



## SPRING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING February 22, 2025

---

The Association of Former Students' President and CEO, Porter Garner '79, called the Spring Leadership Council Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Zachry Family Rooms of the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center. He welcomed more than 120 members of The Association's governing body attending in person, along with an additional 40 volunteer leaders participating via Zoom and expressed appreciation for their dedication and service. Garner noted that those in attendance represented a broad span of Aggie history—from the Class of 1953 to the Class of 2027.

He recognized Chong Hsu Liu '90, President of the Taiwan A&M Club, who joined the meeting virtually, as well as Ryan Price '91, President of the Italy A&M Club, who was in attendance. Garner thanked Price for thoughtfully delivering roses and candy to Association staff on Valentine's Day. He then honored Immediate Past Chair Bobby Jenkins '81, acknowledging his eight years of service on The Association's Board and commending him for his exemplary service as The Association's 2024 Chair of the Board.

Garner invited Corps of Cadets Chaplain Olivia Pace '25 to offer the invocation, followed by 2025 Distinguished Alumnus and Class Agent, Bill Youngkin '69, who led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge.

Garner reminded the Leadership Council of The Association's mission, which is to: *strengthen The Association of Former Students; promote the interests and welfare of Texas A&M University; perpetuate the ties of affection and esteem formed in university or college days; and serve the student body.*

He reported that 16,505 Aggie Rings were ordered in 2024, bringing the total to more than 150,000 Aggie Rings ordered and delivered over the past decade, making The Association the largest ring program in the world. He expressed gratitude to the many volunteers who make this accomplishment possible through service on Aggie Ring Day.

Looking ahead to Muster 2025, Garner shared that more than 200 Muster ceremonies will be held worldwide to honor Aggies who passed away over the past year. He noted The Association will conduct the Worldwide Muster Roll Call at sunrise on April 21, 2025, at the Williams Alumni Center and that the full Roll Call will be streamed live at [MusterLive.AggieNetwork.com](https://MusterLive.AggieNetwork.com). He also recognized Sue Owen '94, Communications Manager, for her work on a multimedia presentation chronicling the history of Aggie Muster, now available on [AggieNetwork.com](https://AggieNetwork.com).

Garner stated that only 354 of Texas A&M's 604,000 former students have been honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a former student of Texas A&M University. He announced six of the 2025 Distinguished Alumni whose surprise notifications had already taken place: Bill Youngkin '69; Scott Taylor '69; Steve Vincent '73; Col. John Ball '78;

Jim Wilson '81; and Mike Walker '66 (posthumously). The 2025 Distinguished Alumni Gala is scheduled for Friday, October 3, at Reed Arena.

Garner reported that given the priority The Association places on engagement, a full-file Former Student Engagement Survey will be distributed in the coming weeks to all living former students. The feedback collected will help guide The Association's planning and priorities as it builds for the future.

Garner introduced and welcomed 2025 Chair of the Board, Jeff Steen '80. who began his remarks by recognizing and thanking Jenkins for his exemplary leadership as the 2024 Chair of the Board.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 16, 2024. Carried. (Members of the Leadership Council unanimously approved the minutes via prior online voting.)

## **ASSOCIATION REPORT**

### **VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS TASK COMMITTEE**

Steen reported that in fall 2023, then-Chair of the Board Bob Jordan '85 appointed a Volunteer Expectations Task Committee to develop a clear and comprehensive policy outlining expectations for all Association volunteers. The resulting Volunteer Expectations Policy was unanimously approved at the Board's second quarter meeting in May 2024 and is now publicly available on The Association's website under the "About Us" section.

Steen introduced Aaron Pool '87 who served as Chair of the Volunteer Expectations Task Committee. Pool restated the committee's charge, which was to draft a volunteer code of conduct that defines expected behaviors, ethical standards and guidelines for those serving in a volunteer capacity with The Association. In addition, the committee was tasked with recommending a confidential reporting mechanism, outlining violation procedures, and establishing processes that ensure fairness, impartiality and due process when addressing concerns. Pool noted the committee was composed of both Board members and members of the Leadership Council. He presented the Volunteer Expectations Policy (Attachment 1), which is now in effect for all volunteers serving directly with The Association of Former Students. Pool walked through the policy, emphasizing that it reflects The Association's commitment to fostering a positive, respectful and values-driven environment, consistent with Texas A&M's core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service. He clarified that the policy is a stated standard—not a signed agreement—that outlines the roles, responsibilities and expected conduct of Association volunteers as they support and promote The Association's noble mission. It includes clear guidelines for professionalism and respect, as well as a defined reporting and response process should concerns arise. Pool further noted that the policy applies to all volunteers serving in direct Association roles, including but not limited to Leadership Council members, Aggie Ring Day volunteers and Legislative Advocates. He clarified that the Volunteer Expectations Policy does not apply to the independent boards or members of A&M Clubs or Constituent Networks.

## FUNDRAISING REPORT

Pool, who serves as Chair of the Board's Fundraising Committee, delivered the Fundraising Report next, announcing that \$11,250,129 was raised in The Association's 2024 Annual Fund from 53,753 donors. He expressed appreciation to the Leadership Council for their ongoing support, including their participation in Pass It Back Day. He also reported a decisive Texas A&M victory in the Rivalry Challenge against The University of Texas at Austin, noting that over \$145,000 was raised from more than 2,200 Aggie donors, compared to \$26,000 from 367 UT donors. Looking ahead, Pool shared the 2025 Annual Fund goal of \$11,502,000 from 55,000 donors and encouraged Leadership Council members to make their 2025 gift. He reported a strong start to the year, with more than \$1M already received from over 13,000 donors as of February 1. Pool highlighted continued growth in endowed giving, stating that 60 new Endowed Century Club gifts were secured in 2024, bringing the total to 1,279 and increasing the trust fund balance to over \$49M. He noted that earnings from the Endowed Century Club contributed more than \$1.6M to Annual Fund revenue in 2024. In addition, 46 new Endowed Aggie Ring Scholarships were established last year, bringing the total to 317 endowments. Effective January 1, 2025, The Association raised the minimum endowment level from \$25,000 to \$40,000 to better align scholarship awards with the rising cost of gold. Pool further reported that 2,933 Aggie Ring Scholarships were awarded in total to deserving students. He concluded by introducing Tony Weber '84, Chair of the Finance Committee, to deliver the Finance Report.

## FINANCE REPORT

Weber presented The Association's 2024 financial report, highlighting that The Association provided approximately \$16.1M in total mission services and support to Texas A&M University and the worldwide Aggie Network across both restricted and unrestricted funds. Of this amount, \$6.3M was distributed in cash for scholarships and academic programs. An additional \$9.8M in support was delivered through programs administered directly by The Association, including Campus Programs and the Aggie Ring office, Traveling Aggies, tailgates, Class Reunions, *Texas Aggie* magazine and the Distinguished Alumni Gala. As of December 31, 2024, The Association reported total assets exceeding \$233M and total net assets of \$224M across all funds. Weber noted that The Association generated approximately \$31.2M in total revenues and incurred \$23.3M in total expenses, resulting in a net increase of \$7.9M. He concluded by introducing Robert White '81, Chair of the Building Enhancement Task Committee, to provide an update on The Association's new building in Aggie Park.

## BUILDING TASK COMMITTEE REPORT

White reported on recent student and guest usage of Aggie Park, noting increased activity and engagement throughout the year. He highlighted the success of amenities such as the Moore Family Creamery and the expanded tailgate experiences, both of which have become popular gathering points. He shared attendance numbers for major 2024 events hosted in Aggie Park, including:

- April Aggie Ring Day – approximately 33,000 attendees
- Texas A&M vs. Notre Dame (with College GameDay) – approximately 36,000 attendees
- Texas A&M vs. LSU – approximately 37,000 attendees
- Texas A&M vs. Texas – approximately 75,000 attendees

White noted that The Association of Former Students manages and maintains 11 acres of Aggie Park, while Texas A&M University oversees the remainder. He outlined plans for The Association’s new student-centric building within the park and shared architectural renderings showcasing a coffee shop, event space and the future Aggie Ring Office. He added that the second level of the facility will be occupied by the Division of Student Affairs and designated for student organization and study space.

### AGGIE SPOTLIGHT

Steen explained that the “Volunteer Spotlight,” which has been used to highlight the work of A&M Clubs, Classes and Constituent Networks, has now been broadened to recognize exceptional achievements across the broader Texas A&M community. Moving forward, it will be known as the “Aggie Spotlight.” Steen introduced David Tofel ’06, Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of Admissions at Texas A&M University. Tofel shared insights into the evolving admissions landscape, noting the dramatic rise in interest in Texas A&M. He stated that when he began working in the Office of Admissions in 2007, the university received approximately 26,000 applications. That number increased to 60,000 in 2023, 66,000 in 2024, and is projected to reach approximately 75,000 in 2025. Tofel outlined several pathways to admission, including Top 10% auto-admit, the Gateway Program, Blinn TEAM, Engineering Academies, the Higher Education Center at McAllen and Texas A&M Galveston. He confirmed that Texas A&M will continue its “test-optional” policy for the upcoming admissions cycle. Tofel concluded by expressing gratitude to The Association of Former Students for its continued support in helping attract and retain top-tier students to Texas A&M.

### CHAIR’S CLOSING REMARKS

Steen thanked the Leadership Council for what they do to serve The Association of Former Students and encouraged everyone to attend the volunteer development sessions following the meeting. To close the meeting, Steen 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 14-15, 2025.

### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lias J. “Jeff” Steen ’80  
Chair of the Board



Porter S. Garner III ’79  
President and CEO