

Message from Chancellor John Sharp

For those of you who know me, you can understand how I was biting my tongue to keep from responding personally during the recent avalanche of negative media coverage. I chose to wait, however, for the conclusion of a thorough investigation into the attempted hiring of Dr. Kathleen McElroy and the controversy surrounding Dr. Joy Alonzo.

You can read the report (www.tamus.edu/internal-review) for yourself and view the evidence that supports the investigation's narrative. It isn't always pretty, but it helps explain what really happened. We surely learned of some bad decision-making to which almost no one was privy at the time.

Regarding the events in Dr. McElroy's hiring process, it is difficult to recognize the alma mater I dearly love and to which I owe so much. Texas A&M is far better than this!

A few, however, forgot our Core Values.

It is time to come together, put our house back in order, and vow to never let this happen again. We all must re-dedicate ourselves to the Aggie values that define us and bind us.

To begin with, I want to apologize publicly to Dr. McElroy and fervently hope we can eventually heal with our mutual love for Texas A&M.

To Dr. Alonzo, I am sorry her name was bandied about in the news media four months after the university had cleared her of allegations she had criticized Lt. Governor Dan Patrick in a manner that at least one student found offensive.

The report also corrects the false narrative that I ordered an investigation into Dr. Alonzo and am not a champion of academic freedom because I took one brief, non-threatening phone call from the lieutenant governor.

The truth is, the university put her on paid leave while it investigated with no initiation or interference from me. Further, Dr. Joy Alonzo says she has no issue with how the university handled her case.

Bottom line, Texas A&M investigated when the University of Texas Medical Branch, where Dr. Alonzo was appearing as a guest lecturer, issued a public statement censuring Dr. Alonzo without providing any evidence, it turned out, and unfortunately still hasn't retracted that censure.

What else would you have the university do but check it out?

As for academic freedom, faculty members across the state were terrified this spring that the Legislature would follow up on calls to eliminate tenure, the bedrock of academic freedom. Instead, today the tenure policy of Texas A&M is codified in state law because we persuaded state officials our policy works both for academic freedom and accountability.

Finally, it has been suggested to me in the media that I let calls from state officials go to voicemail. I assume that silly suggestion was meant as a clever turn of a phrase, but I always found when you stop taking people's calls, then they cease answering yours.

And that would be bad for the alma mater I love so much – especially after the last legislative session was the best we ever had.