



Howdy, Advocates!

We'd like to start this August edition of our news update by welcoming 10,000+ freshmen to Texas A&M University - which brings the total number of students in Aggieland to over 63,298! Speaking of numbers, we are less than two months away from the elections, and less than four months away from the start of the 86th Legislative Session. Please follow us on Twitter [@TAMUAdvocacy](#) as we countdown the remaining days with a daily feature of legislative districts in Texas – including the [#AggieImpacts](#) .

Next week, President Michael K. Young will have the opportunity to testify before the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) and the Governor's staff in Austin. He will speak broadly about the flagship's legislative priorities and in particular about the University's Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). During his address, President Young will outline specific budgetary requirements and inform the participants about how the University intends to spend the state's appropriations over the biennium. Livestream of the testimony and additional information about the LBB and higher education can be found [here](#) .

In this news update you will find two articles about the "race" to replace Rep. Joe Straus as the Texas Speaker of the House. So far seven current members have announced their decision to run, six Republicans and one Democrat. Its also the time of the year for annual college rankings. Texas A&M continues to climb in several polls and you can read about the 2018 results from the The Wall Street Journal. The newsletter also includes an article about the skills employers are seeking in recent college graduates, and how well colleges – writ large – are meeting those needs. Speaking of Texas A&M meeting the needs of local citizens, you can also read about the newest education center in McAllen, Texas.

In keeping with the Aggie values, Texas A&M graduate David Vela '82 was named by President Donald Trump to head the National Park Service, a job that has been filled on an acting basis for the nearly 20 months. We wish him the best during Senate confirmation.

Lastly, I'd like to congratulate my summer student worker – Addie Skinner '18 – for graduating in August, and welcome back Jeevan Varghese '18 – as he finishes his senior year. We look forward to great success from both of these Aggies. Whoop!

Thanks for your continued support of the Advocacy program, Texas A&M, and The Association of Former Students.

Gig 'em

Dave Fujimoto '17
 Director of Strategic Engagement

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Here's a look at who's interested in replacing Straus

Last October, House Speaker Joe Straus announced he wouldn't be running for re-election in 2018 — a move likely to shake up Texas politics for years.



"I believe that in a representative democracy, those who serve in public office should do so for a time, not for a lifetime. And so I want you to know that my family and I have decided that I will not run for re-election next year," Straus said in a campaign email at the time.

Continue reading to find out more about Speaker of the House candidates [here](#).



Analysis: For potential Texas House Speaker candidates, the clock is ticking

The window for state representatives who would like to be the next speaker of the Texas House is open — but it could close quickly.

It's not that the race is over. Far from it. But it's getting crowded. Candidates are going to run out of voters if the pool keeps expanding like this. Each new entrant will find a smaller field of friends from whom to solicit pledges to back them over any of the other guys. First come, first served.

Continue reading about this issue in The Texas Tribune [here](#) .

Wall Street Journal Reports: College Rankings

Cambridge is king. Size doesn't matter. And money talks.



Those are some of the broad takeaways of this year's Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings, which award Harvard University the top spot for the second straight year, followed by its Cambridge neighbor, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Take a in-depth look at the rankings and methodology [here](#).



Colleges Say They Prepare Students for a Career, Not Just a First Job. Is That True?

About 60 percent of executives and hiring managers think that most college graduates are prepared to succeed in entry-level positions. But only a third of

executives, and a quarter of hiring managers, believe graduates have the skills and knowledge to advance or be promoted. Those findings — among the most striking in a new survey of employers released on by the Association of American Colleges & Universities — are open to several interpretations.

On the one hand, it's probably intuitive that graduates would be better poised for entry-level work than for advancement. No one has a second job until they've had a first one. On the other, colleges often argue that they're preparing students not merely for a first job, but for a lifetime of professional and broader success.

Continue reading in the Chronicle of Higher Education [here](#).

Texas A&M Opens New Education Center in McAllen

There's a new university in town.

The Texas A&M University Higher Education Center has opened its doors to the school's first class of students.



The 65,000-square foot building is located in the expanding Tres Lago community and boasts state-of-the-art technology and facilities.

The university currently offers five degree programs including studies in public health, biomedical science, and food information systems management. Students can also enroll in two engineering programs.

Continue reading about the new education center [here](#)



Aggie Nominated To Head National Park Service

Texas A&M graduate David Vela '82 was named last week by President Donald Trump to head the National Park Service, a job that has been filled on an acting basis for the nearly 20 months since Trump has been in office.

Vela grew up in Wharton and graduated from A&M in 1982 with a recreation, park and tourism sciences degree. Vela, a 28-year career veteran of the park services, currently serves as the superintendent of Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway that joins Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks. He began his park services career at San Antonio's Missions National Historical Park.

Continue reading in The Eagle [here](#) .

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