DECEMBER 1, 2017

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OUR VIEW

West Alabama poised for continued growth, if efforts are aligned

One of the most impactful campaign lines in recent memory was Bill Clinton’s succinct “it’s the economy, stupid” aimed at sitting President George H.W. Bush in 1992. With the nation reeling in a recession, political strategist James Carville coined the term to impress upon voters that change was needed. It resonated and Clinton defeated Bush.

While social issues might rile the base on the far right and the far left, most people are apt to look at their own economic well-being when deciding whom to vote for in local, state and national elections. And while the economy isn’t likely to be the deciding factor in the most publicized Alabama election in several years — the state’s current special U.S. Senate election — it will play a significant role in future elections.

Of course, the economic outlook could change significantly between now and the next series of elections, but our area is on sound footing. Good things are happening in West Alabama. While they might not command the same attention as the sex-fueled headlines of the special Senate election, they are going to have a greater impact on the lives of the people who call this area home than anything that Roy Moore or Doug Jones will be able to accomplish in a shortened three-year stint in office.

Just Wednesday, SAS Automotive Systems, a German automotive supplier, announced it will set up shop at Mercedes-Benz U.S. International in Vance, where it will create 170 jobs and contribute to production of the plant’s next generation of sport utility vehicles. That follows Mercedes’ announcement in September that it will invest another $1 billion in its local operations, creating 600 jobs and bringing the company’s total investment in MBUSI to nearly $6 billion over the past 25 years.

All of this is happening as local officials grapple with reshaping the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, where Dara Longgrear retired last month after 31 years of steady leadership as executive director. Jo Bonner was tapped Wednesday to serve as interim executive director as the effort to restructure the organization gets under way. That’s great news. We can think of no one better suited for that role. Bonner, who formerly served the state in the U.S. House of Representatives, is the vice chancellor for economic development at the University of Alabama. He is uniquely qualified to keep things moving in the right direction at the IDA.

Meanwhile, Claude Edwards, chairman of the IDA board of directors, is overseeing the restructuring, with the goal of ensuring the organization is prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing global marketplace.

Workforce development will have to be at the center of any successful effort. With a strong higher education base, including a world-class university, Stillman College and Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, this region is in a great position to transition to a knowledge-based economy. But all efforts will have to be aligned to take advantage of the situation. Bonner’s appointment, albeit temporary, signals that is already happening.
TCIDA appoints interim director

Jo Bonner also works for the University of Alabama

By Stephen Dethrage
Staff Writer

The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority has appointed Jo Bonner to serve as its interim executive director, the agency announced Wednesday afternoon.

Bonner currently serves as the vice chancellor for economic development at the University of Alabama and represented the Yellowhammer State in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2003 until 2013. He is standing in at the TCIDA to fill the void created when longtime executive director Dara Longgrear retired earlier this month.

"TCIDA appreciates Jo assisting us with this transition," Claude Edwards, chairman of the TCIDA, said in a news release. "His experience and knowledge will allow us to continue with our ongoing efforts to create new, quality jobs for the citizens of Tuscaloosa County while positively contributing to our activities as we search for a new executive director."

Edwards said the TCIDA board of directors will conduct the search for Longgrear's permanent replacement in the coming months.
Disenchanted voters have a third option in U.S. Senate race

He has no campaign apparatus, no big money backers and no support from the state or national Republican Party. He doesn’t even have his name on the ballot. And he has no reasonable chance of winning.

But Lee Busby does have the right to ask for your vote. The Tuscaloosa sculptor and retired Marine also makes a good point that many Alabama voters don’t like either option on the ballot in the Dec. 12 special election for the U.S. Senate.

“I think there are a lot of people out there in Alabama who are like me and don’t feel that either of these candidates represent them,” Busby said earlier this week, explaining why he decided to launch a write-in campaign for the seat.

Busby believes his 31 years as a Marine who has served in Iraq and as vice chief of staff for former Lt. Gen. John Kelly, now President Donald Trump’s chief of staff, has prepared him well for the Senate. He also believes positioning himself as a moderate Republican who is a centrist on social issues and a fiscal conservative makes him a viable option in this race.

“One of the reasons I decided to do this is the far left and the far right flanks is where everybody is, and I think there is room to drive straight up the middle,” Busby said.

Of course, he’s right. Roy Moore, the Republican nominee, is embattled after accusations of sexual misconduct. His Democratic opponent, Doug Jones, is being branded as too liberal for Alabama voters. A third option on the ballot would be viable, but state law doesn’t allow for that this late in the game.

As it stands, the most likely scenario is that whatever votes Busby gets as a write-in candidate will be siphoned from Moore, not Jones. The accusations against Moore, particularly that he had sexual contact with a girl who was 14 when he was in his 30s, are disturbing. And Moore’s failure to offer a plausible denial or explanation is sure to weigh heavily on those Republicans who simply cannot bring themselves to vote for a Democrat. Busby gives them an option.

Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, brought this upon the Alabama GOP. When he warned political operatives and potential candidates that if they ran or worked against Luther Strange in the Republican primary he would destroy them, he cleared the field of any other viable candidacy. Only Mo Brooks dared to challenge McConnell, and Brooks lost. A better candidate probably would have beaten Moore. Strange was damaged goods after accepting the appointment to the Senate from then-Gov. Robert Bentley when, as attorney general, he should have been investigating Bentley. After Alabama Republicans rejected Strange and chose Moore, McConnell denounced Moore.

It’s a shame Strange traded his integrity for a temporary seat in the U.S. Senate. It’s a shame McConnell’s strong-arm efforts without regard for the voters resulted in Moore winning the GOP nomination. It’s a shame Busby’s name won’t be on the ballot instead.
Boeing doubts that rival
Bombardier's Mobile plant
will ever get built

Boeing, meanwhile, entered two separate filings. One dated Nov. 6 played up the estimated 400 to 500 direct jobs that would be provided by the Mobile assembly line, along with a range of other positive economic impacts. In the other, dated Nov. 13, Bombardier argued that it would be improper to consider a partnership that hadn't yet been finalized, and that, if necessary, the Airbus-Bombardier alliance could be subjected to administrative review in the future.

The bad news for Mobile is that the court filings suggest any new assembly line is years down the road, and quite likely will face a separate legal challenge. All parties seem to agree that it'll be well into 2018 before the Airbus-Bombardier partnership even gets regulatory approval.

In its Nov. 13 filing, Boeing portrayed the partnership as an unimpressive. Until the deal actually closes, Boeing says, "we will not know the nature or extent of the work, if any, that the C Series Aircraft Limited Partnership ("CSALP") and its partners might decide to perform in Mobile. It would take additional time — likely, years — to implement that decision. In other words, it would be many months to years from now before any C Series work could possibly be done in Mobile at all."

The Boeing filing continued, "Bombardier and Airbus are extremely unlikely ever to actually establish a C Series assembly line in Alabama. Such plans would make no economic sense."

Boeing goes on to argue that the only reason for building the assembly line would be to circumvent tariffs. "But even as a circumvention scheme, this will fail," it said, maintaining that the tariffs should apply to any imported components used in domestic assembly.

"NEVER MATERIALIZE"

Boeing's Nov. 13 filing repeatedly challenged the idea that the Mobile plant will get built. "Simply put, absent antidumping and countervailing duty orders, the purported plan to assemble the C Series in the United States will never materialize."

In its Novem­
ber 6, 2017 factual submission, Bombardier submitted various estimates of the number of U.S. jobs and investment that would result from the proposed transaction with Airbus. These estimates are pure fiction."

In the high-stakes dispute, Boeing has a lock on tart language. The Flight Global newsletter quotes a Delta Airlines brief in the case in which the company writes Boeing, "In Boeing's view, any action would be a potential form of evasion... Modify a prosecution agreement — evasion. Look at options to acquire a 109-seat aircraft that the U.S. industry does not currently produce — evasion. Support expansion of the U.S. aerospace industry and competition in the service of customers — evasion."

A Business Insider analysis from May suggests a historical motivation for Boeing's aggressive stance: It simply doesn't want Bombardier to become another Airbus. Boeing fears a repeat of strategic missteps that made it easier for Toulouse, France-based Airbus to become a heavyweight competitor over the last 40 years. "It's a crucial entry market," one Business insider source said of Boeing's trade complaint about the C Series. "This is the case Boeing might have brought against Airbus 40 years ago. Not taking action at the start led to consequences."
Bell leaving with 'head held high'

Erin Edgemon  eedgemon@al.com

Outgoing Birmingham Mayor William Bell on Tuesday said he will let the history books tell the story of his legacy on the Magic City.

"When I look back over the history of my service to this city, I can only say it has been one of great pleasure, one of deepest respect and humility for everyone who walked through these doors — both elected and those who came to seek help or guidance from the city government," Bell said.

Bell addressed the City Council at the body's last meeting before he leaves office.

Bell said he walked into city hall 40 years ago with his head held high and "I will walk out with my head held high."

He thanked city employees, council members and the public. Bell also shared a few words of advice for city councilors.

Mayor-elect Randall Woodfin, who beat Bell in an Oct. 3 runoff, will be sworn into office at noon Tuesday.

Council President Pro Tem Jay Roberson and other councilors took turns thanking Bell for his 40 years of service to the city.

"Birmingham is moving forward because of the vision of Mayor Bell and his leadership as mayor of this city," Roberson said. 

"Nobody in this council chamber can tell me today that they have seen Birmingham progress and be as prosperous as it is today."

The body passed a resolution of appreciation to the outgoing mayor.

Bell began his speech by reflecting on when he was first elected to City Council in 1979. He became emotional as he told the story of what his father said to him that election night.

"He said, 'I gave you your name, but only you can give your word. Keep them both clean.' And, that stayed with me all these many years," Bell said.

Bell said he considered city employees his co-workers. He thanked them for their commitment and great work.

"I want to thank the public who keep you on your toes," he said. "They can lift you up, and they can tear you down. They can pat you on the back when they think you are doing good, then also let you know when they think you are not doing well."

Bell told city councilors that controversy can follow any decision they make, and there's no manual to being an elected official.

"You have to find your own way," Bell said. "You have to follow your own path to serving the people who voted for you."

Bell said he's spoken to Woodfin on several occasions, and he wishes him "the best success."

"I indicated that I am ready, willing and able to assist him in any need he may have in the future," Bell said.

Looking back over his seven years as mayor and 40 years in public service, Bell said he's thankful he was able to make a difference.

"I love you, Birmingham," he said. "There is nothing you can do about it."

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Former UA music teacher sentenced on child porn charges

By: Stephanie Taylor

A former University of Alabama music professor has been sentenced to serve six years in prison for possessing child pornography.

Federal prosecutors charged Nikos Pappas, 41, with possessing and receiving child pornography in May. The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Birmingham said 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 July press release sent when Pappas pleaded guilty.

Pappas was a music professor at the University of Alabama, who was placed on leave when the allegations surfaced in September 2016 and fired the following May.

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.

Birmingham attorney Tommy Spina asked U.S. District Court Judge Scott Coogler to consider handing down a 60-month sentence, according to court records.

Several friends and family members wrote letters to the judge, saying Pappas has undergone counseling and understands the seriousness of the crime.

Spina wrote in a sentencing document that Pappas only received the images, saying he did not create, distribute or pay for any of them.

“If any person deserves a second chance in life, Nikos would be high on my list,” one friend who said she has known Pappas since 2004 wrote. “He has much to offer and has expressed his sorrow for his behavior and has said that the counseling that he is now getting is much needed, and something that he knew he needed, but was afraid to seek. I do hope that you will see fit to consider him for leniency and mercy in your sentencing.”

Pappas was sentenced to serve 72 months in prison and remain on supervised probation for the rest of his life.
Hostage-taker sentenced to 20 years

Tuscaloosa man tried to rob credit union earlier this year

By Jason Morton  
Staff Writer

The man who attempted to rob a branch of the Alabama Credit Union earlier this year has been sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Cedrick Lamar

Collins, 19, was sentenced Wednesday for the attempted robbery and hostage-taking that occurred in January, federal authorities said. Collins, then 18, took 11 employees hostage at the credit union near the University of Alabama campus during a tense standoff.

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with police that ended two hours later after heavily armed officers stormed the building.

Collins pleaded guilty in August to trying to rob the credit union on Paul W. Bryant Drive before it opened that morning, but University of Alabama Police Department officers arrived before he was able to exit the building.

All of the hostages were freed unharmed and safe, police said.

Collins' plea this summer was to one count of robbing a federally-insured bank, the Alabama Credit Union, and to one count of taking hostages during the commission of the bank robbery. He could have faced 20 years in federal prison for the robbery and at least 10 years for taking hostages.

U.S. District Court Judge L. Scott Coogler sentenced Collins to 20 years in prison Wednesday and ordered him to serve five years of supervised release following his prison term.

"This defendant threatened and endangered the lives of 11 people as he put them between himself and armed police," said U.S. Attorney Jay Town, in a news release announcing the sentencing. "The SWAT teams from the Tuscaloosa police and Tuscaloosa Sheriff's Department did a superb job of stopping the bank robbery, arresting the robber, and recovering all the hostages unharmed."

One of the bank employees taken hostage during the robbery testified at Wednesday's sentencing hearing about how Collins put them all in fear for their lives.

During the ordeal, Collins moved the hostages throughout the building, brandishing a weapon that later turned out to be a BB gun and, at one point, holding it to her head, the unnamed employee said.

"Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Tuscaloosa Sheriff's Office and the Tuscaloosa Police Department, this potentially deadly situation was resolved without injury," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Johnnie Sharp Jr. "The sentence handed down (Wednesday) will give Collins plenty of time to reflect on his dangerous actions."

According to court records, the University of Alabama Police Department received a call concerning suspicious activity at the credit union at about 8:30 a.m. on Jan. 17.

As SWAT teams from the Tuscaloosa Police Department and Tuscaloosa Sheriff's Department arrived on the scene, Collins had taken a number of bank employees hostage after demanding money. Officers attempted to enter the bank and encountered Collins in the stairwell with a hostage in front of him.

Collins threatened to start shooting unless law enforcement moved back, officials said. Officers later entered the bank and safely secured Collins, without any hostages being injured.

The hostages were taken to Bryant Conference Center to speak with police and later meet with family members who had been waiting for word in the surrounding parking lots.

Mayor Walt Maddox spoke with the hostages' families before he visited the scene, wearing a bullet-proof vest.

"One thing I could pledge to them, without any doubt, was that the men and women involved in this operation would make sure that their loved ones could come home safely," Maddox said at the time. "They kept that promise under extraordinary conditions."

Before the robbery attempt and standoff, Collins was well-known to police.

He was charged in 2015 with the rape and robbery of a woman he's accused of kidnapping from the University Mall parking lot.

At the time of the robbery, there was an active warrant to arrest Collins for violating bond conditions on the 2015 rape, robbery and kidnapping charges, according to the Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office website.

A woman told police on Black Friday in 2015 that a man approached her at 7:30 a.m. that day and asked to use her cellphone. She said that she agreed, and that he got into her vehicle before threatening her with a gun and forcing her to drive to an ATM.

She told police that he later drove her to an abandoned property off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Circuit Court records in those cases have been marked confidential, so it was unclear how long Collins has been free on bond or why the warrants had been issued.

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0200.
UA student death misattributed to brain condition

By Jessa Reid Bolling | Staff Reporter

The University of Alabama tragically lost one of its students last month. Alli Brodie, an 18-year-old freshman, was hit in the head with a soccer ball, which triggered a brain bleed. Following the loss, it was widely reported that arteriovenous malformation (AVM) worsened her injury. AVM is a condition where abnormal blood vessels in the brain tangle with connecting veins, disrupting blood flow.

Though Brodie's AVM was a misdiagnosis, those familiar with AVM say it is an important condition for students to be aware of.

Erin Hudson, a neurosurgical nurse at a neurological institute in Phoenix, Arizona, has encountered many cases of brain bleeds from various causes and assisted in operations for such patients.

"AVM is different from some- 
aneurysm in that AVM is a disruption between cap- 
ili arteries and veins that we go in and usually 
with a clip to stop the flow," Hudson said. "With an 
' s more of a weakness that can rupture, so it that condition has that can rupture.

The final prognosis suggested that there was not an AVM at all. It was a misdiagnosis early in the process.

"The final prognosis was not an AVM."

Brodie's mother Cindy has since clarified that the final prognosis was not an AVM.

"The final prognosis suggested that there was not an AVM at all," she said in a Facebook message to a Crimson White reporter. "It was a misdiagnosis early in the process.

After two surgeries and weeks in a coma, Brodie died from complications from pneumonia.

Jillian DeFazio, a mother of two from Georgia, is a survivor of an AVM rupture that caused a brain bleed while she was driving her daughter to school.

"The only way I can explain that feeling is that it felt like my head was having a contraction," DeFazio said. "I was able to drop my girls off at school and I kissed them goodbye like I never kissed them before and called my husband and told him, 'Don't leave for work, there's something wrong.'"

DeFazio managed to get herself home, but she said she doesn't remember the rest of that day. By the afternoon, her condition had worsened and her husband took her to the hospital. She then underwent a procedure to clip her AVM, but the location of the malformation was near the speech center of the brain and would risk losing DeFazio's ability to speak.

After months of observation, she was given radiation treatments to her brain to kill off the AVM.

Looking back, DeFazio said that she noticed some odd things that could have been related to the AVM, such as sporadic headaches and some fainting spells before the rupture. However, DeFazio saw these as common things that many people experience for any number of reasons, so she didn't see them as a warning sign of a brain malformation.

Now she urges people who have noticed anything uncommon occurring with their body or those who experienced physical trauma to seek medical attention immediately.

"Had I gotten checked out right when those symptoms happened and not waited, the problem would have been found sooner and been fixed and maybe could have stopped the bleed from ever happening," DeFazio said. "So, don't hesitate to get checked out. Your life can depend on it. I consider myself very lucky and unfortunately, for everyone who experiences something like this, not everyone can say that."
Group seeks iPod donations

UA students are studying link between music, memory

Staff report

A group at the University of Alabama needs donations of iPods and iTunes gift cards for a project involving music and Alzheimer's patients.

Music and Memory Tuscaloosa will be collecting the items from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Thursday at Ferguson Center on the UA campus.

About 20 UA students are involved in the group. The group brings personalized music into the lives of Alzheimer's patients, who, through familiar music, have shown tremendous recall, according to research cited by the national chapter, musicandmemory.org.

"Alzheimer's runs in my family, and I've seen my loved ones suffer from the disease before my very eyes," said Sarah Beth Loper, UA junior and chapter president. "One thing that never failed was their love for music. Both of my great-grandparents had Alzheimer's and dementia, and even though they couldn't remember anybody's name or face, they could remember every word to the hymns that they sang in church. And I would watch them smile as though they came back to life. I wanted to take care of people like my great-grandparents and bring joy back to those who might've forgotten what it's like to feel joy."

Music and Memory Tuscaloosa is also raising money to help Capstone Village become the first certified Music and Memory nursing home in Tuscaloosa.

For more information, visit the Music and Memory Tuscaloosa page on Facebook.
UA student killed in car accident

Crash involved a wrong-way driver on Interstate 459

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

A University of Alabama student from Saudi Arabia was one of the three people killed in a crash involving a wrong-way driver on Interstate 459 last week.

Mahdi Hashem Alhashem, 21, was one of the passengers in a truck that was struck head-on by a woman driving the wrong direction near Morgan Road in Bessemer, according to the Jefferson County Coroner's Office. The other passenger who was killed has been identified as Linh LeMy Nguyen, 28, of Vietnam. She was a student at Louisiana Tech University.

Bessemer Police said Norma Esperanza Flores, 44, was driving a 2014 Toyota Camry that struck the 2018 Chevrolet Silverado head-on near the 2 mile marker of the interstate. She was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the pickup, also a UA student, was treated for injuries at UAB Hospital in Birmingham.

One of the students died at the crash site, while the other was taken to UAB and later pronounced dead.

Bessemer police said the crash happened around 1 a.m. Nov. 24. Motorists had called 911 to report someone driving north in the southbound lanes of the interstate, but officers were unable to reach her before the crash occurred.

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

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

It only took 10 days for the University of Alabama’s Million Dollar Band to raise 90 percent of funds needed to buy new instruments.

The effort is the first project for UA Crowdfunding, an online fundraising platform for groups at UA. With more than 400 members, the band is the largest student group on campus.

The band began accepting donations Nov. 17 with the goal of reaching $40,000. By Monday, donors had contributed just more than $36,000.

Andy Green marched in the Million Dollar Band between 1986 and 1990 as a member of the drumline. He said he was more than happy to contribute when he received an email about the fundraising campaign.

“I can say, without hesitation, that the friendships and bonds I made with folks during that time are some of the most important in my life, and are with me to this very day,” he said. “Anything that I can do to help make the Million Dollar Band look better, sound better, and give kids an opportunity to experience what I was fortunate enough to be a part of just seems like a no-brainer to me.”

Green, a professor at Kennesaw State College in Georgia, donated $500.

The bulk of donations, according to the website, came in a $25,000 gift from one person. Other donations range from $5 to $2,000. “I’ve been a part of weddings, births, deaths, and countless memories in between, because of the relationships formed from those MDB days,” Green wrote in an email. “The MDB, quite simply, has given me way more than I could ever hope to give back. To not give to the band is simply not an option for me.”

UA Crowdfunding will eventually allow donors the opportunity to support a variety of different projects created by those within the UA community. Supporters can make gifts of any size and track the overall progress of projects, which will typically run for 30 days.

The goal of the band fundraiser is to provide enough money to buy an entire section of new musical instruments. Unlike most college bands, the Million Dollar Band does not have a matching set of instruments, UA director of bands Kenneth Ozello said.

“We are very grateful to The University of Alabama for choosing the Million Dollar Band as the first organization to attempt a crowdfunding project,” he said Monday. “We haven't made any decisions yet on how to use the funds, but they will go a long way towards upgrading our equipment. A big thank you go those who have already contributed and hopefully many more will consider helping out before the campaign ends in a couple of weeks.”

Managed by the Office of Annual Giving, UA Crowdfunding will build support for projects that might otherwise go without funding. Beginning in spring 2018, campaigns will be created and run by academic departments, student groups and other members of the UA community in need of support.

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UA Gallery debuts Blount art collection

Works are from a variety of mediums and genres

Staff report

The University of Alabama Gallery will debut a selection of paintings and sculptures from the never-before-seen Blount Collection of Art starting Wednesday in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center in downtown Tuscaloosa.

The exhibition, titled "Multifarious: Eclectic Selections from the Blount Collection of Art," features 27 works in a variety of mediums and genres.

"I tried to pick a wide selection so that people could get a sense of the breadth of the collection," said Karen Kennedy, the director of the University Gallery and curator of the exhibit.

The director of UA's Blount Scholars Program Fred Whiting said the collection, which is composed of more than 50 pieces, was donated by the Blount Foundation to the program in 2003.

The collection, which is composed of more than 50 pieces, was donated by the Blount Foundation to the program in 2003.

Pauline Howard's "Red Float" is part of the "Multifarious: Eclectic Selections from the Blount Collection of Art" exhibit that will be on display at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center starting Wednesday and ending Jan. 26. [SUBMITTED PHOTO]

Industrialist and former U.S. Postmaster General Winton Blount established the foundation in conjunction with Blount Inc. in order to support education and the arts through philanthropy.

The exhibit will be on display at the gallery until Jan. 26. An opening reception will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday. The exhibit and reception are free and open to the public.

The UA Gallery offers a year-round schedule of exhibitions of artistic works, artifacts, textiles and more from permanent collections held by UA, as well as works by faculty, students, guest artists and designers.

It is located at 620 Greensboro Ave. in downtown Tuscaloosa and is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the first Fridays of the month from noon until 8 p.m. For more information, call 205-345-3038 or 205-342-2060.

The Blount Scholars Program and the Paul R. Jones Gallery are part of UA's College of Arts and Sciences.
Study could alter understanding of physics

University of Alabama researchers part of international team

An international group of researchers, including several from the University of Alabama, measured the interaction between tiny particles that travel the cosmos, called neutrinos, and Earth.

The findings, which carry implications for our understanding of physics and Earth's core, were published this week in the journal Nature.

Neutrinos are abundant subatomic particles famous for passing through, but rarely interacting with matter. About 100 trillion neutrinos pass through your body every second.

Now, scientists have demonstrated the Earth stops highly energetic neutrinos — they do not go through everything. These high-energy neutrino interactions were seen by the IceCube detector, an array of 5,160 basketball-sized optical sensors deeply encased within a cubic kilometer of clear Antarctic ice near the South Pole.

"IceCube was built to detect neutrinos from outside the solar system, even outside our galaxy, but the instrument is capable of much more than that," said Dawn Williams, UA associate professor of physics and astronomy and now analysis coordinator for the research team that authored the paper. "This study demonstrates IceCube's ability to probe fundamental neutrino physics with neutrinos produced right here in our atmosphere, at energies higher than those achieved in accelerator-based studies."

During the work that produced the results of the paper in Nature, Williams was calibration coordinator, meaning she coordinated activities related to translating raw IceCube data into physics quantities such as the energy and direction of neutrinos.

Other co-authors on the paper at UA include:
- Patrick Toale, assistant professor of physics and astronomy
- Sandro Kopper, a postdoctoral researcher
- Prabandha Nakarmi, a doctoral student
- James Pepper, who graduated in May 2017 with a doctorate in physics

IceCube's sensors do not directly observe neutrinos, but instead measure flashes of blue light, known as Cherenkov radiation, emitted by muons and other fast-moving charged particles, which are created when neutrinos interact with the ice, and by

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the charged particles produced when the muons interact as they move through the ice.

By measuring the light patterns from these interactions in or near the detector array, IceCube can estimate the neutrinos' directions and energies.

The study is based on one year of data from about 1,080 neutrino-related interactions, stemming from a natural supply of very energetic neutrinos from space that go through a thick and dense absorber: the Earth.

The energy of the neutrinos was critical to the study, as higher energy neutrinos are more likely to interact with matter and be absorbed by the Earth.

Scientists found that there were fewer energetic neutrinos making it all the way through the Earth to the IceCube detector than from less obstructed paths, such as those coming in at near-horizontal trajectories.

The probability of neutrinos being absorbed by the Earth was consistent with expectations from the Standard Model of particle physics, which scientists use to explain the fundamental forces and particles in the universe. This probability — that neutrinos of a given energy will interact with matter — is what physicists refer to as a “cross section.”

“Understanding how neutrinos interact is key to the operation of IceCube,” said Francis Halzen, principal investigator for the IceCube Neutrino Observatory and a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor of physics.

Precision measurements at the HERA accelerator in Hamburg, Germany, allow researchers to compute the neutrino cross section with great accuracy within the Standard Model — which would apply to IceCube neutrinos of much higher energies if the Standard Model is valid at these energies.

“We were of course hoping for some new physics to appear, but we unfortunately find that the Standard Model, as usual, withstands the test,” Halzen said.

This study provides the first cross-section measurements for a neutrino energy range that is up to 1,000 times higher than previous measurements at particle accelerators. Most of the neutrinos selected for this study were more than a million times more energetic than the neutrinos produced by more familiar sources, like the sun or nuclear power plants.

Researchers took care to ensure that the measurements were not distorted by detector problems or other uncertainties.

“Neutrinos have quite a well-earned reputation of surprising us with their behavior,” said Darren Grant, spokesman for the IceCube Collaboration and a professor of physics at the University of Alberta in Canada. “It is incredibly exciting to see this first measurement and the potential it holds for future precision tests.”

In addition to providing the first measurement of the Earth's absorption of neutrinos, the analysis shows that IceCube's scientific reach is extending beyond its core focus on particle physics discoveries and the emerging field of neutrino astronomy into the fields of planetary science and nuclear physics.

This analysis will also interest geophysicists who would like to use neutrinos to image the Earth's interior, although this will require more data than was used in the current study.

“IceCube was built to both explore the frontiers of physics and, in doing so, possibly challenge existing perceptions of the nature of the universe. This new finding and others yet to come are in that spirit of scientific discovery,” said James Whitmore, program director in the National Science Foundation's physics division.

For this study, the IceCube Collaboration, which includes more than 300 members from 48 institutions in 12 countries, expanded its research partnership to include geologists in an even larger multidisciplinary team. Physicists worked with geologists who have created models of the Earth's interior from seismic studies to measure how neutrinos are absorbed by the Earth.
CW named newspaper of year at Pinnacle Awards

Staff report

The University of Alabama's student newspaper has earned top honors from a national group.

The College Media Association named the Crimson White the national Four-Year Weekly Newspaper of the Year at its recent Pinnacle Awards competition in Dallas.

The Pinnacle Awards honors the best college media organizations and individual work in the country, according to its website.

Elizabeth Elkin, editor-in-chief of the Crimson White, said she knew they were finalists for the award, and was ecstatic when they won.

"They called out fourth through second place, then they called us out as first place," Elkin said in a news release from UA. "It was extremely dramatic. You listen to them call the other names and we're like, 'We're not third, we're not second.' It was extremely cool. We screamed, jumped up."

Elkin, a 22-year-old senior majoring in journalism, said the award is for the work done by last year’s staff when she was managing editor.

She said it's nice to see the paper's staff recognized for the hard work they do.

"The reason The Crimson White is such an incredible college newspaper is because we have the best journalists in the nation," she said.

"We have fantastic designers, fantastic editorial staff. Everyone on staff is really dedicated."

"My staff works as real journalists while they’re full-time students. It’s like a

See CW, B6

From Page B1

full-time job, but it’s what we do and we love it. We feel like we’re doing really important work here."

The Crimson White has published twice weekly since 2015. Before 2015, the 124-year-old paper was published four times a week.

The paper employs 75 to 100 students, both paid and unpaid.
Family tailgate wraps up second season

Leah Burns meets equestrian team western coach Paige Linne and “Smurf” at the family-friendly tailgate near the Bryce campus before Alabama’s game with Mercer on Nov. 18.

[STAFF PHOTOS/GARY COSBY JR.]

UA equestrian team visited for final home game

Staff report

The second year of the family-friendly tailgate area wrapped up Nov. 18 before the University of Alabama’s final home game of the 2017 season. The alcohol-free tailgate on the Bryce Lawn featured an appearance by UA’s equestrian team along with several horses.

Before games earlier in the season, the family friendly tailgate area featured reptiles from UA’s biology department and appearances by former UA football stars Eddie Jackson and Antonio Langham.

The area featured inflatable bounce houses, food, merchandise vendors, face painting, a shuttle service to Bryant-Denny Stadium and more activities geared toward families.

Fans could set up their own tailgate tents free of charge beginning four hours before kickoff.

Organizers said they hope to build on the success of the family friendly tailgate and add features as demand grows.
Dance coach is a UA fixture

Crimsonettes director has coached team since 1978

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

As the daughter of University of Alabama employees, former Crimsonette Brandi Freeman grew up in the Crimson Tide heartland watching football on Saturdays.

"We were huge Bama fans," she said.

In Bryant-Denny Stadium on Saturdays, her father would hand her his binoculars to look at the field.

"Being a little girl and being 5 you don't know too much about football. But I knew when halftime came. I watched the dancers twirl," Freeman, 29, said.

The Crimsonettes, then as now, twirled to routines planned by Marion Powell, who has coached the team since 1978.

Freeman, who was a member of the Crimsonettes from 2006-2010, is among the generations of young women who have been coached by

See COACH, A7
Powell in the past 40 years. Powell calls them her girls, and, decades later, they feel like family.

"I feel like I am their teacher, but also care about them and love them, and I do care what happens to them in the future," Powell said.

The older girls return to watch auditions, sometimes bringing their children. Some former members like Freeman help Powell with the current team. There are lots of wedding invitations, holiday greetings, and notes, according to her husband, Mark Powell.

"I love it and keep every one of those wedding invitations. In fact, I have two former Crimsonettes right now getting married in December," Powell said.

"I keep all of them. They will send me pictures of their babies when they are born. I love getting Christmas cards from them because it lets me know they still care about me. Those are the things that I think help keep you going. Their compliments, their loving thoughtfulness keeps you inspired."

Powell is known for her creative choreography, but it was her emphasis on life beyond dance that resonated with Freeman.

"She just constantly taught us we need to get better with our skills and our dance but also outside of Saturday, and Sundays through Fridays we need to be a positive change in somebody's life," she said.

"I definitely think she has got a positive attitude, but I think more importantly, she lives what she says."

Powell traces her approach to the example set by her mother, a dance instructor, to give back to the community. Even after her mother retired, Powell said she would go to nursing homes and lead exercise classes for the residents.

"I always grew up believing God gives you certain talents. My mother taught me to be patient. I believe in combining talents you were given and taught," she said.

Powell's mother, Annie Katherine Woodall, taught tap, ballet, acrobatics, jazz and baton in Elmore County. One of her mother's former student's, Shirley DeVenney, taught Powell to twirl batons.

"Marion's mom was an excellent teacher. She just loved doing. Marion just fell right in doing it," DeVenney said. "Marion was just a very energetic worker."

For Powell, dance was part of her family life but also a creative outlet.

"When I was little I would take the record player and my mother's records, and I would pay the music and I would go in the studio and dance. Just the little stuff — not anything that anybody had taught me. Dance and put on the costume and play the music," she said.

In a scene similar to Freeman's childhood memories of football Saturdays, Powell, the daughter of Bama fans, sat captivated by the halftime shows during the heyday of head football coach Paul W. "Bear" Bryant.

"My daddy would tell me stories about seeing Bear Bryant at dances when he was a student," she recalled.

Powell watched the Million Dollar Band on TV, and wished to be the young women carrying flowers beside the drum majors.

"They were called sponsors," she said.

Powell arrived on campus in 1974 and joined the Crimsonettes. As a senior preparing to graduate, marching band director James Ferguson asked her to come back in 1978 to choreograph the dance team.

Former Million Dollar Band Director Kathryn Scott, an assistant band director at the time, recalled Powell as a consummate professional.

"She has extraordinary passion as I do for the university and the Crimson Tide," Scott said. "She is paying it forward in a way in her effort to teach nothing but excellence for the Crimsonettes."

Current Million Dollar Band Director Ken Ozzello didn't know Powell before coming to the university in 1989. But he said the dance team made an
early impression during his job interview and first rehearsal.

"Immediately noticed one to the best things about the band was the quality of the majorettes," he said. "I think she is certainly one of the most well-respected choreographers in all of the college band activity. Her works gets on TV probably as much as any band."

DeVenney, who is nationally recognized as a twirling teacher, believes Powell's choreographic style helped influence styles nationwide.

"She choreographs to music. The girls are giving a visual interpretation of the music. They are more like the Rockettes. I think she started a national trend doing precision, Rockette-type work," DeVenney said.

DeVenney said she also incorporated things she learned from her former student.

"I had such trust in her to come up with something unique and something enjoyable to the crowd that added to the quality of the show," Scott said.

The best music for the Crimsonettes is an upbeat piece that is fast with lots of accents and a good horn section, Powell said.

"All of those give me a chance to be more creative," she said. "The slower music is the more challenging for me to choreograph and for them to perform. It is just like I can listen to a piece, and I can tell you if it will make a good routine or not."

Powell's routine has changed after retiring in July as a teacher in Tuscaloosa city and county Schools following a 39-year career. She also recently retired as the Crimson Cabaret coordinator after 14 years.

"I didn't sleep much during all those years," she joked.

For most of the past four decades, Powell juggled her roles as an educator, Crimsonettes coach and twirling instructor.

"I played the role over the years as the husband and father while she was at band practice. I was everyday working hard at what she loves," her husband said.

Powell would leave early in the morning for school and return home at 10 p.m. after band and cabaret practice.

"With retiring from all of that, it has given me a chance to devote more time to the Crimsonettes. This is what I enjoy doing a lot," she said.

As she approaches 62, Powell has no plans of stepping away from the team or the community which has grown around it.

"My mother was 75 when she retired from dancing. So I guess I have her genes in terms of the energy and passion for doing this," Powell said. "Saban is older than me and he is still going strong. I figure if he can keep doing it, I can too. When the passion isn't there, you need to step aside and I still have a passion for doing what I do. I knew when it was time to end this other part of my life, and I am sure I will know when it is time to end this as well."
BIRMINGHAM

UAB merchandise a booming business

Erin Edgemon eedgemon@al.com

UAB apparel sales are booming.
"Last year apparel sales more than doubled," said Steve Murray, director of business and auxiliary services at UAB. "This year we are on pace to double again and hit a new milestone."

In fact, sales in just the past four months are higher than what the university bookstore did all of last year, he said.

While the return of football is getting much of the credit for the increase, Murray said growth on the UAB campus and the popularity of Birmingham-centric merchandise have played a big role, as well. It's allowed UAB's bookstore and Snoozy's College Bookstore to buck the national trend of declining revenues from a drop in textbook sales, the two bookstores said.

SEE UAB, A4
Snoozy's manager Brad Goggins said the store is seeing a lot of new customers. With the return of football, fans are wanting to pick up the latest hat, T-shirt or sweatshirt.

The store has seen record sales this year, he said.

"The week leading up to football, and the first week of football, we did more sales than ever," Goggins said.

At the first UAB football game, Snoozy's had its biggest, single sales day ever, he said.

Overall, Goggins said apparel sales are up 25 percent. Snoozy's has two spaces for merchandise sales at Legion Field.

The UAB bookstore is selling merchandise at Legion Field on game day for the first time this year.

According to UAB, big box retailers like Dick's Sporting Goods and Academy Sports and Outdoors are carrying a wider selection of UAB products this season to keep up with fan demand. UAB gear is also being sold at all Hudson News locations at the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport. Other local retailers like Mountain Brook Sporting Goods have started to carry UAB apparel, too.

More than 50 vendors applied and were approved to be licensed vendors this fall, UAB said. The university is also looking for more online vendors.

**BIGGEST SELLERS**

Goggins said he's been selling UAB merchandise for 19 years so he has a pretty good idea of what to order and what to bring to Legion Field on game day. He did have one surprise this year, though: the popularity of stadium seats.
Football jerseys for both children and adults are big hits, Murray said.

**NOT JUST FOOTBALL**

Murray argues increased sales of apparel and other merchandise isn’t only because of the return of football.

For many years UAB was thought of as a commuter campus, he said. Now the university has more student housing and student-focused events keeping students on campus, Murray said.

UAB is starting new traditions like the UAB House Party that brought Sam Hunt to campus this year. Murray said they gave Hunt and his road crew 30 UAB hats.

About three years ago, the university launched an effort to get more students and prospective students wearing UAB tees. Students are given a discount coupon to the bookstore at orientation and during campus tours, Murray said. All freshmen were given a T-shirt this fall.

“I have a very strong feeling if you are on our campus you should be in our gear,” he said.

Murray said UAB’s partnership with Under Armour has improved sales over the past year and a half. He said the brand is highly popular.

“It’s also the brand the team wears, he said.

“People want to buy what the coaches are wearing,” Murray said.

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

Murray and Goggins said they both expect apparel sales to continue to grow as UAB football is eligible for a bowl this season and as the basketball season starts.

“We hope that bowl merchandise will go well,” Goggins said.

As students prepare to go home for the holidays, Goggins believes many will also pick up mugs and shirts for the family.
Another Global Warming Study Casts Doubt On Media's Climate Change Fairy Tale

Climate Hysteria: With climate change activists and the big media still in high dudgeon over President Trump pulling out of the Paris Climate Deal, yet another study shows no acceleration in global warming for the last 23 years. Piece by piece, the church of global warming is being dismantled.

The University of Alabama-Huntsville study, conducted by climate scientists John Christy and Richard McNider, shows that not only is the temperature rising far more slowly than predicted, but that the Earth's atmosphere appears to be less sensitive to changing CO2 levels than previously assumed.

How do the study's authors know this? They corrected a mistake that many other studies and model forecasts leave uncorrected: First, they used only satellite data, the most comprehensive and accurate temperature numbers available.

Then, they took out the temporary, yet significant, impact of both volcanoes and the El Niño and La Niña climate episodes that periodically wreak havoc on weather around the world.

Once removing the influence of those naturally occurring events, the study's authors were able to come up with a stable base temperature for the world. Doing this, they found that the rate of global warming currently was 0.096 degrees Celsius per decade — exactly what it was 23 years ago.

This casts serious doubts on the dozens of models used in coming up with the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's dire forecast of massive global warming based on rising levels of CO2 in the atmosphere, mainly from human activity.

Given that CO2 levels have risen sharply in recent decades but the pace of warming has remained essentially the same suggests that CO2 doesn't have the warming effect that many models assume.

Rick Moran, writing at the American Thinker, puts it this way: "The UAH paper destroys the models that predict rising temps that correlate with rising CO2 levels."

Yep. And it means that the U.N.'s prescription for this surge in CO2 — the massive downsizing of the global economy and the imposition of rigid socialist planning on all industrial economies — is nothing more than quackery, the worst kind of medicine.

But it's the science that is important. Recent analytical studies of global warming models used for the U.N. predictions have found they tend to "run hot" — that is, predict far more warming than actually occurs. This study goes a long way to explaining why.

And over time, the difference in temperature estimates is enormous. Going all the way back to 1880, the study notes that most climate models predict nearly 4.1 degrees Fahrenheit rise in temperatures. But the calculated value from the actual data are less than half that, 2 degrees F.

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And by the way, this is a published, peer-reviewed journal study, not a bunch of estimates from questionable mathematical models that were created to serve a political purpose, not a scientific one. It is of course in the interest of the researchers and the governments that fund them to find catastrophic global warming. And that's exactly what they do.

Sadly, this is yet another study that the media will, for the most part, ignore. That's especially true since Christy, a scientist with an impeccable reputation, is known for poking holes in the global warming religion's dogma.

At some point, the left-leaning big media will be forced to recognize the growing evidence of the global warming fraud — just as the holier-than-thou media have in recent days had to come to grips with the tragic reality that the media outlets they work for are filled with serial sexual predators.
Study: No speed-up in global warming, Earth less sensitive to CO2

By: Rick Moran

Here is a setback for climate hysterics who say the Earth is warming catastrophically and drastic action is needed to save us.

A new study by the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) shows that the planet is warming at a much slower rate than believed previously, and the atmosphere is less sensitive to rising levels of CO2 than predicted.

The exhaustive study indirectly confirms recent research that shows that a jump in the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere has had little effect on rising temperatures. This contradicts climate models that predict that rising levels of CO2 lead directly to rising temps.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – the U.N. agency tasked with studying global warming – believes that 50% of warming is due to human industrial activity. While some scientists claim there is an observable difference between naturally occurring CO2 and that generated by burning fossil fuels, those methods are in dispute, which makes any statement regarding how much of the rise in temps is due to humans unreliable.

The UAH paper destroys the models that predict rising temps that correlate with rising CO2 levels:

For the purposes of this research, we assumed the climate was stable during that time, that the natural climate trend would have been zero," Christy said. "If the natural trend was zero, then the climate models say the atmosphere is more than twice as sensitive to CO2 as the data might suggest.

Of course, if the natural trend was greater than zero – if the natural climate was warming even a little bit – then the models have the atmospheric sensitivity to CO2 even further out of whack than that.

This has always been the skeptics' chief complaint about using predictive climate and atmospheric models to develop public policy: the models' gross inaccuracies. How can a responsible government develop policies to address a problem that no one knows the extent of – or if it really exists?

Reliance by scientists on ground-based temperature data has always been questioned by skeptics. This study shows why:

Other researchers have tried to calculate the climate's sensitivity using temperature data collected at the Earth's surface. But that data lacks complete global coverage, especially over the oceans. Changes in the character of the land surface near thermometers (such as paving and urban growth) and changes in the thermometer instruments over time also add uncertainty to the data.

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"Additionally, surface temperatures used for tracking climate change use the average of daily maximum and minimum temperatures," said McNider, a distinguished professor emeritus at UAH. "Those minimum nighttime temperatures reflect only the temperature of a shallow layer of air near the surface and not temperatures in the deep layer of the atmosphere."

Not only are the conclusions being drawn by global warming hysterics wrong, but their methodology leaves a lot to be desired. It should be no surprise, then, that if you put bad science in, bad science will come out.

If climate change were an ordinary field of science to study, this paper would be major news. But the issue of global warming is so wrapped up in politics and business that any objective look at the claims made by other scientists is either dismissed out of hand or buried.
STUDY: Satellites Show No Acceleration In Global Warming For 23 Years

By: Michael Bastasch

Global warming has not accelerated temperature rise in the bulk atmosphere in more than two decades, according to a new study funded by the Department of Energy.

University of Alabama-Huntsville climate scientists John Christy and Richard McNider found that by removing the climate effects of volcanic eruptions early on in the satellite temperature record it showed virtually no change in the rate of warming since the early 1990s.

“We indicated 23 years ago — in our 1994 Nature article — that climate models had the atmosphere’s sensitivity to CO2 much too high,” Christy said in a statement. “This recent paper bolsters that conclusion.”

Christy and McNider found the rate of warming has been 0.096 degrees Celsius per decade after “the removal of volcanic cooling in the early part of the record,” which “is essentially the same value we determined in 1994 ... using only 15 years of data.”

The study is sure to be contentious. Christy has argued for years that climate models exaggerate global warming in the bulk atmosphere, which satellites have monitored since the late 1970s.

Christy, a noted skeptic of catastrophic man-made global warming, said his results reinforce his claim that climate models predict too much warming in the troposphere, the lowest five miles of the atmosphere. Models are too sensitive to increases in carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere, he said.

“From our observations we calculated that value as 1.1 C (almost 2° Fahrenheit), while climate models estimate that value as 2.3 C (about 4.1° F),” Christy said.

While many scientists have acknowledged the mismatch between model predictions and actual temperature observations, few have really challenged the validity of the models themselves.

A recent study led by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory climate scientist Ben Santer found that while the models ran hot, the “overestimation” was “partly due to systematic deficiencies in some of the post-2000 external forcings used in the model simulations.”

Christy’s removal of volcanic-driven cooling from satellite temperature data could also draw scrutiny. The study also removed El Nino and La Nina cycles, which are particularly pronounced in satellite records, but those cycles largely canceled each other out, the co-authors said.

Christy said his works shows the “climate models need to be retooled to better reflect conditions in the actual climate, while policies based on previous climate model output and predictions might need to be reconsidered.”

Two major volcanoes — El Chichon in 1982 and Pinatubo in 1991 — caused global average temperature to dip as a result of volcanic ash, soot and debris reflecting sunlight back into space.

Those eruptions meant there was more subsequent warming in the following years, making the rate of warming appear to be rising as a result of man-made emissions or other factors, Christy said.

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"Those eruptions happened relatively early in our study period, which pushed down temperatures in the first part of the dataset, which caused the overall record to show an exaggerated warming trend," Christy said.

"While volcanic eruptions are natural events, it was the timing of these that had such a noticeable effect on the trend. If the same eruptions had happened near the more recent end of the dataset, they could have pushed the overall trend into negative numbers, or a long-term cooling," Christy said.
Connectivity grows innovations in Alabama

Huntsville represents a region that is built on the foundation of cutting-edge disruption driven by STEM-powered minds developing technologies and products, that in addition to government uses have tremendous commercial potential.

The sheer strength of Huntsville’s R&D ecosystem makes it a unique environment to foster, promote and accelerate product development, commercialization and innovation. We have the Redstone Arsenal, UAH, Cummings Research Park, the Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology and many other organizations that empower entrepreneurs with education and opportunities to fly on their own. This along with a vibrant STEM-centric community makes Huntsville a promising destination to start a business.

The current movement of championing entrepreneurship and technology-focused start-ups has resulted in a massive push by universities to anchor and support innovation hubs throughout the state of Alabama.

This presents a unique opportunity for our center to benchmark, learn and collaborate with others that have successfully built and continue to grow a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem that embodies a "pay it forward" mindset and culture of “chutzpah.”

Our mission supports regional innovation and our mantra focuses on connectivity in all directions — thereby creating pathways to extended networks of resources including mentors, investors and strategic partners who will ultimately contribute towards building scalable and investable businesses. We want to convert community connections to industry connections and vice versa and grow into a large interlinked entrepreneurial network fueled by our geographic concentration of educational and research institutions, Federally Funded Research Development Centers, small businesses and an incredible talent pool.

Rigved Joshi is director of the Dorothy S. Davidson Invention to Innovation Center (D.S. Davidson i2c) at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.
OUR VIEW

A well-deserved moment in the spotlight for UWA

In many ways, the University of West Alabama operates in the shadow of the big school a little more than an hour down Interstate 20/59 in Tuscaloosa, but the UWA athletics program is getting a well-deserved turn in the spotlight with the football team's current run in the NCAA Division II playoffs.

Total enrollment at the school in Livingston, which was founded in 1835, is around 5,100 — with an estimated 2,261 students on campus and the rest taking online courses — but there's a good chance that a greater number will be in the stands at Tiger Stadium on Saturday at noon when UWA hosts West Florida in the quarterfinal round of the playoffs.

West Alabama has won or shared four Gulf South Conference championships, winning the league outright this season. With a 10-1 record, UWA is enjoying its first 10-win season since 1975, and with one more victory has a chance to equal the 1971 NAIA national championship team's 11 wins.

The football program's resurgence began 11 seasons ago under head coach Bobby Wallace, who had won three Division II national championships at rival North Alabama. He took UWA to the playoffs, and successor Will Hall had two playoff appearances before leaving.

West Alabama then turned to one of its own, Brett Gilliland, a former Tigers quarterback, four years ago, and he has taken the program to greater heights. He has already won 29 games, and in his young tenure is just three wins short of becoming the school's all-time winningest coach. Gilliland has lost just 10 games since going 5-6 in his first season in 2014. A UWA man through and through, Gilliland's devotion to the school and commitment to the program has powered its success.

UWA has placed players in the National Football League, including in recent years stars like New England Patriots' cornerback Malcolm Butler and Kansas City Chiefs receiver/returner Tyreek Hill. Their accomplishments at the game's highest level bring more attention to the school at a level that no amount of advertising could hope to attract.

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West Alabama coaches, players and supporters deserve recognition for what this year's football team has accomplished so far. The school endured some tough times on the athletics field over the decades, with bright moments in the 1970s when the institution was known as Livingston University. The current run of athletics success — particularly in football, baseball, rodeo and men's soccer — also brings much-deserved attention to the university that's located on 600 scenic, rural acres in Sumter County, near the Mississippi border.

UWA football, and the overall athletic program, has thrived under the direction of Stan Williamson, its athletics director since 2011, and Ken Tucker, the school's president since Jan. 1, 2015. With facilities upgrades and other commitments in recent years, the Tigers have been given the chance to be competitive in the Gulf South Conference and on the national level, and the football program in particular has seized that opportunity.

Good luck to the Tigers this Saturday, and beyond.
UAB FOOTBALL

No one deserves a bowl at the beach like UAB

For players and coaches, trip to Bahamas Bowl is reward for work, success

Kevin Scarbinsky kscarbinsky@al.com

There are 37 bowl games this holiday season. That doesn’t include the playoff semifinals in New Orleans and Pasadena because, well, they’re not bowl games. They’re playoff games, whether you attach a commendation or a flower to them or not.

That means 74 of the 130 Football Bowl Subdivision teams will play in an extra game as a reward for a job well done, or a job done just well enough or a job done so poorly your coach got fired but, hey, you still get 15 more practices and a gift bag.

Of all the players and coaches on those 74 teams, some will care about that extra game, and some will not. Some of those teams will have earned one more road trip more than others.

No one deserves that trip more than this UAB team. No one — not Auburn, Alabama or anyone else — has traveled as far to make it happen. The Blazers will need polarized lenses to complete their journey from darkness to daylight because Year One of #TheReturn will end in the Bahamas Bowl.

First, the 2004 Hawaii Bowl, now this. The Blazers don’t always go bowling, but when they do, they prefer an ocean and a beach.

The opponent, Ohio University from the MAC, is immaterial. The date, Friday Dec. 22 at 11:30 a.m., is irrelevant. The accomplishment is everything.

If ever a team has earned this kind of working vacation, it’s the one that spent two years in exile through no fault of its own.

The Blazers didn’t just complete an astounding 8-4 regular season Saturday by rolling Mike Price and UTEP 28-7 at Legion Field. They didn’t just win more games than any previous UAB team that competed in the FBS starting in 1996. They didn’t just lead Conference USA in attendance to make a mockery of the notion that nobody cares.

They showed the struggle was real, but the struggle was worth it. They understood the debt they owed, and they repaid it in full. They delivered an incredible return on the personal investment of so many students, alums, fans and local movers and shakers who decided enough oppression and opposition was enough.

So raise a frozen glass with a tiny umbrella to Bill Clark, Tevin Crews, Shaq Jones, A.J. Erdely, Spencer Brown and the whole crew. They gave life and meaning to the slogan “Birmingham’s team,” responding to the perfect storm of support with a perfect 6-0 record at home.

There’s never been a college football season quite like it, not here or anywhere else, and there’s no better place to end it. UAB football is in a better place than it’s ever been, and you know what they say.

It’s better in the Bahamas.

Bill Clark’s team set a school-record for FBS victories with eight and will play in the Bahamas Bowl.
UAB to play Ohio in the 2017 Bahamas Bowl

BIRMINGHAM —
Capping off its historic 2017 season, the UAB football team will play Ohio University in the 2017 Bahamas Bowl on Friday, Dec. 22, at Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium. Kickoff is set for 11:30 a.m. CST on ESPN.

The Blazers (8-4, 6-2 C-USA) will be playing in just their second bowl game in program history. UAB rewrote the record books this season which was highlighted by establishing a program record for FBS wins with eight. UAB finished the regular season by winning six of its final eight games.

UAB's only other bowl appearance came in the 2004 Hawaii Bowl, a 59-40 loss to Hawaii.
BLAZERS PUT IN THE WORK

Sunday, November 26, 2017

The Birmingham News
Edge of their seats

No. 24 Alabama excels at keeping things interesting

David Chess / For AL.com

Call Alabama's basketball team young and you'd be stating the obvious.

Call them sloppy and frustrating and inconsistent and you'd be correct there, too.

What you can't say about the Crimson Tide is that they're boring. Wednesday's 77-74 win over Louisiana Tech — when the Bulldogs missed a game-tying 3-point attempt at the buzzer — continued No. 24 Alabama's trend of going down to the wire against its opponent.

Maybe the Louisiana Tech win was not quite as dramatic as last Saturday's unbelievable comeback attempt against Minnesota, when freshman Collin Sexton nearly led a club that was down to three available players past the nation's No. 12 team. But what was similar between that game and Wednesday's win — plus last week's 77-76 victory over UT-Arlington — is that the Tide usually finds a way to keep things interesting.

"It's just one of those nights you've just got to get out of here with a win. It's not always going to be pretty," Alabama coach Avery Johnson said Wednesday on the SEC Network after his team trailed Louisiana Tech for nearly the entire game before rallying to win.

"You can tell with our team we've got a lot of freshmen playing, and they make mistakes like some of our older players. But we hung in there and I'm proud of our team for doing that."

That, too, has become a recent trend for the Tide (6-4). In their last four games, they trailed for at least half the game three times (UT-Arlington, Minnesota and Louisiana Tech). However, they lost only that Minnesota game where they were playing 3-on-2 for a good chunk of the second half.

"We're excited. That's all I've got to say," Alabama guard Dazon Ingram told reporters after scoring 22 points in Wednesday's most recent comeback win. "We like to win. We don't want to lose."

Added Donta Hall, who had 15 points and seven rebounds: "That's what we're playing for, to win."

But Johnson's young team lately has taken the most roundabout paths to victory. Louisiana Tech held the lead for 36 minutes and 10 seconds compared to Alabama's 2:47 before the Tide surged ahead in the closing minutes. Alabama didn't lead for a single second against Minnesota, and it needed a big second half from Sexton to rally past UT-Arlington after trailing for 26:32 in that contest.

"That says something about your DNA and your culture when you can play through adversity," Johnson said. "We sure played through it (against Minnesota). And I think some of the lessons from that game carried over (against Louisiana Tech), especially in the second half."

Perhaps it's necessary to cut Johnson's team some slack here. Among the five Tide players averaging at least 20 minutes played per game, there are freshmen Sexton, guard John Petty and guard Herbert Jones and one is a redshirt sophomore (Ingram). Only junior forward Darius is a true upperclassman.

Further, Alabama is still without preseason All-SEC forward Dazon Key, who could return to practice next week following knee surgery, and lacked versatile senior reserve Riley Norris until last week.

Johnson was going to rely heavily on young players regardless, but that has been especially the case in the opening weeks of the season. That meant Alabama fans would witness moments of frustration, like when the injured Petty sat on the bench Wednesday as his teammates rallied past Louisiana Tech without him, as well as the displays of brilliance that star signee Petty and Sexton have already exhibited.

Take Wednesday's win, for example. Sexton was coming off a 40-point outing against Minnesota where he broke Alabama's freshman scoring record, but he was just 2-for-9 from the field with eight points when the Tide trailed Louisiana Tech at halftime.

However, he was a key figure in Alabama's comeback attempt, scoring 14 of his 22 points after intermission and hitting all six of his attempts from the foul line.

"It's just a sign of maturity," Johnson said. "Maybe a month ago or two months ago, he wouldn't have been able to respond in situations like this."

And Johnson's staff's ability to further that development will determine the ceiling for this Alabama club. Key could be back in time for SEC play, deepening what is already the Tide's most talented roster in Johnson's three seasons on campus. Should the touted freshman class keep developing at its current rate, Alabama will be a team to watch come March.

Tide fans might expect severe highs and lows along the way, though.

"As you continue to see, we're not a finished product. Hopefully I won't continue to say that forever," Johnson said. "We have some areas we need to clean up. Fortunately we're able to clean them up after another win at home."

TRAILING TIDE

Alabama trailed its opponent for more than half of its last four games, but the Crimson Tide also went 3-1 in that stretch:

Nov. 21: UTA led for 26:32, Alabama for 10:36, tied for 2:52

Nov. 24: RVU led for 1:21, Alabama led for 38:39, tied for 0:00

Nov. 25: Minnesota led for 39:44, Alabama for 0:00, Game tied for 0:16

Nov. 29: Louisiana Tech led for 36:10, Alabama for 2:47, Game tied for 1:03

Total: 103:47 with Alabama trailing, 52:02 ahead, 4:19 tied

SCOREBOARD

24 Alabama 77, Louisiana Tech 74

Collin Sexton made four free throws over the final 8 seconds to lift No. 24 Alabama to a come-from-behind victory over Louisiana Tech on Wednesday night. The Crimson Tide (6-4) overcame an 11-point deficit over the last 14 minutes and held off the previously unbeaten Bulldogs (5-1). Louisiana Tech's Jacob Harris missed a 3-pointer from the right wing and Jalen Harris grabbed the rebound and hit a layup with two seconds left to make it a one-point game. Riley Norris heaved the rebound pass across midcourt to Sexton, who made two free throws with just over one second left.

Auburn 73, Dayton 60

Auburn passed its first true road test of the season in convincing fashion Wednesday night, beating Dayton 73-60 at UD Arena and snapping the Flyers' 15-game, 35-day home win streak. After scoring just two points in the first half, Auburn sophomore guard Mustapha Heron helped the Tigers pull away with 16 second-half points. Heron finished with a team-high 21 points. Auburn (5-1) jumped to 11-2 lead early as Dayton (3-3) started 1 of 9 from the field.

South Alabama 69, Southern Miss 61

Rodrick Sikes scored 20 points, Herb McGee added a career-high 19, and South Alabama beat Southern Miss on Wednesday night. Josh Ajayi scored 13 points and Nick Davis grabbed a career-high 11 rebounds and had five blocks for the Jaguars (5-3), who made 11 of 29 3-pointers, led by McGee with four and Sikes with three. McGee hit three 3s in South Alabama's opening 23-2 run and the Jaguars never trailed en route to a 40-19 halftime lead.

Wednesday

Auburn 73, Dayton 60

24 Alabama 77, Louisiana Tech 74

South Alabama 69, Southern Miss 61

Troy 87, UIC 66

Georgia State 83, Alabama A&M 63

Emory 91, Birmingham Southern 86

Montevallo 80, UAH 56

Thursday

UAH vs. Memphis (Bartow Classic), late
Jacksonville State vs. Alabama State, late
Mills vs. Spring Hill, late
Mobile at Blue Mountain, late
North Alabama at West Alabama, late

Saturday

Spring Hill at Tuskegee, 3 p.m.
Alabama A&M at Austin Peay, 3:30 p.m.
Montevallo vs. North Alabama, 4 p.m.
South Alabama at FIU, 6 p.m.
Tide QB finalist for Manning Award

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

University of Alabama sophomore quarterback Jalen Hurts is one of 11 finalists for the Manning Award, the Sugar Bowl released Thursday afternoon.

Established in 2004, the Manning Award is given annually to the top quarterback in college football. The Award was created by the All-state Sugar Bowl to honor the college accomplishments of Archie, Peyton, and Eli Manning.

Hurts completed 60.5 percent of his passes in the regular season, throwing for 1,940 yards and 15 touchdowns against only one interception. He turned the ball over only twice in 2017. He rushed for 768 yards and eight touchdowns.

He led Alabama to an 11-1 record.

Of the finalists, only two represent the SEC. Auburn sophomore Jarrett Stidham was also named a finalist.

Other finalists include J.T. Barrett (Ohio State), Kelly Bryant (Clemson), Sam Darnold (Southern Cal), Lamar Jackson (Louisville), Baker Mayfield (Oklahoma), Trace McSorley (Penn State), McKenzie Milton (Central Florida), Mason Rudolph (Oklahoma State) and Kahill Tate (Arizona).

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CBS crew discusses Alabama and Playoffs

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PLAYOFFS

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frequently.

"I don't know what the rules are," Danielson said. "If someone could explain to me the rules, I'd have a better understanding. I understand these people have high integrity and they have the best interest of college football, but I don't think there are set rules. I don't know what the agenda is for choosing the top four teams. Every time I hear it, every year it's different. And they're able to wiggle out of it by saying 'We have a clean slate. We wipe our slate clean.' I wish I could do that every time, wipe my slate clean. It doesn't work that way, I have no idea what the rules are."

The selection committee didn't take the Big 10 champion last season, choosing a one-loss Ohio State team that didn't play in the conference championship game. That could be the same situation Alabama finds itself in this year, though the teams have different resumes.

"I love all those people," Danielson said. "They're all great people. I honestly know they're trying to do the right thing, but boy, the precedent they set last year is going to be a tough one for them to go in front of the camera this year and explain why they made these decisions."

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Tide finalist for football awards

By Aaron Suttles
Sports Writer

For the third consecutive year, Alabama is a finalist for the Joe Moore Award, given annually to the national top offensive line. It is the third year of the award's history.

The Crimson Tide won the award in the inaugural year of the award in 2014.

Joining Alabama this season is Auburn and Notre Dame.

This year's Crimson Tide helped the offense average 405.4 yards and 39.1 points per game. The offense has gained more than 600 yards three times, the second most in program history.

UA ranks eighth in passing efficiency, 12th in scoring, 11th in rushing, 22nd in total offense.

Junior defensive back Minkah Fitzpatrick was named a finalist for the Lott IMPACT Trophy. He is one of four student athletes to make the cut.

The trophy is awarded to college football's best in character and performance.

Former UA linebacker

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AWARDS
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DeMeco Ryans won the award in 2005.
Fitzpatrick is widely regarded as one of the top collegiate football players in the country and is already a finalist for the Jim Thorpe and Chuck Bednarik awards and Bronco Nagurski Trophy.

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Coaching shakeups: Now's the hard part

Easy to fire. Harder to hire. That's the mantra every good athletic director has to live by when making a coaching change. Firing is unpleasant but, except in situations involving NCAA violations or ethics, it's usually a popular move with a fan base. (Fan bases are not noted for patience.) Even when firing is expensive, as most are these days, fans generally aren't reluctant to see buyouts paid off in the hope of something new.

It's getting to the "something new" that's hard. Ostensibly, the whole purpose of the exercise is to get something better than you had. The market offers lots of possibilities but few guarantees. The problem for an AD is that the same fans who wanted a firing also want a grand slam at hiring time. You can't hit a grand slam every time. Thus, the worst-case scenario, wherein a program finds itself spinning its tires in a hire-and-fire cycle that can last a decade or more.

With that said, here is a look at the six (!) vacancies in the Southeastern Conference now that the smoke

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has (mostly) cleared.  

**FLORIDA:** The firing of Jim McElwain, who seemed as if he’d burned out at midseason this year, was unavoidable. Dan Mullen, who comes with plenty of SEC experience from years as a Gator assistant and then a Mississippi State head coach, is a solid choice. The question is whether Mullen is a championship coach who was constrained by some of the economics and recruiting demographics in Starkville, or whether he is just “solid” and not “special.” So it’s not a grand slam, but I’d call it a solid double.

**OLE MISS:** The fans didn’t want to fire Hugh Freeze (see “ethics” and “NCAA” exceptions above) but seem to have enough sense to realize that trying to sell the job to someone without knowing the dispensation of the NCAA case was like trying to sell someone a car by showing them a crayon drawing of a car. Thus, interim Matt Luke is a way of settling on decent, reliable transportation until you can get things squad away at the bank. The players like him, he did a nice job of holding things together when quarterback Shea Patterson was injured, he won the Egg Bowl and he deserves a shot as much as anyone Ole Miss could have persuaded with more money. No grand slam, but call it an intentional walk.

**MISSISSIPPI STATE:** Didn’t fire Mullen, he walked. Trying to replicate the formula that worked before — hire a hot name from the assistant ranks — seems to be the route here.

**ARKANSAS:** Bret Bielema couldn’t outrun his SEC record. The Razorbacks seem to be waiting before wading into the hiring fray for some reason.

**TEXAS A&M:** Kevin Sumlin was a really good September-October coach. Aggies are swinging for the fences on FSU’s Jimbo Fisher so they can be good from November on.

**TENNESSEE:** In this coach-hiring circus, Orange is the lowest-hanging fruit. They’ve been bashed, largely for spending the half-season that elapsed after Butch Jones’ fate was sealed hustling after Jon Gruden, then botching the near-hiring of former Rutgers coach Greg Schiano who was unwanted because of his career record, or a connection to the Penn State scandal, or both. I will not pretend to judge the motives of the mutinous fans that scuttled Schiano. I will note that the latest move seems to be for a “family” hire off the Phil Fulmer tree, which sounds like a shallow fly to left field, not a grand slam.

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Alabama failed to display its aura of dominance

Cecil Hurt

Championship Game and made its playoff hopes problematic at best, didn't seem to come from overconfidence, or an inflated sense of ego.

All week, in fact, there were warnings Alabama might not be the better team. Yes, the Crimson Tide was ranked higher. Yes, it was favored by the Las Vegas odds-makers. But there were also plenty of people

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that were impressed by Auburn’s improvement and even more that were aware of Alabama’s injury issues and other struggles. If anything, the game seemed to present Alabama with the rarest of opportunities in Nick Saban’s tenure: a chance to be the underdog, the hunter rather than the hunted, a team that could take control of its own destiny that would silence its critics rather than simply confirm a chorus of praise.

Alabama had that chance — and didn’t take advantage of it at all.

Nick Saban said afterwards that one game shouldn’t define a team. That’s true. But a loss in a major rivalry does go into the overall definition and this one certainly didn’t enhance Alabama’s image as the alpha dog, either.

Memories are short: Alabama has lost games under Saban. Most of the losses have included their fair share of self-inflicted wounds, like the five-turnover defeat against Ole Miss in 2015. But in terms of a game slipping out of control, with the other team looking more poised and prepared, this time was different.

From a certain viewpoint, this was as disconcerting a loss as Alabama has suffered since Louisiana-Monroe in Saban’s first year. That’s not a comparison of the opposition — Auburn is a national championship contender, not some forlorn mid-major program — but of the sense of bewilderment that the loss caused.

For the large part of a decade, Alabama has taken the fight to the opponent with ferocious defense and an offense that steadily eroded its opponents’ resistance. None of that happened on
Saturday, which seemed to have the same strategy but not the same swagger. For instance — and this is admittedly with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight — why not go for fourth-and-one on the very first drive of the game at midfield? Yes, the punt pinned Auburn at its 6-yard line — and they proceeded to go 94 yards.

In the unusual game where Alabama might have needed to risk something, it didn’t.

The fourth-quarter implosions were worse, triggered by small things like those pesky unpoisoned rats gnawing at the underpinnings that usually lead Alabama to victory. How small? Consider the sequence after Auburn scored to take a 20-14 lead. Trevon Diggs returned the kick into Auburn territory, a pass interference penalty put Alabama in the red zone and then, on a third-and-four, Alabama fails to get the snap off in time.

Yes, it’s loud. Yes, there’s pressure. Those are precisely the moments you have to execute. Instead, Alabama went from third-and-four at the AU 12 to third-and-nine. Hurts then threw a wild, almost-interception, almost-touchdown pass that wound up incomplete, and the ensuing field goal attempt was botched. Auburn seized all the momentum it needed. The fourth quarter was no better.

An aura of dominance is a hard thing to build and an easy thing to lose. Alabama will have to live with the endless commentary on this game, largely deserved and fueled by the long, long Alabama fatigue across the nation. There might be a chance Alabama will get a lucky break and a chance at vindication in the playoffs — but the direct route ended on Saturday in a rare, ugly train wreck.

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A three-year degree could curb student loan crisis

Bloomberg View

The basic cause of America’s student-loan crisis is no mystery: College tuition and fees continue to soar while the earnings of recent graduates remain flat. It shouldn’t be surprising that there’s also a straightforward way to lower the cost of a college degree: Reduce the amount of time it takes to earn one.

The U.S.’s four-year bachelor’s degree is based on cultural convention, not pedagogical wisdom. In most European countries, as well as India, Singapore and Australia, the majority of undergraduate programs take three years to complete. Some U.S. colleges allow enterprising students to finish their requirements early, but that option is available only to those who enter college with sufficient credits from advanced courses taken in high school — and some elite schools are trying to limit even this practice.

Defying the industry’s inertia, a small number of U.S. schools have started to experiment with offering three-year degrees. This fall, Purdue University, a public school in Indiana that enrolls 31,000 undergraduates, announced a three-year option open to all incoming students pursuing liberal arts degrees. By carrying a slightly heavier course load and taking classes in the summer, students can complete the same number of credits required for a four-year degree. The university provides dedicated advisers to help three-year students structure their schedules. And they still have time to participate in abbreviated study abroad and internship programs.

The plan’s principal beneficiaries are students, who will save $9,000 if they live in-state and $18,400 if not. Purdue officials believe the discount will stimulate demand, allowing the university to expand its student body and make up for the loss of tuition revenue. Increasing the number of students year-round also enables more efficient use of campus facilities.

It’s not likely that other institutions will soon follow Purdue’s example. With applications to the country’s top four-year schools far surpassing the number of available spots, colleges have little incentive to provide a discounted option.

But getting a college education is more than just a commercial transaction. There is a public interest in making higher education more widely available to qualified students. The role for public officials may be limited, but it can still be helpful: tying eligibility for state and federal student aid to a school’s offering of a three-year option, for example.

Not everyone needs a traditional college education. As Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said this week, the U.S. needs more pathways that allow Americans without one to reach (or remain in) the middle class.

For those who want a college degree, however, obtaining one needn’t take so long. A three-year degree is a simple, cost-effective way to set more students up for future success.