



SPRING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

March 2, 2024

The Association of Former Students' President and CEO, Porter Garner '79, called the Spring Leadership Council Meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. in the Zachry Family Rooms of the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center. He welcomed over 200 members of The Association's governing body who attended the meeting in person and another 40 volunteer leaders who joined via Zoom and thanked them for their dedication and service to The Association of Former Students. Garner noted that the attendance ranged from the Classes of 1952 to 2027. He thanked Chong Hsu Liu '90, President of the Taiwan A&M Club, and Ryan Price '91, President of the Italy A&M Club, who had traveled to College Station to attend the Spring Leadership Council meeting. Garner recognized Immediate Past Chair Bob Jordan '85 and thanked him for his dedication to The Association's Board over the last eight years and for being an exemplary representative of The Association. He invited Corps of Cadets Chaplain Seth Wallick '24 to provide the invocation, after which he introduced Class Agent Arnold Hayes '52 to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge. Garner reminded the Leadership Council that the mission of The Association of Former Students is to: Strengthen The Association of Former Students; Promote the interests and welfare of Texas A&M University; Perpetuate ties of affection and esteem formed in university or college days; and Serve the student body.

Garner noted that in the midst of the uncertainty of 2023, The Association of Former Students worked tirelessly to raise friends and funds in support of Texas A&M University. He announced that through the generosity of the worldwide Aggie Network, The Association raised the largest Annual Fund in its history, almost \$11.3 million, and ended the year with revenue above expenses. Garner revealed that 15,724 Aggie Rings were ordered in 2023, with over 150,000 Aggie Rings ordered and delivered in the past 10 years making The Association of Former Students the largest ring program in the world.

Garner stated that in 2024, more than 200 Muster ceremonies will be held around the world to honor fellow Aggies who passed away over the past year. He thanked Price and the Italy A&M Club for making it possible for The Association's Manager and Coordinator of Club Programs to travel to Europe to spend Muster with A&M Clubs in Italy, England, France and Germany. Garner confirmed that The Association of Former Students will host the Worldwide Muster Roll Call, beginning at sunrise on April 21, 2024, in the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center.

Garner stated that only 342 former students have received the Distinguished Alumnus Award—the highest honor bestowed upon a former student of Texas A&M University. He announced surprise announcements have taken place for five of the twelve 2024 Distinguished Alumni: Britt Harris '80; Kent Moore '72, whose family is the namesake of the Moore Family Creamery in Aggie Park; Wayne Roberts '85, the lead donor for Aggie Park; The Honorable Dr. Greg Bonnen '88; and The Honorable Chet Edwards '74. The 2024 Distinguished Alumni Gala will take place on Friday, September 20, in Reed Arena.

Garner introduced and welcomed The Association of Former Students' 2024 Chair of the Board, Bobby Jenkins '81.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 11, 2023. Carried. (Members of the Leadership Council who preregistered for this meeting unanimously approved the minutes via prior online voting).

ASSOCIATION REPORT

Fundraising Committee

Shara McClure '90, Chair of the Fundraising Committee, reported that close to \$11.3 million raised in The Association's 2023 Annual Fund from nearly 57,981 donors. She thanked those in attendance for their annual gifts to The Association, including their participation on Pass It Back Day. She went on to highlight fundraising results from the prior year's Pass It Back Day, where over \$566,000 raised from over 3,200 donors in 2023.

McClure shared the 2024 Annual Fund goal of \$11,575,000 from 60,000 donors and encouraged the Leadership Council to make their 2024 gift. She reported over \$1.3 million from over 15,000 donors in the 2024 Annual Fund as of February 1, 2024.

McClure reported that in 2023, there were 37 Endowed Century Club gifts made for a total of 1,219 funds. In addition, 39 Aggie Ring Scholarships were added last year for a total of 271 endowments.

McClure introduced Jake Carter '25, Head Yell Leader, as the beneficiary speaker. Carter reflected on the memory of his late father, highlighting his honor and resilience during his battle with cancer. He recounted his decision to attend Texas A&M and join the Corps of Cadets, calling it the best decision of his life. Carter expressed his deep appreciation for the 12th Man and the traditions that keep the Aggie Spirit alive. Although he did not initially aspire to be a yell leader, he noted that the most rewarding part of being a yell leader is meeting people and fostering the Spirit of Aggieland.

Volunteer Spotlight

McClure invited Class Agent, Bob Segner '69 to the stage and thanked him and the Class of 1969 for the generous impact they have made to The Association of Former Students and Texas A&M University. Segner spoke of the various contributions and ways in which the Class of '69 has contributed to Texas A&M and The Association.

Finance Committee

Brad Bynum '92, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented The Association's 2023 financial report. He stated that as of December 31, 2023, The Association had \$222M in total assets, \$5.2M in total liabilities for total net assets of \$217M across all funds (both restricted and unrestricted). The Association generated approximately \$30.2M in total revenues and had \$22.7M in total expenses for revenues over expenses of \$7.5M, again across all funds.

Bynum noted The Association generated \$15.4M in total mission support, which included both cash and program support and services, and is a 6.3% increase year over year. Bynum reported that 68% of total expenses went to support the mission of The Association, which is in line with historical trends other than last year with the \$31M gift to Texas A&M for Aggie Park.

When looking at the Operating Fund performance, The Association generated \$19.4M in Operating Fund revenues and had \$19.2M in operating expenses, for revenues over expenses of \$211,755. Bynum reported The Association had total reserves on December 31, 2023, of \$7.66M, with the target being \$6.65M.

Distinguished Alumnus Award Task Committee

Johnita Jones '83, Chair of the Distinguished Alumnus Award Task Committee, stated the day before, The Association's Board approved the following recommendations related to the Distinguished Alumnus Award:

Recommendation #1: Program Updates/Clarifications

Clarifications to ensure consistency across the five affiliates of the Aggie Network.

- Nomination Exclusions – Added employees of the George and Barbara Bush Foundation and the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets Association.
- Letter of Support Exclusions - Added Presidents and CEOs of the George and Barbara Bush Foundation and the Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets Association.

Recommendation #2: Nomination Process Updates

Simplified online nomination process; now requires:

- Letter of nomination, and current biography/CV/resumé.
- Letters of support are now optional.

Established a Nominating Committee appointed by:

- The Association's Chair of the Board, and
- Texas A&M University President.

Issued a call for nominations to the Leadership Council

- Update nomination exclusions – now allow Texas A&M University or A&M System personnel with exceptional careers to be eligible once the associated class reaches 40 years post-graduation.
- Published and posted “Tips for Completing Distinguished Alumni Nomination” on AggieNetwork.com.

Recommendation #3: Program Integrity Strengthening

- University President and A&M System Chancellor are not eligible for the award during their terms of employment (exclusion to 40 years post-graduation newly proposed eligibility).
- A&M System Board of Regents not eligible for award during terms of service on board.

Recommendation #4: Other

- The updated selection process allows the top three runners-up to recycle to the Selection Committee the following year without going back into the main pool of candidates.
- Provide resources from The Association and/or the President's Office to support nomination development (nominees from the Nominating Committee).
- Secured support from the Office of the Commandant for researching military backgrounds.

Jones noted that given the committee's recommendations were approved, the Distinguished Alumni Task Committee has been sunset.

Volunteer Expectations Task Committee

Aaron Pool '87, Chair of the Volunteer Expectations Task Committee, stated that after learning of unfortunate interactions that The Association staff has had with volunteer leaders over the years, Immediate Past Chair Bob Jordan '85 appointed a task committee last fall with the following charge:

- Consider and advise on a clear and comprehensive Volunteer Expectations Agreement that outlines expected behaviors, ethical standards and guidelines for all volunteers of The Association of Former Students, to include, but not limited to, The Association's Leadership Council, Aggie Ring Day volunteers, Aggie Network Student Ambassadors, Young Alumni Council members, and Advocates of the Texas A&M Advocacy Network.
- Consider and advise on strategies for educating Association volunteers about The Association's Volunteer Expectations Agreement and accountability standards.
- Consider and advise on accessible and confidential reporting mechanisms for individuals to report violations of The Association's Volunteer Expectations Agreement.
- Consider and advise on procedures for investigating and resolving reported violations, including a fair and impartial process that upholds due process rights while ensuring timely and appropriate actions are taken.
- Consider and advise on a process for holding Association volunteers accountable for violations of The Association's Volunteer Expectations Agreement and monitoring appropriate enforcement.

Pool thanked the members of the task committee, which is made up of Association Board and Leadership Council members, for their time and dedication to this important effort. He added that the Board would review the committee's recommendations at their second quarter meeting in May with the final Volunteer Expectations Agreement to be presented at the Fall Leadership Council meeting.

TEXAS A&M FOUNDATION REPORT

Jenkins introduced John Morris, Senior Vice President for Development for the Texas A&M Foundation, who provided a brief update on the initiatives and fundraising at the Foundation. Morris thanked The Association for all that it does on behalf of Texas A&M and Texas Aggies.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY REPORT

Jenkins welcomed President of Texas A&M University General (Ret.) Mark A. Welsh III to the meeting and thanked him for his genuine support of The Association. Welsh thanked The Association for the impact it makes on Texas A&M as well as current and former students. He reported on the recent restructuring of the President's Office and stated the number of vice presidents at Texas A&M has been decreased from 22 to eight. Vision 2040 is the university's next strategic plan. He commented on the studies that are reviewing the university's space, capacity, student experience, and research identity. Welsh discussed his priorities, which are re-embracing the spirit of Aggieland, using the capacity study to repair the faculty/staff-to-student ratio, graduating students who are great citizens and not just great Aggies, being the number one student experience university in the country as well as the top veteran-serving university in the country, and keeping Texas A&M's affiliates in the university's inner circle. Given the number of false narratives that have been circulating about Texas A&M, Welsh told the Leadership Council that they are welcome to personally reach out to him to confirm facts.

OTHER BUSINESS

Association Past Chair Phil Miner '80 was surprised as a 2024 Distinguished Alumnus of Texas A&M University.


CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Jenkins congratulated Miner and thanked the Leadership Council for what they do to serve The Association of Former Students and Texas A&M. He expressed his sincere appreciation to the staff who serve the worldwide Aggie Network every day. To close the meeting, Jenkins invited all former yell leaders to lead in the singing of the *Spirit of Aggieland*. He noted that the Fall Leadership Council meeting will be held November 15-16, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Bobby Jenkins '81
Chair of the Board


Porter S. Garner III '79
President and CEO