

Sept. 22, 2023

Statement By Bill Mahomes, Chairman of the Texas A&M System Board of Regents

We are pleased with the direction of Texas A&M University under the leadership of interim President Mark Welsh. We applaud that he is moving decisively to advance the university's mission and ensure that faculty, staff, and others in the Aggie community are properly informed and included in the decision-making process.

This Board of Regents is committed to academic freedom and faculty input into the board's responsibility for governance. The board is also committed to fulfilling its responsibility for strategic oversight of academic degree programs, especially emerging ones.

In February 2023, the board approved the start of a new journalism program at Texas A&M. Dr. McElroy was announced as director of the program a few months later. In the context of the board's responsibilities and public attention concerning the hiring of Dr. McElroy, the board met and discussed the matter. The board took no action on her hiring and did not direct administrators to modify the terms of her offer.

Regarding ideology, it is no secret that Texas A&M is widely seen as conservative. This reputation is rooted in its tradition of graduating exceptional leaders in military service, its capacity to develop young people of strong character with a public service mindset, and its strongly felt commitment to its core values of respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, and selfless service.

It is a tradition without regard for whatever divisive issues are causing political polarization at any moment in time. It is a tradition that comfortably co-exists at Texas A&M with faculty across the political spectrum.

This board supports faculty who teach students how to think and not what to think, who prepare learners by cultivating critical thinking skills and encouraging free and open inquiry and discourse.

As Aggies and members of the governing board of the Texas A&M System, we share a collective sense of failure and regret regarding the handling of Dr. McElroy's hiring. We apologized to her for those mistakes and learned from them. We will strive to prevent similar mistakes in the future.

This Board of Regents is committed to its strategic governance and oversight of all System universities through processes that include proper faculty and staff participation.