

# **Marketing and Communications at Texas A&M University**

*R. Ethan Braden*

*Vice President, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer*





Great brands don't just *happen*.

They are built on a *great insight,*  
*position, and story...*



FORBES > LEADERSHIP > EDUCATION

# HERD Survey Reveals Top U.S. Universities For R&D Funding In Engineering

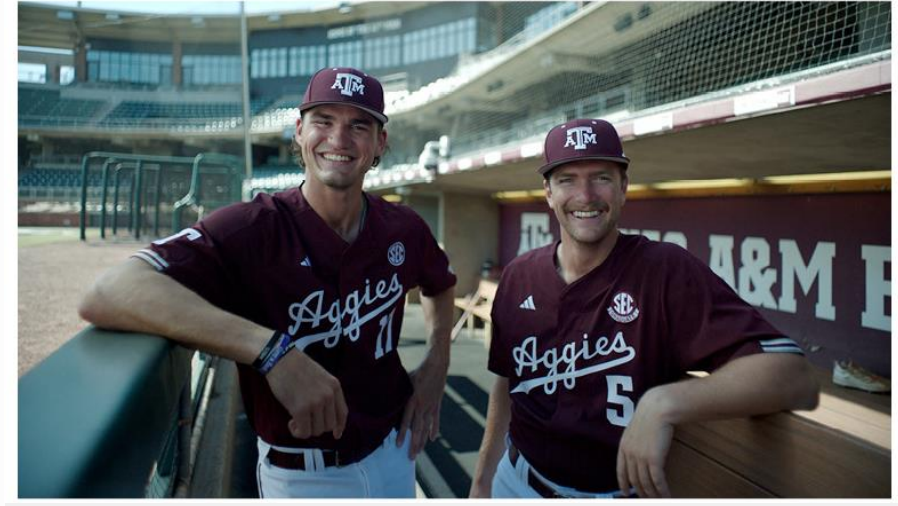
Michael T. Nietzel Senior Contributor

*I am a former university president who writes about higher education.*

Follow

0

Jan 5, 2024, 06:00am EST



## ‘Make Texas A&M a Constant in the National Conversation’



*“Texas A&M is a great institution, but a great national institution requires a **great national reputation**. We should be leading the national conversation on important topics regularly.*

*What are those topics, and how do we best highlight them?”*



**STEVE JOBS**

**1997**



*“Marketing is about values. It’s a complicated and noisy world, and we’re not going to get a chance to get people to remember much about us. No company is. So we have to be really clear about what we want them to know about us.”*



**STEVE JOBS**

**1997**



*“Even a great brand needs investment and caring if it’s going to retain its relevance and vitality.”*



**STEVE JOBS**

**1997**



*“Apple spends a fortune  
on advertising.  
You'd never know it.  
You'd never know it.”*

At Texas A&M University, we lack little  
to gain the national attention we desire.

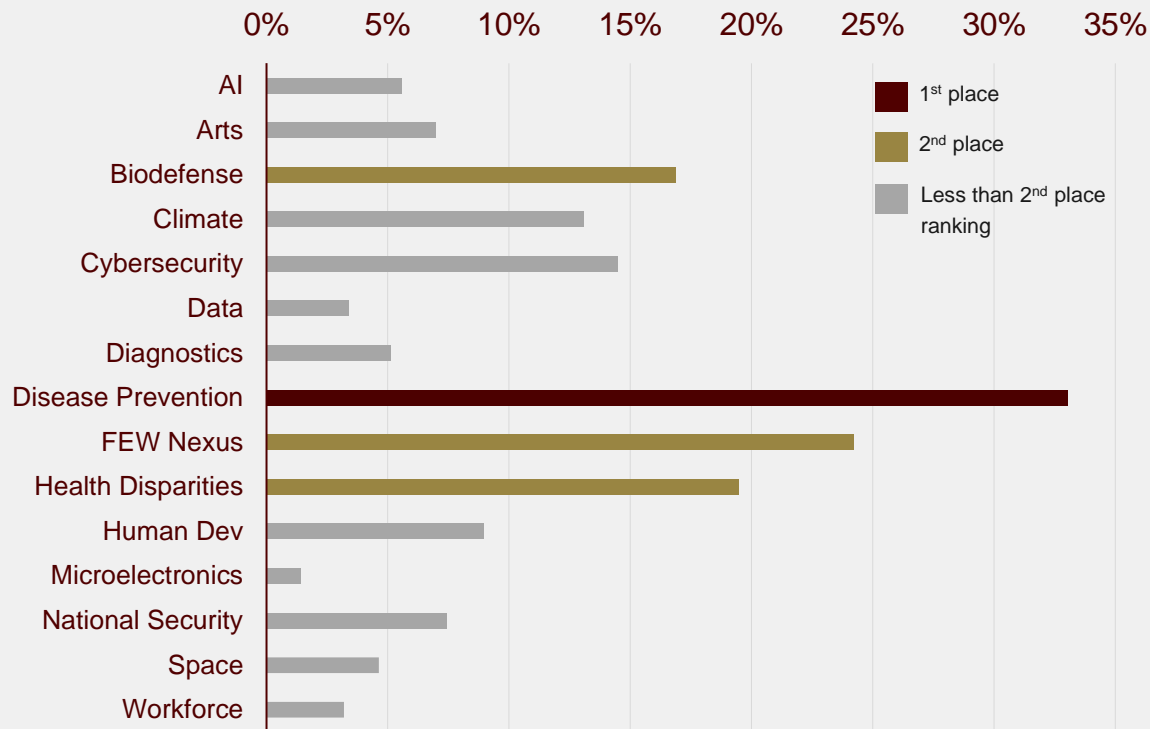




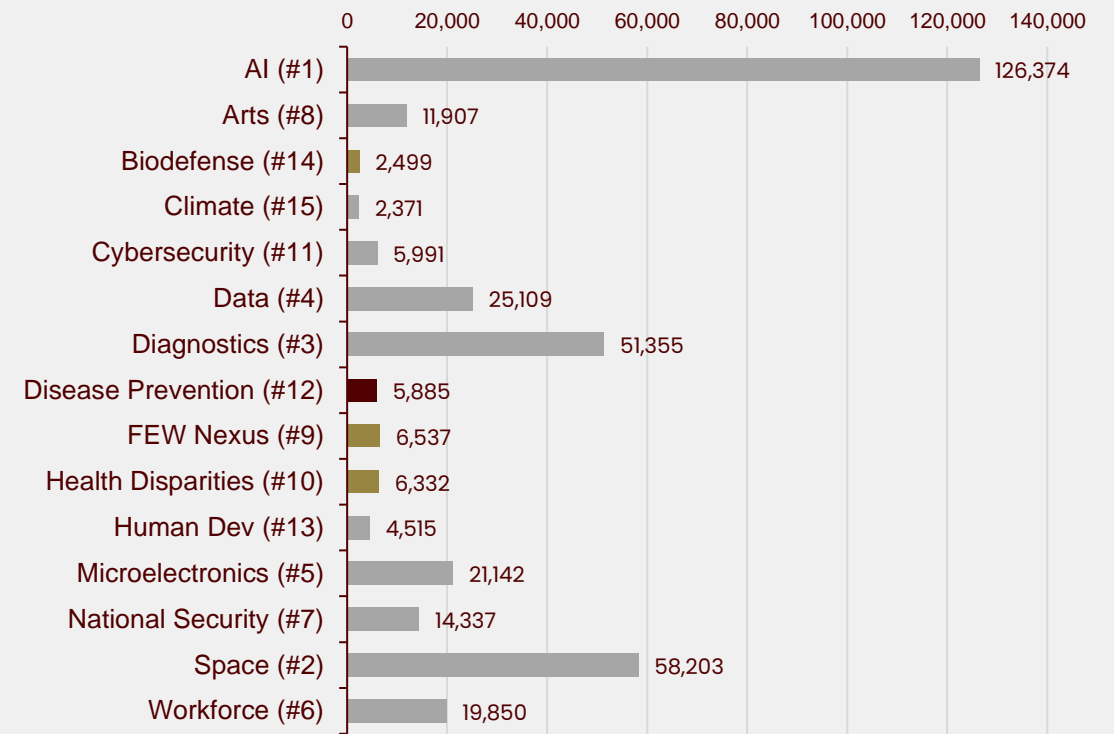
Of the 15 research areas studied relative to select peers, Texas A&M ranks in the Top 2 in earned and social media volume in four areas, while the volume of these areas is small relative to the other areas.



Texas A&M Share of Voice by Volume % per Research Area



Texas A&M Share of Voice by Volume per Research Area



NEWS

# From Google ads to NFL sponsorships: Colleges throw billions at marketing themselves to attract students

*Marketing and branding are getting big budgets and advertising is setting new records*

by JON MARCUS

October 1, 2021



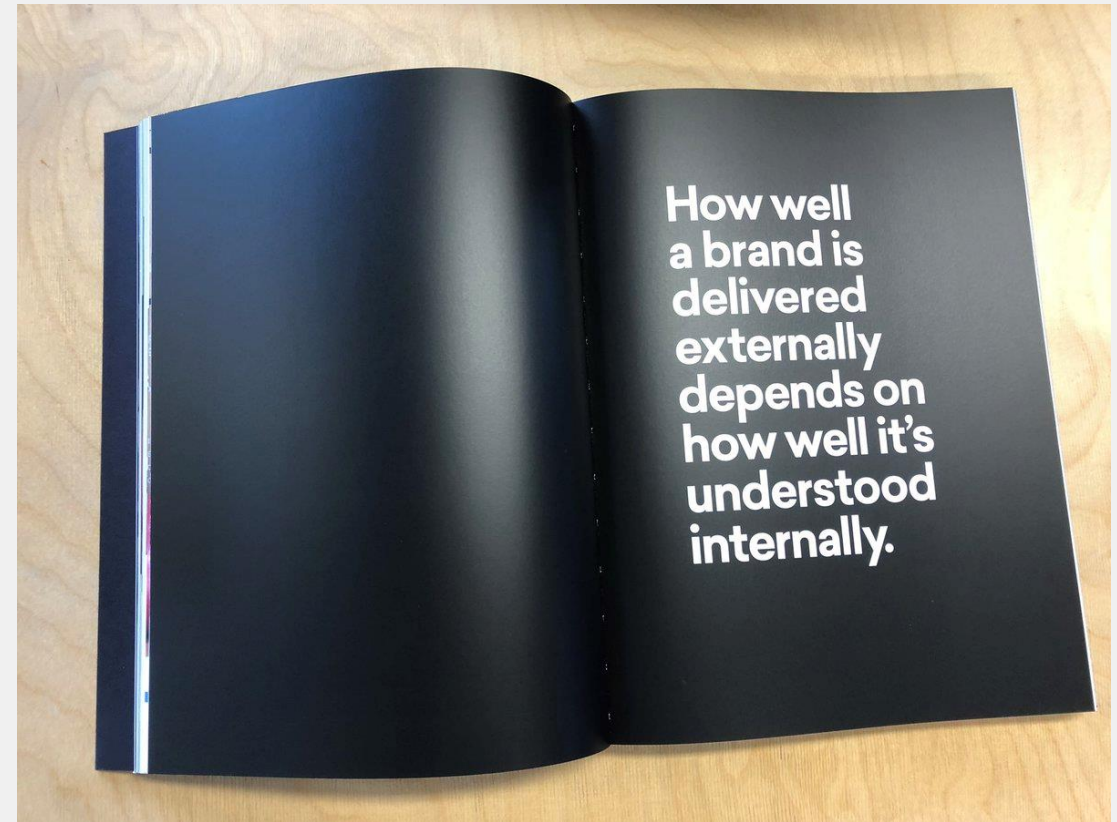
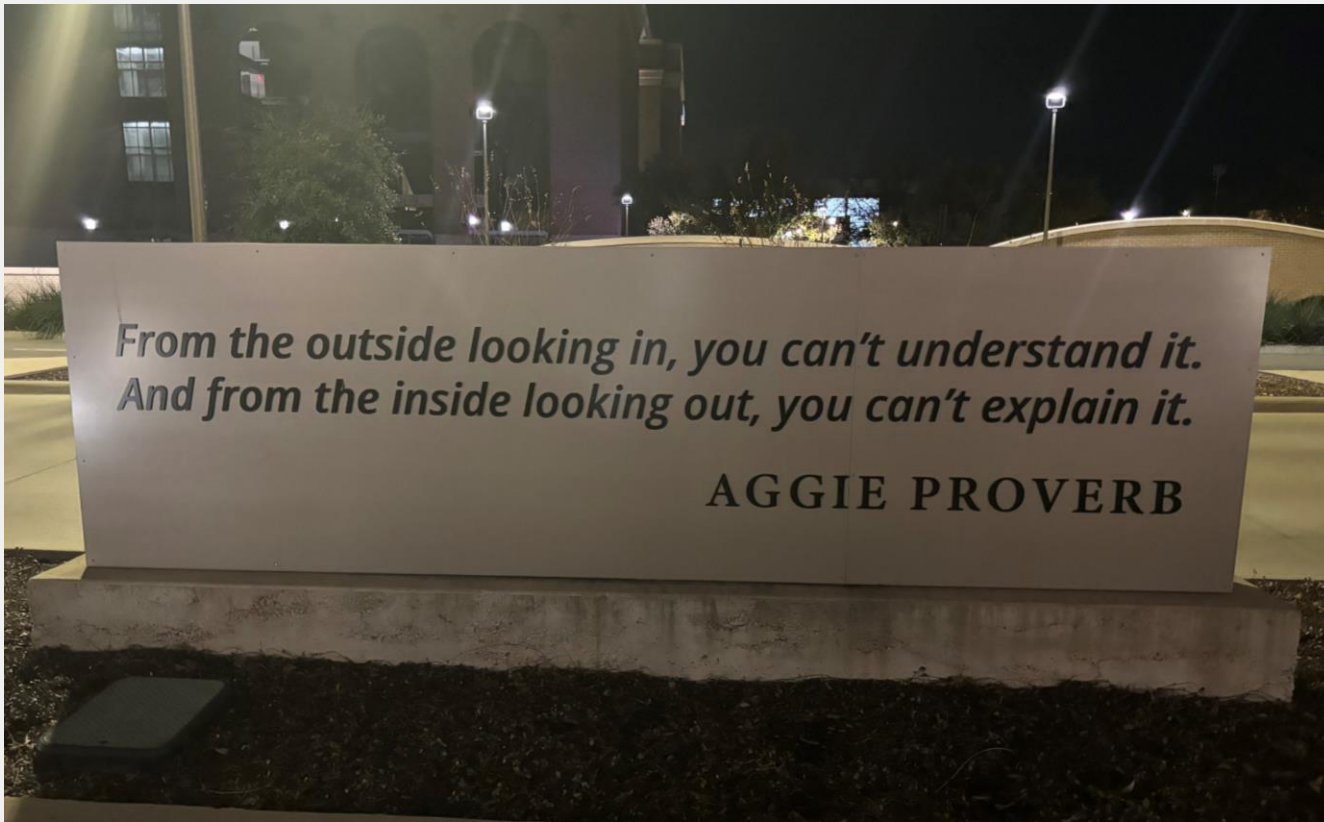


**W. EDWARDS  
DEMING**



*“Every system is perfectly  
designed to the get the  
results that it does.”*

**We cannot 'Make Texas A&M a Constant in the National Conversation' if we cannot compellingly explain it.**

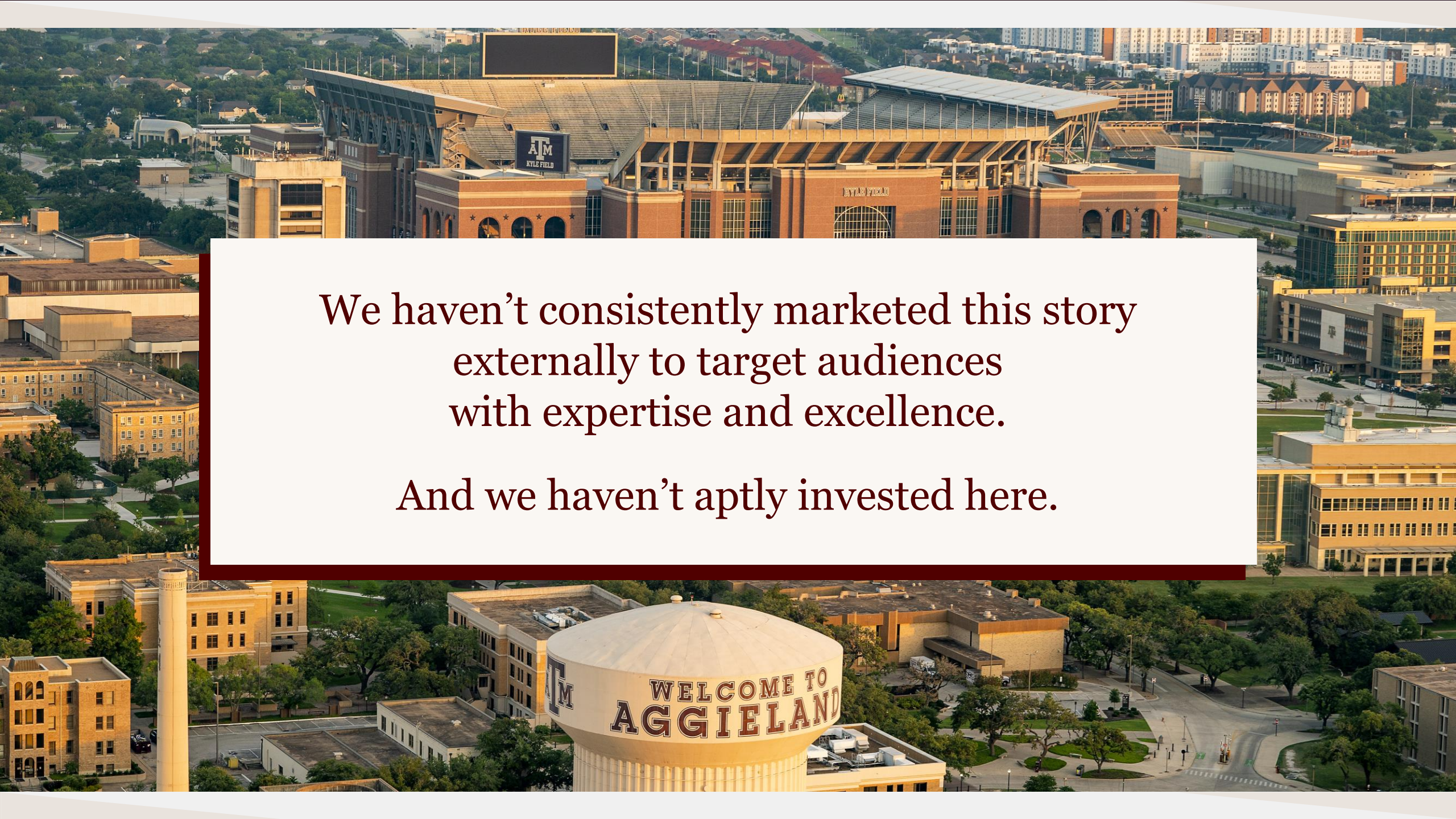




At Texas A&M, we haven't focused on crafting an outward story that tells audiences what we stand for.

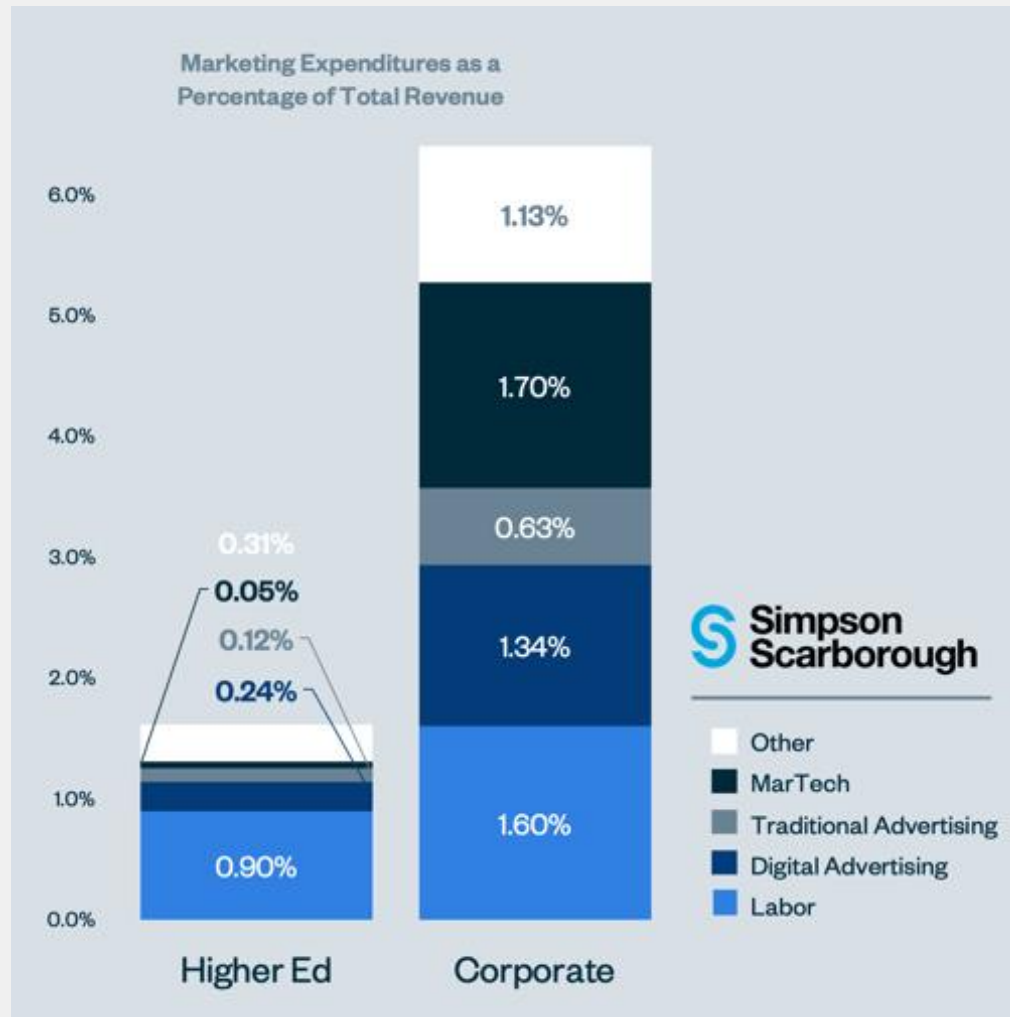
What makes us distinct.

And why those audiences should *really care*.



We haven't consistently marketed this story externally to target audiences with expertise and excellence.  
And we haven't aptly invested here.

Relative to Industry, universities disproportionately spend on labor and underspend on marketing initiatives that reach target audiences.



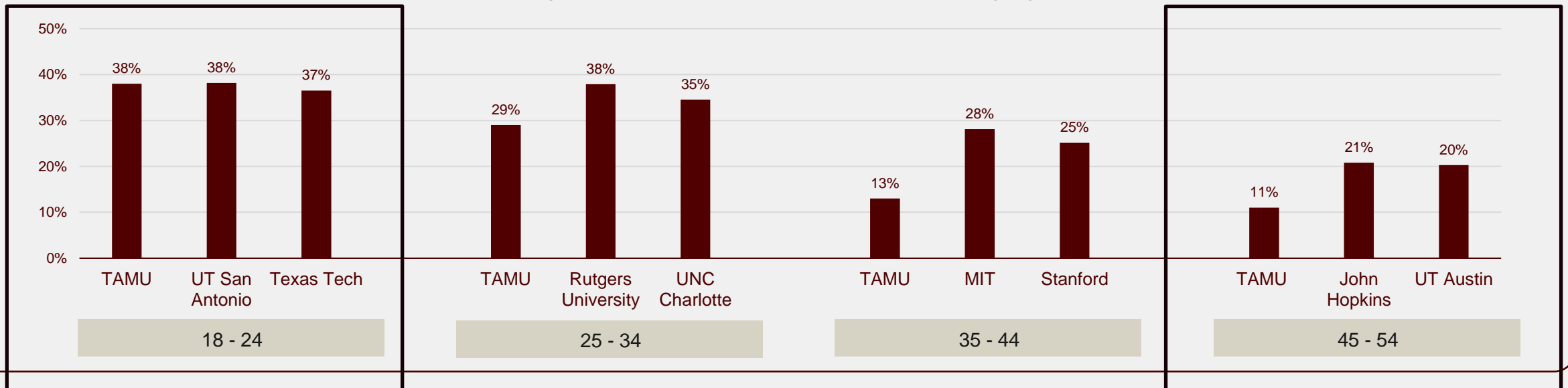
*\*In FY24 and previously, ~97% of the Texas A&M central marketing and communications budget was spent on FTEs.*

# 68% of TAMU followers are under 35, the highest percentage among benchmarked peers. These often aren't the editors or decision makers.



The audience age distribution for Texas A&M demonstrates a significant following in younger age groups, with nearly 70% age 35 or under, suggesting a following of current students, prospective students, and recent graduates.

Audience Age (TAMU and top two universities per age group)





 MORNING CONSULT®



# UNIVERSITY REPUTATION SURVEY - HIGHLIGHTS

National Survey of 6,000+ Adults

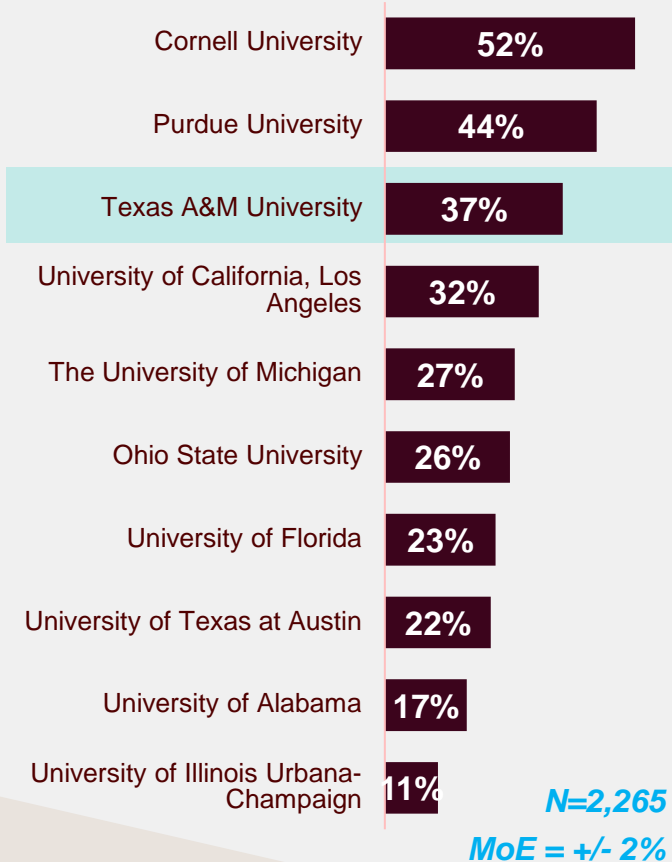
APR 2024

# 37% of US adults (aware) say Texas A&M is among the three most academically prestigious universities of those tested.

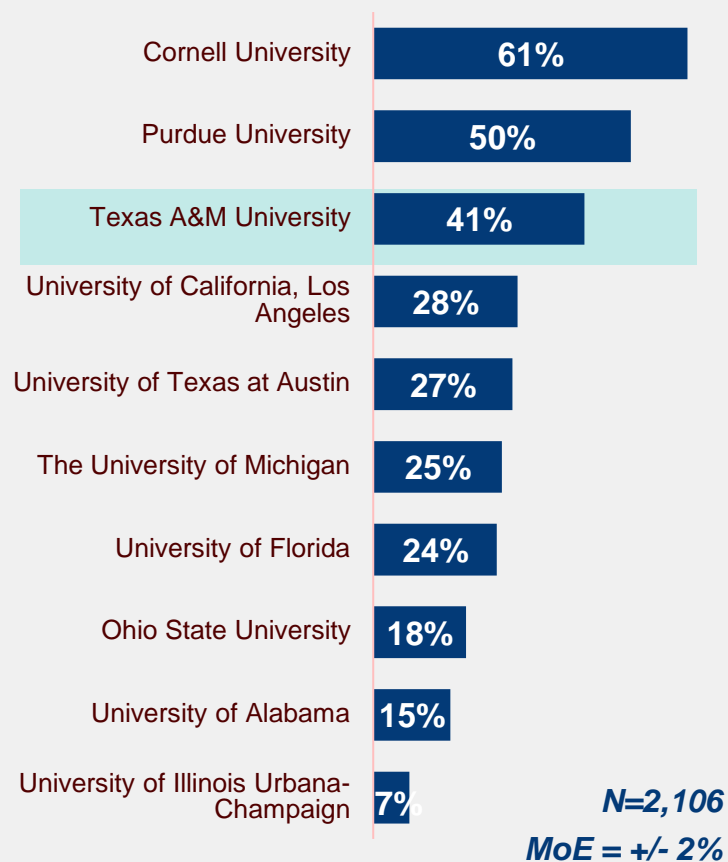


Which of the following national universities do you believe are the most academically prestigious? Select three.

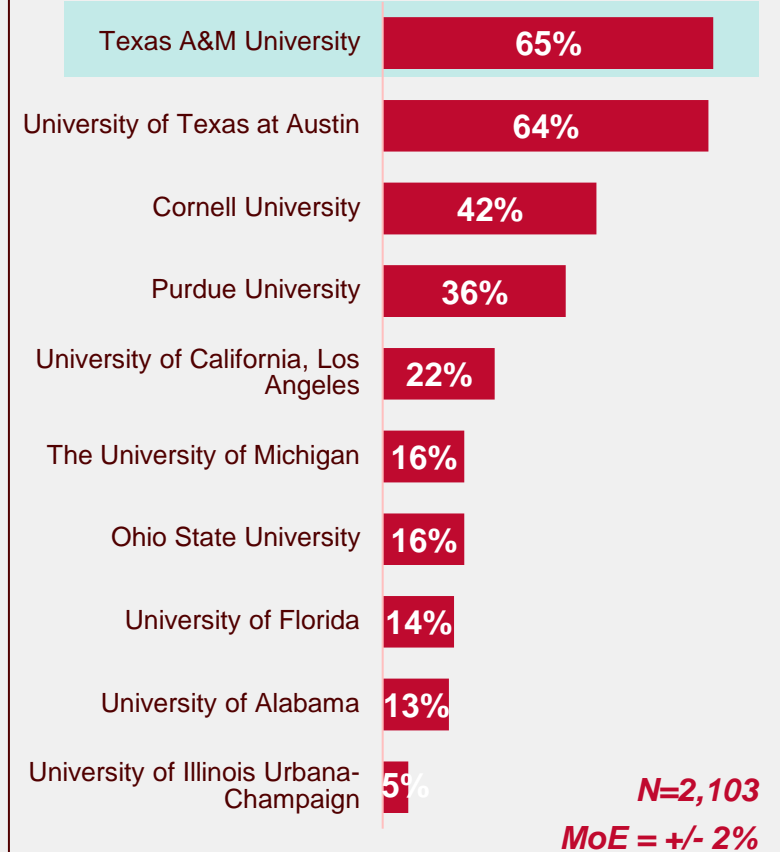
## U.S. Adults



## SEC College+ Adults



## Texas Adults

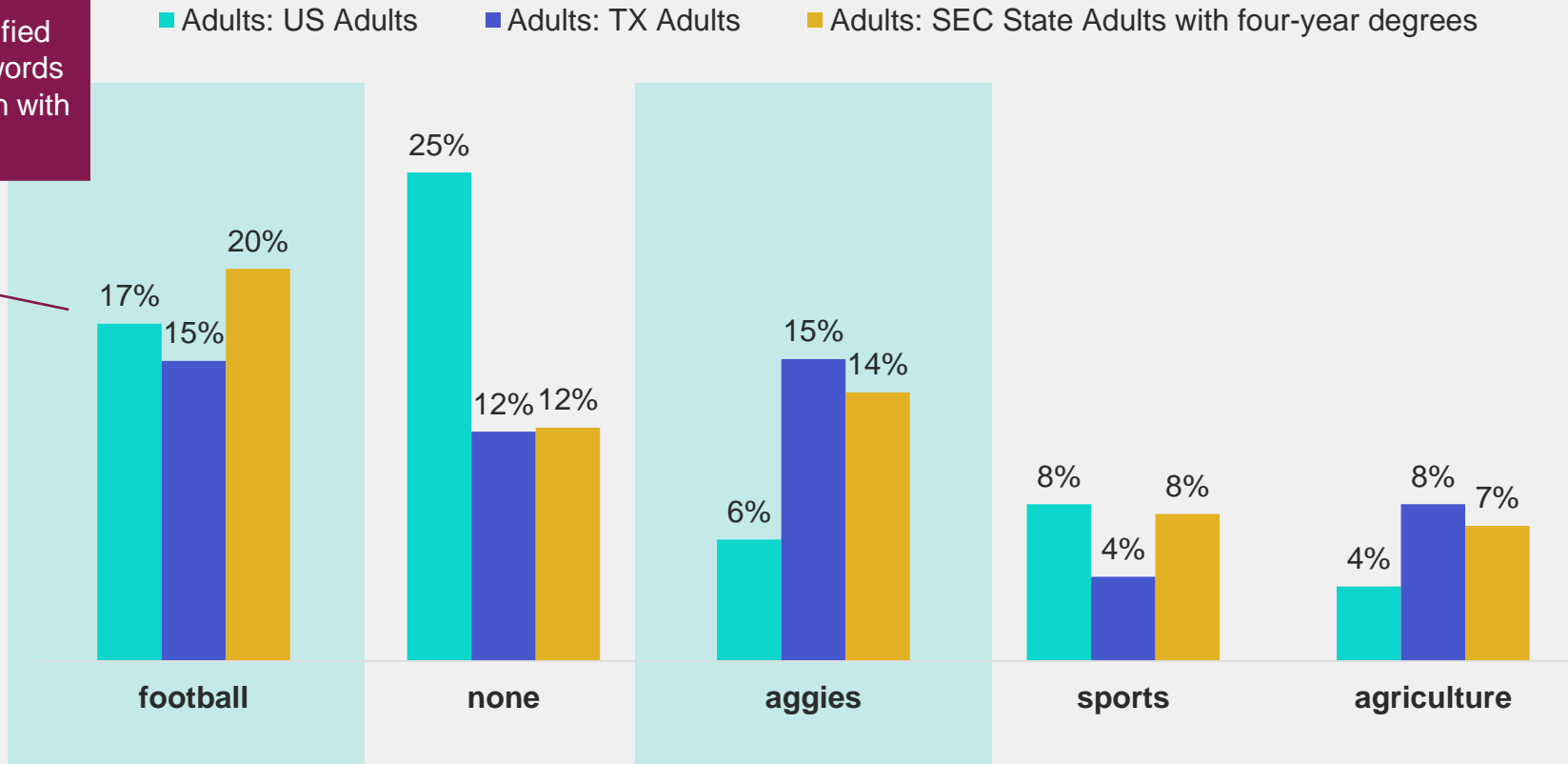




# The words *Football*, *(none)*, and *Aggies* come to mind most often across all aware audiences when they think about Texas A&M.

When you think of Texas A&M University, what words or phrases immediately come to mind?

1 in 6 US adults identified football as one of the words for un-aided association with TAMU

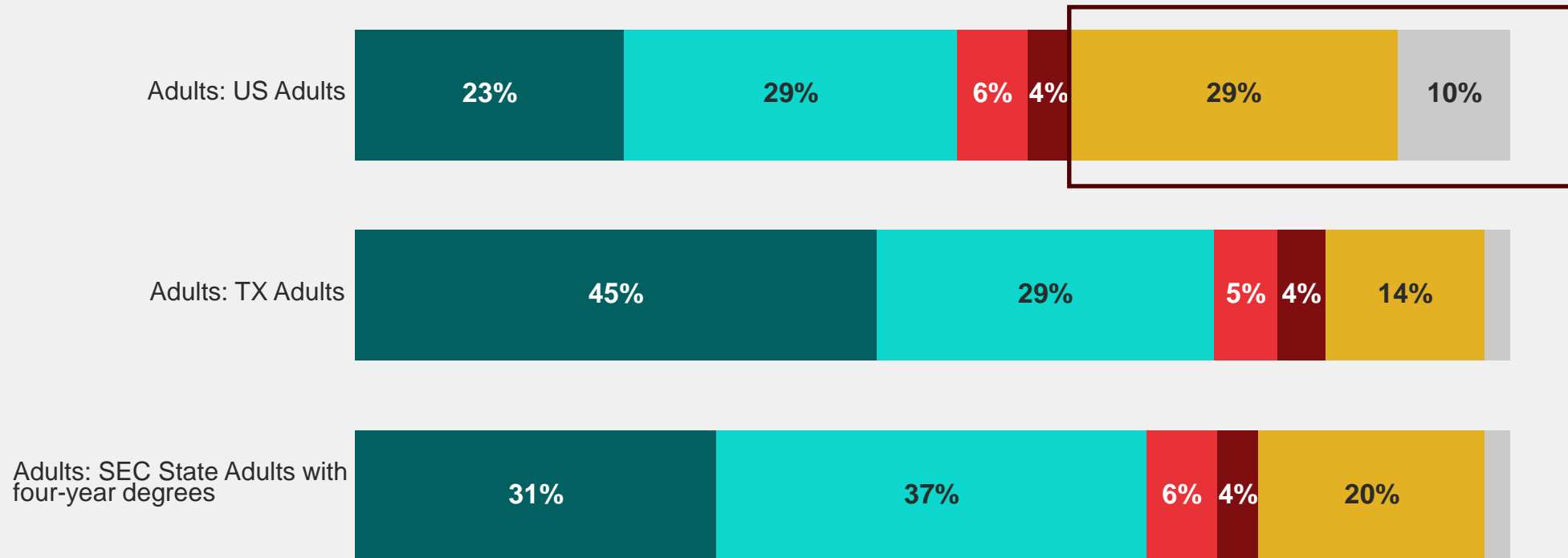


# Nearly 40% of Americans have never heard of or have no opinion about Texas A&M University.



Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the following schools? Texas A&M University

Very favorable   Somewhat favorable   Somewhat unfavorable   Very unfavorable   Heard of, no opinion   Never heard of



# Across the audiences, adults report Texas A&M's *long history & heritage*, coupled with *ranking among top colleges & universities*, as some of the most believable attributes.



Please indicate which statement is **most believable** in shaping how you view Texas A&M University and which statement is **least believable**.

	Average utility score 100		
	US Adults	TX Adults	SEC College+ Adults
Has a long history and heritage	347	405	429
Is ranked among the top colleges and universities	343	349	326
Has elite athletic teams	222	161	218
Provides real-world learning for students' future careers	132	122	117
Has significant endowment (financial resources)	114	104	131
Has a high job placement rate of graduates	105	112	98
Known among my family/friends	82	157	106
Educates the next generation of ethical leaders	76	81	69
Has affordable tuition cost	75	61	58
Has an extensive campus infrastructure	73	69	73
Has high quality faculty	68	66	65
Innovates with teaching and learning	68	63	59
Promotes diversity and inclusion	65	56	53
Conducts research that helps society	60	63	65
Has a convenient location	58	39	47
Has a vibrant off-campus life	48	40	45
Known for notable alumni	47	57	47
Offers global learning experiences	41	31	33
Is trusted to do the right thing	31	32	26
Takes a stance on sociocultural issues	26	20	19
Has small class sizes	20	12	14

***Educating ethical leaders, innovates with teaching and learning, has high quality faculty, conducts research that helps society, and is trusted to do the right thing are all below average.***



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# Research Summary and Implications



- In recent market research performed by Morning Consult, 40% of US adults have not heard of or have no opinion about Texas A&M
- For those US adults aware of Texas A&M, the three most common words they associate with the University are 1). Football, 2. (none), and 3. Aggies.
- US adults aware of Texas A&M believe it is academically prestigious, but are less aware of other key attributes.
- For several years, there has been no paid marketing or advertising for Texas A&M University at the enterprise level, creating a void relative to what Texas A&M stands for and allowing others to fill it.
- We are filling this void with a bridge “Values Campaign” for the next 7 months, including our new institutional spot.
- And we will launch a new brand platform and comprehensive marketing campaign in February 2025; extensive research underway.

# Our Objectives



- The Central Marketing and Communications team will become a *driver* of external recognition, demand, affinity, reputation, and prosperity at Texas A&M University.
- We will *enchant* target audiences with Texas A&M's signature story and stories.  
Enchant (v): to rouse and attract ecstatic admiration and demand for something.
- We will build a brand and a central marketing team that people love and trust.



# Over the next five years, the marketing and communications strategy that A&M needs and deserves involves:



- A world-class central marketing and communications **team**
- A professional-grade, insight-based, distinct, and emotive **brand platform and marketing campaign**
- A university marketing and communications **campus community** that resembles an orchestra, playing A&M's symphony together with harmonious, flawless sound
- A **national earned media strategy, and expert team**, to help us become top of mind and a constant in desired national conversations
- A **budget**, earned through stellar performance and results, reflecting that Texas A&M understands what it takes and is serious about building a great national reputation

# What have we done so far?



- Returned 165 or ~\$9 million of FTEs to the colleges, schools, and divisions
- Reorganized the central marketing group, including the reallocation of 13 FTEs
- Sponsored ESPN's debut of the Dude Perfect '30 for 30' at Dallas International Film Festival
- Attracting and hiring the roles, individuals and skillsets we need to win in the future
- Secured incremental budget for FY25 to build brand platform and proof of concept campaign
- Formulated and communicated 5-year budget need to truly compete and win
- Orienting team to emotive, external storytelling and value-added initiatives
- Joined the Associated Press' Campus Insights program to increase national earned media exposure, the only university in Texas and second in SEC
- Launched bridge "Values Campaign" with refined visual identity and new commercial to come
- A coalition of ~30 marketers and communicators are researching and building Texas A&M's future brand platform and marketing campaign together

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

# *Values Campaign*



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY®

# Insights

*The places where we've historically found community, belonging, meaning, and purpose are in decline.*



## LOSING FAITH

Nearly all faiths are seeing declines in regular religious service attendance. Two decades ago, an average of 42% of U.S. adults attended religious services every week or nearly every week. A decade ago, the figure fell to 38%, and it is currently at 30%.

## THE "THIRD PLACE"

Third places are the building blocks of community — think public libraries, local cafes, or the neighborhood barbershop — are on the decline as technology and automation supplant convenience for community.

## VANISHING NEIGHBORHOOD

Communities have been replaced with networks in which you keep in touch with only your closest friends and family; gone is the age of the township.

RELIGION

**The importance of religion in the lives of Americans is shrinking**

MAY 16, 2023 - 12:33 AM ET  
HEARD ON MORNING EDITION

npr

WELLBEING MARCH 25, 2024

**Church Attendance Has Declined in Most U.S. Religious Groups**

Three in 10 U.S. adults attend religious services regularly, led by Mormons at 67%

GALLUP

**Covid Ruined Our Hangout Spots. Here's How They Come Back.**

"Third spaces" like coffeeshops, gyms and libraries are critical for building community ties and boosting social cohesion. What happens when they almost disappear for more than a year?

Bloomberg

**Why are third places disappearing?**

Society is losing its places to chill. Third places or "spaces that are neither home nor work, but locations somewhere in-between," locations where we "would bump into acquaintances; interact with strangers (or, admittedly, eavesdrop on them); and chat with friends, percolating ideas and plans," said the BBC. Some examples include coffee shops, libraries, bars and parks. While these places have served important purposes, their presence is becoming rarer. "For decades, Americans reported spending about 6.5 hours a week with friends. But from 2014 to 2019, it suddenly dropped by 37%, to four hours a week," said Insider.

THE WEEK

PERSPECTIVE | MAGAZINE

**We don't know our neighbors anymore. Here's what that costs us.**

Trust levels are down, loneliness is up, but a fix could be simple: Say hello once in a while.

By Meghan McKeough October 10, 2017, 9:27 a.m.

The Boston Globe

**Older Americans are more likely to know their neighbors than younger ones**

# Insights



79% of 18-24 year-olds  
report feeling lonely

SOURCE: The Cigna Group, *The Loneliness Epidemic Persists: A Post-Pandemic Look at the State of Loneliness among U.S. Adults*

XQ

Are High Schools Preparing  
Students for the Real World?

*The Atlantic*

My Students Don't Know How to  
Have a Conversation

"Students' reliance on screens for communication is detracting—and distracting—from their engagement in real-time talk."

**Newsweek**

As Teen Loneliness Rates Soar, Schools May Be Making  
It Worse, Scientists Say

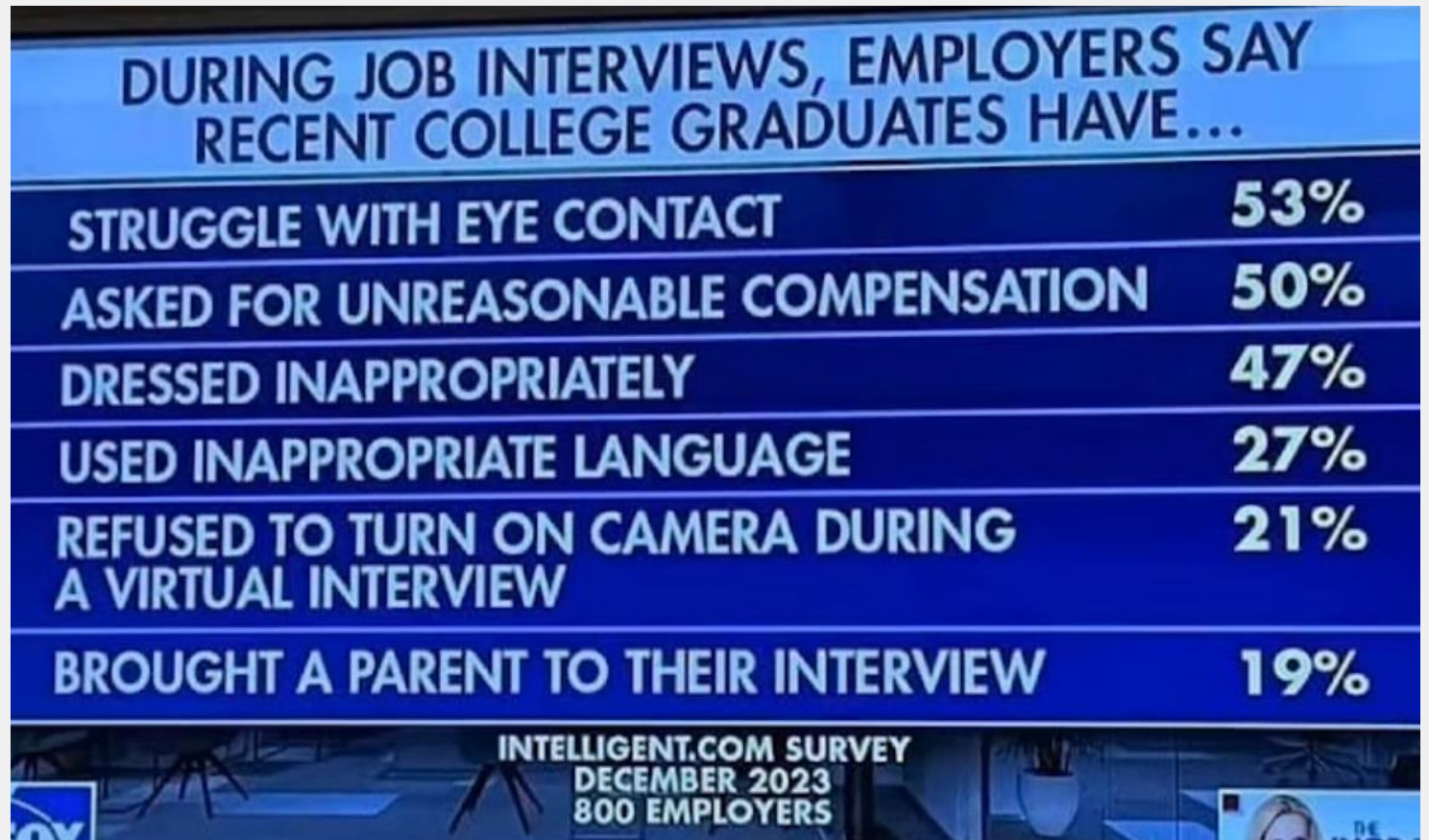
**AMERICAN  
MILITARY NEWS**

Teens spending less time with friends even after  
pandemic, study finds

# Insights



And higher education isn't preparing them for a life of impact after they graduate.



# Objectives



## The Goal:

Over the next 7 months (August - February) define and sustain a **coordinated campaign** for Texas A&M University to bridge the gap between now and the launch of a new brand platform and marketing campaign.

Align all areas of the university to **create marketing harmony**, leveraging the current purpose, values message, and a tighter expression of the visual image.

## Specifically, the values campaign should:

- **Advance** the awareness, recognition, visibility, and reputation of Texas A&M, within and beyond Texas.
- **Strengthen** the university's readiness to launch a bold new brand campaign in early 2025.
- **Leverage** existing core messages and content that is impactful but familiar - remind people about the core values and purpose of the university.
- **Reinforce** Texas A&M's position as a national (and eventually global) brand within and outside of higher education that is recognized and respected.



**The Bottom Line:**

Everything we do should positively impact reputation and awareness of Texas A&M **externally** while creating synergy, harmony and alignment **internally** prior to launching a new brand platform.



A large, spreading tree with a white text box overlaid. The tree has a thick trunk and many branches, with green leaves. The text box is white with a dark red border and contains the word "Messaging" in a bold, italicized, dark red font.

# ***Messaging***

# ***Story Framework***



As a first step we should simplify the key message elements while maintaining a high degree of familiarity:

<b>Texas A&amp;M</b> <b>Our Purpose:</b>  <b>Developing leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good.</b>	
We do this through:	
<b>Our Culture:</b> [Stories that highlight:]  <b>Respect, Loyalty, Integrity</b>	<b>Our Impact:</b> [Stories that highlight:]  <b>Selfless Service, Excellence, Leadership</b>

A large, spreading tree with a white text box overlaid. The tree has a thick, gnarled trunk and many thick, horizontal branches that spread out in all directions. The leaves are green and dense. The background shows a grassy area and some buildings in the distance. The text box is white with a dark red border and contains the text "Visual Identity" in a bold, italicized, dark red font.

# ***Visual Identity***

# Colors



## FROM THIS:

### Primary Colors

<b>PMS 7421</b> C-15 M-100 Y-39 K-69	<b>White</b> C-0 M-0 Y-0 K-0
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### Secondary Colors

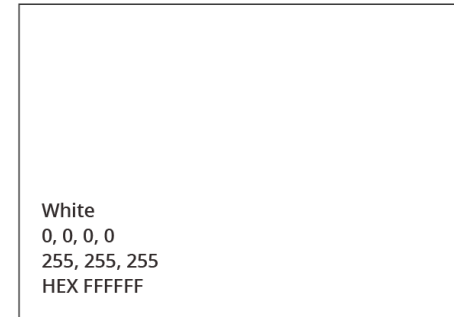
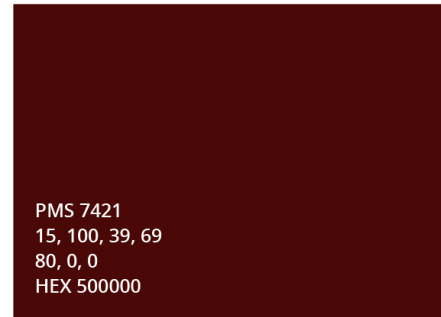
<b>PMS 541C</b> C-100 M-58 Y-9 K-46	<b>PMS 7498C</b> C-46 M-23 Y-84 K-68	<b>PMS 463C</b> C-14 M-54 Y-95 K-62	<b>PMS 4505C</b> C-16 M-27 Y-83 K-42
<b>PMS 7C</b> C-67 M-63 Y-63 K-57	<b>PMS 422C</b> C-19 M-12 Y-13 K-34	<b>PMS 7527C</b> C-3 M-4 Y-14 K-8	

### Accent Colors (to be used sparingly)

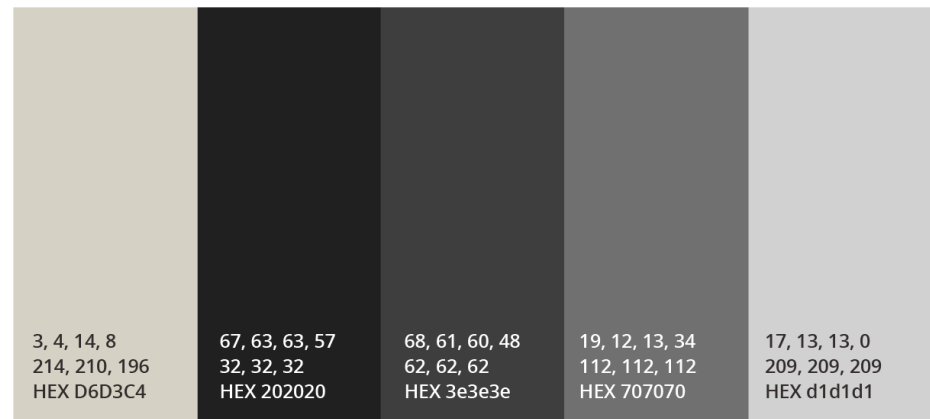
<b>PMS 102C</b> C-0 M-0 Y-95 K-0	<b>PMS 185C</b> C-0 M-95 Y-79 K-0
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## TO THIS:

### PRIMARY



### SECONDARY



### ACCENT (USE SPARINGLY)



# From This...



ATM  
Mays Business School Executive MBA

#2

Best MBA Programs Under \$115K

Peers & Quants

Thanks AND Gig'em

THURSDAY

MSC

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
The Bush School  
of Government & Public Service

MAKE PLANS THAT WORK  
minor in  
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

ATM  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
Science

BEYOND THE SCREEN:  
RECONNECTING WITH STEM

Dr. Katelyn Jettelina, Keynote

Jettelina, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, is an epidemiologist, researcher, and educator who is also founder and sole author of a viral newsletter, "Your Local Epidemiologist," that translates public health science information for a general audience.

30TH ANNUAL SUSAN M. ARSEVEN '75  
CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN IN  
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

WISE

AGGIE VALUES BROUGHT TO  
NEW VENTURES

ATM | TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY.

FEARLESS ON EVERY FRONT

LEARN MORE

1/2

CONGRATULATIONS  
DR. TATIANA ERUKHIMOVA

ELECTED AS  
AAAS FELLOW

ATM | TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
Physics & Astronomy

NESS  
LEADERS

NEXT TIME YOU PAUSE, REWIND OR RECORD  
YOUR FAVORITE SHOW, YOU CAN THANK  
TEXAS A&M FORMER STUDENT ANTHONY WOOD '90.



# To This...




## TEXAS A&M STANDS FOR LEADING INNOVATION

Stand at the foot of the world's tallest building in Dubai and, like most, your stomach will turn. But for a Texas A&M Aggie, heights are nothing to fear. Towering more than half a mile above the desert of the United Arab Emirates, the Burj Khalifa is a jaw-dropping sight and a point of pride for the UAE. It's also the design of former Texas A&M College of Architecture student *Adrian Smith '66*. Adrian is the co-founder and principal of *Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture*, and is responsible for three of the top 10 tallest buildings in the world.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY




 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
 The Bush School  
 of Government & Public Service

**#26** BEST PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT GRADUATE RANKINGS



## CHARACTER CULTIVATED HERE

### THE BIG EVENT

For the past 40 years, Aggie students have participated in this annual event to show their appreciation to the surrounding community, completing service projects such as yard work, window washing, and painting for residents of the community. Although The Big Event has become the largest one-day, student-run service project in the nation, our message and our mission remains the same - to simply say "Thank You."



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

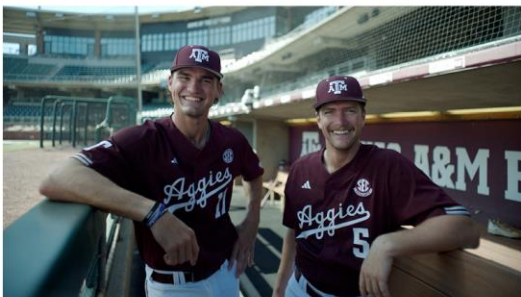


## TEXAS A&M STANDS FOR SERVICE



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

# ***New Commercial Debuts on 8/31 vs. ND***



# ***:60 Second Script***



*At Texas A&M University, what do we stand for?*

*We stand for leadership, respect, and excellence.*

*We stand for loyalty. Integrity. And selfless service.*

*At Texas A&M, we stand for four straight hours.*

*And we always stand ready.*

*We stand up for others, stand in when others won't, never stand by, and we won't stand still.*

*Texas Aggies have always 'stood where duty required us to stand'.*

*We stand for something bigger than ourselves and we stand stronger together.*

*At Texas A&M University, we know what we stand for.*

*Come stand with us.*



# *Equities from Ongoing Research*



## ENDURING COMMUNITY

Creating a sense of family that lasts a lifetime

## TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

Transforming individuals into leaders of character that transform the world

## REAL WORLD ON- RAMP

Producing a well-adjusted, well-rounded and career-ready workforce

## STUDENT CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

Engineering a student-first experience to empower student success

## PURPOSEFUL IMPACT

Living out our land-grant mission and values to tackle the world's biggest challenges

## MUTUAL RESPECT & COOPERATION

Aspiring to treat everyone with dignity to promote a culture of cooperation

## THINKERS & DOERS

Equipping the next generation to think critically and execute broadly

## UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

Matching ambitions with the resources to make more possible



Great brands don't just *happen*.

We are beginning to build and execute on ours with strategy, focus, and passion.



***THANK YOU***

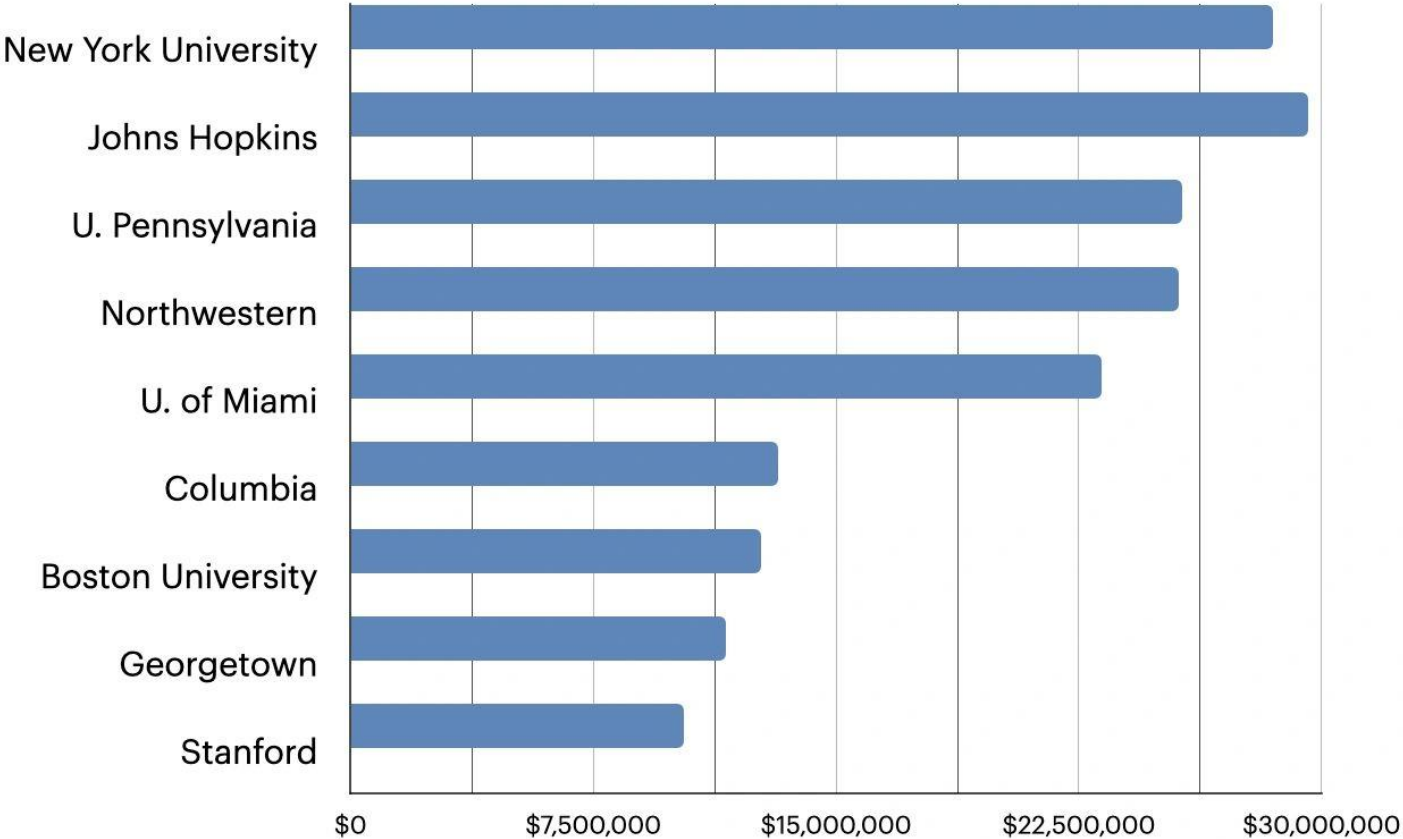
A large, spreading tree with a white text box in the center. The tree has a thick, gnarled trunk and many thick, horizontal branches that spread out in all directions. The leaves are green and dense. The tree is set in a grassy area with a paved path or road in the foreground. The background shows a clear sky and some distant buildings.

Back Up Slides

# How Much Do Universities Spend on Advertising?



Annual Advertising Spend



# Texas A&M ranks #14 in the U.S. and #21 globally for visibility.



## Global University Rankings 2024 - 2025

To rank these universities by global brand visibility, the researchers evaluated numerous data points across several key categories to determine the most visible university brands.

A major component in global visibility is the overall number of **News Mentions** (how many times the university is mentioned in mainstream news in a one year period) this is weighted the most heavily in the GUV ranking calculation. The **Public Interest** score is a very important indicator as it requires action on the part of the individual to actively seek out information on the university. This is the second most weighted metric in the GUV ranking calculation.

**Social Media** (the total amount of fans and followers on the university Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn channels) demonstrates not only reach but action taken to follow the university channels.

**Website Visits** (the number of people who visit the university website each month) is also an important metric in the visibility calculation.

# Texas A&M ranks #14 in the U.S. and #21 globally for visibility.

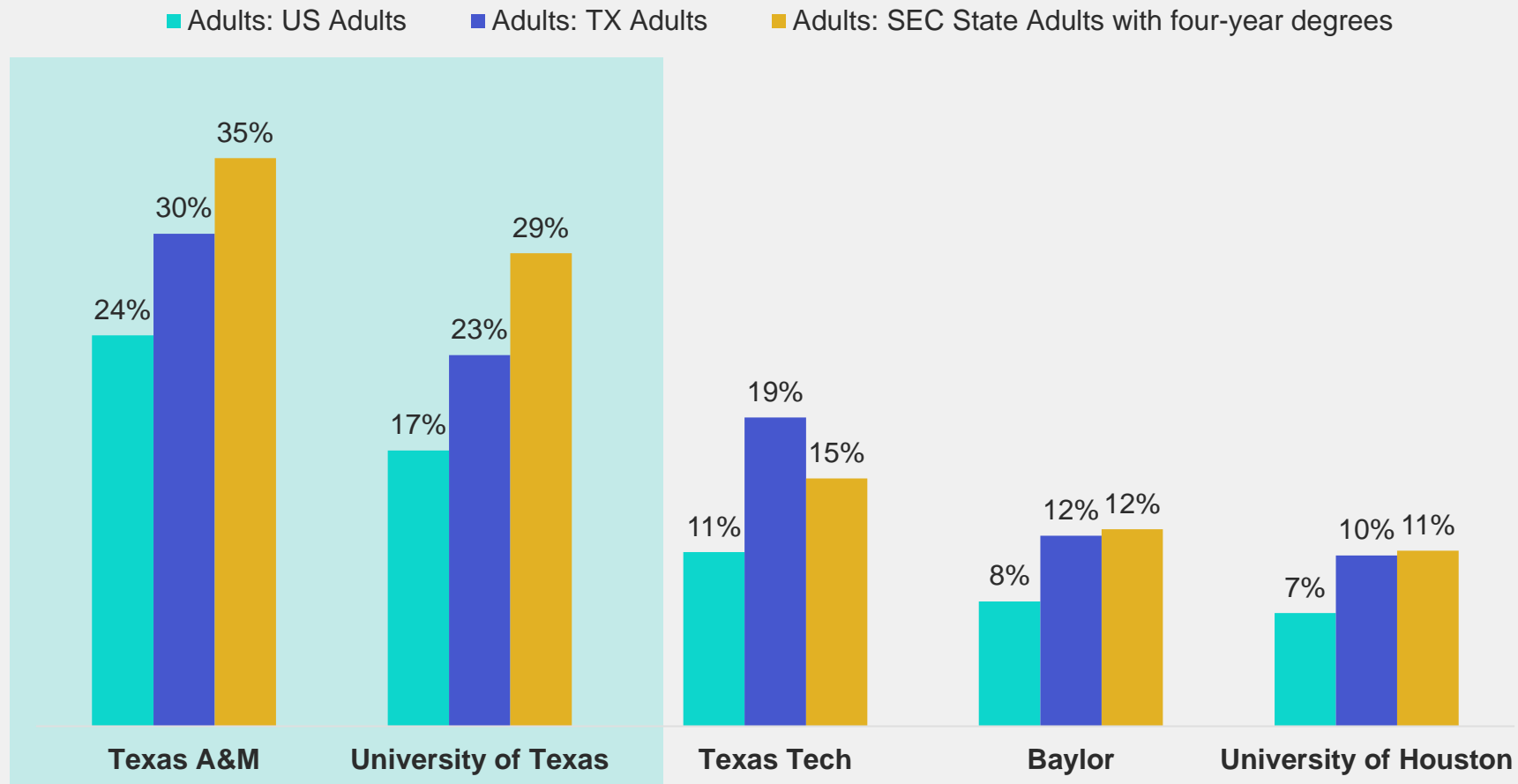


RANK (PREV)	UNIVERSITY NAME	COUNTRY	VISIBILITY SCORE	WEBSITE VISITORS	NEWS MENTIONS	PUBLIC INTEREST	SOCIAL MEDIA	
1	1	Harvard University	USA	69,559,811	46,279,137	118,306	1,659,100	13,920,420
2	2	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA	53,810,777	46,095,630	86,683	480,000	4,535,000
3	3	Stanford University	USA	31,077,622	20,713,670	135,328	909,200	4,600,000
4	9	Columbia University	USA	29,532,964	13,413,461	138,867	2,564,500	2,047,200
5	8	University of Oxford	United Kingdom	24,283,611	8,431,300	29,479	1,457,400	8,300,000
6	4	Cornell University	USA	22,233,027	17,233,317	70,190	506,900	1,833,500
7	16	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	21,203,280	6,456,156	24,636	1,756,200	5,744,400
8	11	Universidade de São Paulo	Brazil	21,093,181	18,800,000	20,409	26,900	1,975,000
9	10	Purdue University	USA	20,061,383	15,863,464	32,591	557,500	1,117,100
10	-	King Saud University	Saudi Arabia	19,625,153	18,058,367	5,795	69,300	1,168,131
11	5	University of Toronto	Canada	19,537,703	15,650,163	22,360	367,300	1,849,800
12	6	University of Michigan – Ann Arbor	USA	19,330,066	14,296,026	106,060	370,100	2,229,000
13	7	University of California – Berkeley	USA	19,268,627	15,336,503	42,836	324,700	1,923,100
14	13	University of California – Los Angeles	USA	18,381,799	11,491,548	34,939	890,300	2,124,300
15	28	Arizona State University	USA	17,734,443	12,411,908	28,615	667,400	1,728,000
16	-	University of British Columbia	Canada	16,969,404	14,075,456	14,472	321,700	1,155,200
17	17	New York University	USA	16,211,167	10,506,177	84,110	479,100	2,552,500
18	37	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Argentina	16,203,717	14,220,000	3,313	50,300	1,702,400
19	18	Yale University	USA	15,575,926	7,855,149	60,753	756,500	3,391,500
20	15	University of Pennsylvania	USA	14,660,765	10,386,155	149,390	327,300	1,293,600
21	25	Texas A&M – College Station	USA	14,558,068	9,601,725	29,827	497,200	2,201,900
22	14	Pennsylvania State University	USA	14,437,307	10,381,407	38,000	404,900	1,689,400

# Texas A&M commands the highest unaided recall among all three audiences and maintains at least a 6-point edge over UT.



Thinking about **reputed public universities in Texas**. Please name the first three that come to mind.



Based on open-ended comments



# ***Our Values***



## **RESPECT**

*We appreciate, learn from and create a welcoming environment that values uniqueness, and a sense of community.*

## **LOYALTY**

*We are stronger and better together because of our shared support of the University.*

## **INTEGRITY**

*We honor and follow through on commitments and expectations, holding ourselves and others accountable for our actions, behaviors and outcomes.*

## **INTERNAL CULTURE**



## **EXTERNAL IMPACT**

*We are courageous and forward thinking, embracing change.*

*We are dedicated to excel in what we do and say we will do, and we continually strive to improve.*

*We work with and help others to have a positive impact; and, we do so without expectation of recognition or reward.*

## **LEADERSHIP**

## **EXCELLENCE**

## **SELFLESS SERVICE**

# ***Tighten Up Brand Design***



For the campaign voice or personality, lean into the **existing brand personality traits**:

- **Driven**
- **Passionate**
- **Knowledgeable**
- **Friendly**
- **Earnest**
- **Sensible**

**Simplify the current visual language by:**

- Leaning into core brand colors of maroon + white
- Limiting secondary colors to gray, black and tan
- Using easily and widely accessible typography
- Paring down existing graphic elements
- Using consistent photo style for stories

# Identity



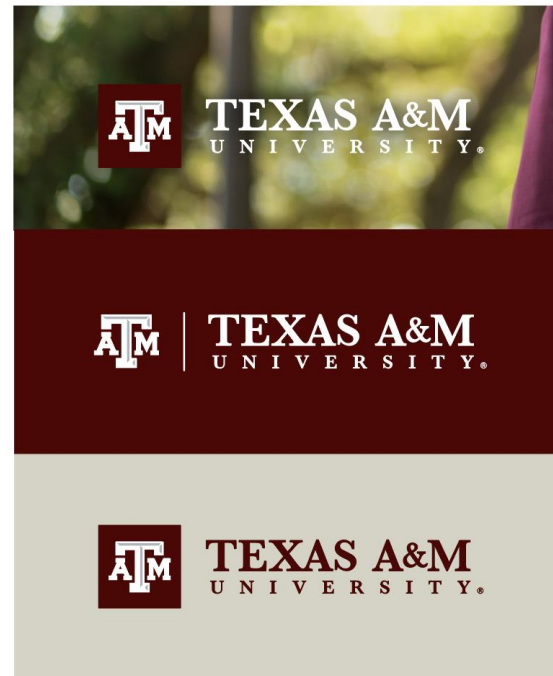
UNIVERSITY LOGO (HORIZONTAL)



UNIVERSITY LOGO (STACKED)



COLORS



# ***What does Texas A&M Stand For?***



What does it mean to stand for something?

To take a stand for (or against) something...

What does it mean to stand up, or stand out?

We stand together as The 12th Man, united with a common purpose.