

We have work to do.

We thought it couldn't get any worse.

At first, it was frightening to be a student in such a period of instability within our communication and journalism department. Now, it's evolved into a system-wide fallout that's garnered national attention, which has been nothing but an embarrassment to our university.

Political overreach leads to a lack of intellectual diversity, inevitably damaging the curriculum and research done at the university. Students will not attend a college where they do not have the ability to learn any subject, irrespective of the matter, the same way faculty will not tenure at a university with a barricade around "touchy subjects." Texas A&M University leaders should be chosen through merit alone — not back-room political dealing.

How much more shame will university leaders subject Aggies around the world to? This board believes that A&M can get back on track, but before we can even think about building back, we need to repair the damage that has already been done.

First and foremost, to acting president Mark Welsh, we as students would like to express our support for you as president. You have been put in an unenviable position. Still, we believe that your service not just to A&M as Dean of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service but to our nation and the United States Air Force, as well as your personal connection to A&M, makes you uniquely qualified to lead the university through this troubled time.

To begin rebuilding trust between the administration and the rest of campus, we ask that on behalf of A&M, you take the time to repair the currently broken relationship with Kathleen McElroy. Not only is this essential for journalism at Texas A&M to succeed but as long as the relationship with McElroy remains damaged, this university's ability to make quality hires is diminished. This university, her alma mater, caused her both ca-

reer and personal distress. If this is how Aggies treat their own, what hope do we have of attracting other qualified candidates?

We ask that apologies be made, either by or on behalf of those responsible for the events that led to her rejecting the illegitimate offer given to her. Furthermore, we ask that the university does whatever is necessary to restore her as the head of the Department of Journalism. The need for well-trained Texas journalists has never been more clear than it is right now, it is up to A&M to help educate them.

During this time of great turmoil for faculty and students, we call upon the Vice President of Faculty Affairs, N.K. Anand, to lead the faculty with dignity and respect. More than ever, the concerns of the faculty matter. Unfortunately, they have been met with either dismissal or demands to resign. This conduct is not only unprofessional, but it degrades the already damaged reputation of our university. The administration needs to take feedback as valid concerns rather than inconveniences.

Finally, we call on Chancellor John Sharp to emphatically affirm, through action, that outside political influence has no place in any of the A&M system's universities. In addition to McElroy's situation, the suspension of Professor Joy Alonzo, allegedly ordered by the Lieutenant Governor, greatly troubles us. We are glad to hear the investigation of Alonzo has concluded with no terminations made and all parties satisfied, and we call on you to make sure cases such as Alonzo's and McElroy's do not happen again.

It is this board's strong belief that A&M is a world-class institution, but the behavior and attitudes of certain current and former leaders show that it won't remain that way unless imminent action is taken. As long as university leaders continue to put the demands of outside political actors above the well-being of our campus community, this embarrassing and destructive downward trend will continue.



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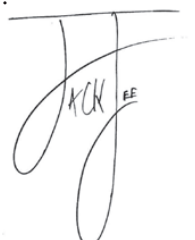
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