SEPTEMBER 25, 2014

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Trustees get first female pro tem

UA board also OKs budgets for FY 2015, construction projects

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Karen Brooks, the University of Alabama board of trustees' new president pro tempore, is the first woman to serve in the role in the institution's 183-year history.

Brooks, of Tuscaloosa, was selected during the board's meeting Friday to replace outgoing President Pro Tem Paul Bryant Jr. Bryant served three terms as pro tem, the maximum allowed by the board's bylaws. The 69-year-old trustee will continue to serve on the board.

"I really want to thank all of you for your vote of confidence. I am extremely humbled by the responsibility," Brooks said.

Brooks, the chairwoman of the physical properties committee, praised Bryant's leadership. The son of the legendary football coach received a standing ovation at the meeting.

"I know I have huge shoes to fill, and I am going to do everything I can to get my feet to grow fast," Brooks said.

Friday's meeting was the last for trustee Andria Scott Hurst, who is leaving the board because of a mandatory retirement age of 70. Trustees are required to retire following the annual meeting after...
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their 70th birthday, according to board rules. Hurst represented the state's 7th congressional district since 2001.

The board nominated Barbara Humphrey, a University of Alabama at Birmingham alumna, to replace Hurst. Humphrey's appointment must still be confirmed by the Alabama Senate.

During Friday's meeting, the board also approved fiscal year 2015 budgets for its three campuses and the system office, as well as a series of construction-related resolutions including increasing budgets for the renovation of Thomas-Sewell Stadium and demolitions on the Bryce Hospital campus.

The UA operating budget of $785 million for FY 2015 would be an increase of about 6.4 percent over 2014. Revenues are expected to increase by $63 million and expenses by $47 million.

UAB's operating budget for 2015 would be about $1 billion, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville's operating budget for the year beginning Oct. 1 would be about $215.3 million. The proposed budget for the UASystem office would be about $18.5 million.

The board approved a resolution to increase the budget for the renovations and additions of Sewell-Thomas Stadium from $35 million to $42.6 million and award a construction contract to Rabren General Contractors Inc. of Auburn as the low bidder for the construction. The increase was the result of a variety of factors, including higher than expected bids for the construction, according to the firm managing the project.

The trustees approved increasing the budget for the planned demolition on the Bryce Hospital campus from $3.8 million to $4.4 million based on an expansion of the scope of the work. The demolition work includes sections of the outermost wings of the former Bryce Hospital main building and 12 other buildings on the historic campus. The resolution would also grant authority to award contracts to the lowest responsible bidders for the work.

The board also approved the architectural design for a new classroom building planned for the west side of the historic Bryce campus off Hackberry Lane and changes that would increase the size to 83,798 square feet and the budget by roughly $576,000 to $52 million. The change would add two corridors in the building to improve access and circulation, increasing its size.

The board also gave preliminary approval of plans to demolish the existing Zeta Tau Alpha sorority house and the nearby Gamma Phi Beta chapter house and construct a new 40,000-square-foot, $13.8 million ZTA house at the location. The construction would be funded by a loan from UA, which would be repaid by the sorority.

The trustees also authorized negotiations for an architectural agreement for the planned retail center on Bryant Drive, which will be at the former site of the Cor- ners store and current location of Bryant Dance Studio. The $5.2-million center would house The Supe Store now in Tutwiler Hall next door and a Starbucks. The top-ranked firms are Herrington Architects, CMH Architects Inc., and Hendon Huckestein Architects, all of Birmingham.
UA Board of Trustees names female president

Board approves new ZTA sorority house

By Rachel Brown, Katie Shepherd and Andy McWhorter | CW Staff

The University of Alabama system made history Friday morning by selecting Karen Brooks to serve as the president pro tempore of the Board of Trustees for the next year. Brooks will be the first woman to serve in this position in the board's 183-year existence. Brooks was elected by a unanimous vote of the board.

Brooks will replace Paul W. Bryan Jr., who finished his third year at president pro tempore Friday. Three years is the maximum time someone can serve as president pro tempore.

Trustee Finis St. John said he was honored to nominate Brooks. "She has proven she is willing to do the hard work that is necessary," he said.

Brooks is a native of Tuscaloosa and graduated from The University of Alabama in 1972 with a degree in social work. She currently serves as the president and co-chairman of Phiir Incorporated.

Brooks said she was extremely humbled to step into her new position.

"I know I have huge shoes to fill, and I am going to do everything I can to make my feet

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Board updates student handbook during meeting

TRUSTEES FROM PAGE 1

grow really fast,” she said.

The Board of Trustees also elected a new trustee, Barbara Humphrey, to serve as a representative of the seventh congressional district, replacing trustee Andria Scott Hurst, who retired from the board Friday due to age. Humphrey is an alumna of The University of Alabama at Birmingham and is the founder and head coach of Speedy City Summer Track Club. Humphrey currently serves as the head track and field coach at Simmons Middle School in Hoover.

Brooks and Humphrey will step into their new posts at the next board meeting in November.

The Board also voted Friday to approve the resolution to demolish Zeta Tau Alpha and Gamma Phi Beta’s sorority houses on Magnolia Drive to allow space for Zeta Tau Alpha’s new 40,000 square foot house in their meeting Thursday.

Gamma Phi Beta will move to their new location on Paul W. Bryant Drive, leaving the old house empty. Zeta Tau Alpha plans to demolish both their existing house and the adjacent Gamma Phi Beta house to construct a larger house on the lot. The projected budget for the construction is $13,892,375 and will be funded by a loan from the University to the Zeta Tau Alpha chapter.

Mike Lanier’s request to increase the budget for construction on Thomas-Sewell Stadium was also approved by the Board. The budget will increase from $35 million to $42,632,920, nearly a 22 percent increase. The project will be funded by gifts, the Crimson Tide Foundation and Intercollegiate Athletic Funds in the amount of $27,632,920 and 2014 general revenue bonds in the amount of $15 million.

The Board approved all resolutions of the physical properties committee, the finance committee and the academic affairs, student affairs and planning committee.

The construction of a Starbucks on Paul W. Bryant Drive was budgeted at $5.2 million, and it will feature both outdoor seating and a larger pedestrian area. Lanier said there would be considerations made for traffic, including a crosswalk with a traffic light, in order to ensure the safety of students in the area.

“The changes to the student handbook were fairly benign,” said Charles Nash.

The University of Alabama will see a $47.47 million increase in the budget for the 2015 fiscal year totaling $786 million. The budget proposal includes a $62 million increase in operating revenue, totaling $661 million. The total 2015 operating budget for the UA System will be $3.8 billion, an increase of approximately $200 million from last year. The finance committee allocated $301 million for scholarships at all University of Alabama schools.

The proposal also showed a nearly $100 million higher than anticipated revenue from tuition and fees in fiscal year 2014. While the 2014 budget anticipated $473.6 million in revenue from tuition and fees, the University is projected to take in $570.6 million by the end of September.

Amendments to the UA Student Handbook will be made in the upcoming year. These changes include updates to departments that may have undergone name changes, such as the Office of Student Conduct, Student Involvement and Leadership and the SOURCE Board of Governors.

In addition, updates and corrections were made to ensure that the handbook accurately reflects current policies that are found on the UA website. These corrections include Academic Integrity, ADA compliance, EEOC and the Student Appellant Process. The UA Code of Conduct and Social Event Guidelines were also updated. According to Vice-Chancellor Charles Nash, the changes to the student handbook are not expected to have a significant impact.

“The changes to the student handbook were fairly benign,” Nash said at the academic affairs, student affairs and planning committee meeting Thursday. “We are just updating.”
Board of Trustees must engage with UA students

The UA System Board of Trustees met Friday to approve the proposed operating budget for 2015. At that meeting, the Board gave the rubber stamp to numerous construction and demolition projects, including $13,892,375 going toward a loan for the construction of a new Zeta Tau Alpha house and $4,479,944 for the New Academic Classroom project. In addition, the Board approved changes to the UA Student Handbook, mostly revolving around updates to departments that have undergone changes in structure or name in the past year.

This all seems relatively benign; however, we are talking about tens of millions of dollar, and I would venture to say that the majority of students on this campus had absolutely no idea that this meeting was even scheduled to take place. Trustee Joe Espey, a former SGA president, rightly asked whether students’ and faculty members’ opinions had been taken into consideration when deciding whether to approve these changes. In response, current SGA president Hamilton Bloom said he was satisfied with the degree of student involvement with the proposals.

Perhaps I’m far less aware of the dynamics within this University than I thought I was, but I do not recall a single instance where any genuine effort was made to include students in this decision-making process. Going back through my inbox, not a single email was sent asking for student input, nor am I aware of anything similar to the Student Opinions of Instruction surveys that attempt to engage students with the Board of Trustees.

This is critical for a number of reasons. The University of Alabama does not exist without its students. It has an obligation to ensure that the decisions it makes, especially those involving millions of dollars coming from our tuition payments (which the trustees also set), are aligned with the desires and values we hold. Contrary to perhaps popular belief, we did not sign away our souls when we agreed to attend this University. We simply agreed to fork over significant bundles of cash with the expectation that it would be used in a way that furthered our education and our ability to make an impact in our community.

Many other universities, such as the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, have a non-voting student member on the Board, elected by university students, who is required to at least minimally engage students in the Board’s decisions. At The University of Alabama, the SGA president is tasked with such a role, but because he has numerous other responsibilities, it would make more sense to have an entirely separate position dedicated toward dealing with such issues.

If the Board of Trustees ever decided it was going to cease including student input in offering a quality education, we would rightly be irate. So why is it any different that we don’t have a voice when it comes to multimillion dollar projects? The Board should make a real effort to reach out to students for their opinions, but if we are to make the most out of this relationship, we must meet them halfway. For as much complaining about the University as we students are apt to do, there is comparatively little action. Consider this an ideal avenue for action.

Chisolm Allenlundy is a junior majoring in philosophy and economics. His column runs weekly.
Revenues sluggish as budget year comes to end

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Alabama's fiscal year ends next week, and it's been a sluggish one for the tax revenues that support the education and general funds.

Through August, dollars to the Education Trust Fund were up 1.6 percent compared to last year. That's about what the legislature projected when it passed the budget in 2013.

Dollars to the General Fund, which supports prisons, Medicaid and other non-education services, were flat, as expected.

The state will make it through the year without proration for the third-straight year in the ETF and the second-straight year in the General Fund.

Proration is the across-the-board spending cuts mandated if revenues fall short of the spending levels set in the budget.

But the state has borrowed $1 billion to balance the budgets in recent years.

$437 million withdrawn from the Alabama Trust Fund in fiscal year 2009 to support the Education Trust Fund.

$162 million withdrawn from the Alabama Trust Fund to support the General Fund in fiscal year 2010.

$437 million withdrawn from the Alabama Trust Fund to support the General Fund in fiscal years 2013, 2014 and 2015 ($145 million each year).

About three-fourths of that money has yet to be repaid to the Alabama Trust Fund.

The first withdrawal listed above — $437 million to the ETF — must be fully repaid by next summer. The state began this fiscal year still owing $163 million of that amount.

The chairmen of the education budget committees in the Legislature, Sen. Trip Pittman and Rep. Bill Poole, said the money should be available to finish the payback next year.

Pittman said his biggest long-term concern about the education budget is the impact federal policies on health care, energy, taxes and foreign policy will have on economic growth.

More about this year's revenues through August:

Net income tax receipts to the ETF are almost exactly the same as last year, up just three-tenths of 1 percent.

Net sales tax receipts to the ETF are up 5 percent over last year, to almost $1.5 billion.

Total net receipts to the ETF are up $83 million, 1.6 percent, to $5.2 billion.

Total net receipts to the General Fund are down $7 million, 0.4 percent, to $1.6 billion.

Norris Green, director of the Legislative Fiscal Office, said income tax receipts were reduced this year because taxpayers, anticipating the expiration of some Bush-era tax cuts after 2012, claimed some income that year instead of in 2013.

These claims boosted income taxes paid in 2013 and decreased the amount in 2014.
Bice touts schools’ success
Superintendent says innovation key to advances

By Jamon Smith
Staff Writer

When Alabama Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice was being interviewed for the position in 2011, he said he told the state board of education three things about how he would run public education in the state if hired.

■ He would always make decisions based on what’s right for children no matter whose toes he stepped on.
■ He would be politically independent.
■ If allowed to do innovative things and break out of the mold, he would make a difference.

"I asked them very quickly, after I made that point, ‘Would you give me permission to set aside everything we’ve currently done in public education?’" Bice said. "... And I’m very fortunate to have a board who said yes to that.”

Bice spoke to a crowd of about 200 people at the Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy Tuesday as part of his 12-city “Future of Public Education Tour.”

The tour is an attempt for Bice to engage Alabama residents in person and talk with them about public education in Alabama past, present and future.

“The reality was that 30 percent of the kids who were graduating from Alabama high schools got a diploma that I signed and the principal signed, and gave to them in May when they walked across the football field, or stadium or auditorium and we said they had met our expectations,” Bice said.

“And two months later when they went to Shelton, they enrolled
See Bice | 4B

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in remedial education taking the same thing because our expectations were so far off.”

He said parents shouldn’t have to pay for public education with their tax dollars and then pay college tuition to have classes retaught to their children.

Bice illustrated how inadequate public education in Alabama was by comparing students’ Alabama High School Graduation Exam scores to their ACT scores. He said the last time the graduation exam was given — variants of the ACT are now used — 97 percent of the entire senior class passed it in every subject.

He said their “great success” was celebrated, an act that was actually “lying to our students.”

When 76 percent of that same group of students who passed the graduation exam took the ACT — a college entrance exam — only 66 percent of them passed the English portion, 31 percent passed the math section, 41 percent the reading section, 30 percent the science portion and 20 percent passed all four sections.

“If we really want to know the facts and get off our political bandwagons and make a difference for children, if we look at our black children across the state of Alabama that were part of that 76 percent, 4 percent of the black students who took it met the college readiness qualifications in mathematics,” he said.

A change had to be made, Bice said.

So what they created was the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards and Plan 2020, but before that, they had to figure out what kind of graduate Alabama public schools needed to produce.

“We had to redefine our vision,” he said. “We had a vision that every child be a graduate. What we realized ... is that students are graduating but they’re not prepared for what comes next.

“So we redefined the high school graduate based on your interests.”

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State schools chief will visit

By Jamon Smith
Staff Writer

State Superintendent Tommy Bice is coming to Tuscaloosa on Tuesday as part of a 12-city “Future of Public Education Tour.”

Bice will speak with residents about how public education works in Alabama and about its future, and answer any questions.

“We hear from some parents on Facebook, we get some interaction on Twitter, but we definitely want to meet face to face and hear (residents’) comments,” said Malissa Valdes-Hubert, public information manager for the Alabama Department of Education.

From 6 to 7 p.m., Bice will give a presentation on the key education issues of the day dealing with long-range planning, career preparedness standards, testing, accountability and funding.

After the presentation, there will be a 30-minute question-and-answer session.

“Any questions that are not answered will be put up on a website and be answered by the end of the tour,” Valdes-Hubert said.

The tour started in Huntsville on Aug. 26. Since then Bice has been to Demopolis, Opelika, Birmingham, Montgomery, Florence and Dothan. After Tuscaloosa, he will go to Helena, Selma, Mobile and Jacksonville.

“We found it really engaging for the first (seven) stops we’ve had now,” Valdes-Hubert said. “People felt like they got first-hand information. Dr. Bice is very approachable. We’ve had roughly 1,300 people combined at the first stops, and we hope more will come.”

Bice will be joined by state business and industry representatives as well as other education stakeholders.
Mercedes announces it will begin making hybrid cars

Company will launch 10 plug-in models by 2017

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Mercedes-Benz announced plans Monday to make plug-in electric hybrids in most of its major models, including the C-Class sedans and M-Class sport utility vehicles made at its auto assembly plant in Vance.

Thomas Weber, head of Mercedes’ research and development, made the announcement Monday at a news event at the company’s headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany.

“We will have a plug-in hybrid version of every volume model,” Weber said, according to an online report in Automotive News, an auto industry trade journal.

He said the company would launch 10 plug-in hybrids by 2017.

Automotive News said plans include plug-in hybrids for the C-Class, Mercedes’ top-selling model, and the M-Class, which is only made in Vance.

The Vance plant, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, also started making C-Class sedans this year for sale in the North American market.

No specific launch dates were given, nor was there an indication which models would be first.

Weber said, however, that by 2020, even Mercedes’ compact models like the A-Class also will come with plug-in hybrids.

He said hybrids will be combined with gasoline and diesel engines and will be available in all engine types.

Plug-in hybrid vehicles have rechargeable batteries that store energy that run the vehicle. The batteries are charged by plugging them into an electric socket.
Unemployment rate ticks down to 6.9 percent

Alex Walsh  awalsh@al.com

Alabama's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 6.9 percent in August, down from the 7 percent rate posted a month before, according to the Alabama Department of Labor.

The unemployment rate dropped because fewer Alabama residents were looking for work in August than in July. About 6,800 fewer people were employed in August than in the previous month, and about 1,300 fewer were classified as unemployed.

Combined, those changes brought about a slight drop in Alabama's jobless rate.

The state's unemployment rate was lower this time last year. In August 2013 the rate was 6.5 percent. Since then, the numbers show about 15,000 fewer Alabamians are employed.

While fewer Alabama residents say they are working, Alabama employers say they have created nearly 20,000 jobs over the past year, good for growth of about 1 percent.

Nationally, job growth has been about 1.5 percent since the end of the Great Recession.

For the most part, Alabama job trends held steady in August: the manufacturing industry added jobs, as did the service sector — business services, health, food service — while the government shed jobs.

Jobs were also added in the construction industry, which has been slow to recover in Alabama.

Over the past year the state added nearly 3,000 construction jobs, bringing the industry total to 83,400 — its strongest reading since 2011.

Despite those gains, total construction jobs in Alabama are about what they were 20 years ago in the spring of 1994.
‘We don’t feel safe’

LISTEN UP: UA STUDENTS TAKE CONCERNS TO SCHOOL OFFICIALS.

Melissa Brown • mbrown@al.com

University of Alabama officials Wednesday morning met with students at Tutwiler Hall to try and ease their concerns after recent online threats.

Officials still say they’ve received no “credible” threats and no one is in personal danger, but they did call the threat posted to YouTube “serious” and are currently investigating. A UAPD officer said search warrants have been served to the site and they’re awaiting information.

“We are working through this as efficiently as possible. But it’s important to know we haven’t had a major incident occur,” said Steven Hood, interim vice president for student affairs.

UAPD says it has increased security presence on campus, as well.

While police investigate the threat, the university has taken to email and social media updates to keep the campus community informed, but an overwhelming majority of students at the Q&A session were not satisfied with the timing and content of the messages.

“I don’t feel like the police or university understand that we are scared. It’s like, y’all think we’re silly for being scared,” one student said.

FABRICATED UA ATTACKS

Meanwhile, for the second time this month, a woman falsely reported being attacked to the University of Alabama Police Department.

UAPD posted an alert Monday to warn students of an alleged harassment on the Tuscaloosa Riverwalk trail that runs alongside the Black Warrior River just north of campus.

According to the original report, the woman said she was jogging on the trail Sunday morning when a man jumped out of the bushes in front of her and pushed her to the ground. She told police that she kicked her attacker and was able to run away.

Shortly after posting the original alert, UAPD updated the message, saying the report was fabricated.

Earlier this month, a woman told the department that as she walked on Bryant Drive near campus, three men tried to force her into a car and touch her sexually. That report was also revealed to be fake.

Erin Edgemon
University of Alabama makes room for remodel
Tide is renovating, expanding baseball stadium

Construction workers on Monday tear down the press box and the brick wall at Sewell-Thomas Stadium on the University of Alabama campus. The $42.6 million renovation and expansion of the Crimson Tide's baseball stadium is scheduled to be complete by November 2015. The expansion will increase the size of the facility — previously 32,801 square feet — to 129,000 square feet. The renovations and additions at the stadium will include food service areas, restrooms, locker rooms and other areas for players, the press box, seating and the concourse.

INSIDE
UA BASEBALL: Tide will use Hoover Metropolitan Stadium as its temporary home in 2015 | 1C
A NEW HOME

Contract approved for Crimson Tide baseball team to use Hoover Met for home games in 2015

By D.C. Reeves
Sports Writer

Alabama Baseball has its temporary home for 2015.

The City of Hoover approved a contract with the University of Alabama Monday that will have the Crimson Tide play its home schedule at Hoover Metropolitan Stadium next season.

Alabama is in need of a home as Sewell-Thomas Stadium undergoes a $42 million renovation. The new facility is expected to be ready for the start of the 2016 season.

The Hoover City Council approved the contract during a special meeting on Monday.

"I think that in the situation that we’re in, not being able to play in Sewell-Thomas, I don’t think we could have asked for a better situation than what we’re getting," Alabama head coach Mitch Gaspard said.

Alabama will pay the city $3,500 a game in rent. Alabama has 31 home games on its schedule, but The Tuscaloosa News has learned the agreement does not obligate the school to play all of them in Hoover, meaning UA could decide to play a handful of its home series in other locations. No agreements have been finalized to move any series elsewhere as of Monday, however.

The city will keep all revenue from concessions while Alabama will keep the revenue from ticket sales.

The stadium, which has hosted the SEC Tournament since 1998, has a capacity of 10,600 and has 12 luxury suites that the school will control.

"Obviously it’s a ballpark we’re comfortable with," Gaspard said. "And there’s such a strong Alabama fan base in Birmingham, I think it really gives us an opportunity to grow that fan base prior to opening the new stadium the next year."

It is not clear yet whether the school will be allowed to sell alcohol at home games because the venue is off campus. UA will be able to put its logos and signage anywhere in the ballpark to create a home-stadium feel.

"Basically, it’s our ballpark," Gaspard said.

The city will begin prepping the ballpark for baseball once the Hoover High School football season is complete, Gaspard said.

Most parts of the agreement have been settled for weeks. One of the last to be ironed out was the fences due to the Hoover Met’s cavernous dimensions. The two parties settled on having Hoover match the dimensions of TD Ameritrade Park in Omaha, Neb., the site of the College World Series. Compared to the current dimensions of the Hoover Met, Sewell-Thomas Stadium played 15 feet shorter at the foul poles (325 feet compared to 340), 20 feet shorter in the left-center (365 to 385) and right-center gaps and five feet shorter to center field (400 to 405).
HOME
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Alabama's home opener is scheduled for Feb. 13 and it will play SEC home series against LSU, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt, Georgia and Arkansas in 2015. It will also host Louisiana-Lafayette, which hosted an NCAA Super Regional last season, in an out-of-conference weekend series.

Alabama could also bid to host NCAA Regional and Super Regional rounds that could be played in Hoover.

The move to Hoover won't be without its challenges. Located 48 miles east of Tuscaloosa, the travel will increase significantly for the team, and weekend series will likely mean the team will stay in Hoover for two nights instead of commuting back and forth three times in a span of 48 hours.

Also, instead of the more standard two-game midweek series against non-conference teams, Gaspard said that Alabama will play Tuesday doubleheaders on Feb. 24, March 10 and April 21 to cut down on travel.

"I think we know going in that there are going to be challenges, but I think when we look down the road it's going to be well worth all the challenges that are in front of us," said Gaspard, whose team begins organized fall practice on Tuesday.

"Our focus, as always, is still on baseball and doing the things we have to do. The biggest thing as the head coach, our staff and our administration has done a good job — when we get into that season and we get into the travel, we have to be very cognizant that these are student-athletes and that we're not missing school and they're able to take care of their academics. We want to make this year as comfortable for our players and our fans as well."

Alabama will be able to practice at Sewell-Thomas with temporary batting cages and on the regular field throughout the fall and into the spring. The team will practice in Hoover in the days leading up to the start of the season.

The Hoover Met was built in 1988 and served as home for the Birmingham Barons — the Chicago White Sox's Double-A affiliate — from 1988-2012 and is scheduled to keep the SEC Tournament through at least 2016. It has no full-time baseball tenant since the Barons left to play at Regions Field in downtown Birmingham last spring.

Ticket information for the 2015 season has not been released yet.

Reach D.C. Reeves at 205-722-0196 or dc.reeves@tuscaloosanews.com.
University of Alabama student charged with making social media threat

By Ed Enoch

The University of Alabama announced Tuesday that a 20-year-old student was arrested on a charge of obstructing governmental operations for allegedly sending an alarming social media message Monday night.

Dakota John Timm was arrested Tuesday by the University of Alabama Police, according to Cathy Andreen, director of UA Media Relations.

University officials said they believe Monday’s message is not directly connected to an earlier message posted as a comment on YouTube warning of retribution for students who discriminate against minorities, according to UA Police Chief Tim Summerlin in a video released late Tuesday afternoon.

Timm, of Virginia Beach, Va., was taken to the Tuscaloosa County Jail early in the afternoon on the charge of obstructing governmental operations. The charge was subsequently changed to harassing communication Tuesday afternoon, according to Andreen and jail records. Timm was released on a $2,500 bond a couple of hours later, according to jail records.

“Let me be very clear: Any attempt to create alarm or fear will be aggressively investigated, and perpetrators identified will be arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. These actions only serve to increase an already heightened anxiety in our community and tie up valuable law enforcement resources that could be more effectively utilized elsewhere,” Summerlin said.

Summerlin said UAPD was continuing to vigorously investigate the first message with the help of state and federal authorities.

“Please know until the authorities, the FBI, the University of Alabama police and countless other trained law enforcement officials can positively identify who posted the original message, this will be the focus of everything we do. We will leave no stone unturned until this person is apprehended,” said UA President Judy Bonner, who joined Summerlin in the video.

Bonner said the original post and the rumors that followed over the past two days had created a “tense atmosphere” on campus.

On Tuesday morning, UA officials also spent a couple of hours trying to assure skeptical students of their safety on campus after two days of rumors and social media buzz about the online threat against the campus.

Steve Hood, interim vice president of Student Affairs, joined by UA police officers at Tutwiler Hall, sought to allay fears and assure students that the incident, while not considered a “credible threat,” was being thoroughly investigated.

“Students are safe,” Hood said.

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Hood repeatedly assured the students there was no credible threat and asked them to share any information they hear about the threats with police while refraining from spreading it on social media.

More than 50 students, predominantly young women, gathered at Tutwiler for the update on the situation.

The university's often-repeated message was met with exasperation from students anxious for more specific information who complained the university has been slow to communicate about the threat and the steps it was taking in response. The students were critical of the university's decision not to issue a UA Alert, a move the university has defended on the grounds police quickly determined there was no danger at Tutwiler.

The concerns would be conveyed to the administration, Hood said.

UAPD Maj. Aaron Fowler, while confident of the students' safety, acknowledged the challenge of calming anxiety and fear after two days of rampant rumors on social media.

"It takes time for people to regain the sense of security."

I don’t want to say it is shattered, but it has been shaken," Fowler said.

Chip Butler of Charlotte, N.C., the father of a current freshman residing at Tutwiler, was in the area on business when news of the threat broke. He was among the parents attending Tuesday’s meeting.

"The communication is not good," he said.

While Butler agreed the campus is probably one of the safest places to be in the state, the message was not being effectively communicated by the university, he said.

The lack of frequent communication for a generation used to immediacy is another source of alarm for young students away from home for the first time, Butler argued.

"Until they can assure these kids that it’s safe, their fear is going to run rampant," Butler said.

Some students, fearful of remaining on campus, said they were staying off campus with friends or in hotels or booking flights home.

"I would go home if I could," said freshman Emily Novozinsky of Princeton, N.J., who lives in the Presidential Village.

The students peppered Hood and Fowler with questions about the status of the investigation.

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The police are awaiting information sought in search warrants sent to Google, which owns YouTube, and other social media providers about the posts and hope to receive the information about the original poster of the message soon, Fowler said. Summerlin in his late afternoon update said UAPD was also seeking additional search warrants.

UA police have increased their presence on campus in response to the situation, Fowler said.

The police are also posting updates on the main page of the UA website and the police department’s web page, Fowler said. The officials encouraged students and parents to check the UA website and its social media accounts for updated accurate information.

In response to rumors and social media posts, university police searched Tutwiler late Sunday. There were no weapons or unauthorized individuals found in the vicinity of the dorm, according to the university in a message posted early Monday morning.

Later Monday afternoon, the university released a laundry list of rumors and reports it dismissed as false, including shots fired on campus, a person dressed as the DC Comics’ character the Joker in Tutwiler, and a man on sorority row with a box tied to him in a threatening manner.

The rumors continued to swirl Monday evening, prompting the university to announce in a post after 1 a.m. Tuesday that Hood would be at Tutwiler at 9 a.m. to address student concerns.

Residents of Tutwiler complained Tuesday they were not told what was happening at the building until after police had completed their sweep Sunday.

“How can you lock down a building when the residents don’t know they are locked down?” a girl asked.

Fowler characterized the police presence at Tutwiler on Sunday as a precautionary measure rather than a lockdown, adding officers quickly determined after arriving at the dorm that the threat did not rise to a level requiring a lockdown.

The students — who noted deadly attacks at Virginia Tech in 2007 and the University of California, Santa Barbara in May — pressed the administrators about how they determined the threat was not imminent or credible but still called the situation serious.

Fowler repeated throughout the meeting the university’s belief that the original YouTube comment lacked specific threats about people or places.

“This sounds like an action to me, to us” junior Emily Parsons said. “That scares the crap out of me.”

Based on consultation with experts, Fowler said police did not believe a threat was imminent.

“They don’t feel like this person presents a threat,” Fowler said.
Fowler said police are “constantly monitoring social media” for further information.

Responding to a question about active shooter protocols, Hood said the university had generally reviewed its emergency procedures but nothing specific on active shooters.

The students — some of whom expressed fear about venturing onto campus in the wake of the posts — also were critical of the lack of a uniform plan for whether classes should be canceled, noting some faculty were canceling classes while others were continuing as scheduled.

“I really think Dr. Bonner needs to go to the faculty and say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’” Butler said.

The university said Monday afternoon it would continue normal operations.

Late Tuesday, Provost Joe Benson reiterated that the university plans to have classes meet as scheduled, though he added any student who is uncomfortable attending class will not be penalized but will have to make up missed classwork.

Hood also directed students to the university’s counseling center if they needed to talk with someone.

UA officials are encouraging parents and students with questions to contact the UA Call Center at 205-348-1001 and 877-408-1001.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
More details on UA text suspect

Authorities still seeking person who ignited fears with YouTube post

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

Court documents made public Wednesday detail more information about a University of Alabama student arrested for harassing communications earlier this week.

Dakota John Timm, 20, admitted that he sent text messages to two women, stating that they "would be spared from the coming day of retribution if she would deliver one sorority member and one fraternity member" to an off-campus residence, according to court documents filed Wednesday. Investigators quickly traced the messages to Timm and arrested him Tuesday.

The text messages came a day after a comment posted to YouTube threatened "retribution" against racist students. UA officials are working to determine the origin of the message, which has caused concern among students and their parents.

As of Wednesday, authorities had not yet identified the person behind the initial message. The message has led to several rumors, includingSee UA | 4A

UA

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one Sunday night that an active shooter was targeting women at Tutwiler Hall and nearby sorority row.

Timm, who is from Virginia Beach, Va., sent the text messages at 11:50 p.m. Monday, according to court record. The messages diverted investigators' attention from the ongoing investigation of a possible active shooter on campus, according to the court documents.

University officials said they believe Timm's messages are not directly connected to the earlier message, according to UA Police Chief Tim Summerville in a video released late Tuesday afternoon.

The phone number listed in Timm's court record has been disconnected.

He was originally charged with obstructing governmental operations and harassing communications, both misdemeanors, but the obstruction charge was dropped after a review by the Tuscaloosa County District Attorney's Office.

The university has continued normal operations in the wake of the threats. Students uncomfortable attending classes will not be penalized but will be required to make up missed classwork.
FBI investigating Internet threat at UA dorm

Police: Posting is terrorist threat; other rumors unfounded

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

University of Alabama officials and the FBI are investigating the origin of an Internet threat that prompted a lockdown Sunday night at Tutwiler Hall, one of the school’s largest dormitories.

The threat appears to have stemmed from a comment posted on a YouTube video about sorority recruitment on Sunday.

A computer screenshot of the message circulating on social media Sunday and Monday contained statements that the alleged author would seek "retribution" against students who discriminate against minorities. Investigators have issued subpoenas for records from social media sites in an attempt to identify the person who left the comment.

“This comment appears to have been the catalyst for the incident last night at Tutwiler,” University of Alabama Police Chief Tim Summerlin wrote in a message to students on Monday. “And the ongoing social media conversation continues to fuel rumors and speculation and generate additional inaccuracies.”

The comment and the video do not mention Tutwiler Hall, and UA officials did not say why campus police responded there.

Rumors were so rampant that UAPD posted a list Monday evening to discredit them. Some of the rumors involved shots fired, students being attacked and choked on the Quad, a man wearing an explosive on sorority row or wearing a Joker mask at Tutwiler.

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School officials determined that no threat existed and will not cancel classes this week, despite requests from some students and parents.

Campus police learned of the YouTube threat just after 11 p.m. Sunday before placing Tutwiler Hall on lockdown and conducting a search of the 13-story dorm.

"While we have no credible information at this point to determine whether this is a legitimate threat, the University of Alabama is taking this situation very seriously," Summerville wrote in the message sent to students Monday. "Posting a terrorist threat is a crime and will be treated as such. UAPD is aggressively investigating to identify the individual(s) involved.

"I can assure you that your safety is our top priority," he continued. "I encourage you to continue to go about your normal routine."

Tutwiler residents were asked to either stay in their rooms or weren't allowed to enter the building while police searched the 966-bed facility from about 11 p.m. until 11:45 p.m. Sunday. The lockdown at the dorm that houses mostly freshman women was in response to rumors and social media posts, not actual witness accounts, according to official statements released by the university.

"No weapons or unauthorized individuals were found in Tutwiler or in the vicinity," UA President Judy Bonner wrote in a campuswide email sent Monday morning. "Students were never in danger."

The university's police department received search warrants and are consulting with the FBI to determine the threat's origin, Summerville wrote in the statement issued Monday.

UAPD officers were notified of the threat by another law enforcement agency that had been contacted by a parent of a UA student, according to Bonner. The student had heard the rumor and seen social media posts, she said.

University police responded to the dorm within a minute, she said, and quickly confirmed that no one was in danger, Bonner wrote in a statement.

"I can assure you that UA will only respond quickly and notify the campus community when you need to take immediate action," Bonner wrote in the email. "In this case, no one was in danger and immediate action was not required. We understand that the time it took to be cautious was concerning to students and their parents, faculty and staff, and I want to reiterate that we will always put your safety and security first. UAPD will continue to investigate the situation."

UA spokeswoman Cathy Andreen said that the university did not notify students via UA alerts because police quickly determined that there was no danger.

"It is our policy to notify the campus community via UA Alerts when students, faculty, staff or others on campus need to take immediate action," she said. "In this case, UAPD was able to determine quickly that reports of armed individuals were not accurate. No one was in danger, and immediate action was not required."

Interim provost Joe Benson sent a message to faculty and students Monday evening, stating that students and parents had inquired and requested that classes be canceled this week.

"Based on the information that has been evaluated regarding this incident, classes will continue as scheduled and UA will maintain normal operations," he wrote. "Faculty members are encouraged to work with students who present specific or unique concerns."

The student newspaper The Crimson White and campus radio WVUA FM Capstone News now worked together to broadcast information as it became available Sunday night. Andy McWhorter, production editor for the Crimson White, said that the staff was finishing up Monday's edition of the newspaper when photo editor Peter Pajor received a text message that contained an image of the threat.

"We started getting a lot of information very quickly," McWhorter said. "There was a police perimeter around the building, and a police officer telling the women to stay inside the sorority houses."

News of the lockdown was posted by national media outlets and #PrayersForBama was trending on Twitter.

Reach Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosa news.com or 205-722-0210.

Tuesday, September 23, 2014
Save the last splash for me

Dozens of dogs rule the pool in annual event at UA center

By Lydia Seabol Avant
Staff Writer

More than 100 dogs splashed, dove and swam at the University of Alabama Recreation Center’s outdoor pool Sunday, catching balls and playing with their owners and other dogs.

The event was part of the eighth annual Dog Splash, where dogs and their humans could enjoy the water at the rec pool, before the UA pool staff closes it for cleaning. The event has traditionally marked the end of summer for the pool complex.

It was the third year for Jamie Hakes and Robin Wrobel of Cottondale to participate in the Dog Splash with Hakes’ 5-year-old dog Casey, who wore her own life-jacket.

“We love it and she loves it,” Hakes said. “This year, she actually jumped in on her own.”

Wrobel, who calls Casey her “granddog,” said she enjoys watching the other dogs interact.

“It’s fun coming out, seeing all the different dogs,” Wrobel said.

It was the first year for Brenda Harris to participate in the event. She calls herself “Godmother” to Cully, a St. Bernard who enjoyed diving into the large pool Sunday.

“I knew she loved to swim,” Harris said. “She took off and dived right in. When they called everyone to get out, she was the dog that dived back in again.”

See Splash | 4A
The dog splash was also a first for UA grad student Sarah McCullough, who brought her dog Dixie.

“It’s so much fun,” McCullough said. “She was immediately excited, as soon as she saw the other dogs and the water.”

At the Dog Splash, students from UA’s pre-veterinary club sold towels for the dogs and also offered to bathe the canines before they headed home. The event helped raise money for the pre-veterinary club, said Jacksyn Clanton, a club member.

“I really love this event,” Clanton said. “I love that the rec is allowing the dogs and the community to use the pool for the last time.”

Reach Lydia Seabol Avant at 205-722-0222 or lydia.seabol.avant@tuscaloosa.com.
CARLY'S LAW: PEOPLE KNOW MEDICINAL CBD OIL IS DIFFERENT FROM MARIJUANA, REPRESENTATIVE SAYS.

Mark McCarter  •  mmcarter@al.com

There is cannabidiol, a drug derived from plants in the marijuana family that can have broad medicinal use. There is marijuana, an illegal drug used recreationally, the possession of which can be a felony.

"It’s apples and oranges. Our people are smarter than that," state Rep. Jim Patterson said of any confusion between the two. "They can see the difference in somebody having a medical use (and recreational). We have to separate the two."

The Alabama Legislature passed Carly’s Law last April, with Gov. Robert Bentley’s signature putting it into law. The law was championed by two Huntsville area legislators, state Sen. Paul Sanford and state Rep. Mike Ball.

It gave UAB’s Department of Neurology the ability to prescribe the drug for seizure disorders. The law reads it “shall be provided exclusively by the UAB Department for a debilitating epileptic condition.”

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CARLY'S LAW
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The recent story about Itamar Shapira of Huntsville, who suffers from a debilitating colon condition, brought CBD oil back to the forefront. He maintains that if he had access to the drug, it would provide relief. However, it may not be prescribed for his aliment.

While Carly’s Law was perhaps a first step toward broader use, it was a tenuous one. It was controversial because CBD is a marijuana derivative.

Politicians “were afraid of that, for being seen in Alabama as pro-marijuana,” said Patterson, who noted that “in an election year ... some people were threatening to make it a campaign issue.”

However, Ball’s relentless work on the bill — “the most courageous thing I’ve seen in Montgomery,” Patterson said — made Carly’s Law a nonpartisan issue. It passed unanimously in the House and Senate.

‘Did their homework’

“They (Ball and Sanford) did their homework well to get that through, because most people were like me. They said ‘hey, we’re not going to vote for any kind of marijuana bill,’” said state Rep. Howard Sanderford. “But when they said UAB was going to be the one controlling this thing and making sure it works, a lot of people signed on.”

“I’ve never seen anything turn around and us work together more than Carly’s Law,” Patterson said. “It’s a model for how we should operate.”

But the operation has gone slowly. UAB has yet to administer any CBD. It is awaiting federal approval. Warned Athens State professor Jess Brown, a political science expert: “UAB might have a little discretion, but ultimately this thing is going to be a federal question and how the feds treat it as a matter of law and law enforcement.”

Expanding Carly’s Law to include using CBD to treat other diseases is likely to move even slower.

Others, such as state Sen. Arthur Orr, stress a philosophy of “go slowly and methodically as opposed to rushing and doing something without the science to back it up.”

Narrow scope

“If the medical community concludes that the best solution available, I could see that debate (to expand Carly’s Law parameters) coming forward. Particularly after a year or two of results on the Carly’s Law clinical trials they’ll be having at UAB. That will give us a good baseline,” Orr said.

As bold as Carly’s Law might have been, its narrow scope was still one of great caution.

“The attitude was, we have a problem here,” Orr said. “We have a possible solution. Let’s allow the researchers at UAB to address the instant problem with the children who have the seizures in clinical trials. In the long term, let’s verify it’s the best means to treat the problems these children have.”
By telling stories of uninsured, medical students hope Alabama will 'rethink' Medicaid coverage

By: Mike Oliver

A group of medical students influenced by the stories they have heard while volunteering at a free medical clinic have focused their concerns into action.

They formed a nonprofit, Rethink Coverage, and began going to the clinics to gather the stories of the uninsured.

They hope the stories will help shatter misperceptions.

"Our idea is to give a platform, a voice, to the uninsured, especially those caught in the Medicaid gap," said Ynhi Thai, a second-year medical student at the University of Alabama School of Medicine (in Birmingham) and co-founder of the group.

Thai is referring to the 191,000 Alabamians whose income levels are too high for Medicaid but too low to qualify for subsidies. Alabama is one of about 21 states declining Medicaid expansion from the federal government which would have covered that gap.

The group has collected 30 stories so far, such as:

- The 41-year-old man with a Ph.D who had insurance until he lost his job as a military contractor. The effects of a serious car wreck and his work in Afghanistan have taken a physical toll. He has recently been approved for disability. "He was evaluated for, was approved as a candidate for surgery, but has been putting it off for years because he has not been able to afford it," wrote medical student Danielle Fincher, who interviewed him. He now provides security at a shelter and transitional home which covers room, board and $100 per month for groceries and medical care, she wrote.

- The 45-year-old man who worked temp jobs and at a convenience store without insurance for years while his diabetes worsened. Now working as a forklift operator, he found an insurance plan and subsidies helped pay for it. But "because of the lack of continuity in medical treatment since 2000 until recently, he has been left with permanent damage to his vision and likely other organs," wrote medical student Swaroop Vitta, who interviewed him.

- The 21-year-old aspiring NBA basketball player originally from Argentina who suffered an ankle injury that would require serious medical attention. "However, his father had just recently lost his job, which was the source of his insurance for both ....He suddenly found himself in the Medicaid gap," wrote medical student Jesse Ross, who interviewed him.

- The woman who has been working self-employed in janitorial services for 22 years. She once had insurance through another job and tried to maintain premiums after her job was "phased out" but she couldn't afford it eventually. She canceled her insurance and now depends on free or scale-pay preventative healthcare from various resources such as
Princeton, Cooper Green, Cahaba Valley Health Clinic, the Foundry, and the Christ Health Center in Birmingham, wrote Jennifer Feltman, who interviewed her.

The medical students formed Rethink Coverage as an independent group, not affiliated with UAB or the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

"A lot of patients have never been asked these questions before," said Danielle Fincher, a 26-year-old medical student from Huntsville. "We've had people who have just been thankful to tell their story."

Robertson Pearce, a 22-year-old medical student from Birmingham, said sometimes the students can help the patients with information about resources that they may not have known about. But he said many were savvy about what's available, and many knew already they didn't qualify for Medicaid or federal subsidies under the Affordable Care Act.

"We want to tell these stories and show who these people are," Pearce said. "We've found a lot of the stereotypes are not true."

Ultimately, Thai, Pearce, Fincher and the dozen or so others in Rethink Coverage said they would like to get these stories out there in hopes that policymakers will take notice.

"The story is no good if it doesn't get out," Pearce said.

For more information go to www.rethinkcoverage.org

Rethink Coverage will be on Oh Brother Radio through Birmingham Mountain Radio on Thursday, Sept. 25. Tune into 107.3 FM/97.3 HD2 from 7-9 PM to listen to the show, or attend the live show at Iron City!
"The first year was fantastic" says H.O.T. Coffee co-founder on 1st anniversary

By: Mike Kelley

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- You could feel the room almost vibrate at the Huntsville Open Tech (H.O.T.) Coffee forum at UAH Friday morning.

And if you're an entrepreneur, or just thinking about becoming one, this is the place to meet, get ideas, get inspired, and get the help you need to get your venture off the ground.

"We want to make Huntsville the easiest place in the U.S. to start a company," Whitman said.

Friday's HOTCoffee meeting, where entrepreneurs meet over morning coffee, marked one year since the group was started as a project of the UAH School of Business.

"HOTCoffee only works if people like you show up," said co-chair John Whitman, who teaches business at UAH and runs the business school's Innovation, Commercialization, and Entrepreneurship Lab.

HOTCoffee kicked off a year ago as an activity of the ICE Lab at UAH when a small group came together to create a forum for innovation and entrepreneurship. Borrowing an idea from Brad Feld's book, Startup Communities: Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Your City, they begin holding bi-weekly meetings to network and share ideas.

Whitman congratulated the small group of 18 that came together to start HOT a year ago.

He spoke of several initiatives for the second year, among them an effort at Huntsville International Airport to raise awareness of the non-defense aspects of the Huntsville economy.

Describing the scene that greets visitors to the airport as "like visiting the Pentagon gift shop" Whitman says he wants HOTCoffee to create "a more welcoming atmosphere" that would inform visitors of Huntsville's entrepreneurial side. It would include posters and publicity about groups such as HOTCoffee and Huntsville Startup Ventures.

The forum is putting together a directory of services for local entrepreneurs. "We want to make Huntsville the easiest place in the U.S. to start a company," Whitman said.

The directory would be a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs to get accounting, IT, legal, human resource, payroll and other services to help launch their ventures.

A series of workshops to held in early October will help entrepreneurs with many common needs and concerns of starting new ventures.
The two-hour, $20 workshops will be held Thursday, Oct. 2 and Friday Oct. 9 through the Small Business Development Center at the Chamber of Commerce. To register, contact Foster Perry, foster.perry@uah.edu. The schedule is as follows:

Thursday, Oct. 2
12-2: Opportunity Identification and Startup Options
2-4: Building a Team and Allocating Equity

Friday, Oct. 10
12-2: How Deals Are Structured and Sources of Funding in Huntsville
2-4: How to Make Your Business Plan Fundable

Thursday (TBA)
2-4: Intellectual Property Protection

Friday (TBA)
12-2: Marketing Essentials: How to go to market
2-4: Nonprofit Strategy: Charity versus Social Change
From trucks to defibrillators to M-16s, 5 Alabama universities stock up on surplus military equipment

By: Leada Gore

For Troy University, it's a pair of all-terrain vehicles that can be used to travel through campus even in inclement weather. For the University of Montevallo, it's miles of fiber optic cable. For the University of Alabama in Huntsville, it's hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment ranging from an ax and microscopes to a pair of Humvees and five M-16 A-1 rifles.

Five Alabama college and universities – Troy, Montevallo, UAH, Alabama A&M University and University of North Alabama – have received surplus military equipment through the Department of Defense's Law Enforcement Support Office's 1033 program. Established in 1990 and expanded in 1997, the program puts military surplus items in the hands of law enforcement.

It came under fire in the wake of the strong police presence following the Aug. 9 police shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, when critics said it led to over-militarized law enforcement officers.

For campus police at Alabama colleges and universities, however, the program – which provides equipment for little more than the cost of shipping – is a money saver.

"We operate on a very limited budget and we try to obtain expensive items that we would normally not be able to afford to serve the university community," UNA Police Chief Robert Pastula said.

What the universities received

UNA, located in Florence, has received seven generators through the program, as well as six Automated External Defibrillators and 10 first aid kits. In the event of a blackout, the generators are used to power the university's police department and health center, while three more are on trailers and can be used to provide electricity to different areas of the university. Those trailered generators are also on loan to the community.

UNA has also received two portable light towers that can be used by the university and the community and a mechanical bomb detection unit.

For Troy and Alabama A&M, the program has provided vehicles that assist primarily in inclement weather situations. Herbert Reeves, Dean of Student Services at Troy, said the university found itself without any all-terrain or four-wheel drive vehicles during recent snow events.

"We began the process of seeking vehicles that could be used in situations such as the winter storm," Reeves said. "We were able to procure the two Humvees through the LESO program and have them on the Troy campus."

See next page
Alabama A&M uses its two four-wheel drive trucks obtained through the program for training during active shooter exercises and carrying equipment and personnel. Like Troy, the university relies on them to transport personnel in the event of inclement weather, according to Jerome Saintjones, Director Marketing and Public Relations at the university.

Access to the trucks is strictly monitored.

"The trucks are stored on campus and can only be operated with approval from the Executive Director of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness," he said.

The University of Montevallo received 249 units of fiber optic cable through LESO. The cable is used in its telephone repair office.

**UAH an active participant**

The most active Alabama college in the LESO program is the University of Alabama Huntsville. Since 2011, UAH has more than $200,417 in equipment ranging from $89 printer to a $60,409 Humvee. The program has also provided UAH police with two utility trucks – valued at around $32,990 each – and 20 laptops worth a combined $19,980.

UAH is also the only Alabama university to receive weapons – five M16-A1 rifles - through the program. The Pentagon did not provide a value on the weapons, but Ray Garner, Chief of Staff and Director of Community Relations at UAH, said the university paid $220 for transfer and shipping.

**Critics of the program**

Not everyone thinks the Pentagon to university equipment pipeline is positive.

The NAACP’s Legal Defense Fund and 22 other advocacy groups recently wrote a letter to the Defense Logistics Agency calling for a halt to the program that provides equipment for colleges and K-12 school districts. President Barack Obama and several lawmakers have vowed it will be reviewed and, if necessary, changed.

David Perry, president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. Said his group will assist with any review of what he describes as a "helpful program."

"These items have unquestionably improved the safety of our campus police departments' personnel and ultimately enhanced their ability to protect our college and university communities," Perry said. "I am confident upon a detailed review it will become clear that our campus police departments are using the equipment gained from the 1033 Program in a responsible manner with the goal of better serving and protecting the people we serve on campus and enhancing the safety of our officers."
A life-changing scholarship

Sally Pearsall Ericson
sericson@al.com

Dustyn Milligan spent most of his growing up years as a homeless student and was headed for a bleak future after his 2014 graduation from Alma Bryant High School.

His father left the family when Dustyn was only 2 years old, and his mother spent most of his childhood going from one male companion to another, the student said. When he was 12, they camped out in the woods for a time after one of her boyfriends kicked them out. At another point, they lived in a homeless shelter.

He changed schools repeatedly during his childhood as they moved from place to place and job to job: Washington, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi and finally, Tillman’s Corner. As he got older, he yearned for stability.

Many students who live itinerant lifestyles like Milligan’s are particularly at risk of dropping out of school, according to information from the Mobile County school system. Homeless children tend to experience much more stress than their fellow students because of the instability of constant moves.

Consequently, such students often display a lack of motivation, low attendance, poor school performance, low self esteem, increased frequency of illness and poor social development, according to information from the school system.

‘It’s either him, or me’

In Tillman’s Corner, his mother got a job managing an RV park, and he attended Hankins Middle School, then Theodore High School. “I thought we were settled,” he said. “I made friends.”

Then his mother found a new boyfriend and they moved into the man’s home in Bay Minette, where Milligan enrolled at Baldwin County High School. “I didn’t like him,” he recalled. “There was just something about him.” He had trouble getting along with the man’s daughter, and he missed his former school.

He had a long argument with his mother. “I told my mom, ‘it’s either him, or me,’” he said. “She chose him.”

After that, Milligan returned to south Mobile County and began his junior year at Alma Bryant High School, working after school and on weekends and living with a friend’s family. “I had to grow up real quick,” he said.

At one point, the family’s home burned down while they were away — “I lost everything,” he said — and everyone had to move into a cramped, one-bedroom apartment, with seven people sharing one bathroom. Milligan was dependent on friends to drive him to school and to his job at Sam’s Super Burger in Grand Bay.

He pushed on to get his high school diploma, but college, even community college, seemed out of the question.

The Treadwell Scholarship

Then came the miracle. A social worker with the Mobile County school system encouraged him to apply for something he’d never heard of: The Treadwell Scholarship at the University of South Alabama, which helps academically qualified students in financial straits.

Now, he is a freshman at USA, with nearly all expenses paid. One item he’s still working to acquire is a laptop needed to complete his coursework.

“This is the first thing that has ever gone right for me.”
he said.

Each spring, the Joseph Treadwell Charitable Foundation gives scholarships to a small number of graduating seniors in Mobile County. Its criteria: Students who may not have the top grades or the most impressive extracurricular activities, but "have overcome tremendous obstacles in their lives and show an aptitude for the rigors of college work."

Milligan had an interview for the scholarship, but heard nothing more until Honors Day at Alma Bryant High, late in his senior year.

Principal Doug Estle announced the winners from the podium after receiving a text message with the names—including Milligan’s.

"At that moment, my life meant something," Milligan said. "Up until that moment, really, I had nothing to be proud of."

**Looking to the future**

Milligan is one of eight Treadwell scholars at USA this fall. He credits his counselor, Hoyland Fields; his teachers, including Sue Whisenhunt and Amanda Mitchell; and his social worker, Denise Reimer, for his college career. "I don’t think I would be here without them," he said.

His advice for other students in his situation: Find the toughest teacher, the one who everyone complains about, and ask that teacher for help. That’s the person who will push you in new directions, he said.

Milligan is hoping for a career as an actor, a path that he knows isn’t exactly ideal. He performed in shows at Alma Bryant High, under Mitchell’s direction.

"I want to work hard for it, like I’ve done my entire life," he said. He’s excited about acting in South’s fall production, "The Importance of Being Earnest."

"Coming from a life like that and having gotten this far—why not go farther, if you can?" he said.
New water policy set at Ladd-Peebles after dozens fell ill

WATER WORKS: USA WILL ALLOW SPECTATORS TO BRING TWO BOTTLES PER PERSON TO GAME.

Cassie Fambro cfambro@al.com

The University of South Alabama has announced changes to the water policy at Ladd-Peebles Stadium after 58 medical calls were made due to heat and multiple reports of lack of water or hot water surfaced after the game against Mississippi State last week.

"Spectators will be allowed to bring into the stadium two bottles of water per person. Small to medium-sized soft-sided coolers are now allowed and are subject to search. Please be sure such items are sized appropriately to fit within the designated seating area and does not intrude on adjacent fans," a statement from athletic director Joel Erdmann said.

The announcement comes after a meeting with Turner Foods, the company with the concessions contract with Ladd-Peebles, the Ladd-Peebles board and USA officials.

In addition to the ability to bring water, there will be roving vendors with beverages in both the west and east grandstands.

Refrigerated trucks will be in designated ground-level areas of the stadium. Those locations will serve as points of sale with cold bottles of water assured. A short walk to those areas will be required.

Erdmann also denoted that the game times begin when ESPN sets the television schedule.

Shuttles were also a common complaint, after hundreds of people waited for buses to Bel-Air Mall. There were 30 buses in continuous rotation, but the 38,000-strong crowd overwhelmed them.

"We will increase the number of buses in the rotation at peak-use times and balance those numbers with the desire to keep the cost of the shuttle at $2.50 per round trip," Erdmann said.

Erdmann said he still believes that Ladd is an asset to the program.

"As our football program continues to grow, we have been provided a tremendous opportunity to call Ladd-Peebles Stadium our home," he said.

"When issues which negatively impact the experience of our fans occur, we will be diligent in working together as a team to find reasonable solutions."
Nobody wanted Kiffin, nobody respected Sims and nobody can stop them now

Joe Namath probably wanted to kiss Blake Sims, and why not? How else would the biggest name in Alabama quarterbacking lore show his affection for the biggest overachiever at that position the school has ever known?

Namath was on the premises Saturday as the school honored his 1964 national championship team — and as Sims and his friends made a 50th anniversary title seem entirely possible. All the senior leader did was answer this outfit’s most pressing preseason question one more time.

With authority.

Sims wasn’t the only reason Alabama destroyed Florida 42-21, but somebody had to drop that opening bomb to Kenyan Drake and mail all those balls to Amari Cooper. When the scoreboard operator finally got a breather, every quarterback in Alabama history but Scott Hunter had to take one step back.

Hunter still holds the school record with 484 passing yards in a game from the 1969 Iron Bowl. Sims is now second after finishing 33 of 33 for 445 yards and four touchdowns, and he did all that despite a brief second-half absence after a scramble that bruised his throwing shoulder.

Not bad for a guy who was never officially declared Alabama’s starting quarterback at a press conference or in a press release. He simply and quietly earned the job and has refused to give it back.

In five months, Sims has progressed from one of the worst spring games in memory to one of the best passing performances in school history, and Alabama has continued its own about-face — from immovable defensive object to unstoppable offensive force.

That’s not a coincidence, and Lane Kiffin has been right in the middle of what’s shaping up to be a transformative year for the Alabama program. The coach nobody wanted has taken the quarterback nobody respected and turned him into a record-setter in record time.

That first play from scrimmage Saturday? That bolt out of the blue to Drake was set up by three weeks of throwing the tunnel screen to the other side to Cooper.

“That was all Coach Kiffin,” Sims said.

Those 10 passes Cooper caught for 201 yards and three touchdowns to raise his season totals to 43 catches for 655 yards and five scores after just four games? That’s vintage Kiffin, giving a big dog plenty to eat, turning an elite wide receiver into a Heisman contender.

And if or when Kiffin gets a little too happy with the passing game, there’s always Nick Saban to ground him. When Alabama started to throw tailbacks Derrick Henry and T.J. Yeldon at the bone-weary Florida defense, Will Muschamp should’ve thrown in the towel.

The contrast between Florida’s continued ineptitude on offense and Alabama’s increased diversification was striking. The Gators couldn’t run or throw and stumbled to 200 total yards. The Crimson Tide couldn’t find enough ways to move the ball — hey, look, it’s the return of the wildcat — and finished with 645 yards.

No one has ever hung that many yards on the Gators, not even when Steve Spurrier was running a defensive coordinator of the month club, and Alabama did it despite turning the ball over four times.

The Crimson Tide has rolled up 2,350 yards this season, a school record through four games, and now the juggernaut gets a week off. Kiffin can correct the game management errors that bugged Saban, and Sims can heal his shoulder. Together, the coach nobody wanted and the quarterback nobody respected can continue to prove everybody wrong.

ALABAMA FOOTBALL: QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE TIDE’S QB-OC TANDEM ANSWERED WITH AUTHORITY IN ROUT OF FLORIDA.
Is Kiffin making a case to succeed Saban at Alabama someday?

How much of an impact has Lane Kiffin had on Alabama four games into his coaching rehabilitation assignment as offensive coordinator? You could do the math. Second-best passing day by a Crimson Tide quarterback.

Most total yards by anyone against a Florida defense.

Most total yards after four games by an Alabama offense.

All in the history of ever, which in Alabama's case includes Hall of Fame passer Joe Namath and the juggernaut wishbone era.

But there may be an even better way to address what Kiffin has accomplished with the Alabama offense and quarterback Blake Sims during the Crimson Tide's 4-0 start — by asking a question:

One week shy of one year since USC hired him as head coach at LAX in a nightmarish conclusion to his dream job, is Kiffin starting to make a case to one day succeed Nick Saban?

It's possible to ask that question without snark or sarcasm, without having everyone in earshot question your sanity. It's possible to ask it because hot coordinators are always viewed as head coaching candidates, and at the moment, Kiffin could be considered the hottest coordinator in college football.

Hotter even than Kirby Smart, the long-presumed heir to Saban's throne in Tuscaloosa.

Smart is still elite at his job, but his rep has lost a bit of luster for several reasons. He didn't jump through the head coaching window of opportunity after Alabama's dominant defensive seasons of 2009 and 2011, and the longer you stay, the more you risk getting labeled a next-generation Mickey Andrews or Ken Donahue. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but in some cases, the longer you're second-in-command, the less you're viewed as presidential material.

It's also Smart's misfortune to be a defensive coordinator as college football has become more and more of an offensive game for the Xbox generation.

"The fast pace of play and the way college football is right now definitely favors the offense," Saban said Monday before his speech at Birmingham's Monday Morning Quarterback Club. "That's why we see the points that we see."

This may be the most important point in Kiffin's favor. The time-honored tradition that offense sells tickets while defense wins championships has been invalidated. Now offense can sell tickets and win titles, which is a win-win deal for any AD in search of a new coach.

Gus Malzahn's Auburn team became the first in SEC history to lead the country in rushing as it won the 2013 conference title. Jimbo Fisher's Florida State team set a major college record for points in a season en route to the last BCS championship, outscoring Auburn in a last-team-w ith-ball-wins shootout.

Give Saban credit for bending to the way the game is trending by stockpiling playmakers and hiring Kiffin to deploy them in new, exciting and record-setting ways.

Saban's not retiring to the lake anytime soon, and Kiffin has yet to help beat Ole Miss or Mississippi State, let alone Auburn, so this entire discussion is premature food for thought. But think big picture. It's reasonable to project that the longer Kiffin stays at Alabama, the more success he'll enjoy, the more his past mistakes as a head coach will recede and the more interest he'll receive to run another major college program.

One day, that interest may even come from the program that employs him now.

Sound crazy? One month into his tenure as the starter, one game into the SEC schedule, Sims has outdone Namath, Jay Barker and AJ McCarron in the Alabama record book. So crazier things have happened in Tuscaloosa than AD Ozzie Newsome stepping to the podium on Jan. 15, 2020, and introducing the next head coach of the Crimson Tide... Lane Kiffin.
Colleges Crack Down on Fraternities Amid a Wave of Crises

By Katherine Mangan

A flurry of fraternity-related crises on college campuses this month has resulted in stiff penalties against chapters and a wave of soul-searching about how to curb dangerous behavior.

Clemson University on Tuesday suspended the activities of 24 fraternities amid an investigation into a pledge’s death and after several recent reports of alcohol-related medical emergencies, sexual misconduct, and other "violations of the law or student conduct code." The Clemson student who died was found in a lake this week after an early-morning run with members of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. Officials believe he died of a head injury after falling off a bridge and hitting a rock in shallow water.

Earlier this week, Clemson’s Interfraternity Council voted to suspend the activities of all of the fraternities it governs, a decision the administration agreed with and extended indefinitely. The university will work with the fraternities to come up with risk-management and accountability strategies to prevent further tragedies.

The university’s four fraternities that are not governed by the council were not affected. Allegations of possible criminal matters were turned over to law-enforcement agencies, while violations of the student code of conduct were being investigated by the university’s Office of Community and Ethical Standards, Clemson officials said.

Missing After a Run

The student who died, Tucker Hipps, a 19-year-old sophomore, reportedly had been lagging behind during the morning run. His fraternity brothers reported him missing after he failed to show up for breakfast.

Authorities said on Wednesday that they had not yet determined whether Mr. Hipps had been drinking or whether hazing had been involved.

But campus officials had obviously reached their limits after a series of reports of dangerous behavior that Gail DiSabatino, vice president for student affairs, said "mandate swift and effective action" to protect students.

"There have been an unprecedented number of violations of conduct rules since the beginning of the year, and that, coupled with Tucker's death, convinced us to call things to a halt, restore order, and decide what’s best for our community," Ms. DiSabatino said in an interview on Wednesday.

Of the 15 reports of dangerous behavior in the first three weeks of the semester, five involved
hazing, three sexual misconduct, and seven alcohol abuse, she said. Some of the reports came from parents, who were urged over the summer to talk to their children about acceptable behavior and to take advantage of a new hazing hotline. Ms. DeSabatino also speculated that the recent attention to sexual abuse on college campuses has made students feel their complaints will be taken seriously. Most Clemson students have supported the fraternities’ suspension, although "a few don’t get it and don’t think we have the right to tell them they can’t have a good time," she said.

‘Incredibly Bad Things Happen’
Meanwhile, campuses across the country are struggling to rein in fraternities.

A national expert and consultant on fraternity hazing said he had seen a shift in recent years from hazing "that, while problematic, served some purpose, like building solidarity, to one based on social dominance in which ‘I’m going to make you do anything I want, just because I can.’"

Gentry McCreary, associate dean of students at the University of West Florida and a former director of Greek affairs at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, said in an interview on Wednesday that those doing the hazing have become morally disengaged and tolerate greater abuse, with each subsequent class upping the ante because they’ve just been through it themselves.

And unlike groups, like college bands, where an adult is theoretically in charge, in fraternities "we have the inmates running the prison," he said. "They have ultimate power over the lives of their peers, and incredibly bad things happen."

A Death in California
Officials at California State University at Northridge determined this month that hazing was involved in the death this past summer of a pledge who passed out, blistered and barefoot, during a fraternity-ordered hike that continued after the pledges ran out of water. The fraternity involved, Pi Kappa Phi, was suspended, and later permanently withdrew from the university. Fraternities at Northridge are now required to submit student-recruitment plans in advance and offer new training programs for members.
"Hazing is stupid, senseless, dangerous, and against the law in California," the university’s president, Dianne F. Harrison, said in a written statement. "It is a vestige of a toxic way of thinking in which it was somehow OK to degrade, humiliate, and potentially harm others. It has no place on this or any university campus, in any student club or organization, and it will not be tolerated."

At the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, the national fraternity Tau Kappa Epsilon kicked out the campus chapter’s president this month as police officers were investigating whether fraternity members might have slipped date-rape drugs into partygoers’ drinks. The chapter president was charged with several drug-related crimes, and the university suspended the chapter during the investigation.

Required to Go Coed
And at Wesleyan University, students and faculty members who have blamed all-male fraternities for fueling sexual assaults won a victory on Monday, when the president and chairman of the Board of Trustees announced that all of the university's residential fraternities must start admitting women within three years.
That decision affects two fraternities that have residences on the campus. Wesleyan has only one sorority, which doesn't have an on-campus residence.

A third fraternity at Wesleyan had a campus residence, but students were barred from living in it this month after a woman attending a party was seriously injured in a fall from a third-floor window. That fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, was also prominently mentioned in an article about fraternity abuses that appeared this year in The Atlantic.
The announcement ending all-male membership did not mention any abuses, but was framed as a gesture of equal opportunity for women. "Our residential Greek organizations inspire loyalty, community, and independence," wrote the president, Michael S. Roth, and Joshua Boger, the board chairman. "That's why all our students should be eligible to join them."

National leaders for Delta Kappa Epsilon, one of the two fraternities affected by the decision, objected that the announcement "does not mention a single specific problem that this decision is intended to resolve, not to mention how or why this step would resolve such problem(s)."
2 students charged in campus threats

The Associated Press

Two students, one at the University of Georgia and another at the University of Southern Mississippi, face charges in connection with threats made on social media this week.

A judge has banned a University of Georgia student from Clarke County — where the school is — while he faces charges related to a threatening post on social media.

The Athens (Ga.) Banner-Herald reported that a judge granted Ariel Omar Arias $8,000 bond.

As a bond condition, the judge banned him from Clarke County except for court appearances.

The 19-year-old had been held without bond since his arrest Friday on two felony counts of terrorist threats.

Police say Arias used a smartphone app to anonymously post, “If you want to live don’t be at the MLC at 12:15.” The Zell B. Miller Learning Center was evacuated for about an hour after students reported the threat.

Police say Arias admitted to making the post and called it an “immature prank.”

In Hattiesburg, police at the University of Southern Mississippi arrested a 20-year-old man accused of making a social media threat.

The university said in a news release that Brandon Hardin, a business major from Carriere, Miss., was arrested Monday and charged with posting a computer threat to cause injury, a felony.

Hardin is accused of making an anonymous post on the social media application Yik Yak on Monday morning that threatened members of the university community at Joseph Greene Hall, said USM Police Chief Bob Hopkins.

Hopkins said campus police are continuing the investigation after an interview with Hardin but that there has been no corroborating information or evidence to support a threat to campus.

The anonymous post led campus police and administrators to issue an Eagle Alert to students and parents and increase security in and around Joseph Greene Hall.
Southern Miss Receives Threat Via Yik-Yak

Yik-Yak is a tool for trouble again, this time as a threat against the Southern Miss Hattiesburg campus.

Southern Miss University Police are responding to a threat made on Yik-Yak earlier Monday about Joseph Greene Hall. The message on Yik-Yak read, “The red will flow tomorrow at JGH. I recommend missing class.”

University Police Chief Bob Hopkins said at a press conference Monday that it even if this is an empty threat, they are treating it seriously. Classes are scheduled to resume, but there will be added security in and around Joseph Green Hall.

WDAM reports that Chief Hopkins says they are working with Yik-Yak and the person responsible for this threat could be charged with making a terrorist threat.
Indiana State University student arrested in shooting threat

By: Kylee Wierks

Update: On Friday, Indiana State University Police arrested a sophomore student in connection with a social media post referencing a school shooting, according to a news release.

Rashon Ke'nise Marshall-Bowen, 19, of Indianapolis, faces a preliminary misdemeanor charge of harassment, the release said. She was booked in Vigo County jail Friday and is scheduled to appear in Terre Haute City Court on Monday.

The original story below was posted on Thursday, Sept. 18:

Indiana State University issued a crime alert Thursday morning regarding a message on a blog.

Access to university residence halls is being restricted to students only as a result.

According to the ISU Police Department, at approximately 11:30 p.m. a student was on the ISU blog of the "Yik Yak" social media app.

The student saw an anonymous message that read, "I wonder if this school shooting is going to go as planned tomorrow."

The student replied to the message saying "That's not funny man I should report this!"

Within 90 seconds the post was removed.

Police say it is possible that this message was a hoax, and there has been no corroborating information received to support this.

On Thursday afternoon, the university sent out a second alert after a note predicting a shooting was found in a bathroom at University Hall.

According to the ISU Police Department, it is their procedure to share any information that may be a threat to the campus community. All local law enforcement agencies have been advised.

Police are asking anyone to report any suspicious activity by calling (812) 237-5555 or by calling 911.
Police: UGA student arrested for threat on campus building

By: Alexis Stevens

A University of Georgia student admitted his social media post threatening violence at a campus building was a prank, police said Friday night. Only it wasn’t funny.

Within hours of a threat that evacuated the Zell B. Miller Learning Center and surrounding areas, the person believed responsible was in custody, UGA police said. Ariel Omar Arias, 19, was arrested and charged with two felony counts of terroristic threats. He was also suspended from the university, according to police. Arias is from Lilburn, according to an online campus directory.

"In an interview with investigators, Arias admitted to disseminating the post in question and indicated that the incident was the result of an immature prank and that he had no motive to follow through with any acts of violence," UGA police stated late Friday on their Facebook page.

Shortly before noon, several students reported that a violent threat directed at the Miller Learning Center had been made on social media, UGA Police Chief Chief Jimmy Williamson said. The threat was believed credible, and officers were immediately dispatched to the area. The UGA police bomb squad was also dispatched.

"The world we live in, it's not an innocent prank anymore," Williamson told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Next, a campus-wide alert was sent out that read: "Threat of violence at MLC. Stay away from area until further notice." Three minutes later, the same message was repeated.

While the Miller Learning Center, which houses a library and classrooms, was evacuated and searched, other officers helped keep students away from the area, near Baxter and South Lumpkin streets. Shortly before 1 p.m., another campus alert was sent informing the community that the investigation continued.

At 1:08 p.m., an "all clear" alert was sent, and the area was deemed safe. But by then, the fear had spread far beyond the campus.

Dozens of frantic parents called the campus police office, Williamson said. But nothing suspicious was found and all students and staff members were safe, he said.

Late Friday afternoon, the investigation focused on who was responsible for the threat. Williamson didn’t elaborate on how the threat was made, but said officers were working to find the culprit.

See next page
UGA students sent Twitter messages saying that the threat was posted on the Yik Yak mobile app, which allows users to send comments anonymously.

“If you want to live don’t be at the MLC at 12:15,” the Yik Yak posting purportedly said.

The app, created by two Atlanta friends in November 2013, allows users to send texts containing up to 200 characters, according to its website. Posts can only be read by people in a 1.5-mile radius of the poster.

Although the app’s creators contend it was created as a positive tool, Yik Yak has been linked to numerous scares on high school and college campuses across the country. Even though those posting threats believe they are anonymous, the mobile device used can generally be tracked.

UGA officers used information from cellular service providers to identify the suspect, according to police. Arias was booked into the Clarke County jail Friday night, where he was being held without bond.
Academia needs to act to protect college women

Back in the dark ages when I was in college, female students at most colleges and universities, including mine, had what we called “hours.” If memory serves me correctly, at my school they had to be in their dormitories or sorority houses by 10:30 Sunday through Thursday and midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. That, of course, was before coed dorms and enlightened views about equal privileges between men and women, which, let me make clear, I support in nearly every instance. The theory for the women’s curfew was that while anyone with half a brain even then understood that women were generally smarter than men, they were vulnerable physically and subject to unfair assaults on their reputations if not their bodies.

All this came to mind recently with the frightening disappearance of a young University of Virginia student, Hannah Graham, while out for a night of partying with friends. Videos show her wandering confused on a downtown street, a man following behind. It has been a scene repeated over and over on campuses or in college towns throughout the country. Each report heightens the stress on those of us who have daughters or granddaughters (as is my case) who have left the protective nest for the adventure of higher education.

These events seldom end well, and when added to the concern about the apparent mounting number of alleged rapes and assaults on college women, they have stimulated an intense dialogue all the way to the White House, where the president just recently called for academia to clean up its act not only in prosecuting sexual assaults but safeguarding students in the first place.

But how?

Important questions

Many of the victims are away from home for the first time and it is their natural inclination to take advantage of the situation. It certainly was for me. The problem is that there is no one around to make or prevent them from doing anything—study, drink, participate in dangerous sex, or even walk alone. They must rely on their own judgment reinforced by what they have been taught.

The risk is increased exponentially by the easy access to liquor and drugs that stimulate the libido, including marijuana. Anyone who thinks campuses aren’t chocked full of date rape opportunities is living in a fantasy world.

No one wants to return to those days when the atmosphere for half the enrollment was akin to living in a nunnery. So what can these institutions do to prevent parents and grandparents from dissolving into ectoplasm every night their college kids don’t check in? Should they (we) demand beefed-up security with limits on off-campus areas? In smaller towns should the colleges or universities subsidize local police to make sure that there are patrols on the city streets where students eat and drink and so forth? Some schools have intense courses on the responsibilities of students in this whole matter. They should be mandatory.

All these questions and dozens more need to be asked and a way found to minimize the dangers as much as possible in this increasingly violent world. The sight of the hundreds of Virginia students holding a candlelight vigil for Graham is too often repeated across this nation.

I remember my telephone ringing one night at 11 p.m. My college senior son was somewhat frantic that he could not find his sophomore sister who was attending another institution. I told him she was at school.

"It is now 11 and she isn’t in her dorm," he said. I informed him her school was in a time zone that was an hour behind where he was. Promptly at midnight the phone rang again and he announced that he had just called her and she was OK in her room. While I laughed about it at the time, I was proud of his concern, one he is now showing for his daughter who is a freshman at a major university.

It would be utterly insensitive to the inequities women still face to even suggest that we could turn back the clock to those days when as college students they were treated as little girls to be tucked in by a certain hour. But whatever else we can do to prevent what might have befallen Graham and so many others, we should try.

Dan Thomasson is an op-ed columnist for McClatchy-Tribune. Readers may send him email at thomassondan@aol.com.
Wesleyan orders fraternities to become coed

MIDDLETOWN, CONN. | Wesleyan University in Connecticut on Monday ordered its fraternities with houses on campus to become coeducational within three years, a move it says is not just about bad behavior but also equality.

Wesleyan follows Trinity College in Hartford, which made the transition starting in 2012, citing problems with drinking and drug use in Greek organizations. It also comes less than a month after Wesleyan closed the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house after an accident in which a woman fell from a third-story window.

—From wire reports