MAY 26, 2017

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
MAY 19, 2017 – MAY 26, 2017

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

NEWS ABOUT

TRUSTEE/SYSTEM INFO 2
STATE ISSUES 4
UA CAMPUS ISSUES 12
UAB CAMPUS ISSUES 34
UAH CAMPUS ISSUES 32
OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES 37
SPORTS 44
NATIONAL NEWS 57
City leaders sworn into office

Terms begin for mayor, City Council, school board

By Drew Taylor and Jason Morton
Staff Writers

When Patrick Hamner was elected to the District 4 seat on the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education in March, he and his wife, Elizabeth, knew how to mark his new role in a special way.

Elizabeth Hamner, a judge in the 6th Judicial Circuit, was on hand Monday morning to swear her husband into office at the Tuscaloosa River Market. At the end of oath, Hamner hugged his wife of nearly 17 years and gave her a kiss.

"She has been instrumental in everything I have done in the last 17 years," the newly elected board member said. "We make a pretty good team."

Elizabeth Hamner, who was appointed to office to replace former judge Herschel Hamner in 2011, said she felt privileged to not only stand on stage with Hamner as his wife, but to also swear him into political life.

"It was wonderful to be able to do this for him and to get him started as a new member of the school board," she said.

See OFFICE, A5
Six new school board members were officially sworn into office, in addition to incumbent members Marvin Lucas and Erskine Simmons. Along with Hamner, new members include board chairman Eric Wilson, District 1’s Matthew Wilson, District 2’s Kendra Williams, District 3’s Guy May and District 5’s Erica Grant.

In contrast, the Tuscaloosa City Council returned all incumbents save for one.

Political newcomer Rae·van Howard was the lone new addition to the City Council, unseating six-term incumbent Harrison Taylor as the District 2 representative in March.

Following an organizational meeting of the council on Monday, Howard said she was proud to officially have a vote and a voice in city-related matters.

“It was nice,” she said after he first council meeting. “I’m happy to be official.”

As for the school board, May, who was elected to represent District 3, was joined onstage by his wife, Beverly, and their daughter, Meg. Like Hamner, May was sworn into office by a family member: his brother, Tuscaloosa County Circuit Judge Allen May.

“To be able to make a difference for other kids and other graduating classes, it means a lot to me to have this opportunity,” May said.

Eric Wilson, the newly elected board chairman, thanked each board member’s family and friends in the audience.

“It goes without saying that we would not be here without them,” Wilson said.

Mike Daria, superintendent of Tuscaloosa City Schools, said it was an exciting day in Tuscaloosa.

“As we look at where this community and where this community is going, we are full of pride, optimism and excitement,” Daria said.

In addition, Daria said the success of the community was largely dependent on the success of the school system, and that he and the board would ensure that the city’s schools would move forward in a positive direction.

“Our collective and unified vision for Tuscaloosa will result in a large and meaningful impact,” he said. “Working together, we can accomplish so much.”

Addressing the audience, Wilson made a commitment that the board would do all it could to lead the school system forward.

“Make no mistake: we do know the challenges ahead of us,” Wilson said. “We’re certainly aware that there is definite work that needs to be done, but we are certainly heading in the right direction and we do relish the opportunity to make things even greater than they are now.”

Meanwhile, Mayor Walt Maddox said he thanked the voters across each of the council’s seven districts for believing in his leadership, management and vision for the city enough to grant him a fourth term as mayor.

“I am humbled beyond measure to have the opportunity to serve the people of Tuscaloosa. I am truly thankful to work for my hometown,” Maddox said after he was sworn in.

“As we turn this page and begin to write a new chapter in our city’s history, we know there is still much to be done.

“Your struggles are our struggles. Your hopes are our hopes. And as this journey continues, I will continue to be your voice — your advocate — at City Hall.”

Reach Drew Taylor at drew.taylor@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0204.

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0200.
West Alabama delegation active in 2017 session

Lawmakers help pass local, statewide bills

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The 2017 regular legislative session saw approval of a mix of local and statewide bills from the West Alabama delegation, including measures that functionally protect Confederate markers and monuments and changes to the classification of the Northport city administrator.

The local bill By Rep. Alan Harper of Northport exempts the Northport city administrator and city manager positions from the civil service system and requires members of the personnel board to be members of the county.

Statewide, the monument bill sponsored by Sen. Gerald Allen of Cotuitdale would prohibit the removal of monuments installed more than 40 years ago and form a new commission to review requests to change to monuments, markers, streets and school names in place for at least 20 years, according to the Associated Press. The bill was approved Friday and sent to the governor. A bill by Rep. Rich Wingo of Tuscaloosa, which has been signed by the governor, prohibits the state from taking adverse action against or denying licenses to faith-based adoption organizations that refuse to place children with gay parents.

Lawmakers also passed a bill to reign in the growing cost of a scholarship program for dependents of disabled veterans by reforming the eligibility requirements.

Bills introduced by the West Alabama delegation this session that died include a local bill promoted by Holt High School students to protect animals locked in hot cars and the people who want to save them, a measure to remove requirements for permits to carry concealed handguns, and a proposal to clarify the law regarding infusions of using alcohol.

Other bills this session:

Rep. Chris England

Failed: HB552 Lowers number of signatures on petition for independent candidates to qualify for ballot access lowered for special elections

Enacted: HB211 Medicaid benefits for county jail inmates and juveniles under juvenile court would be suspended rather than terminated while they are in a public institution under the control of a sheriff but can be temporary reinstatement for medical care while they are in an inpatient medical facility.

Rep. Alan Harper

Failed: HB566 Constitutional amendment to allow

See SESSION, B3
SESSION

Continued from Bl

Pickens County probate judge to run for re-election until the age of 75.

Enacted: HB430 Local bill to allow court costs and service of process fee of $350 for personal service by Pickens County sheriff of actions outside the state.

Rep. Ralph Howard

Failed: HB463 Charter schools would be subject to same laws, rules, policies, and procedures as other public schools

Rep. A.C. McCampbell

Failed: HB301 Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons and Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. and A.M., would exempt from sales, county and municipal taxes

Enacted: HB56 Distribution of fees from hazardous waste site operators to Sumter County Commission:
- $4,000 each to the Sumter Industrial Board, Solid Waste Fund, city of Livingston, $2,500 to North Sumter Day center.
The remaining funds would be distributed by the commission. HB547 Sumter County commission authorized to levy additional 1 percent sales and use tax for hospital

Rep. Bill Poole

Failed: HB271 Additional circuit judge for the Tuscaloosa County circuit.

Rep. Kyle South

Enacted: HB137 Authorizes state agencies with access to federal tax information to conduct national criminal history background checks through the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency on employees or contractors to determine whether they should be denied access to the federal tax information based on criminal history.

Waiting on governor’s signature: HB156 Provides that non-profit affiliates of public housing authorities are governmental entities for the purposes of tort immunity.

HB157 supplemental appropriation of $50,000 for the Alabama Forestry Commission, $800,000 for the Department of Forensic Sciences, and $5 million for the Department of Insurance and $10,000 for the state board of prosthetics and orthotics.

HB467 Amends state law regarding surface mining to allow payment of the reclamation permit fee over life of the mine operation.

HB468 Levies an additional excise and privilege tax of 2.5 cents per ton of coal for underground mining and 5 cents per ton for surface mining benefiting the Surface Mining Commission. The act terminates in 2019.

HB500 Authorizes referendum on proposal for additional court costs of $100 for misdemeanor drug cases and $500 for felony drug convictions to support a canine unit in Lamar County Sheriff's office.

HB501 Repeals a $500 expense allowance from the district attorney's fund for the prosecutor and allows for $500 a month from the fund to the Judicial Administration Fund for the circuit.

HB592 Authorizes the Lamar County Commission to levy an additional sales and use tax up to 1 percent to benefit the county general fund.

Sen. Gerald Allen

Failed: SB272, Ultrasound Access Act, would require abortion providers to provide patients with sonogram images and information regarding unborn child.

Enacted: SB72 Restores the prior limit of $10,000 on bid bonds required of contractors bidding on public work for state agencies other than the Alabama Department of Transportation which remains $50,000. The act is effective retroactively through May 2016.

Sen. Bobby Singleton

Failed: SB432 Would set the terms of office for the Marengo County Commission at six years beginning with the next term of office

Enacted: SB143 Requires people who advertise for the purchase of junk or salvage vehicles to disclose in the ad the company’s name, address, contact information and business license numbers. It sets penalties for those who advertise in violation of
the statute. It does not apply to private sales for personal vehicles.

SB239 Hale County Commission authorized to set new fees for probate office including $5 license tags, $2 for car and mobile home titles, $1.50 for driver’s licenses and duplicates, $25 for privilege licenses, and $4 for

SB350 Extended the City of Epes corporate limits
SB351 Authorized City of Greensboro to establish by local ordinance the sale of draft and keg beer by licensed retailers.

Sen. Greg Reed

Waiting on governor’s

signature: SB421 Authorizes Walker County Sheriff’s Office to sell certain abandoned stolen, lost, unclaimed and confiscated property at auction, destroy certain lost, unclaimed and confiscated.

Enacted: SB201 requires the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) to develop rules governing non-consensual towing of motor vehicles and commercial vehicles. This bill could increase the administrative obligations of ALEA to develop and implement the rules required by this bill to process and hear complaints against towing service and storage providers.
Attorney appointed to high court

Appointee is UA law school graduate

By Ken Roberts
City Editor

Gov. Kay Ivey on Thursday appointed a Montgomery attorney to serve on the Alabama Supreme Court.

William B. Sellers, a partner in the Montgomery office of Balch and Bingham and a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law, fills the seat vacated by Lynn Stuart. Stuart was appointed by Ivey as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court in April, replacing Roy Moore.

Sellers is a Montgomery native who earned his bachelor's degree from Hillsdale College in Michigan in 1985 and his law degree from UA in 1988. He earned a master of laws degree in 1989 from New York University. A news release from the governor's office says that Sellers' law practice focused on tax litigation.

"His conservative principles and commitment to the rule of law along with his commitment to his family, church and community are foundations that make him uniquely qualified for the position of associate justice," Ivey said in a news release announcing Sellers' appointment.

Sellers is the past

See COURT, B4
COURT

Continued from B1

president of the Rotary Club of Montgomery and has served as past chairman of the Montgomery Area Business Committee for the Arts, the Montgomery area United Way campaign and the YMCA of Greater Montgomery. He also serves on the Alabama State Council on the Arts, is chairman of the Fair Ballot Commission and is the community liaison with the International Officers School at Maxwell Air Force Base. He is a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montgomery.

"I cannot think of an individual who is more qualified, capable and who exemplifies the qualities of a true public servant," Ivey said.

Sellers and his wife, Lee, have three children.

The nine-member Supreme Court remains all Republican with Sellers' appointment.

Other associate justices are Michael F. Bolin, Tom Parker, Glenn Murdock, Greg Shaw, James Allen Main, Alisa Kelli Wise and Tommy Bryan.

The Supreme Court has authority to review decisions rendered by the other courts of the state and make rules governing administration, practice and procedure in all courts.

The chief justice serves as the administrative head of the state's judicial system.
Williams looks to go from legislator to commissioner

Erin Edgemon  eedgemon@al.com


Williams, 59, served in the Alabama Legislature for 13 years representing House District 47, which includes the cities of Vestavia Hills and Hoover.

"Over the years, I have come to realize the passion I have for our community has grown," he said.

After learning county Commissioner David Carrington, who represents District 5, planned to run for governor, Williams said he decided to run for the seat. He said his skill set is best suited for Jefferson County than the state as a whole.

During his announcement at Soho Social in Homewood, Williams said he planned to focus on infrastructure, economic development, tourism, higher education and combating the "plague of drugs" in the county.

Jefferson County drives the economy of the state, he said.

"A healthy Jefferson County can do more to affect the (state) budget than what I can do in Montgomery," Williams said.

He said he has the skills to recruit new businesses and residents to Jefferson County, adding he'll unveil those plans in the coming weeks.

Williams was active in the fight to bring back UAB football after it was abolished in December 2014. He was an outspoken critic of the decision, and also proposed legislation to restructure the Alabama System Board of Trustees, which oversees UAB and the University of Alabama.

He announced in February that he wouldn't run again for the Legislature.

Some key talking points:

- The Northern Beltline project is 100 percent federally funded, he said, and he wants to see construction on that start in the near future. The 52-mile highway project is expected to someday connect Interstate 459 in Bessemer with Interstate 59 in northeast Jefferson County.
- Williams said keeping graduates of Birmingham-area colleges, including UAB and Miles College, in Jefferson County "should be a priority."
- Jefferson County is seeing too many young people dying from drug overdoses. Williams said. He said law enforcement and the court system needs to partner with faith-based organizations and get drug abusers into rehab.
- During his speech, Williams thanked Carrington and former commissioner Jim Carns for the work they did to get Jefferson County out of bankruptcy.
Amid slow year, Airbus takes Delta order of 30 A321 aircraft

By: Christopher Harress

The Airbus manufacturing facility in Mobile has added to its growing list of orders Thursday after announcing that Delta is to buy 30 A321ceo aircraft.

The order, which will be Delta's fourth at the Gulf Coast plant in as many years, will be welcome relief for European aircraft manufacturer as it deals with a slow order book, reduced earnings and an array of technical problems with some of its aircraft.

"Delta’s vote of confidence in the A321ceo - which takes the airline now to more than 100 of the type on order - demonstrates the passenger, operator and investor appeal of this aircraft," said John Leahy, Airbus' Chief Operating Officer - Customers for Airbus Commercial Aircraft. "The A320 Family truly delivers unsurpassed comfort, economy and reliability for airlines like Delta that pay attention to what their customers want."

Delta has now ordered 112 aircraft from the facility, adding to the 187 Airbus aircraft the company already has in operation. The aircraft will be fitted with the lesser fuel efficient current engine option (ceo) rather than the new engine option (neo), which is currently undergoing tests by manufacturer Pratt & Whitney to fix an overheating issue.

All of the ordered aircraft are expected to feature fuel-saving Sharklets - lightweight composite wingtip devices that offer up to four percent fuel-burn savings. That means that each aircraft can either extend its range by 100 nautical miles/185 kilometres or increase payload by around 1000 pounds/450 kilograms.

"The A321's comfort, performance and economics make it a very compelling aircraft for Delta in our domestic route network," said Gil West, Delta's Sr. Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "We value our longstanding partnership with Airbus and look forward to taking more new A321 aircraft for the benefit of our customers, employees and shareowners."

Delta's order comes less than two weeks after Airbus revealed that its earnings had drastically cut in half for the first quarter of 2017. Its three-month earnings before interest and tax fell to 240
million euros ($262 million) from 498 million euros a year earlier. The company also fell short of analysts' predictions that it would earn 326 million euros. The company is also still reeling from the delayed delivery of the A400M military aircraft, which has cost the company upwards of 7 billion euros over the last decade.

Airbus has already begun manufacturing its first A320 aircraft and its expects to start production of the A320neo by the end this year, according to an Airbus spokesperson. The company, thereafter, is expected to produce four aircraft of different varieties each month.
Crimson Tide baseball looking for a new coach after firing of Greg Goff

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

It's early in the college baseball coaching cycle, and early in the University of Alabama's coaching search. First-year director of athletics Greg Byrne is looking for his first coaching hire after firing first-year coach Greg Goff on Wednesday.

Alabama has one of the nation's best facilities and a strong baseball tradition to sell to candidates. On the other hand, the coach will be Alabama's third in as many years, inheriting a program that missed the SEC tournament this season, and trying to guide UA back to the College World Series for the first time since 1999. The NCAA limit of 11.7 scholarships and Alabama's lack of a state lottery that could supplement that number is also well-known in the baseball world. There's reason to be optimistic, but the Alabama job also has real drawbacks that coaches will consider.

The following list should be considered speculative. Byrne said on Tuesday he wanted a coach with college experience, but doesn't necessarily require head coaching experience. He purposefully left himself with a broad pool to draw from.

Brad Bohannon
Current position: Auburn assistant coach/recruiting coordinator since 2016
Bohannon is a veteran SEC assistant who will be in his sixth NCAA tournament this season. He may have a relationship with Byrne from a brief period where their tenures at Kentucky overlapped. He's a strong recruiter and well-respected around baseball circles.

Scott Brown
Current position: Vanderbilt
See COACHES, C3
COACHES

Continued from C1

pitching coach

Resume highlights: Vanderbilt pitching coach (2013-present), St. John’s pitching coach (2004-12)

He helped Vanderbilt win a national championship in his second year, and the Commodores were College World Series runners-up in 2014. Vanderbilt is an annual contender in the SEC and St. John’s was a strong performer in the Big East during his tenure there. The Red Storm made the NCAA tournament seven times in nine years when he was an assistant, but have otherwise made it just once since 1997. Vanderbilt has different opportunities and strengths in recruiting than Alabama but Brown has earned his keep in Nashville.

Mark Calvi

Current position: South Alabama head coach since 2012

It was a little bit of a surprise that Calvi wasn’t a more serious candidate last time around. South Alabama could earn another NCAA bid this season, but he made his name at South Carolina. The Gamecocks were a powerhouse during his tenure with one of the league’s best pitching staffs. South Carolina also won a national championship in 2011 and was runner-up in 2012 thanks in part to players he recruited or developed.

Alan Dunn

Current position: LSU pitching coach

The only Alabama alumni on this list might have ended up in Tuscaloosa last time around, but it was more likely to be as an assistant in a package with another head coach. He has major league experience as a player and coach. His LSU pitchers have major league pedigree as well; 14 have been drafted in five years. LSU has made the NCAA tournament every year he's been in Baton Rouge and reached Omaha twice.

Gary Gilmore

Current position: Coastal Carolina head coach

If you want to aim big, how about the guy who won last year’s national championship? Gilmore will be hard to pull away from his alma mater, but he’s amassed a staggering record in 22 seasons there. The Chanticleers have made 14 of the last 16 NCAA tournaments. Expect his name to be connected with other major conference openings as well.

Jay Johnson

Current position: Arizona head coach

Johnson has the most direct tie to Byrne on this list, because Alabama’s athletics director hired him at Arizona. He took the Wildcats to the final game in the College World Series in his
first year before falling short of a championship. His entire career has been on the West Coast and recruiting the southeast may be a challenge, but he's proven that he can win.

Nick Mingione

Current position: Kentucky head coach
Resume highlights: Kentucky head coach (2017-present), Mississippi State assistant coach/recruiting coordinator (2009-16), Western Carolina assistant coach/recruiting coordinator (2008), Kentucky assistant (2006-07)

Byrne and Mingione spent time at Mississippi State together from 2009-10. The Wildcats have been a surprise in Mingione's first year, finishing third in the conference after missing the NCAA tournament last season.

He is believed to love Lexington and UK broke ground on a new $49 million baseball stadium in March, but his $375,000 salary might make him a possibility.

Other names worth mentioning:

- Scott Berry (Southern Miss head coach) – He's not a young up-and-comer, but Berry has been more than solid in eight years in Hattiesburg. He's never had a losing record and never finished worse than third in the conference. This year might be his best coaching job yet. The Golden Eagles are 44-13 and ranked in every major poll.
- Casey Dunn (Samford head coach) - Dunn wasn't a finalist a year ago but there was some support. It seems unlikely there will be much momentum for him this time but don't totally rule it out.
- Cliff Godwin (East Carolina head coach) – Bill Battle confirmed that Godwin was among his finalists last year, and there was strong interest from both sides. Byrne is his own man and this is his search, but Godwin has SEC experience as an assistant and took ECU to a Super Regional last season.
- Bobby Pierce (Former Troy head coach) – Troy hasn't dominated the Sun Belt during Pierce's tenure but he's been very consistent. He made four NCAA regionals and finished below .500 in conference just once. He may have reached out to Alabama about the position last year, but was not a finalist.

Reach Ben Jones at ben@tidesports.com or 205-722-0196.
How much patience will UA fans have with baseball?

In his first major act as University of Alabama director of athletics, Greg Byrne received Oscar-level reviews. He has been described as "bold" and "decisive," praised for not being a penny-pincher or a procrastinator. He certainly projected a strong, professional image at Wednesday's press conference to announce the firing of head baseball coach Greg Goff.

As drama goes, it's a role that Byrne hopes he never has to play again in a sequel.

That's not to say that Goff is the last coach Byrne will ever have to remove at Alabama. Byrne would certainly like that to be the case, but that's not the way of modern-day college athletics. It's a tough, competitive world. Still, this was such an unusual set of circumstances that even Byrne couldn't help falling into the paradox that inevitably accompanies the firing of a head coach less than a year into his tenure.

Part of Byrne's presentation was to discuss the firing of Goff after one year. Another part was to discuss the future of the baseball program. It sounded like this:

"I really think it's important as a program, as a University and as a fan base (that) whoever our next coach is, that we're patient through the process," Byrne said.

"We have to have stability in our coaching staffs going forward. That's very important. This is very unique, but this is very important going forward that we have that in mind going forward in what we do.

"Coaches are going to make decisions that sometimes aren't going to be popular to everybody. They might not be popular to the team, the fan bases or the families -- and that's OK. There will be some of that as well, and we need to be patient through those processes."

There's a good bit to ponder there, but there's not much argument that it's a precise description of exactly what did not happen in Goff's case.

Why was that? What exactly triggered Byrne's decision that this situation was "very unique?"

Asking the question doesn't mean Byrne was automatically wrong in firing a coach after one season. Part of his job as the athletic director is to conduct triage, with the overall goal of saving the program even at the cost of a drastic cauterization. There has been a great deal said about Goff's
HURT

Continued from C1

tenure off the field, much of it
revealed through diligent work
by Tuscaloosa News reporters
Ben Jones and Aaron Suttles.
Those issues go beyond the
boxscore, or wins and losses.
Byrne didn't just randomly
mention the concerns of "the
team, the fan bases or the fami-
lies." Clearly, he heard from all
those groups and listened to
them. Just as clearly, he sent
a message that they won't be
calling the shots in the future.

How much fan patience will
there actually be, as Alabama
brings in its third baseball coach
in three years? Next season,
the new staff will get a free pass
on anything, even if they don't
win a game. There's already
a building buzz that the tal-
ent level, which was assumed
by some to have been that of a
.500 team in SEC play without
"terrible coaching" is now so
bad that a single league victory
will be progress of sorts. But
it doesn't matter if Alabama
fields a team wearing oven
mitts and rompers next year, as
far as criticism goes. After all,
even if you acknowledge that
this firing was a "very unique"
circumstance, the odds of two
"very unique" circumstances in
a row are incalculable. So will it
be two years, or three, or four
before fans start to squirm?
Given all the current restric-
tions on baseball scholarships
(and the new rules about cut-
ting players that Alabama
intends to follow) and the
might of the SEC in baseball,
it could easily take that long.
But "a long time" is better than
"never." Byrne clearly thought
that baseball prominence
was never going to happen
with things as they were, nor
was he going to play "wait-
and-see" with an unpopular
coach that he did not hire.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tide-
sports.com or 205-722-0225.
UA fires Goff after one season

Alabama baseball team finished with fewest wins since 1980 and worst SEC record since 1994

ONLINE
For video of Alabama athletic director Greg Byrne's press conference on the firing of Greg Goff, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

Greg Goff was fired as University of Alabama head baseball coach Wednesday after leading the program for just one year. Director of Athletics Greg Byrne formally announced the decision in a news conference. The Tuscaloosa News first reported his dismissal earlier in the day.

The Tuscaloosa News reported on Tuesday night that Goff had attempted to reduce or revoke the scholarships of up to 10 players in violation of NCAA bylaws during their exit interviews on Monday. Byrne said in the news conference that all scholarships would be honored for 2018 if players wish to return.

Since scholarships are renewed each year on July 1 and Goff’s intentions were not carried about, no NCAA violations occurred.

“There were no rules violations,” Byrne said.

Goff was terminated without cause. Alabama will be responsible for the remainder of his base salary unless he accepts another job in baseball. Goff signed a five-year contract that ran through the 2021 season for $450,000.

See GOFF, A5

See next page
GOFF
Continued from A1

annually with a base salary of $265,000.
If he does not accept another job in baseball, he will be owed $1.06 million over the next four years. He was due to make $1.8 million in total compensation if he had coached through the duration of his contract.

“We felt this was the best decision going forward for our baseball program, and that’s why we made the decision,” Byrne said. “When you look at these situations when it comes to coaches and you decide what is the best long-term solution for the program. Not based of off the season or anything like that, it’s based off of the long-term health of the program.”

Players who were still on campus were informed of the decision in a 1 p.m. meeting. UA athletic officials also reached out to players not on campus. Players and their families who had been considering transfers were advised to wait.

Athletic department officials spent most of the morning in meetings before reaching the decision. Byrne said he informed Goff of his decision on Wednesday morning.

Alabama finished the year 19-34-1 overall and 5-24-1 in SEC play. It was the program’s fewest wins since 1980 and its worst SEC record since 1994. The Crimson Tide did not qualify for this week’s SEC tournament in Hoover.

Pitching coach Terry Rooney has been named interim head coach to help stabilize the program during the transition. Rooney previously served as head coach at Central Florida from 2009-16. Byrne said he did not have discussions with Rooney about considering him as a candidate for the position permanently.

There was not one specific incident or reason that led to Goff’s departure, Byrne said.

“I don’t want to get into specifics with the meeting or incidents of any kind, but we continue to evaluate just as we did throughout the season, as we ended the season, and we went into the last couple of days and felt this was the right decision for the long-term health of the program,” Byrne said.

Several players and their families complained after they were informed their scholarships would be reduced or revoked. NCAA schools voted in January 2015 to approve legislation requiring Power 5 conference schools, including Alabama, to renew scholarships annually.

Previously, most scholarships were subject to annual renewal. Scholarships at schools outside the Power 5 such as Louisiana Tech, Goff’s previous stop, are not required to be renewed.

Struggles on the season started to bleed into other areas. Alabama averaged 3,773 in attendance in 36 home games compared to 4,314 in 31 home games last season. Several alumni, fans and others associated with the program voiced displeasure with Goff throughout his first season in Tuscaloosa.

The search for Goff’s replacement will bring the third Alabama baseball coach in as many seasons. The last time UA baseball had three coaches in three seasons was 1927-29.

“We felt that the right thing for the long-term health of the program is where we are today,” Byrne said “And that’s a constant evaluation, and that’s what we were focused on throughout.”
Tide baseball searches for answers

Program faces setback after firing of first-year coach Greg Goff

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

Where does Alabama baseball go from here? It's a pertinent question for a proud program which has fallen on hard times.

Consider the following:

- It's been more than a decade since Alabama won the SEC regular season title (2006).
- It's been more than a decade since Alabama hosted an NCAA Regional (2006).
- It's been nearly two decades since Alabama went to the College World Series (1999).

Now the program faces a setback of its own making.

Regardless of whether you think Greg Goff was a good or bad hire and regardless of whether you think he should have been fired or retained to build his team with his own players, the fact remains that he's gone.

He wasn't scooped up by another program. Alabama acted of its own volition.

Time will tell whether that decision was wise or foolish. But, in his first substantive action as UA director of athletics, Greg Byrne acted decisively. That's a sign of leadership.

Byrne now is on the clock to make his first hire at the school, and all signs point to that he'll attract a top, qualified candidate.

"If Greg Byrne felt like that

See BASEBALL, B7

University of Alabama athletic director Greg Byrne speaks at a press conference Wednesday officially announcing the dismissal without cause of baseball coach Greg Goff. Alabama finished the season 19-34-1 overall and 5-24-1 in the SEC under Goff. It was the fewest wins by the program since 1980 and the worst conference record by UA since 1994. Alabama finished last in the SEC this season and was not among 12 teams to qualify for the conference tournament this week in Hoover. (STAFF PHOTO/GARY COSBY JR.)
program was going the wrong direction with (Goff) in charge, they probably saved more of the program by doing it now rather than doing it next year to when the situation is even worse than it is now," Kendall Rogers of d1baseball.com said. "In reality they're probably saving themselves more grief than they would have otherwise.

"I think there's going to be a lot of interest. If you look around the country, I've already had two or three big-name coaches reach out to me getting my thoughts about what I think about the job. Alabama has a chance to get some pretty good names."

It can be and maybe currently is an attractive job. A fertile state and region of the country in which to recruit helps. A $42 million stadium is a crown jewel.

An easy job, though, it is not.

The scholarship inequities the program faces is well known. Alabama isn't able to supplement the 11.7 scholarships the NCAA allows with lottery scholarships that most other SEC programs get. Alabama also doesn't allow in-state tuition to neighboring states that some schools allow.

All in all, Alabama is an attractive big-name job, but it's not easy.

"It's right there with Auburn," Rogers said. "When you look at the job, obviously it's not Tennessee, it's not Kentucky, it's not Missouri. I would say it's a step above that, but I think there's a lot of potential.

"Look at the facility. We were all blown away with the job they did with that facility. I think Alabama has a big-time facility to sell. If you look at the financial commitment that Greg Byrne is going to make. That's certainly going to be impressive. I know Greg's past and I know he loves college baseball and will make a strong commitment. So if you look at those two aspects I think it's a very attractive job.

"Is it an easy job? Absolutely not. If it were an easy job Alabama would be more relevant than they've been over the last decade. But if they can get the right guy in there, I do think they can make a quick transition over the next couple of years. The pieces are finally there to be able to do that whereas before they had the facility the pieces weren't really there."

In meeting with reporters Wednesday afternoon, Byrne emphasized he's looking for a coach with college experience. That candidate might be a head coach or he might be an assistant, Byrne said.

There is not time frame either, which makes sense considering that many talented coaches will be busy with conference and NCAA tournaments for the next few weeks. Until that time, assistant coach Terry Rooney will handle the day-to-day operations, which will primarily consist of trying to keep the recruiting class together.

"Baseball season is going to go for a lot longer now so I would not be concerned if a week from now we haven't announced who the new head coach is," Byrne said.

Byrne is aware of the plusses of the program he is pitching, and he is all too aware of the drawbacks. He focuses on the positive.

"The reality is, every single place you go has its strengths and its challenges," he said. "There are a lot of strengths at the University of Alabama, and we're going to be very focused on what those strengths are to give us the best opportunity to succeed at the highest levels of college baseball.

"We compete at the highest level at many of our sports, and our goal will be for that to be the case across the board. I think with the passion of our fan base, with the incredible resources we have here as a program, especially our beautiful stadium, that has a leg up. I mean, I think I've been to all the spring training homes in Arizona, I've been to a lot of minor league ballparks — our stadium doesn't take a back seat to anybody. That's important in recruiting.

"Are there challenges that you have? Absolutely. But we need to be as aggressive as we can with the resources that we have to work with to give us a chance to win. This is a great place to be, and I know there are a lot of coaches who will be interested in it."

— Reach Aaron Suttles at aaron@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
Greg Goff's firing shows why Alabama's paying Greg Byrne the big bucks

By: Kevin Scarbinsky

If you suspect you may have to do it eventually, better to do it immediately.

That take-charge philosophy was articulated most memorably in the SEC by Florida's Jeremy Foley while he was building a well-deserved reputation as one of the best athletics directors in the business.

Foley's retired now, but his approach to personnel management is alive and well. Witness the first major decision made by new Alabama AD Greg Byrne.

Byrne didn't hire Greg Goff as Alabama's head baseball coach a year ago, but he didn't hesitate to fire him Wednesday. It was the best thing to happen to Alabama baseball in some time, according to people close to the program, because Goff was the wrong man in the wrong job at the wrong time.

It wasn't just losing at a rate Alabama hadn't suffered since 1980. It was the way Goff related to his players. Or didn't relate to them.

It was threatening to withhold their meal money. It was threatening to take away their scholarship money. It was letting them know that they simply weren't worth a darn, to put it more politely than he did, and letting everyone know he couldn't wait to bring in his own players.

Those were among the allegations against Goff from people close to the program. Byrne must have found some fire behind the smoke because it would be well out of the ordinary to fire a coach after one year simply for losing.

Alabama's 18-1 and 13-1 defeats at Vanderbilt in last weekend's final regular-season series suggested the players had had enough. Goff's dismissal said Byrne had, too. Byrne must have been convinced that Alabama baseball would be better off starting from scratch. His history suggests it would be wise to trust his judgment on this subject.

In late June of 2016, a little more than a week after Bill Battle hired Goff at Alabama, Byrne was busy watching the baseball coach he'd hired at Arizona the year before, Jay Johnson, lead the Wildcats to the final game of the College World Series.

One of the people who'd recommended Johnson was John Cohen, the baseball coach Byrne had hired at Mississippi State to succeed the retiring Ron Polk despite Polk's vocal desire that one of his assistants, Tommy Raffo, get the job.

If you doubt Byrne's toughness, consider the cajones required to buck the legendary Polk and his public threat to take his name off the stadium.

See next page
All Cohen did in Starkville was win one SEC regular-season title and one SEC Tournament championship and reach the finals of a College World Series. He earned enough respect and credibility there to become the school's AD. In short, Byrne knows college baseball, and in his short time at Alabama, he evidently discovered something was amiss in the staggering Crimson Tide program that couldn't be fixed if Goff remained.

Like Auburn, Alabama faces challenges in baseball that aren't present in other sports, particularly in the inability to supplement the 11.7 available scholarships as rivals such as SEC co-champs Florida and LSU can. But Byrne's in a much better position to conduct a national search and find the right man to attack those challenges than Battle was a year ago.

People who should know say that Battle was not going to fire Mitch Gaspard a year ago, that Gaspard made the decision to resign, that Battle reached out to different people for advice on the search but ultimately relied on the counsel of someone who may not have been a baseball expert.

In fairness to Battle, he also was battling a rare form of treatable cancer at the time and preparing to undergo a stem cell transplant. He had larger and more personal issues to address than hiring a coach in a sport that was not his area of expertise.

The last year showed that Goff wasn't ready to make the jump from Louisiana Tech to Alabama and adjust his approach to the way things are done in the SEC. Byrne knows the territory far better.

Goff was successful in his previous stops, which suggests he may be better suited to run a program at a lower level. There's no question Alabama will be better with a new coach - if he's the right coach. Byrne appears to be the right AD to make that determination.
Ex-UA professor guilty in child porn case

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

A former University of Alabama music professor has agreed to plead guilty to federal charges of possession of child pornography.

Federal prosecutors charged Nikos Pappas, 41, on Tuesday, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Birmingham. The office filed a two-count information alleging that Pappas received hundreds of images on his home computer and a computer found in his office between January 2014 and September 2016.

According to a plea agreement, the laptop computer taken from Pappas' home contained more than 100 videos of child pornography, some depicting sex acts with very young children. His second computer contained more than 150 images and at least 25 videos of child pornography, according to a release sent Wednesday.

The penalty for receiving child pornography is five to 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for possessing child pornography is 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations investigated the case, which Assistant U.S. Attorney John B. Ward is prosecuting.

Pappas was placed on leave in September, according to a statement from UA. "As soon as the university became aware of these serious allegations, officials promptly placed him on leave Sept. 22, 2016, and took precautions to keep him away from the campus and ensure he had no contact with members of the campus community," said Monica Watts, Associate Vice President for Communications, Division of Strategic Communications. "He was no longer employed as of May 15, 2017, the end of the academic year. The university is committed to providing a safe environment for the campus community."
Champion for African-American health

Retiring cancer center director grew up a segregationist; soon realized segregation has 'no place'

Amy Yurkanin
ayurkanin@al.com

Dr. Edward Partridge, the outgoing director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, graduated from his small-town high school in 1965, before the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

He attended an all-white high school in a majority-black town.

But in nearby Selma, 35 miles from where he lived in Demopolis, protesters marched and endured brutal beatings at the hands of police. Partridge watched a bus carrying Freedom Riders pass through Demopolis not long after they fled bombings and beatings in Anniston and Birmingham. Klansmen held rallies in high school football stadiums. They carried burning crosses down rural highways in the beds of pickup trucks.

"So it was real to me," said Partridge, who has been the director at UAB for 10 years.

And he makes no bones about where he stood.

"For all practical purposes, I was a segregationist," Partridge said.

He learned it from his father and grandfather, who fondly recounted the exploits of his great-great-grandfather, Daniel Partridge, a lieutenant in the Confederate army. He invaded the North three times and fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

An uncle who served in the state Senate believed so strongly in the separation of the races that he fought the state librarian over a children's book that depicted a marriage between black and white rabbits. Partridge later discovered the dispute has gone down in library history as one of the worst examples of American censorship.

Partridge inherited that uncle's name — but soon abandoned his beliefs. He left Demopolis to attend college and medical school.

"I changed during this period of time," he said. "I realized my family was wrong and that segregation had no place in our society, just as slavery had no place in our society."

By the time he returned as a doctor and researcher, he understood how deeply slavery and segregation had impacted the health of African-Americans in the Black Belt.

"Three hundred-plus years of slavery and 100 years of segregation has had its impact on the population. ... We have to recognize that," says Dr. Edward Partridge, retiring director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center. During his career, Partridge has worked to increase the number of African-Americans participating in screenings and clinical trials.

UAB

Three hundred-plus years of slavery and 100 years of segregation has had its impact on the population. ... We have to recognize that," says Dr. Edward Partridge, retiring director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center. During his career, Partridge has worked to increase the number of African-Americans participating in screenings and clinical trials.
Retiring cancer center director evolved from segregationist to champion of African-American health

By: Amy Yurkanin

Dr. Edward Partridge, the outgoing director of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, graduated from his small-town high school in 1965, before the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

He attended an all-white high school in a majority-black town.

But in nearby Selma, 35 miles from where he lived in Demopolis, protesters marched and endured brutal beatings at the hands of police. Partridge watched a bus carrying Freedom Riders pass through Demopolis not long after they fled bombings and beatings in Anniston and Birmingham. Klansmen held rallies in high school football stadiums. They carried burning crosses down rural highways in the beds of pickup trucks.

"So it was real to me," Partridge said.

And he makes no bones about where he stood.

"For all practical purposes, I was a segregationist," Partridge said.

He learned it from his father and grandfather, who fondly recounted the exploits of his great-great-great-grandfather, Daniel Partridge, a lieutenant in the Confederate army. He invaded the North three times and fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

An uncle who served in the state senate believed so strongly in the separation of the races that he fought the state librarian over a children's book that depicted a marriage between black and white rabbits. Partridge later discovered the dispute has gone down in library history as one of the worst examples of American censorship.

Partridge inherited that uncle's name - but soon abandoned his beliefs. He left Demopolis to attend college and medical school.

"I changed during this period of time," he said. "I realized my family was wrong and that segregation had no place in our society, just as slavery had no place in our society."

By the time he returned as a doctor and researcher, he understood how deeply slavery and segregation had impacted the health of African-Americans in the Black Belt.

"Three hundred-plus years of slavery and one hundred years of segregation has had its impact on the population, on me personally, on people in the South and the North, for that matter," Partridge said. "We have to recognize that as an underlying cause."

Preventive screenings such as pap smears and mammograms slashed mortality rates for breast and cervical cancer - but only among women with access to care. Low-income women without

See next page
insurance continued to die at high rates. Many of these women were African-American and living in the Black Belt.

Partridge placed that separation in survival rates at the very center of his career as a researcher and physician. He helped launch outreach programs in the Black Belt that trained non-medical outreach workers to promote screening and connect low-income patients to care.

Over the years, thousands of community health outreach workers have fanned out over the Deep South, supported by a network of hospitals with the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center at the center. Within less than a decade, workers closed the gap in mammogram screenings between African Americans and whites.

Partridge and his team doubled the rate of participation in clinical trials among African-American patients and partnered with historically black institutions including Tuskegee University and Morehouse School of Medicine to bolster cancer research on those campuses.

Genetic profiling, targeted therapy and immunotherapy have all revolutionized cancer care - and could improve outcomes for patients with the disease. But first those patients have to be identified and linked to treatment. That's where community health outreach workers come in, and few simple concepts that have little to do with science and everything to do with Partridge's journey.

"Creating trust, eliminate bias where you can and sharing power with those that are less fortunate are sort of the underlying themes," Partridge said. "Now, I was as far away from that as you could be as an 18-year-old graduate of Demopolis High School."
As demand for on-campus housing meets UAB's current supply, students spill over into city's emerging housing market courting young professionals, families

By Lexi Coon

For many universities across the nation, growth is inevitable — especially when you have a reputation like UAB's, known for its excellence in health care and research.

The school — and the education its faculty provides — has become more renowned both locally and nationally, lending itself to an increase in enrollment in recent years.

As stated in the first installment of this school series in May, UAB had record enrollment for the fall of 2016, jumping up 6.5 percent in the past year to 19,535 students, and school President Ray Watts is aiming to reach 20,000 students by 2018.

Bradley Barnes, UAB's vice provost for enrollment management, said the student body could grow well beyond Watts' goal, possibly reaching 24,000 within the next five years. But as enrollment levels increase, the school, as well as the city, may find itself inundated with students who are looking for housing options.

'Overflow Housing'

"I guess all through high school, I knew I wanted to go into health care, and I looked at schools that provided a lot of opportunity in those areas," Junior Joanne Jacobs, from Flowery Branch, Georgia, said of her choice to attend UAB. "UAB really felt like an urban campus, so there were more opportunities for students to get out there, and when you stand on the Green, you see four different medical institutions."

Hoover resident and sophomore Hassan Sadruddin had similar sentiments.

"I found UAB because, growing up here, it was well-known to be the best pre-med and med school in the state ... but when I got to campus and was in Birmingham on a daily basis, I realized that it was very underrated," he said.

Like other surrounding colleges such as Samford, UAB requires enrolled freshmen to live on campus unless they live within one of the seven surrounding counties: Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair or Walker.
"Probably for the last 15 years, research has supported the notion that if a student lives on campus their freshman year, they are more likely to do better and complete school," said Marc Booker, executive director of housing and dining.

If a student stays on campus an additional year, the numbers nearly double, he said.

Requiring students to start their college years on campus also allows them to learn what Booker calls "those fundamental, basic life skills of conflict resolution," such as being assertive, how to address conflicts with civility and how to get along with others.

It's also pushing UAB to become a more multi-modal or traditional campus rather than a commuter campus, as more students live on campus past their freshman year.

After the freshmen have lived with a roommate in a residence hall for nine months, they can transition to live off campus or, preferably, in apartment-style housing on campus, Booker said.

For those students looking to live on campus, there are six residence halls. The earliest residence hall was built in 1972, and since 2000, UAB has added three additional residence halls for a total of 2,880 beds for students.

According to a report by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis, in fall 2016 there were 2,921 freshmen enrolled, 1,469 of whom lived in on-campus housing. This leaves a little less than half of the university's bed selection for returning students who wish to live on campus.

Booker said that the university has been at or close to 100 percent housing capacity since 2012, and in the 10 years prior, UAB was between 90 and 98 percent full. As more students wanted to live on campus, the demand exceeded supply, which was in part due to construction and renovations being done on some of the residence halls.

To mitigate the issue, UAB worked with The Venue, neighboring Regions Field on 16th Street South, to offer close-to-campus housing to subsidize. Booker said there are 101 students living in the complex.

"When we provide them off-campus space, we charge a rate that is commensurate with what they would receive on campus, and then the difference would be absorbed by the institution," Booker said, calling the situation "overflow housing."

"Essentially, we ran out of rooms, and we went back to those students who already had rooms [and offered them a space at The Venue]. And that's the [101] who chose to live there," he said.

After agreeing to live at The Venue, their space in the residence halls was filled with other students.

With The Venue as a viable option for "overflow housing," Booker said their number of beds grows to 3,000, which he feels, "pretty good with ... for the foreseeable future," although UAB is currently taking a close look at housing through a housing and dining study.

Many students look beyond the confines of university specific housing, too.

"When we provide them off-campus space, we charge a rate that is commensurate with what they would receive on campus, and then the difference would be absorbed by the institution," Booker said, calling the situation "overflow housing."

"Essentially, we ran out of rooms, and we went back to those students who already had rooms [and offered them a space at The Venue]. And that's the [101] who chose to live there," he said.

After agreeing to live at The Venue, their space in the residence halls was filled with other students.

With The Venue as a viable option for "overflow housing," Booker said their number of beds grows to 3,000, which he feels, "pretty good with ... for the foreseeable future," although UAB is currently taking a close look at housing through a housing and dining study.

Many students look beyond the confines of university specific housing, too.

OFF (BUT NEAR) CAMPUS

Senior Andrew Whitfield lives about a mile from campus in an apartment, and said when he was looking for housing, he took into account various factors.

"It would say it depends on whether it's new or old, obviously, but it also depends on
hundreds of additional beds on the market for both students and professionals. The Pizitz downtown they thought the apartments would appeal to young professionals searching for apartments and found housing available. "As people spend more on those renovated units, I think that gives people a lot more options." While much of where students may be living depends on price, Cleage said he believes there is something for everyone near the campus. "I think the two uses, both [UB provided] housing, on the campus, and private provided housing adjacent to the university are complementary," said UB Director of Planning, Design and Construction James Fowler. "I'm appreciative that there seems to be a variety of options both on and around campus." Eli Ussery, a junior from Columbus, Georgia, found Cleage's beliefs to be true when he decided to move off campus. After living on campus his freshman year, he and friends went searching for apartments and found housing that he described as in their "possibility spectrum" about 15 minutes from campus. "It was pretty easy to find something... even in the middle of summer," he said, mentioning that there were dozens of places available.

Jane Hoerner, director of marketing for Bayer Properties, said when they opened The Pizitz downtown they thought the apartments would appeal to young professionals in the city. They see their market as those who "value a walkable urban lifestyle," and many of their current residents work downtown. And although they cater to all types of residents, the apartments haven't been marketed toward students. "But, it has also proved to be attractive to people of all ages," she said, adding they have received interest from residents of all demographics. "We think it's a great choice for people who want to live downtown." As of recently, a variety of complexes have opened, including The Pizitz, putting hundreds of additional beds on the market for both students and professionals. Some students also take advantage of University Heights, which is a type of apartment-style living in Homewood. J.C. Meyers with University Heights said all of their apartments are three bedrooms, totaling 535 bed spaces, but each bed has its own rent, and the majority of students who live there commute to UAB. "That way, you aren't worrying about if your roommate has paid their half," Meyers said. It's a way that University Heights caters more to the student lifestyle. She said when most students are in the search for housing, they are mostly concerned with proximity and price. Sadruddin also lives off-campus in a complex nearby. He said he decided to make the switch after his family could afford it, but he found it more difficult to find a space that was within his price range, close to campus and safe. "It took four months. A lot of it was word of mouth," he said. "Things booked up so fast... Housing is extremely tight, and the prices are skyrocketing." He mentioned that when he looked at University House, some of the rooms were already booked for students who were graduating from high school the following year. Sadruddin added that he looked at rent on the Northside and Southside in the past 10 years, and prices have increased about 25 percent. "There is not much... unless you're looking at Pizitz," he said.

AFFORDABILITY
For the 2016-17 school year, on-campus housing prices ranged from $2,770 to $4,340 per semester depending on the number of students living together and the selected residence hall. Broken down into a four-month semester, students may pay between $692 and $1,085 per month to live on campus for the school year, and even then, they may be sharing a room. Other nearby apartments listed on the UAB off-campus housing service webpage run anywhere from $403 to $945 per bedroom per month excluding utilities, and higher-end apartments downtown, such as Flats on Fourth or The Pizitz, can range from the mid-$900s to the low-$2,000s per month for different apartment layouts. Depending on the level of quality, prices and conveniences students are accustomed to, there may be a shortage of what they consider "affordable housing" in the downtown area. Others, however, are able to afford it, leading to a mixture of student and professional housing. "We expect that there will always be demand for housing adjacent to campus," Fowler said. "We think that's going to be a part of how UAB should grow, is in partnership with the community." University Heights, though mainly filled with students, does house a few families and young professionals, Meyers said. She added that like many complexes and housing situations, there are occasionally some problems, such as noise complaints and parking troubles, between local residents and students. "Coming from conventional housing, that was a lot of what I would deal with," she said. She considered University Heights to be more similar to student housing than conventional housing. "That's part of why the students end up getting the bad rap that they do... They're spreading their wings; they're testing the waters." William Kesler, who has lived in Southside for about 10 years, and previously lived on 34th Street for 19 years, said he has dealt with excess noise from students living in the area in the past. "But, I kind of get used to that," he said, "I get along with them pretty well." Randy Williams, who has lived all over the Southside area throughout his entire life, said he has almost always lived near students in some capacity and that he's had good interactions with them. "[My experiences] have been great," he said. "I haven't had any problems." He added that he doesn't recall his sister, who has lived in the area for 10 years, ever having problems either. Some students may choose to venture a little farther from campus, too, into surrounding neighborhoods, although commute times may increase alongside rental prices. Compared to the downtown area, Homewood, Vestavia and Mountain Brook don't offer as many "affordable" apartment or rental house options, and students would be paying more in taxes and city fees. They would also be competing with families who are searching for housing in specific school districts for their children and who have more savings to spend on housing.

To help ease the growing pains, UAB is in the process of creating a plan that features many facets, including housing.

FUTURE PLANS
The university's first Campus Master Plan was developed in 2001 and aimed at guiding the physical shape and growth of the campus. A housing master plan was started shortly after in 2003. UAB Facilities Division then chose to revisit their initial plan in 2015 and worked with staff, faculty, community stakeholders and city of Birmingham representatives to guide the physical development of the campus in a manner that supports the five pillars of the university's strategic plan: education, research, patient care, community...
and global service and economic development, according to a December 2016 article from UAB News.

With this new campus plan, the university will be able to "refocus its efforts to capture an overall vision for campus development in the next five years and serve as a foundation and beyond," which includes taking a look at housing.

"The way incoming freshmen are coming in with bigger and bigger classes, they are trying to accommodate that," Sadruddin said, citing such improvements as the Housing and new recreation center. "I'm really happy to see where it's headed."

"I don't think the growth would be a bad thing," Jacobs said. "I think the new buildings are exciting."

Since the creation of the master plan in 2015, UAB made plans to work on various buildings around campus such as the School of Business, the New College of Arts and Sciences, the police headquarters and the School of Nursing.

The inclusion of these buildings throughout the city of Birmingham would allow UAB to be more comprehensive, as each area of the campus relates to a different element of the university. The academic campus is arranged in its own area adjacent to athletics and research, and research is between the academic campus and the hospital.

"It's kind of evolved into that, [grouping things together], and I think in most respects we're going to keep heading in that direction," said James Fowler, director of design, planning and construction at UAB. "But, I think we are pretty flexible just depending on what the specific need is."

But the area already being fairly built-up limits options for growth.

By 2020, UAB wants to "accommodate growth compactly and in appropriate locations" and "continue transition from a commuter to a [multi-modal] campus," among other goals, the Campus Master Plan said.

Booker said the university is looking to provide space for 15-17 percent of its student population within the upcoming years. This could mean an additional 700-800 beds, and Booker said it would include the removal of UAB's smallest and most historic residence hall, Denman. But, much of the housing decisions are contingent on what their consultants may suggest after completing the current housing and dining study.

Currently, the university is undergoing a housing and dining study provided by consultants to help plan future residence halls and accommodations.

"So, as part of our housing and dining study, we know our campus population is growing and we hope for it to continue to grow," Fowler said, noting UAB is looking to create additional housing in the existing campus footprint in the following years.

"The study is going to tell us exactly, you know, how much that should be and then also make some suggestions on exactly where that should be."

According to the master plan online, "Additional housing will emerge on the south side of campus to accommodate increasing student enrollment, including housing for a growing international body," which Fowler said is accurate.

As of early May, Fowler estimated that the plan would be available for public knowledge later in the year.

"I hope that it helps us grow in a smart way, so that we're providing a great environment on campus for our students and it provides a good next step for the growth of UAB," he said. He added that the plan will be updated as new information arises and as the community evolves.

The master plan also presents a glimpse into solutions for another problem the campus is facing: parking.

Regardless of the city, parking can sometimes take up a good portion of travel time. But sometimes, parking can cause students to miss a class, as Sadruddin said he experienced. Instead, he resorted to collecting parking tickets.

"I have a lot of parking tickets, because I'd rather pay the $20 fee than miss a class," he said.

While UAB is an urban campus that sees a lot of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, officials still are working to address transit and parking concerns by conducting a detailed parking and transportation study.

"I think it (parking) is a very traumatized subject, something students love to complain about," Jacobs said. "Something I have learned is you do need to allocate 15 to 20 minutes to come to class. And with the construction on campus, there is sometimes parking lots that may not be usable."

"We are constantly expanding, and they're doing their best to make sure it's going to be good for students," Ussery said, "but while they are doing all this construc­tion, it's going to be a little difficult for people to find that 'perfect spot.'"
The University of Alabama at Birmingham Benevolent Fund is expanding how it gives back.

In March, the Benevolent Fund established Blazer Kitchen, an on-campus food bank open to all UAB employees and students.

"If there’s any UAB employee or student who comes by and tells us that they need food, we will let them access the food that they need," said Benevolent Fund Project Manager Lisa Higginbotham.

"We don’t want anybody to go hungry, to turn somebody away, because you just don’t know what someone’s situation is."

Plans for Blazer Kitchen got started after recognizing the Benevolent Fund, which is funded by donations from UAB employees and partners with 130 local nonprofits, was unable to help with some needs of employees in emergency situations, Higginbotham said.

The Benevolent Fund financially will help employees who are overcoming illness or facing another hardship, but was not helping with a key need, Higginbotham said.

"We’ve noticed that we aren’t always able to help with all their needs, and we feel like if we could help with just the most basic of need — which is food — then we can continue to allow that employee to focus on getting healthier and being able to return to work," she said.

Research has also shown that about 25 percent of community college students and 20 percent of students at four-year schools are food insecure, according to the College and University Food Bank Alliance.

UAB students who are food insecure are able to access a food pantry through student life, Higginbotham said, but that pantry mainly carries non-perishable food.

"We were hoping that maybe we could work collaboratively with them and supplement what they have," Higginbotham said. "We have fresh produce — fruits and vegetables and eggs and meat."

Blazer Kitchen is funded through the Benevolent Fund and benefits from its partnership with the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama, which provides access to low-cost food. It also accepts food and monetary donations for Blazer Kitchen and is open to one-time and regular volunteers, Higginbotham said.

In its first month and a half of operation, Blazer Kitchen distributed more than 3,000 pounds of food to 47 families, or 102 people. Of those families, 26 were employees of the university, and 21 were students.

"Some people might think we’re preparing food here and feeding it to people, but Blazer Kitchen sounds a whole lot better than UAB Food Bank. It sounds friendlier; it sounds more inviting."

They also will partner with the Office of Service Learning, which will connect students completing research or looking for experience in social work.

"There’s plenty to do, but we’ve got some pretty awesome students who have good skills and need the opportunity to get engaged and get involved and get some experience to put on their resumes," Higginbotham said.

The Blazer Kitchen already has an intern who intends to research the stigma of food banks and how to reduce that stigma, Higginbotham said, and they hope to bring in dietary science students to help build recipes with available food.

"What I tell people when they come in for emergency employee assistance is, 'We help all other people when we can, but there are times in our life when we need a little bit of help from other people. It’s perfectly OK to come to Blazer Kitchen to access the food, if that’s what you need to do,'" Higginbotham said.

For more information about Blazer Kitchen, go to uab.edu/benfund/blazer-kitchen.
Engineering students complete bridge

By: Monica Kreber

Relieved and proud – these are two words Ben Bertolet used to describe the work his engineering students put into building a new bridge on Fort Dorchester High’s campus.

Max Eichman, a graduating senior who has taken five engineering courses at the Fort, came up with the idea to build a new, wider bridge to cross a ditch near the school’s football stadium. A small group of engineering students committed to the project.

“These boys became a team with a common goal: not for financial gain, not for a grade, but for a commitment to get the job done, and to get it done right,” Bertolet said during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new bridge on May 19.

Eichman said he asked Principal Bert Postell a couple years ago if they could build another bridge but the project did not commence until they had the funding for it. The students worked on it this semester.

The bridge replaces a previous, narrower bridge that Eichman said allowed for only one person to cross at a time. The new bridge can accommodate about three people at a time.

The new bridge is approximately 60 feet long.

“So it’s a lot bigger, it’s a lot sturdier, and it looks a lot bigger than the old one did too,” Eichman said. “It’s a huge load off my back. It feels really good…at the same time it’s kind of sad…because we’ve been working for so long on it.”

Bertolet gave particular recognition to Eichman as well as graduating seniors Nick Russo and Rick Comps. Eichman is going to pursue civil engineering at the University of South Carolina. Russo is heading to the University of Alabama in Huntsville to study aerospace engineering and Comps wants to be a mechanic in the United States Air Force. Bertolet also recognized graduating senior Evan Lindsey and 10th-grader Mason Mitchell.

“These are good kids, and I’m honored to say that I taught them,” he said. “I know that they’ll make a difference in our world so I try my hardest to make a difference in theirs.”

Bertolet said funding was an issue from the beginning of the project. They had plans for a $3,000 bridge but had only $500 at the start.

The Charleston Defense Contractors Association provided the impetus for the project with a $500 grant. Bertolet Construction Corporation and Bosch followed suit with additional
donations, and Pat Branham, the head of maintenance at Fort Dorchester High, donated his concrete tools and other equipment to finish the ramps. Lowe’s provided discounted prices on most of the supplies.

The engineering department supplied most of the tools and know-how. Bertolet said they had to research span tables and make sure their designs met code prior to building it. The school also provided funding for the project and the art department at the school helped brand the school logo onto the decking of the bridge.

Bertolet said they also encountered vandalism when they were setting the posts, but with no cameras in that area of the school campus, the culprit got away with it. The students had to dig out the vandalized post from the three feet of concrete it was encased in and reset a new one.

There were also some mathematical hurdles that Bertolet said come along with any design, but students used state-of-the-art design software to make sure their design met code.

Time was also an obstacle. Students had to transport materials from Bertolet’s classroom to the bridge on a daily basis (about a half-mile round trip) and meet up on weekends and before school in order to get the job done by the varsity football spring game.

Eichman did the honors during the ribbon-cutting ceremony by hammering in the last nail to the bridge.
Plasma propulsion could eventually become effective and useful for higher altitude aviation, airships and eventually space access

By: Brian Wang

Berkant Göksel at the Technical University of Berlin and his team now want to fit plasma engines to planes. “We want to develop a system that can operate above an altitude of 30 kilometers where standard jet engines cannot go,” he says. These could even take passengers to the edge of the atmosphere and beyond.

The challenge was to develop an air-breathing plasma propulsion engine that could be used for take-off as well as high-altitude flying.

A new breakthrough in jet propulsion technology since the invention of the jet engine is achieved. The first critical tests for future air-breathing magneto-plasma propulsion systems have been successfully completed. In this regard, it is also the first time that a pinching dense plasma focus discharge could be ignited at one atmosphere and driven in pulse mode using very fast, nanosecond electrostatic excitations to induce self-organized plasma channels for ignition of the propulsive main discharge. Depending on the capacitor voltage (200-600 V) the energy input at one atmosphere varies from 52-320 Joules per pulse corresponding to impulse bits from 1.2-8.0 mN\text{s}. Such a new pulsed plasma propulsion system driven with one thousand pulses per second would already have thrust-to-area ratios (50-150 kN/m$^2$) of modern jet engines. An array of thrusters could enable future aircrafts and airships to start from ground and reach altitudes up to 50 km and beyond. The needed high power could be provided by future compact plasma fusion reactors already in development by aerospace companies. The magneto-plasma compressor itself was originally developed by Russian scientists as plasma fusion device and was later miniaturized for supersonic flow control applications. So the first breakthrough is based on a spin-off plasma fusion technology.

“We are the first to produce fast and powerful plasma jets at ground level,” says Göksel. “These jets of plasma can reach speeds of up to 20 kilometres a second.”
The team used a rapid stream of nanosecond-long electric discharges to fire up the propulsion mixture. A similar technique is used in pulse detonation combustion engines, making them more efficient than standard fuel-powered engines.

- Plasma propulsion was proved on an airship in 2005
- this is a pathway to far more powerful and effective plasma propulsion
- this could enable propulsion beyond the height of existing planes
- nearer term it could be for routine airships at 50-100 km
- it could eventually be used to get to orbit and transform aviation and space access

It's the first time anyone has applied pulse detonation to plasma thrusters. Jason Cassibry at the University of Alabama in Huntsville is impressed. "It could greatly extend the range of any aircraft and lower the operational cost," he says.

But there are several hurdles to overcome before the technology can propel an actual plane. For a start, the team tested mini thrusters 80 millimetres long, and a commercial airliner would need some 10,000 of them to fly, which makes the current design too complex for aircraft of that size. Göksel’s team plans to target smaller planes and airships for now. Between 100 and 1000 thrusters would be enough for a small plane, which the team thinks is feasible.

In future experiments the plasma dynamics could be investigated using ultrafast cameras with up to 2 Mio frames per seconds which are available to the corresponding authors. In the present work the maximum voltage and power limits of the new MPC thruster were not tested. The main task was the first demonstration of a pulsed MPC-based plasma thruster with ns-internal excitation for a stable operation at high atmospheric pressures up to 1 bar. In this regard, a first breakthrough and pulse operation with 4.7 Hz was demonstrated. In the next step, the pulse frequency of the main discharge will be increased up to 10 Hz. Furthermore, a new mobile power generator will be developed for the first flight demonstration onboard of the b-Ionic Airfish, which was the world’s first airship propelled by plasma engines in 2005. Only 0.08 N or 8 g would be sufficient to propel this 7.5 m airship at low speeds up to 1 m/s. A 5 Hz thruster has already about 0.02 N. So an array of four plasma pulse “detonation” thrusters with the present power level would make it fly. The available maximum weight for the power generator is about 5.1 kg plus 1.2 kg for LiPo batteries.

The general thrust of an array with 10 cells, each operating with a pulse frequency of 50 Hz, is 2.0 N. The total power required for a first high altitude (H=20 km) demonstrator mission using an array with 10 thruster is about 75 kW. With a solar battery effectiveness of 0.2-0.3, the required minimum surface area is 250 m².

In any case, the new propulsion technology is still away from being competitive but it has to be noted that the research, development and optimization is now at the very beginning. The impulse bit for each thruster unit can be essentially increased by using different ejector schemes and jet focusing nozzle structures. These are items of next investigations.
Furthermore, there are also a large amount of other possible technological applications in the field of aerodynamics, material sciences and power engineering. But a real flight demonstration is the next milestone goal towards new magneto-plasma flux compression thrusters for stratospheric airships or high altitude platform stations (HAPS) which are currently all limited to about 25 km altitude by using propellers. With future air-breathing magneto-plasma flux compression thrusters next generation solar, beamed or fusion energy powered airships could climb to altitudes up to 50 km and beyond.
Alabama colleges to debut ‘app economy’ curriculum

Paul Gattis, pgattis@al.com

Apple is launching a new app development educational curriculum today to help students interested in pursuing careers in the app economy. And the curriculum has a specific connection to Alabama.

Apple is working with six community college systems across the country — including Alabama — to roll out the app curriculum.

The program will be available to students at Wallace State in Selma, Drake State

See Apple, A4

APPLE

FROM A1

In Huntsville and Bishop State in Mobile, Apple officials said they hope the program grows beyond those three campuses.

"Apple has been 40 years working in the education space," said Lisa Jackson, Apple vice president for environment, policy and social initiatives. "For us, we knew we wanted to take the curriculum all the way up to the high school/community college level.

"So when we got the curriculum developed and we did that with a number of educators, many of them put their hand and said they were willing to roll it out into their existing programs and teach with the curriculum in the fall. We think part of the reason is it was developed with them in mind."

Apple said its new Swift coding curriculum will help create jobs for students across the country.

It’s an extension of Apple’s K-12 Everyone Can Code program that provides fundamentals in learning, writing and teaching coding. Apple now has a curriculum path from kindergarten through the first two years of college.

"We’re very excited," Jackson said. "This is a pretty important moment when we set out years ago to develop a whole new programming language — and that’s what this is, it’s language for app developers by people who invented the App Store — we envisioned that we wanted to reach folks starting in kindergarten and all the way through middle school, which is what our Swift playground app does.

"We knew we didn’t want to stop there. It was about workforce development and skills needed for the workforce in the future."

The free curriculum is available for download from Apple’s iBooks Store.
Alabama community colleges selected for Apple tech training program

By: Ty West

The Alabama community college system was one of six in the nation to be selected by Apple Inc. for a new app-development curriculum.

The program will allow students to learn coding and app development using Apple's Swift programming language. The Swift Programming Labs are an extension of Everyone Can Code — another Apple (Nasdaq: AAPL) program that introduces coding in K-12 schools.

The three Alabama colleges that will offer the program are Drake State Community and Technical College in Huntsville, Bishop State Community College in Mobile and Wallace State Community College in Selma.

The curriculum will be offered at the schools starting next fall.

“This will allow our students to develop cutting-edge skills that will prepare them for success in today’s workplace,” said Jimmy H. Baker, chancellor of the Alabama Community College System. “It’s exactly the kind of opportunity that we want to make sure we are offering our students. We are thrilled to be partnering with Apple on this program.”

The program will come at a time when there are a number of open tech jobs in Birmingham and around the state. Leaders in the industry have said the competitive environment for talent has created a significant need for skilled tech workers — a need several programs, including Innovate Birmingham, are seeking to address.

The new community college program will create another potential pipeline of talent for the field. Schools will also receive electronic equipment such as computers, iPads, iPods and Apple TVs, as part of the partnership.

“In a world powered by code, understanding key software concepts has become a new literacy,” said Lisa Jackson, Apple vice president for environment, policy and social initiatives. “Computer coding is an essential skill that students need to succeed, no matter what career they pursue.”
BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham-Southern
College hires new provost

Birmingham-Southern College has tapped Dr. Bradley Caskey, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, as its provost and vice president for academic affairs, effective July 1.

Caskey's career in academia spans more than 30 years. In his current position, which he has held since 2009, he oversees 16 academic departments and interdisciplinary programs that include 2,200 students and more than 200 faculty and staff. Under his leadership, UW-River Falls has developed new academic programs and majors, remodeled its microbiology laboratory and theater, established international partnerships with institutions of higher education in South Korea, and built a new program for students whose primary language is not English.

He has also helped the school's College of Arts and Sciences secure its first $1 million non-estate gift and is part of a team that recently secured a $1.5 million gift for the college. He has worked on behalf of UW-River Falls to increase enrollment, streamline student registration, increase student and faculty diversity, and develop the school's first residential learning community and first-year student experience in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The provost and vice president for academic affairs at Birmingham-Southern reports directly to the school's president and is the chief academic officer with broad responsibilities for the full range of the school's academic programs and support services. Caskey is replacing interim provost and English professor Susan K. Hagen, who is retiring after more than 40 years of service at Birmingham-Southern.

In other news at the school, Virginia Gilbert Loftin, assistant vice president for development communications and principal gifts at UAB, has been named Birmingham-Southern's vice president for advancement, effective Aug. 1. — Greg Garrison
Retiring Auburn President: 'Little Stuff' Matters

By: Cynthia Williford

AUBURN, Ala. (AP) — Less than a month until his departure, Auburn University President Jay Gogue sat at his desk listening to the plea of a student who had overslept and missed his business school interview.

Gogue listened and tried to help, just as he aimed to do 10 years earlier when he returned to the southern land grant university nestled in east Alabama where he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees years before.

It's "just little stuff" that matters, he said.

Gogue and his wife, Susie, will pass the torch to incoming Auburn president Steven Leath and his wife, Janet, in June, leaving behind a legacy as the 18th president of Auburn University.

Before he was approached about the presidency in Texas, Gogue, a '69 and '71 Auburn graduate, didn't think he would ever return to the university. The move is rare in higher education, Gogue explained.

"Typically schools don't really hire their own back," Gogue said. "We lived in 10 different states. I jokingly tell people we've got cemetery plots in seven states because we really thought we'd probably stay in them forever."

Gogue beat the odds and returned to Auburn in 2007 where he says he "hit the ground listening," not running. He practiced what he was taught. Auburn had its own set of traditions, culture, values and history, and Gogue took time to hear what students, faculty and other groups wanted before setting his own agenda.

After six months of "formal" listening, things like improving graduation rates, increasing private fundraising and widening Auburn's global focus emerged as some target areas to work on. Those are some of the successes Gogue highlighted about his tenure.
Auburn's graduation rate has risen from about 60 to 75 percent since 2007, and the "Because This is Auburn" fundraising campaign made Auburn the first university in the state to raise $1 billion in a comprehensive fundraising campaign last September.

With the increase of foreign-owned companies locating in the United States, Gogue said creating international awareness in graduates is more essential than those who were graduating years ago. He highlighted Auburn's study abroad programs, in which a fourth of Auburn alumni participate before graduating.

But Gogue was quick to say that "a president doesn't do much_ the campus does the stuff."

Gogue made an effort quickly to increase shared governance across the university when he came in. He brought in student leaders and faculty and has worked closely with the University Senate to make sure they were represented in decision making.

James Goldstein, English professor and University Senate chair, said Gogue has been successful in his efforts.

"He respects the faculty's viewpoints," Goldstein said.

Challenges soon followed Gogue's advances. Less than a year into his presidency, the cuts came. The university faced a 38 percent budget cut, and the most Gogue had faced at other universities was a 5 percent cut.

Gogue worked with staff to manage the $102 million funding loss, which he said was the toughest challenge he faced at Auburn. He met with faculty and students for input, who asked to not cut class offerings but to raise tuition.

Though the university has gained about $7 million back, Gogue said he sees the lack of funding as a pervading issue for years to come. While state governments previously viewed a college education as a "societal good," Gogue said the view has shifted to an "individual good," with states putting the burden of funding on the individual.

Despite these cuts, Goldstein said Gogue's strategic planning has brought the university far.
"Similar efforts by previous administrations were not nearly as effective as under Dr. Gogue," Goldstein said. "His knowledge of every facet of the university's operations is incredible, and he has an impressive command of regional and national trends in higher education."

But Gogue gave credit to those who came before him, like his predecessors Edward Richardson, William Walker and William Muse.

"They would've made good decisions during their time that made it easier during my time," Gogue said. "It was a lot of fun while I was here."

Auburn was a good school before he came, Gogue said; he just worked to not mess it up. One of those areas was the partnership between the university and the city of Auburn.

The two have partnered on numerous road work projects and facilities like the Yarbrough Tennis Center and the soon-to-come performing arts center on South College Street. Last week Gogue met with Auburn Mayor Bill Ham to discuss partnering to alleviate downtown parking congestion.

"I think the key is, the city needs the university and the university needs the city," Gogue said.

One primary challenge he sees for the university's future is managing growth. Like the city, Gogue said there's a "huge demand" by students wanting to attend the university.

"I'd say to carefully grow the way you need to grow is going to be something that has to be looked at as you go forward," Gogue said, adding that he has been in favor of limiting growth and improving the quality of the university.

As he prepares to pass the torch, Gogue left a simple word of advice to incoming president Leath.

"Take care of the kids, and do a great job," Gogue said.
College has had interim leader since September 2015

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Three finalists have been interviewed on campus as part of the search for a new Shelton State Community College president.

Darrell Cain, a vice chancellor of Student Affairs at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis; Andy Clark, who served as a vice provost at Middle Georgia State and vice president at Valdosta State University in Georgia; and Dianne Piper, executive vice president and special counsel for Diversity to Blake, Chavis and Parks, P.C., were interviewed as part of the search which has been ongoing since January, the Alabama Community College System office confirmed.

The system office did not respond by press time to questions about the status of the search.

System Chancellor Jimmy Baker will make a final recommendation to the board of trustees on a candidate to fill the position.

The Myers McCrae Executive Search firm is assisting with the search to fill the position.

An advisory search committee appointed by system trustees and the chancellor assisted with reviewing applicants and conducting interviews.

Interim President Cynthia Cain has led Shelton State since September 2015, following the departure of Andrea Mayfield, who left to become executive director of the Mississippi community college system. Mayfield served just more than a year at Shelton State.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosa-news.com or 722-0209.
The UAB baseball team had two players recognized by Conference USA on Tuesday afternoon. Brewer Hicklen and Thomas Lowery were each tabbed to the All-Conference USA Second Team. It’s the first time either player has received the distinction.

“They’re both great players and I can’t imagine any team in our league wouldn’t want them,” said head coach Brian Shoop. “I think Brewer is one of the best position players in the league. If he was healthy all year, he might’ve been the best player in the league.”

For Hicklen, this honor comes a day after being named to the InTouch Credit Union 2017 C-USA Baseball All-Academic Team for the second straight year. The UAB centerfielder led the team with a .328 average, 43 runs, six triples, eight home runs, 31 RBI, 109 total bases, a .586 slugging percentage, 25 walks, a .422 on-base percentage and a C-USA best 17 stolen bases.

Lowery earns his first All-C-USA honor since being named to the conference’s All-Freshman Team in 2014. The senior had a remarkable season while being tasked with moving from the bullpen to Friday night starter.

Lowery hurled a 9-inning complete game, one-hitter in a 5-0 victory over WKU on March 20 as he needed just 87 pitches to get through 28 batters, one over the minimum. He walked none and tied his career-best with six strikeouts.

Lowery finished the regular season with a 6-4 record, 4.90 ERA, three saves, team-high 54 strikeouts, and walked just 20 batters over 75.1 innings. His six victories all came in C-USA play, as he was one of just four players in the league with six-or-more wins.

The Birmingham native finished his career ranking second in saves (19) and relief appearances (73), third in ERA (3.37), wins (18) and pitching appearances (88), fourth in strikeouts (210), and ninth in innings pitched (232.1).
There have been some impressive streaks in the history of Alabama athletics. Just to name a few:

Nick Saban's football program has been ranked No. 1 in the nation at some point every season since 2008, or nine straight years. That's a national record.

The gymnastics program under long-time coach Sarah Patterson and successor Dana Duckworth has advanced to the NCAA Championships 35 straight years, the second-longest streak in NCAA history, one behind Utah.

Another current streak: The gymnasts have finished in the top six in the nation for 10 straight years, the longest run in the nation.

There's another example of extended excellence that stayed alive Sunday, and it may be the quietest streak in Alabama athletics history. Pat Murphy's softball team beat Minnesota to sweep its NCAA Regional and advance to the Super Regionals for the 13th straight year.

How many other NCAA Division I softball programs have reached 13 straight Super Regionals?
None.

When's the last time Alabama softball didn't reach the Super Regionals?

The last time the NCAA Tournament didn't include a Super Regional, in 2004. That extra round of postseason play was added in 2005. Alabama has reached that round every single year of its existence.

See SCARBINSKY, B3
Murphy's program hasn't just advanced out of the regional round as regularly as other programs put on their cleats. It's now won 34 straight regional games since 2007.

That's a phenomenal postseason run despite the advantage of playing every one of those games at home in front of some of the best softball crowds in the country at the Rhoads House.

This past weekend alone, Alabama had to defeat Minnesota, the No. 1 team in the nation in the final regular-season coaches' poll, not once but twice. There was controversy surrounding No. 16 seed Alabama getting the host spot and Minnesota going unseeded and having to travel, but the Golden Gophers didn't get to Tuscaloosa and roll over.

It took nine innings Saturday before Alabama beat Minnesota 1-0 on a controversial walk-off walk, and it took the Tide throwing its program-tying 26th shutout of the season Sunday to beat the Gophers again 1-0 to win the regional.

The reward for rising to the occasion in yet another regional is a Super Regional trip to meet No. 1 seed Florida in Gainesville.

Winning there won't be easy, but Alabama has won 9 of its 12 Super Regionals.

The Super Regional streak is obviously impressive, but consider this: Alabama's in the NCAA Tournament for the 19th straight year, or every year since Murphy became the head coach.

SEC competition has gotten better and better through the years, with all 13 of the league's softball programs making this year's NCAA Tournament. In-state rival Auburn has ramped up its program considerably since the hire of national championship coach Clint Myers.

The Tigers won their third straight regional Sunday to advance to their third straight Super Regional.

Win there, and Auburn will reach the Women's College World Series for the third straight year, the third time in school history.

Meanwhile, Alabama is two wins away from its fourth straight World Series trip, its sixth visit in seven years and its 12th appearance overall.

The more things change in SEC and NCAA softball, the more Alabama stays the same.

Just last week, Saban talked about the difficulty of getting on top and staying there. He's not the only coach on campus who can speak on that subject with experience.
Tide shuts out Minnesota, wins regional

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

All the University of Alabama softball team had to do to win the Tuscaloosa Regional was beat the No. 1-ranked team in the country.

Twice.

To do that, all the Crimson Tide had to do was score a run.

It did, each time.

Alabama defeated Minnesota, 1-0, on Sunday in front of a crowd of more than 1,900 at Rhoads Stadium to win its 13th straight regional and 15th overall. The Crimson Tide advances to the best-of-three super regional round at Florida, the No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

The victory assured UA (45-16) of remaining the only team in the country to make a super regional in all 13 years since that format was adopted.

Tide that was erased when short-stop Sydney Booker turned a double play in the second.

In the fifth, surprise starter Rachel Bobo made a running, full-layout catch of a foul ball in foul territory down the left-field line for an out to end the inning.

"The defense was great and amazing," Littlejohn said.

"That's the reason I feel like I was effective, because I knew they were going to make the plays behind me. I didn't have any worries."

Minnesota (56-5) began to time her in the sixth. Murphy turned to Osorio, who pitched the final five outs without a hit or a walk, striking out two for the save.

The Gophers managed just five hits with one walk against UA's duo. Alabama didn't fare much better against Minnesota ace Sara Groenewegen (31-4), who yielded five hits without a walk and seven strikeouts.

See TIDE, C3

Online
See more photos of the NCAA Tuscaloosa Regional at www.tuscaloosanews.com.

See TIDE, C3
Murphy saw an opportunity to get a run early, and pounced on it. Senior outfielder Chandler Dare floated a single over first base. Marisa Runyon hit an opposite-field double with two outs.

“I wanted to be up there,” Runyon said. “I wanted the bat in my hand. I was ready to get that first RBI.”

Runyon wasn’t sure it was enough to bring Dare all the way around from first base. Dare beat the relay throw and got under the tag at home plate.

“I didn’t think we’d get many chances, and that was a huge chance with a double in the gap,” Murphy said.

Alabama was seeded 16th, but still drew the Big Ten champions, who were snubbed by the selection committee that seeded the tournament.

“This could have been a super regional game, because it really was the caliber of that round,” Murphy said. “To me, this was one of the most satisfying. I don’t know how many we’ve won, but it’s right up there at the top.”

Minnesota’s coach endorses Alabama’s chances.

“You can’t take away anything from Alabama, they had an unbelievable weekend,” Jessica Allister said. “Those pitchers threw great, they played great defense, they got big hits. That is a good ball club. They’ve got a chance to do some big things.”

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Goff tries to revoke scholarships

Alabama baseball coach informed players their scholarships would not be renewed; NCAA bylaws prohibit schools from such action

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer
University of Alabama

baseball coach Greg Goff informed up to 10 players their scholarships would not be renewed, a violation of NCAA rules, The Tuscaloosa News has learned.

According to NCAA bylaw 15.3.5.2, institutions cannot revoke or reduce a scholarship because of an athlete's ability, performance, physical or mental condition.

According to NCAA bylaw 15.3.4.3.1, an institution may not set forth an athletically related condition that would permit the institution to reduce or cancel a scholarship if the conditions are not satisfied.

UA Director of Athletics Greg Byrne issued a brief statement when contacted about the situation:

"As with any situation, the University of Alabama will follow NCAA guidelines. We are not revoking scholarships," the statement said.

Players were informed of Goff's decision to cut their

See GOFF, C7

GOFF

Continued from C1

scholarships during exit interviews on Monday after UA's season concluded on Saturday with a 3-3 tie at Vanderbilt.

Some draft-eligible players were told they could return and have a roster spot, but were not guaranteed to retain their scholarship money. Some walk-on players, including several who contributed during the season, were told they could try out for next year's team again during practice this coming fall but were not guaranteed to retain their roster spots.

UA athletic department officials became aware of the situation after upset players and parents complained.

Goff met with Byrne on Tuesday about the matter. The coach canceled a scheduled television appearance on WVUA on Tuesday night.

The Crimson Tide finished 19-34-1 overall and 5-24-1 in SEC play in Goff's first campaign. It was the fewest wins by the program since 1980 and the worst conference record by UA since 1994. Alabama finished last in the SEC this season and was not among 12 teams to qualify for the conference tournament this week in Hoover.

Under NCAA bylaw 15.3.4.1, schools can reduce or cancel scholarships in cases where an athlete "renders himself or herself ineligible," or "fraudulently misrepresents any information" on scholarship and financial agreements," or "engages in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary penalty."

Athletes can voluntarily give up their scholarships, but the institution must honor scholarship agreements. In January 2015, NCAA schools passed legislation that required Power 5 conference schools, including Alabama and other SEC schools, to renew scholarships annually regardless of athletic performance. Previously, most scholarships were subject to annual renewal. Schools outside the Power 5 such as Louisiana Tech, Goff's previous stop, are not required to renew scholarships annually.

Staff writer Aaron Suttles contributed to this story.
Alabama basketball back in SEC/Big 12

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

For the first time since the 2013-14 season, the University Alabama men's basketball team will take part in the annual SEC/Big 12 Challenge in the upcoming season.

Alabama will host the Oklahoma Sooners in Coleman Coliseum on Jan. 27, 2018, according to a release from the SEC Office. Alabama will also participate in next year's Challenge as of the 10 SEC teams that participate in the 2018 Challenge will be a part of the 2019 event.

Four of the 10 games will be televised on ESPN, four on ESPN2 and two games will air on ESPNU. Start times and network designations will be announced at a later date.

The Crimson Tide owns a 1-0 record in the annual challenge, with the only game coming in a 76-64 victory over Texas Tech on Nov. 14, 2013.

The other Big 12/SEC Challenge games for the upcoming season include Baylor at Florida, Georgia at Kansas State, Texas Tech at South Carolina, TCU at Vanderbilt, Oklahoma State at Arkansas, Kentucky at West Virginia, Ole Miss at Texas, Tennessee at Iowa State and Texas A&M at Kansas.

The addition of the Oklahoma game adds to an already strong non-conference schedule that includes Memphis, Texas (in Birmingham) and a tournament in Brooklyn, N.Y., that will include Minnesota and Brigham Young. Alabama is still in negotiations for at least one more non-league game — expected to be against a potential Preseason Top 10 opponent — but that game has not been finalized.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Key exits NBA Draft, returns to Tide

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

The University of Alabama men's basketball team put in the final piece of the 2017-18 roster puzzle on Tuesday as rising sophomore Braxton Key announced that he has withdrawn his name from the upcoming NBA Draft.

Key had worked out for a possibility of entering into a professional career after leading Alabama in scoring last season, but did not retain an agent. He said via a UA release on Tuesday that he had finalized his decision on Monday morning when he filed the necessary paperwork to withdraw with the NBA office.

A 2017 SEC All-Freshman team selection, Key also led the team in minutes played (29.8 mpg), while ranking second in assists (2.5 apg) and rebounding (5.7 rpg).

"I spoke to coach Avery Johnson just over a week ago and informed him of my decision to withdraw my name from the NBA Draft and return to the University of Alabama for my sophomore season," Key said in a UA graphic release. "I made that official when I sent my paperwork to the NBA league office Monday morning. I want to express my appreciation to my teammates, Coach Johnson and the entire coaching staff for giving me their full support while I went through this process. I am excited for the future of the Alabama basketball program and looking forward to getting to work as we prepare for next season. Roll Tide and Buckle Up!"

With the return of Key, the Crimson Tide will return four starters from last season's 19-15 squad that reached the National Invitation Tournament. In addition, Alabama welcomes the nation's fifth-ranked recruiting class for the 2017-18 campaign, while sophomore transfer Daniel Giddens, who transferred from Ohio State prior to the 2016-17 season, will be eligible to suit up for the Crimson Tide this year after sitting out last year due to NCAA transfer rules.

All UA players for the upcoming season are expected to report for summer workouts by Memorial Day. Transfer Tevin Mack, who committed to UA last week and will sit out the upcoming season, is expected to report later this summer.

Reach Cecil Hurt at cecil@tidesports.com or 205-722-0225.
Chandler Taylor was named second-team All-SEC

By Ben Jones
Sports Writer

Sophomore outfielder Chandler Taylor was named a second-team All-SEC selection, the league office announced on Monday. Taylor was Alabama's lone representative on the two all-conference teams and the freshman All-SEC team.

Taylor finished the year batting .282, including .295 in SEC play while finishing third in the conference with 16 home runs. He led Alabama with 34 RBIs and 113 total bases. He also led the team with 32 walks, a .601 slugging percentage and was third with a .383 on-base percentage. Taylor also had three outfield assists.

He was named SEC player of the week this season after Alabama's sweep of Auburn. He was 7 for 14 with three home runs, two doubles, three walks, three RBIs and five runs scored to lead the team in every offensive category.

Taylor was named to the freshman All-SEC team last year. He is eligible to be chosen in June's MLB draft.

Alabama finished the season 19-20-1 and 5-24-1 in conference play. The Crimson Tide did not qualify for this week's SEC tournament.
Under new O.C. Brian Daboll, will Alabama turn to play that beat them last season?

Rainer Sabin  rsabin@al.com

In a flash, a perfect season was dashed and a championship was lost. The 2-yard catch by Clemson’s Hunter Renfrow with one second remaining in the CFP national title game last January will forever be remembered not only for its significance but for the way it unfolded.

Renfrow ran unguarded in the flat after Alabama cornerback Marlon Humphrey was obstructed by Artavis Scott, leading to the shocking denouement for the Crimson Tide.

"It’s a situation we didn’t play very well, we didn’t coach very well," Alabama coach Nick Saban said last week. "The way you pass off and different things you get close to the goal line is a little bit different. When things don’t work, you always wish you did them a different way and we certainly do in that game."

The play—fittingly named Orange Crush—involved the use of a pick, or to put it more mildly, a rub route. It’s a concept conjured up to defeat man coverage and create separation for receivers in congested areas of the field like the red zone.

It usually materializes out of bunch formations and sets with three-by-one or two-by-two looks that allow for route combinations, such as the slant-flat composite that produced the winning score for Clemson. It also stretches the bounds of legality, as Alabama’s defensive backs will attest.

After all, blocking more than a yard downfield before a pass is thrown should draw a flag for pass interference. The nebulous nature of rub routes and the confusion they create have sparked the same visceral reactions as the run-pass options that have drawn Saban’s ire.

But they are effective because of the pressure they put on a defense.

And in the pro game, they have become commonplace.

The two teams most associated with pick plays are the New England Patriots and the Peyton Manning-era Denver Broncos. Their offenses were masterminded by two Saban disciples, Josh McDaniels and Adam Gase.

McDaniels’ Denver teams were low-level grunts on Saban’s Michigan State staff in 1999. So too was Alabama’s new offensive coordinator, Brian Daboll.

When Daboll was hired away from the Patriots back in February, one of his former players with the New York Jets, Chad Pennington, made a prediction.

"Alabama fans will at least know that they will have pick plays in their offense," he said.
with a laugh. "So, they can serve up the same
dose of medicine."

In the past, Saban says they have done just
that and "it's been quite successful."

And with Alabama's new offensive coor-
dinator, Crimson Tide radio analyst and for-
mer NFL general manager Phil Savage said he
wouldn't be surprised to see rub routes used
at a higher frequency.

Pointing to Daboll, Savage said, "I would
think because of his background, you're
going to have bunch patterns and stacked
receivers. The one thing about it is even
when you show the capacity to do it then
the other team has got to get ready for it —
those two, three-receiver routes. You have
one up, one out, one in. Sometimes there is
some other sort of variety. Essentially they
burst out of there and depending on cover-
age, you usually have a fairly easy option to
take. It usually cleans up the picture for the
quarterback."

At the same time, it only muddies it for
a defense, which often tries to combat rub
routes by switching the coverage assign-
ments of individual players: during the
course of a play. Being disciplined and
aware is critical in order to negate the effect
of these offensive machinations. It’s why
Alabama linebacker Keith Holcombe said
the Tide "worked on stuff like that" in the
spring.

Of course, in the A-Day game last month
the Tide kept it pretty basic. On one of the
few occasions when Alabama offered a clue,
it used a hi-lo concept in which freshman
Mac Jones debated whether to throw a quick
out or deliver a more challenging pass to a
receiver tracing a corner route as the quarter-
back assessed his options to his left. Last sea-
son, Jalen Hurts' progressions were stream-
lined in a similar fashion, as Saban explained
last November.

"That's one of the things that we think
about," Saban said then. "Other times you're
just trying to limit the side of the field he's
going to throw the ball to, he's reading some
kind of a hi-lo, which is a little bit easier for
him to do."

By developing levels for multiple patterns,
Daboll can create opportunities for rubs
with criss-crossing routes. The Patriots did
this often, with one receiver running from
one side to the other near the line of scrim-
mage and another wideout maneuvering the
opposite direction at a greater depth, so that
they would eventually converge on the same
patch of turf.

"New England's stuff is very con-
cept-driven so the quarterbacks will under-
stand concepts for each side of the field," Pennington said. "There will be certain
concepts and those concepts have certain
rules and they have always been very good
about the spacing of their routes and mak-
ing sure that everything has a rhyme and
reason."

Asked specifically if the Tide has incorpo-
rated the Patriots' pick-play wrinkles since
Daboll's arrival, receiver Calvin Ridley said.,
"Kind of. We do a little similar things to what
they did."

It only makes sense, according to Penning-
ton.
As the ex-NFL quarterback explained, rub
routes are effective in specific situations and
help reduce a defense's leverage or mitigate
it altogether.

"When you see a lot of press, man-to-man
coverage, that's only the smart thing to do," he said.

The Tide knows. A pick play cost Alabama
its second consecutive national title and has
left Nick Saban ruing a defeat that remains
at the forefront of his mind. But with Daboll
on board, the Tide's kryptonite could become
one of its weapons.

What killed Alabama's bid for perfection
in the final seconds of the 2016 season could
make it stronger this year.
All-Bryant team

With so many all-time greats to choose from, several All-Americans were bound to be left off.

Of the several great quarterbacks to play for Bear Bryant at Alabama, AL.com selected Ken Stabler as his best. *File*

Kevin Scarbinsky
kscarbinsky@al.com

How do you put a quarter century full of great players under one head coach at one college football program into perspective 35 years later?

How do you choose an All-Bryant team of 25 players when Bear Bryant spent 25 years as the iconic head football coach at Alabama?

Perhaps there's no better summation than this: Twenty of the 25 players AL.com chose for our All-Bryant team were named first-team All-American at least once in their college careers.

That means 18 other Alabama players who were named first-team All-American under Bryant did not make our team.

Joe Namath isn’t our quarterback. Ray Perkins isn’t one of our wide receivers. Sylvester Croom isn’t our center.

They all received serious consideration from our staff members who voted, but each of them was beaten out by another former first-team All-American.

Hey, Bryant alumni are a big tent and a tough crowd.

The center position alone produced four first-team All-Americans under Bryant: Paul Crane in 1965, Jim Krapf in 1972, Croom in 1974 and Dwight Stephenson in 1979. We could choose only one, and we went with Stephenson.

Seven of Bryant’s Alabama players have been named to the College Football Hall of Fame. All seven — guard John Hannah, linebackers Lee Roy Jordan and Woodrow Lowe, defensive tackle Marty Lyons, running back Johnny Musso, tackle Billy Neighbors and tight end Ozzie Newsome — made our team.

Those choices were no-brainers.

As legend has it, Jordan inspired this famous Bryant quote: “If they stay in bounds, ol’ Lee Roy will get ’em.” The early standard at linebacker in the Bryant era, Jordan’s on another short list on our All-Bryant team. Of our 25 selections, only eight played their entire college careers before 1970.

That group: Jordan and safety Bobby Johns on defense; quarterback Ken Stabler, wide receiver Dennis Homan, tackles Neighbors and Cecil Dowdy and guard Wayne Freeman on offense; and kicker David Ray.

*See Scarbinsky, BS*
It's only natural that our choices would lean heavily toward the 1970s, or the latter half of Bryant's Alabama tenure. It's easier to remember players from that decade than from the more-distant 1960s, except for rare big-name exceptions such as Stabler and Jordan.

Bryant, in case you'd forgotten, won three national championships in the '60s (1961, 1964 and 1965) and three more in the '70s (1973, 1978 and 1979). He won three with a balanced offense and three with the run-heavy wishbone. He won three before integration and three afterward.

Our All-Bryant team reflects the incredible diversity of his career in every possible way. One of our guards, the 1964 All-American Freeman, stood 6-feet tall and weighed 192 pounds. Our other guard, the 1971 and 1972 All-American Hannah, went 6-3, 273 less than a decade later.

Despite the changing rules and changing times, one thing remained the same throughout that historic quarter century from 1958-82. Bryant won a lot of football games, and he did it with a lot of special players.

It was almost as difficult for us to separate them as it was for opponents to beat them.
When Colleges Dangle Money to Lure Students Who Ignored Them

By: Ron Lieber

In the minds of parents and teenagers going through the college application process, May 1 is a magic date. At that point, you’ve sent in a deposit, bought a sticker for your car window and posted your choice on social media.

This year, however, scores of teenagers had something unexpected happen next: During the first week in May, they received text messages or emails from schools that had accepted them but had not heard back. The messages all hinted at a particular question: Might a larger discount prompt you to come here after all?

Hampshire College, Elizabethtown College, Washington & Jefferson College and Ursinus College, all private liberal arts schools, did this sort of outreach in recent weeks, as did Lawrence University, and perhaps others. For some students, such notes can be a dream come true if they make their first-choice college more affordable.

These invitations raise ethical questions in higher education: Schools are not supposed to dangle discounts in front of people who have committed to other institutions. Liberal arts colleges with flexible discounting policies may be tempted to skirt that line, given that families might worry about the value of their programs in the workplace. But late communications to applicants about financial aid, even without mentioning dollar amounts, can seem like flat-out poaching to the schools that have already admitted those students.

“In just trying to talk about how competitive and cutthroat this business is right now, this has brought it up to another level that I have never seen before,” said James A. Troha, the president of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa. “May 1, is that even the date anymore?”

The upheaval that comes with reopening the college decision is rough on teenagers as well as their parents, who would have to revisit difficult financial choices and conversations all over again. Suddenly, a first-choice school may be almost within reach but still not quite affordable.

The injection of money into a discussion thought to be over makes an emotional situation even more fraught. “Talking about the affordability piece with the student in the room, that was never done much until five years ago,” said Kristina L. Dooley, founder of Estrela Consulting in Hudson, Ohio, a group that advises clients on college decisions. Now that applicants, even in wealthier families, know how much of a stretch college might be, it can weigh them down with guilt. “I’m hearing it more and more,” Ms. Dooley said.

For a portion of the applicant pool, May 1 has not been the date for some time. Many colleges maintain wait lists. Schools may draw from that list for months after the deadline without anyone accusing them of playing dirty.

And for all the attention families devote to the most competitive institutions, plenty more have space available through summer and invite qualified students to apply. The National Association
for College Admission Counseling, or Nacac, publishes a list each year, and this year’s lineup includes household names like Arizona State and Penn State.
Higher education’s Macy’s problem

By: Jeffrey J. Selingo

Macy’s and the iconic regional department store chains that the company acquired over the years—Kaufmann’s, Hecht’s, Robinsons-May—were once the crown jewels of downtown shopping districts and the key anchors of bustling malls across the country. They were destinations for shoppers who wanted to browse extensive housewares departments, find the latest fashions, or have a leisurely afternoon lunch.

But now Macy’s is struggling along with much of the retail sector. After disappointing sales during the holiday season last year, Macy’s said it was slashing 4,800 jobs and closing 40 stores. Sears and J.C. Penney announced store closings as well, leaving big empty spaces in America’s malls, a third of which are predicted to close in the decade ahead.

A big part of the Macy’s problem is that to get more people through its doors in recent years it turned itself into a discount store. Type Macy’s into Google and “coupons” returns as one of the top hits. Those ubiquitous coupons were coupled with constant sales to boost revenue from quarter to quarter. When consumers walk into Macy’s and most other retailers these days they never expect to pay full price for any product in the store.

The same is increasingly true of college tuition as well: few students and parents expect to pay the published sticker price listed on a college’s website. This week we learned that the tuition discount rate for first-time, full-time freshmen hit a record 49.1 percent, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers. Unlike Macy’s, few colleges hoist advertisements for sales at their entrances, but higher education is essentially following the same failed playbook of the retail sector by discounting the product so deeply, and for so many people.

As Mike Coyne, vice president for finance and administration at Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania told me, tuition discounting is not a strategy, but “a symptom of demographics and personal finances.”

First, there are fewer high school graduates in the Midwest and Northeast, where many tuition-dependent small colleges are located. Second, median per-capita income in the United States, when adjusted for inflation, has been essentially flat since 2000. The typical American family makes slightly less than a typical family did 15 years ago.

“There are parents in New Jersey and elsewhere who used to make $120,000, $150,000, and whose jobs were downsized in restructuring or eliminated because of automation,” Coyne said. “Those jobs used to pay for college tuition.”

While this fall’s incoming class at Susquehanna surpassed its enrollment goal of 650 freshmen, it cost the university a percentage point higher on its discount rate than it had planned.

See next page
Still, Coyne feels fortunate to have hit the enrollment goal because “there’s nothing worse than empty beds.” After all, even students with deep tuition discounts bring in some revenue. Some 10 percent of private colleges and nearly as many public colleges have missed their enrollment goals in recent years, according to annual surveys by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Compared to other schools right now, Coyne said he is satisfied with the university’s financial standing. But like other higher education financial officers, when he looks back at the trends of the past 10 years he sees worrisome signs for the future. The discount rate for higher education overall has been growing. Earlier this decade it was closer to 40 percent. A decade ago it was in the mid-30s. And 20 years ago, the discount rate at most colleges was south of 25 percent.

What that means is that even as the sticker price of college increases year after year—the tuition figure that gets all the attention from the public—schools are actually bringing in the same or even less in actual revenue after grant aid is subtracted from a student’s tuition bill. Like any business, a college needs cash on hand to pay employees, bills, and debts, and most of all, maintain the campus and invest in the future.

Continuing to discount a product more and more every year eventually leads to the death spiral that many retailers find themselves in right now. So does that mean higher education will follow the retail sector and witness a rash of closures and mergers in the coming years? It’s unlikely given the political realities and government subsidies. Just look at how difficult it was to close tiny Sweet Briar College in Virginia (and ultimately unsuccessful).

Rather, this latest discounting study “suggests that we are nearing the end of solutions based on pricing for higher education,” said Rick Staisloff, founder of rpk Group, a consulting firm, and a former vice president for finance and administration at what is now known as Notre Dame of Maryland University. Colleges now need to focus on the other side of the equation—cutting the cost of educating students. “My experience across institutions nationally is that we have not focused sufficient attention on cost,” he said.

Higher education has never been good at controlling costs. Last decade, construction cranes were ubiquitous on college and university campuses to build ever more luxurious residence halls, recreation centers, hi-tech classrooms, and state-of-the-art research facilities. For many institutions, much of that construction was financed by debt. The amount of debt taken on by institutions between 2000 and 2012 nearly doubled, to more than $300 billion.

As Larry Bacow, the former president of Tufts University, told me, there is “no natural constituency” for cost control on campuses. “Universities compete by advertising their inefficiencies—small classes, lots of hands-on experiences, the intimacy of the student experience,” he said. “We tell students to come here because we’re essentially the most labor-intensive provider.”
Colleges and universities with large endowments can afford to be inefficient if they believe it provides a better student experience. But fewer than 100 universities in the United States have endowments of more than $1 billion. For all others, financial and demographic realities will require them to adopt new approaches to delivering courses and different choices about how to spend their money—whether on the latest campus amenities or on reducing costs. If not, many colleges and universities risk following Macy’s and other retailers in the race to offer their products next to free.