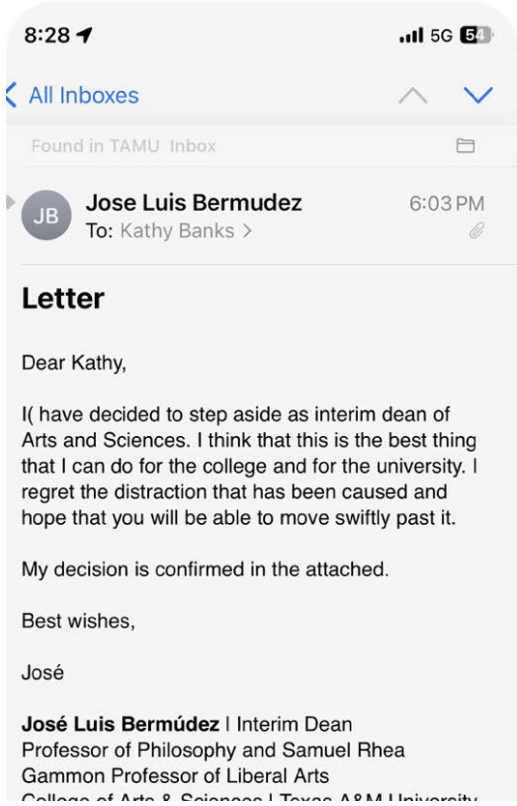


Mon, Jul 17 at 7:59 PM

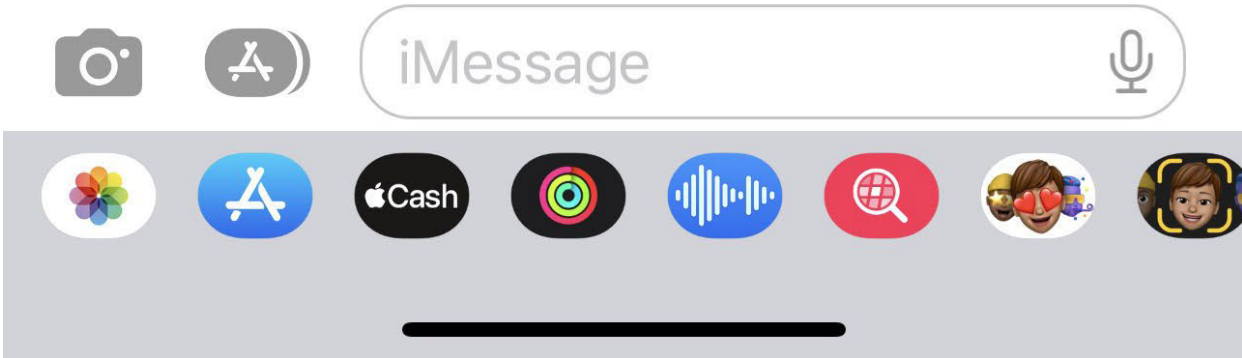
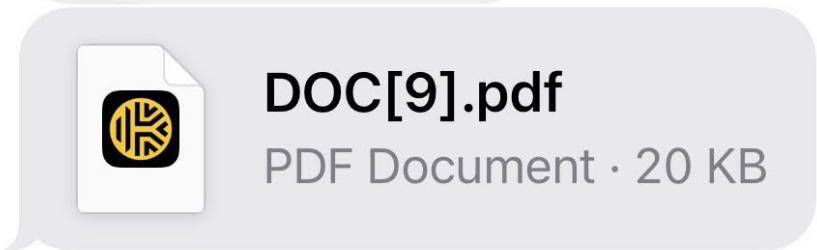
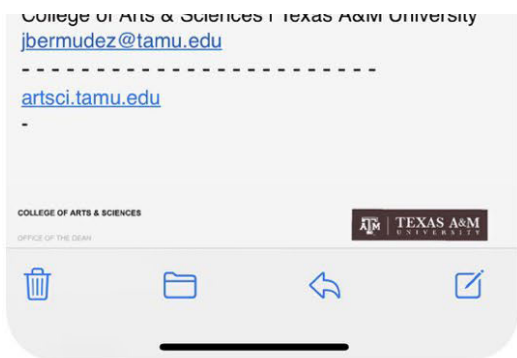
I didn't get the resignation letter. Can you resend it?

Delivered

yes







Sent from my iPhone