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ECU lockdown nets an umbrella

Campus on alert for man with gun

By Richard Stradling - rstradling@newsobserver.com

GREENVILLE—East Carolina University was locked down for three hours Wednesday while dozens of law enforcement officers looked for a reported gunman who turned out to be armed only with an umbrella.

It was the sixth time in a month that a college campus in Eastern North Carolina has been locked down because of a reported crime or a sighting of a person thought to be carrying a gun.

The earlier incidents included a standoff with a Campbell University student who had been charged with stealing a carbine from a Fuquay-Varina gun store.

An alert sent to the ECU community shortly after 10 a.m. Wednesday said an "armed individual" had been seen on Fifth Street, on the northwest edge of campus. About 60 law enforcement officers swept the campus and nearby
neighborhoods looking for a man carrying a rifle, while students and staff were ordered to remain inside.

The lockdown was lifted about 1 p.m., after officers found the man that two callers had described to police, said Sgt. Carlton Williams, a Greenville police spokesman. Williams would not say how the man reacted or whether he knew he had sparked the campus lockdown.

Williams said the search for the alleged gunman was complicated by various reports on Facebook and Twitter about someone holding hostages on a bus or in a classroom. Officers responded to these reports and determined that all of them were unfounded, he said.

On the upside, Williams said, the procedures put in place to safeguard the ECU campus in an emergency worked very well. The computer notifications and outdoor horn that accompanied the lockdown came off perfectly, he said.

"We train with ECU police for events like this, and it could not have gone better," Williams said.

Universities across North Carolina beefed up their security measures, including lockdowns, after a troubled student shot and killed 32 people on the Virginia Tech University campus in Blacksburg in April 2007.

Recent lockdowns include:

-- N.C. State University on Oct. 28 when a suspect in a nearby bank robbery ran onto campus.

-- Elizabeth City State University on Nov. 5 when a former student showed up on campus carrying a rifle. Campus police confronted the man and say they shot him in the leg after he pointed the gun at them.

-- Wake Tech Community College's north campus on Nov. 7 when someone reported seeing a man in camouflage clothing going into some nearby woods with "a long gun." The man was never found.

-- Campbell University on Nov. 9, when police tried to search the home of Jared Dale Knight, looking for stolen weapons. Knight slipped away from police and locked himself in his bedroom before surrendering more than three hours later.

-- UNC Wilmington early Tuesday, when a gunman who robbed four people at a fast-food restaurant ran toward campus shortly before midnight Monday.
Greenville and ECU police were joined Wednesday by Pitt County sheriff’s deputies and the state Highway Patrol, which lent its helicopter.

"East Carolina University will always err on the side of campus safety when these situations arise," ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said. "Our response by faculty, staff, and students was timely and professional."

Stradling: 919-829-4739
ECU exhales as lockdown ends
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, November 17, 2011

A three-hour lockdown at ECU ended Wednesday when officers confirmed a man reported to be carrying a gun actually was carrying an umbrella, officials said.

Scores of police with guns and rifles drawn responded following two 9:50 a.m. reports that the man was walking on Fifth Street downtown toward campus. Searches of main campus buildings, city and university buses, downtown and residential areas failed to locate a gunman.

About 1 p.m. officials were able to call off the alert thanks to information from a part-time deputy who had seen the man earlier in the day and confirmed he was carrying an umbrella.

Chancellor Steve Ballard dispatched a campuswide email that said the reports had turned out to be unfounded.

“East Carolina University will always err on the side of campus safety when these situations arise,” Ballard’s note said. “Our response by faculty, staff, and students was timely and professional.”
The man, whose name was not released at his request, was recorded by surveillance cameras at Fifth and Reade streets. He was a white man wearing a light-colored fedora, a button-down shirt and jeans. A dark backpack was strapped to his shoulders and he carried a long umbrella on his side like a soldier carrying a rifle.

Reports about the man triggered email, text and Twitter alerts to ECU students and staff about 10 a.m. Loud speakers on campus sounded siren blasts along with voice messages warning students to stay indoors.

A total of 60 officers responded from ECU and Greenville police departments, the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office and the State Highway Patrol. An SHP helicopter also responded.

Officers ordered pedestrians to move inside buildings or leave the area. Some were momentarily detained. ECU Police Assistant Chief Dawn Tevepaugh did not have a number of how many people were detained, but said there were no armed encounters with citizens.

Officers responding to subsequent reports of hostages — many reports passed on through social media services — focused their attention on four GREAT city buses at the transfer station at Fourth and Reade streets.

More than a dozen patrol cars converged at the site about 11 a.m., and officers focused their assault rifles, shotguns and handguns on the buses until they were confirmed safe.

Officers with guns drawn later searched a home at 4001 Johnston St. in the area of Rotary and Third streets. One officer spoke to a person at the house. Another later appeared on the roof.

A square-block area around the area of Johnston and Rotary was blocked off for a short time.

Officers conducted a floor-by-floor search of the Rivers Building off Fifth Street on the east end of main campus after reports of hostages there.

University employee Peggy Novotny stayed under her desk when she got the report of a campus threat, she said.
“Somebody jogged my door and I heard people shouting indistinguishable words, so I jumped under the desk,” Novotny said. “I heard in a campus alert that there might be an armed suspect in my building. When the officers came to my door again to evacuate me, I was afraid to open it because I couldn’t be sure they actually were officers.”

When a woman officer talked to her from outside the door and told her it was safe to come out, Novotny complied, she said.

“It was unnerving. What else was I to think but that the building was under siege and there was somebody (dangerous) inside,” she said.

ECU buses were used to ferry people away from Rivers to College Hill, where they were asked to stay at Todd Dining Hall.

Greenville Police Sgt. Carlton Williams said that fictitious reports surfacing on social media hampered officers’ efforts to manage the situation. “It causes us to ... chase ghosts,” he said.

The reports were untrue, Williams said, but the incident showed that alert and response plans developed after the 2007 shooting rampage at Virginia Tech worked well.

“The campus lockdown system worked exactly as planned and as they’re supposed to go, utilizing computer pop-ups, mass texting and the outdoor warning system,” Williams said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or 252-329-9571.
RALEIGH, N.C. — A major university in eastern North Carolina was locked down for three hours Wednesday when a man carrying a golf umbrella was mistaken for a gunman.

Greenville Police spokesman Sgt. Carlton Williams said emergency dispatchers received two 911 calls about 9:50 a.m. Wednesday reporting a man was walking along a major street near the East Carolina University campus carrying an assault rifle.

Within minutes, the campus alert system was activated, with announcements broadcast over loudspeakers advising students, faculty and staff to stay inside and lock their doors. Written alerts were also sent to campus e-mail accounts and as test messages to cell phones. Nearby elementary schools and a middle school were also put on lock down.

Police soon reviewed traffic camera footage and isolated what appeared to be a man with a rifle sticking out of a backpack.

Dozens of heavily armed officers from at least four law enforcement agencies responded in force, sweeping campus buildings, searching buses and briefly surrounding a nearby house. Snipers took up positions on rooftops. A North Carolina Highway Patrol helicopter hovered overhead.

ECU spokeswoman Mary Schulken said the reaction was justified even though it was based on a false alarm. Universities across the country beefed up crisis plans following the 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech, where a mentally troubled student shot and killed 32 people before committing suicide.

“When a report like that is made, a university has no choice but to respond,” Schulken said of the reports at ECU, a university with nearly 28,000 students located in Greenville.

Sarah Schach, an ECU senior, was in class when the alert was sounded. Students turned out the lights and moved away from doors and windows while using their phones and computers to try and learn details, she said.
“It was very tense,” she said.

Williams said the situation was also amped up after officers saw Twitter and Facebook posts saying students were being held hostage in a campus building and on a university bus.

Officers armed with pistols and shotguns boarded and searched buses. The campus building was stormed by officers carrying military-style carbines, searched and evacuated.

Doug Boyd, a reporter for the university’s in-house news service who was out covering the lockdown, was confronted by officers and ordered at gunpoint to get on his knees. Though it was the first time he’d ever stared down the barrel of a gun, Boyd said he remained calm.

“I wasn’t too concerned,” Boyd said. “I knew as an ECU employee that it would be straightened out.”

Eventually, officers located the man recorded by the video camera and discovered that what was thought to be a rifle was actually just a long black golf umbrella.

“Without getting up close, it looked like the real deal,” Williams said.

Classes at ECU were resumed at 3 p.m.

“We are relieved that the reports of this incident turned out to be unfounded,” Chancellor Steve Ballard wrote in a message posted on the university’s website. “East Carolina University will always err on the side of campus safety when these situations arise.”

This is the fourth time this month a college campus in North Carolina has been locked down. Reports of gunmen resulted in similar measures at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and at the north Raleigh campus of Wake Technical Community College. A lockdown at Campbell University happened last week when a student locked himself in his on-campus home after police tried to serve him a warrant.

The Campbell standoff ended peacefully when the student surrendered to police. The reported gunmen have not been found in either the Wake Tech or UNC Wilmington incidents.

Williams, the Greenville police spokesman, praised the response of law enforcement offices to what was believed to be a credible threat at ECU.
“We received two independent calls of a man armed with an assault rifle,” he said. “Everything went the way it should have. We don’t think it could have gone any better.”

Schach said that as a student she is glad the university and police took the report seriously.

“A friend of mine knew people who went to Virginia Tech, and as much as I hate the inconvenience, I’d rather have them prevent another Virginia Tech,” she said.

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Follow AP writer Michael Biesecker at twitter.com/mbieseck
East Carolina University is on lockdown following reports of an armed gunman near the campus. (Photo credit: WCTI)

**East Carolina University Lockdown Ends**

By Christina Ng

A lockdown at East Carolina University has been lifted, about three hours after police reported spotting a man with an assault rifle near the campus. As it turned out, the man wasn’t carrying a weapon. He was carrying an umbrella.

“The situation has ended and there is no threat to the campus at this time,” ECU news services office spokeswoman Jeannine Manning-Hutson told ABCNews.com.

The school, located in Greenville, N.C., was on lockdown for about three hours following a security camera sighting of a man believed to be carrying an assault weapon, a backpack and a cowboy hat.

No one was taken into custody, but authorities are still investigating.

Manning-Hutson said Greenville police spotted the man security cameras and reported the sighting to the ECU police.
No shots were fired and the ECU police is working with the Greenville Police Department and the Pitt County Sheriff’s Department to investigate the sighting.

At 10:11 a.m., the school sent out an alert reporting an armed individual and the instructions to “secure offices and buildings.”

Residence halls were locked and all campus buildings were searched by authorities.

The school has an enrollment of nearly 28,000 students.
East Carolina University officials will take their share of ridicule following a campus-wide lockdown on Tuesday apparently prompted by a man carrying an umbrella, and not an assault rifle, in a backpack. The criticism is undeserved since the administration acted swiftly to protect students, faculty and staff with the information it received from Greenville police that morning.

In a note that followed the “all clear,” Chancellor Steve Ballard said, “East Carolina University will always err on the side of campus safety when these situations arise.” That is the only appropriate response in the post-Virginia Tech era and the university — along with local law enforcement — should be commended for what some will incorrectly classify as an overreaction.

All those at East Carolina who have been inconvenienced by the two previous live shooter drills now know why they are so important. When the university received information from Greenville police that a man with an assault rifle was spotted near campus, school officials leaped to action. They declared a lockdown on campus, distributing the information through the ECU Alert system and speakers that can be heard throughout the university.

Over the course of three hours, East Carolina police and Greenville officers, along with deputies from the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office, blocked key intersections and carefully swept the campus, looking for the perpetrator. A little after 12:30 p.m., the university issued the welcome news that the lockdown was cancelled because the suspect was located. He was found unarmed and the surveillance footage that first alarmed law enforcement turned out to be an umbrella.

That was cause for amusement in conversation and on social media, but it is important to recognize that the decision made by East Carolina administrators was a difficult one. Any major disruption to campus life affects thousands of students and brings the city to a grinding halt. Making that call is not done cavalierly but only through careful deliberation.
After the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, officials are quicker to err on the side of safety, with good reason. Every college administrator’s nightmare is receiving a report of an unknown individual carrying a weapon on campus. Common sense dictates a timely response, but it can be complicated to quickly determine the credibility of the information at hand.

By that measure, East Carolina passed this test. Its success should give comfort to both campus and community.
A false-alarm about a gunman at ECU left people on campus with stories of the fear and confusion they felt as events unfolded.

The mood was especially tense in the Rivers Building, many said, which was evacuated during the course of a three-hour campus lockdown. ECU buses lined up outside Rivers to carry throngs of students to Todd Dining Hall on College Hill.

Will Lane, a senior, was in his juvenile justice class in Rivers when the sirens went off. “I didn’t know what it was,” he said on College Hill. “People started freaking out.”

The teacher was trying to continue teaching, Lane said, until someone from across the hall came over and told them to lock the door and turn the lights off. An officer knocked on the door a short time later and moved everyone to a back corner of the room, Lane said.

“You could see the cops walking by with assault rifles. It actually got a little scary,” he said.

Sophomore Amelia Hayes was in a study lounge with another young woman when police told them to take cover. Since their room didn’t lock, the women banged on doors in Rivers, asking to be let in, and eventually were pulled by an ECU maintenance man into a closet, Hayes said. A third woman also took shelter there.

They waited, in the dark, without Internet access or much idea of how much time was passing, Hayes said.

For those with Internet access — either in a computer lab or by smartphone — rumors flew.
“There was a picture on Twitter with two men with hands behind their heads,” said freshman Haley Walter, who was in class in the Brewster Building. “People said there were hostages, a bus full of hostages.”

“People were texting me, ‘Oh you’re in Rivers? I heard the gunman was in Rivers,’” Lane said.

After authorities confirmed that the scare began with a man carrying an umbrella in the downtown area, students contacted friends and family members to assure them of their safety and returned quickly to normal concerns, like whether classes would be canceled.

Senior Andrew Evans wondered aloud if a strict professor would hold him accountable for the take-home test due Wednesday morning.

Evans arrived on campus just moments before the siren sounded. He turned around, but the bus was already pulling away. He rushed into Rivers because it was the closest building.

He and other students moved desks against the door in their classroom, he said, and were ready to attack any intruder with a fire extinguisher.

Evans said the silver lining is that an event like this makes people safer “because they’re more aware” of what can happen.

Walter thinks everyone would have been calmer if more information were delivered by official sources during the lockdown. She suggested they could have utilized text alerts.

“There was nothing legitimate,” Walter said. “And too much (bad) information.”

Things were quiet elsewhere on campus, as students peered from windows and doors or — in a few cases — class proceeded as usual.

“I’m in Ward Sports Medicine Building near the football stadium, a ways away from where the suspect reportedly was,” kinesiology professor Scott Gordon said via email during the lockdown. “We are staying in the building in our locked suite of offices, and are very curious as to what is going on, but are otherwise taking care of business as usual.”
Communication professor Brian Massey was in Joyner East during the lockdown.

“The building’s outer doors are locked. Most of the office and classroom doors are locked. Classes are still going on,” Massey emailed.

Massey said he stepped outside momentarily and was struck by the sight of an empty campus.

“It’s a strange sight because there are typically dozens of students and others walking around. It’s not this empty even when we’re between semesters and all the students have gone home.”

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Deputy spotted man before lockdown

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, November 17, 2011

A part-time Pitt County deputy almost drew her weapon on a man with an umbrella Wednesday, 30 minutes before a lockdown at ECU.

Tina Knox was driving to work at the courthouse about 9:30 a.m. when she observed a man downtown who appeared to have a rifle, said Pitt County Sheriff’s Office spokeswoman Christy Wallace.

Knox pulled her car over, unbuckled her seat belt and placed her hand on her service pistol, ready to get out and confront the man, Wallace said. Knox then realized what had appeared to be a rifle was simply an umbrella. Relieved, she continued to the courthouse for her shift, Wallace said.

Some time later, she told a colleague there what had happened. Her colleague explained the campus had just been placed on lockdown because others had reported seeing a man with a rifle, Wallace said.

Believing she might have seen the same man, based on the description the officer gave, they arranged for a video taken by city traffic cameras to be emailed to them at the courthouse, Wallace said.

The video confirmed that he was the same person she saw — and for whom about 60 police, deputies, ECU officers and State Highway Patrol troopers were searching at that moment. Knox then walked across the street to the U.S. District Courthouse to view a more extensive copy of the recording.

Greenville police officers located the man at his home near the downtown area after information was received from Knox. The lockdown ended after they confirmed he was carrying an umbrella, officials said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com and 329-9571.
East Carolina University was locked down for about three hours Wednesday after people reported seeing a man with an assault rifle walking casually on a main thoroughfare near the Greenville campus. The item the man was carrying was, in fact, an umbrella.

**Umbrella, not gun, causes lockdown at ECU**

East Carolina University was locked down for about three hours Wednesday after people reported seeing a man with an assault rifle walking casually on a main thoroughfare near the Greenville campus.

The item the man was carrying was, in fact, an umbrella.

The man was seen near the corner of 5th Street and Reade Circle at about 10 a.m., ECU spokeswoman Mary Schulken said. Campus police, Greenville police, the state Highway Patrol and Pitt County deputies systematically swept the campus and nearby neighborhoods to search for the man.

When they found him, they determined he was not a threat.

The lockdown was lifted shortly after noon for ECU's medical campus, and it was lifted for the main campus at 1 p.m.

Greenville police Sgt. Carlton Williams said rumors circulating on Facebook and Twitter caused authorities to "chase ghosts" and use resources inefficiently. Still, he said, the university handled the reports properly, law enforcement worked well together and students remained calm and orderly.
False leads about a potential hostage situation caused the evacuation of the Rivers Building.

Police also surrounded several city buses with weapons drawn after witnesses reporting seeing the armed man on board. That report was unfounded and all the buses were secured, authorities said.

"We'd rather respond 10 times than have someone not call and have it be something tragic," Williams said.

About 27,000 students attend ECU. The university said classes would resume at 3 p.m.

Chancellor Steve Ballard said he was relieved that the reports turned out to be false.

"East Carolina University will always err on the side of campus safety when these situations arise. Our response by faculty, staff and students was timely and professional," he said in a statement.

The school had an emergency drill to prepare for a lockdown like this back in August.

Three nearby schools also were locked down as a precaution – Elmhurst Elementary School, Wahl-Coates Elementary School and C.M. Eppes Middle School.

This is the fifth time in recent weeks that a North Carolina college campus has been locked down because of reports of a gunman.

On Nov. 5, police shot a former Elizabeth City State University student who allegedly brought an assault rifle to campus. The school was temporarily locked down after officers on foot patrol ran into students running from the man.

Wake Technical Community College's campus in north Raleigh was locked down on Nov. 7, but authorities couldn't locate a gunman seen in some nearby woods. Campbell University was locked down a week ago during a three-hour standoff with a student suspected of stealing weapons from a Fuquay-Varina gun shop.

Late Monday, a man who robbed a business near the University of North Carolina at Wilmington was seen running toward the campus, prompting another lockdown.

Reporter: Amanda Lamb
Web Editors: Matthew Burns, Bridget Whelan
UNC-Chapel Hill student protesters march up Pittsboro Street to the Carolina Inn on Wednesday afternoon. About 50 students rallied at The Pit and then marched to the meetings, where they sat in on the hourlong session as tuition and fee increases were considered.

**UNC-CH panel supports 5-year tuition hike**

BY LANA DOUGLAS - ldouglas@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL–A committee voted Wednesday to send to the full board of trustees today a five-year plan to raise in-state undergraduate tuition at UNC-Chapel Hill by $2,800.

More than 50 students protested with signs that read "Education is a right" and postcards bearing more than 1,000 signatures of students who oppose the plan.

"I believe that the sticker shock of this (increase) in tuition and also the reality of raising tuition will in fact change the diversity on campus, as it has at other peer institutions that have been undergoing the same tuition hikes," said Elizabeth Cooper, 21, a senior.

The plan would raise in-state undergraduate tuition next year by $800, or 15.6 percent. Total in-state tuition and fees would increase from $7,005 to $7,795.
Out-of-state undergraduate tuition would rise by $1,622, or 6.5 percent, which would raise total out-of-state tuition and fees next year from $26,830 to $28,442.

"There can be a reallocation of resources. It doesn't have to be the way it is," said Alanna Davis, 21, a sophomore.

Students said the university should use more of its $2.2 billion investment fund to offset tuition increases.

But much of the money in the fund, which includes the university's endowment fund, has designated uses, said Jonathon King, president of UNC Management Co. Inc.

"Invading the principal of the endowment to solve the problem that we have right now is not prudent for us, and we're not thinking about the students that are coming 50 and 100 years from now if we do that," Chancellor Holden Thorp said.

Students chanted "We are not happy" and "We the students are not reflected in this decision" when the committee voted to send the plan to the board of trustees.

Thorp said he understood students' frustration.

"They're trying to make the case, that I agree with, that education is a public good," he said. "We've reached the point where we have to decide between preserving that public good and changing the way we pay for it.

"This wasn't an easy choice for us," Thorp continued, "and I think what's cool about Carolina is that it really took three years of the crisis before we got to this point, whereas around the country you were seeing scenes like this play out three years ago."

About 45 percent, or $12 million, of the revenue created by the tuition increase next year will be set aside to help the university continue to cover 100 percent of need-based financial aid, Thorp said.

If the trustees approve the plan today, it will go to the UNC system Board of Governors.

Douglas: 919-932-2008
Meredith Teaching Fellows plan replaces state program

From staff reports

RALEIGH Meredith College has launched its own teaching fellows program to replace the state program being phased out by the legislature.

The Meredith College Teaching Fellows program will provide scholarships worth a minimum of $6,500 to qualified high school seniors who commit to the teaching profession.

The award is renewable for four years and includes enrichment activities. It is available to both North Carolina students and students from other states.

The legislature voted earlier this year to phase out the N.C. Teaching Fellows program, which was designed to attract high-achieving students to teaching.

Meredith has a history of producing award-winning teachers. In 2010, both the North Carolina and Wake County teachers of the year had been teaching fellows under the state program at Meredith.

To apply for the program, go to www.meredith.edu/teachfel. The application deadline is Jan. 15 for the 2012-13 academic year.
Police: Man shot at UC Berkeley acted strangely
By GARANCE BURKE and TERRY COLLINS, Associated Press

Berkeley, California (AP) -- Investigators are trying to figure out what changed for a University of California, Berkeley student who appeared to have turned his life around before he pointed a pistol at campus police and an officer fatally shot him, authorities say.

Christopher Travis, 32, was described by investigators as having acted strangely in the weeks before the shooting.

Travis died at a hospital hours after being shot Tuesday afternoon. Citing information from family members, UC Berkeley police Capt. Margo Bennett described Travis' behavior leading up to the confrontation as "unusual" but offered no further details and did not say why he might have brought the gun to the Haas School of Business computer lab.

Travis was gunned down by an officer who fired several shots after police say he ignored repeated orders to put the weapon down, police said. There were 14 other people in the lab at the time, including four officers.

"We have received information from people who know him, from his family members, that over the past two weeks his behavior had changed," Bennett said.

A video made by his former employer as part of a series on high-achieving workers said Travis had been a dropout with "no direction" who had once tried to end his own life by taking pills. After he began working as a guard for the company, AlliedBarton Security Services, he rose to become shift supervisor and went back to school, where he earned high grades that qualified him to transfer to UC Berkeley.

Travis left Allied Barton voluntarily in April 2011 and started a motivational speaking company before beginning the autumn semester.

In a blog post on his speaking company's website, Christopher Travis described himself as a "reformed computer nerd" who once wasted time playing video games. His new mission, he wrote, was to "help people like you to achieve your goals in life."
Bill Travis, the suspect's father, sobbed during a brief telephone interview from his home. He said he learned his son had been shot Tuesday night and declined further comment.

State records show Travis had been a licensed security guard. Police said there was no indication he had a concealed weapons permit. His gun on Tuesday was a loaded Ruger 9mm semiautomatic handgun registered to him, police said.

University authorities said a staff member first saw Travis carrying a backpack with what appeared to be a gun inside in an elevator at the business school. The staffer told a colleague, who contacted police at 2:17 p.m., saying she saw the man take the gun out of his backpack.

Police officers tracked him into the computer lab, where he was shot at about 2:22 p.m., roughly five minutes after the initial call, officials said.

At the time, four students were between Travis and the officer, UC Chancellor Robert Birgeneau said.

At 2:53 p.m., campus authorities sent out the first alert to the Berkeley community, saying there had been a shooting at Haas; police had the situation under control; and the area should be avoided, said Claire Holmes, an associate vice chancellor for public affairs. Another warning at 2:59 p.m. said the only suspect was in custody. A third alert sent nearly an hour later said there was no longer a threat and campus activities had returned to normal.

Students and administrators gathered at the business school Wednesday for a meeting about the shooting, with those attending saying numerous students were crying. Administrators promised safety upgrades at the school, and university counselors offered grief counseling to those traumatized by the shooting.

The incident was the first on-campus shooting in nearly 20 years. In a 1992 confrontation, an Oakland police officer fatally shot a machete-wielding activist from nearby People's Park after a break-in at the former chancellor's mansion.
As New Graduates Return to Nest, Economy Also Feels the Pain

By CATHERINE RAMPELL

Like most of her friends, Hollis Romanelli graduated from college last May and promptly moved back in with her parents.

As a result, she didn’t pay rent — or a broker’s fee or renters’ insurance, for that matter. She also didn’t buy a bed, desk, couch, doormat, mop or new crockery set. Nor did she pay the cable company to send a worker to set up her TV and Internet, or a handyman to hang a newly framed diploma. She didn’t even buy drinks and snacks for a housewarming party.

In other words, Ms. Romanelli, 22, saved a lot of money. But she deprived the economy of a lot of potential activity, too.

Every year, young adults leave the nest, couples divorce, foreigners immigrate and roommates separate, all helping drive economic growth when they furnish and refurbish their new homes. Under normal circumstances, each time a household is formed it adds about $145,000 to output that year.
as the spending ripples through the economy, estimates Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s Analytics.

But with the poor job market and uncertain recovery, hundreds of thousands of Americans like Ms. Romanelli (and her boyfriend, who also lives with his parents) have tabled their moves. Even before the recession began, young people were leaving home later; now the bad economy has tethered them there indefinitely. Last year, just 950,000 new households were created. By comparison, about 1.3 million new households were formed in 2007, the year the recession began, according to Mr. Zandi. Ms. Romanelli, who lives in the room where she grew up in Branford, Conn., said, “I don’t really have much of a choice,” adding, “I don’t have the means to move out.”

Ms. Romanelli, who works as an assistant editor at Cottages & Gardens magazines, is one of the luckier “boomerang” children who have found jobs and at least can start saving for their own place someday. As of last month, just 74 percent of Americans ages 25 to 34 were working. It is perhaps no wonder then that 14.2 percent of young adults are living with their parents, up from 11.8 percent in 2007. Among young men, 19 percent are living with their parents.

But even some young people who can afford to move out have decided to wait until getting on more solid footing. Prudence, not necessity, has kept them at home.

Jay Bouvier, 26, has a full-time job teaching physical education and health and coaching football and baseball at a high school in Hartford, near his parents’ house in Bristol. He could rent his own apartment — after taxes he makes about $45,000 a year, he says — but has decided not to. He says he will stay with his parents until he has saved enough to buy his own house. “I have it pretty good at home, since it’s so close to my work, and financially I just feel like it’s smarter for the long run to buy,” he said. He says that living with his parents enables him to set aside about half of each paycheck. “It’s like I pay rent, but to myself.”

By not paying rent, of course, he has deprived a local landlord and a host of other local companies of some income, as well as whatever businesses those purveyors might have patronized further down the line. It’s a phenomenon that John Maynard Keynes referred to as the “paradox of thrift”: Saving is good for the individual, but en masse can hurt the economy by reducing demand.
“Increased housing demand definitely has multiplier effects throughout the economy,” said Gary D. Painter, a professor at the University of Southern California and director of research for the university’s Lusk Center for Real Estate. “We have these sort of missing potential households,” he said, which also means “missing” sales and jobs in industries like retail, construction and manufacturing.

The actions of the young are self-perpetuating. Young people are reluctant to set off on their own until they have greater financial stability. But the economic conditions necessary to make them financially secure are difficult to achieve while consumers like them are still too nervous to start making big purchases, on housing or anything else.

Small indulgences are not totally out of the question, though.

“To be honest, for my first few real paychecks I’ve treated myself,” said Ms. Romanelli, explaining that she has not yet begun her plan to salt away half of each paycheck. “It’s only the first month or two, after all.”

Some economists are optimistic that there is considerable pent-up demand for new homes because so many young adults are reluctantly staying with their parents. Several of Mr. Bouvier’s friends, he said, are “itching to get out.” As soon as they find work, he says, they’ll leave.

“Once we get a little bit of job growth, or even expectations of better job market, those households are going to start breaking apart pretty fast,” said Mr. Zandi, of Moody’s Analytics. Household formation probably won’t lead the recovery, but once set into motion by other good economic news it can “supercharge growth.” He estimates that there is pent-up demand for close to 1.1 million new households, which is approximately equal to the number of excess vacant homes for sale and rent.

“If these pent-up households were to form, then the oversupply of housing would be largely absorbed and housing construction would quickly ramp up,” he said.

Mr. Bouvier, now three years out of school, is hoping to move into his own house early next year, ideally a place that he can “fix up and turn into good investment.” He says he’ll hire a construction crew to help with the renovations.

“You know, they really should have kept that tax incentive for first-time home buyers,” he said. “I’m creating jobs after all. I thought that was a good thing.”
Biyan Zhou switched her major from electrical and computer engineering to a double major in psychology and policy management.

Generation Jobless: Students Pick Easier Majors Despite Less Pay

By JOE LIGHT And RACHEL EMMA SILVERMAN
Jeff Swensen for the Wall Street Journal

Biyan Zhou wanted to major in engineering. Her mother and her academic adviser also wanted her to major in it, given the apparent career opportunities for engineers in a tough job market.

But during her sophomore year at Carnegie Mellon University, Ms. Zhou switched her major from electrical and computer engineering to a double major in psychology and policy management. Workers who majored in psychology have median earnings that are $38,000 below those of computer engineering majors, according to an analysis of U.S. Census data by Georgetown University.

"My ability level was just not there," says Ms. Zhou of her decision. She now plans to look for jobs in public relations or human resources.

Ms. Zhou's dilemma is one that educators, politicians and companies have been trying to solve for decades amid fears that U.S. science and technology training may be trailing other countries. The weak economy is putting those fears into deeper relief.
Time will tell if the poor job market persuaded more students to push into disciplines such as engineering and science. Although the number of college graduates increased about 29% between 2001 and 2009, the number graduating with engineering degrees only increased 19%, according to the most recent statistics from the U.S. Dept. of Education. The number with computer and information-sciences degrees decreased 14%. Since students typically set their majors during their sophomore year, the first class that chose their major in the midst of the recession graduated this year.

Research has shown that graduating with these majors provides a good foundation not just for so-called STEM jobs, or those in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields, but a whole range of industries where earnings expectations are high. Business, finance and consulting firms, as well as most health-care professions, are keen to hire those who bring quantitative skills and can help them stay competitive.

For 22-year-old Ms. Zhou, from Miami, the last straw was a project for one of her second-year courses that kept her and her partner in the lab well past midnight for several days. Their task was to program a soda machine. Though she and her partner managed to make it dispense the right items, they couldn't get it to give the correct change.

To avoid getting an "incomplete" for the course, Ms. Zhou withdrew before the lab ended. Since switching majors she has earned almost straight A's instead of the B's and C's she took home in engineering.

Students who drop out of science majors and professors who study the phenomenon say that introductory courses are often difficult and abstract. Some students, like Ms. Zhou, say their high schools didn't prepare them for the level of rigor in the introductory courses.

Overall, only 45% of 2011 U.S. high-school graduates who took the ACT test were prepared for college-level math and only 30% of ACT-tested high-school graduates were ready for college-level science, according to a 2011 report by ACT Inc.

"If you haven't been given the proper foundation early on, you fall farther and farther behind as the material gets more difficult. It's discouraging, demoralizing," says Claus von Zastrow, the chief operating officer and director of research at Change the Equation, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit.
group that seeks to improve science and math education. It has led professors to anticipate the high levels of attrition.

"I get direct emails from a handful of students who say, 'I struggled in this class. I realize that I'm not cut out to be a [computer science] major,'" says professor Adam Klivans, who teaches an introductory math and computer science class at the University of Texas, Austin.

Science classes may also require more time—something U.S. college students may not be willing to commit. In a recent study, sociologists Richard Arum of New York University and Josipa Roksa of the University of Virginia found that the average U.S. student in their sample spent only about 12 to 13 hours a week studying, about half the time spent by students in 1960. They found that math and science—though not engineering—students study on average about three hours more per week than their non-science-major counterparts.

Educators have tried to tackle the attrition problem with new programs that they say make engineering more accessible. In 2003, Georgia Institute of Technology split its introductory computer-science class into three separate courses. One was geared toward computer science majors, another to engineering majors, and a third to liberal arts, architecture and management majors. The liberal arts course cut down on computer-science theory in favor of practical tasks like using programming to manipulate photographs, says computer science professor Mark Guzdial. Since the switch, about 85% of students pass, he says.

Meanwhile, only a third of science and engineering college graduates actually take jobs in science and tech fields, according to a 2007 study by Georgetown University professor B. Lindsay Lowell and Rutgers University professor Hal Salzman.

That may partly be because the jobs don't pay enough to attract or retain top graduates. Science, technology, engineering and math majors who stay in a related profession had average annual earnings of $78,550 in 2009, but those who decided to go into managerial and professional positions made more than $102,000, according to an analysis of U.S. Census data by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.
"If you're a high math student in America, from a purely economic point of view, it's crazy to go into STEM," says Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown center.

Some science and math graduates also say they would rather channel their analytical skills into fields that pay higher and seem less tedious. Charles Mokuolu, 23, graduated from Georgia Tech in 2010 with a civil-engineering degree, and now heads the finance club at Duke University's master of engineering management program. He recently secured a business-strategy job in the commercial leadership program of a large global manufacturing company.

After interning at an engineering firm, "I realized that although I did enjoy learning about all this cool stuff and doing math problems that no one else could solve, it's not something I wanted long term as a career," he says.

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