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## The Buck Weirus Spirit Award

honors up to 55 students who demonstrate high involvement, create positive experiences throughout the Aggie community, impact student life at Texas A&M and help enhance the Aggie Spirit. Unlike other awards, the Buck Weirus Spirit Award recognizes those students who make contributions to the university by participating in student organizations, Aggie traditions and university events. Email SpiritAward@AggieNetwork.com for more information.

Online applications available at: **AggieNetwork.com/BuckWeirus**



Online applications available now at: [AggieNetwork.com/BuckWeirus](http://AggieNetwork.com/BuckWeirus)

and are due by 11:59 pm, February 2, 2015.

### Application Workshops

**Tuesday, January 20**  
3:30-4:30 p.m.  
Koldus Building  
Room 144

**Thursday, January 22**  
7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Koldus Building  
Room 144

**Monday, January 26**  
6:00-7:00 p.m.  
Koldus Building  
Room 144

**Wednesday, January 28**  
6:30-7:30 p.m.  
Koldus Building  
Room 144



The Aggie Band, Parson's Mounted Cavalry and The Ross volunteers were some of the student groups who participated in the Inaugural Parade.

Shelby Knowles — THE BATTALION

## INAUGURATION CONTINUED

The parade attracted visitors from all over Texas. Jennifer Hancock, Class of '93, had traveled all the way to Austin to see her son represent Parson's Mounted Cavalry in the parade.

"Seeing the Aggies take part in such a big event is really a great representation of Texas A&M," Hancock said. "I came out to see my son and to be part of history."

Along with the Aggie Band and Parson's Mounted Cavalry, the Ross Volunteers also participated in the inauguration. The Ross Volunteers were chiefly tasked in providing

a saber arch at the Oath of Office ceremony.

Agricultural science junior Garrett Hancock said being invited by the governor to march in the parade and represent Texas A&M was one of the best experiences he has had in college.

"Halfway through our march I started to get goosebumps," Hancock said. "This parade was the first time A&M has had a citable presence in Austin since the last TU game."

Hancock said his involvement was special in that participating in such an event has not happened since Perry's first election.

"I think [Abbott] is going to do a really good job. He has good ideas and is determined," Hancock said. "Texas is ready for a change."

## VIEWS

# Eyes on Austin

State lawmaking is tedious and at times boring — but it's worth paying attention



Jennifer Reiley  
@jreiley1

The Texas Legislature is now in session, but you won't see any bills being passed immediately.

While not every student has extreme interest in politics, learning a bit about how the system works can at least impress your political science professor. The session officially started on Jan. 13, and this year marks an important shift as Texas welcomes a new governor into the office after 14 years of Rick Perry.

For 140 days, Texas goes through the process of adding and refining laws. This hectic time happens every two years, and 2015 welcomes in the 84th legislative session. However, before bills actually become laws, a number of steps have to be checked off.

Before a bill is even introduced onto the House or Senate floor, it has to go through committee. You know the School House Rock song about the bill on Capitol Hill. Same rules apply on the state level. (If you don't know what Schoolhouse Rock is, educate yourself.) The committee heads are assigned by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and speaker Joe Straus. Each bill is assigned to a committee based on subject matter, where it is reviewed, amended and sometimes stopped from ever entering the floor.

The Texas Constitution dictates that the first 30 days of session are for the introduction

of bills, and the second 30 days is for public hearings on each bill. What that all means is that no bill, other than those marked as urgent by Gov. Greg Abbott, won't be discussed on the floor until early March.

There are a number of bills that directly affect college students. Some involve tuition. There's a bill on file that would give a sale tax exemption for textbooks, something I think we would all appreciate. After the passage of Student Senate's Personal Protection Act, bills dealing with concealed carry and handgun licenses have new relevance for Aggies.

While there's still a little more than a month before bills reach the floor, there are ways students can get involved. Most of the action actually takes place within the committee. Find an issue that you feel strongly about that has a bill on file. You can write to your representative or senator to let them know your stance. The members of the legislature are meant to represent and serve their constituents. However, if they have no communication from the constituents, they're limited to their own opinions.

Members of the public can express their opinions at bill hearings. Guests are also welcome to visit the Capitol and sit in the gallery. If you've never witnessed a day in the life of the Texas Legislature, I would encourage you to do so. While 90 percent of the time it may seem boring and most of the conversations will go over our heads, watching the government at work does give a new perspective.

Every Maroon Coat has a story.  
What's yours?

Applications due Jan. 28:  
[give.am/ApplyMC](http://give.am/ApplyMC)

Morgan Cochran, 15<sup>th</sup> Second Brigade Commander, Corps of Cadets

## Aggieland2015

It's not too late

to order your copy of the 2015 AggieLand yearbook.

The 113th edition of Texas A&M's official yearbook will chronicle the 2014-2015 school year — traditions, academics, athletics, the other education, the Corps, Greeks, residence halls, campus organizations, and student portraits. Distribution will be in Fall 2015.

By credit card go online to <http://aggieland.tamu.edu> or call 979-845-2613. Or drop by the Student Media office in Suite L400 of the MSC.

## Aggieland2015