False social media reports about a gunman at ECU concerned and frustrated Chancellor Steve Ballard, who was 3,000 miles away during a three-hour lockdown Wednesday.

Ballard was at a professional conference in California, he said during a Thursday phone interview from the west coast.

“It felt horrible to be away. You just never want to be so removed when something like that happens,” Ballard said.

The chancellor said he was looking at ways to return quickly if something bad happened, but he was tied in by phone and email. He followed events on his Blackberry and his wife’s iPad, he said.

Greenville Police Department updates to Ballard indicated the department had received reports someone was walking on campus with an assault rifle.
“When those words come from a police department, they obviously get everyone’s immediate attention, and we got more concerned when we couldn’t find the person,” Ballard said.

False and inaccurate reports on Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites added to the chancellor’s worries from afar, he said.

Ballard talked throughout the morning with his crisis intervention team and campus officials handling lockdown operations.

ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton and Bill Koch, associate vice chancellor for campus safety, were incident commanders.

“Even if I was there, I would not have intervened in their work,” Ballard said. “The decisions need to be made by them; that’s the way our system works.”

The emergency ended when officers confirmed the man spotted earlier was actually carrying an umbrella. The chancellor breathed a sigh of relief, he said.

Koch and Shelton now will get busy with an assessment and evaluation process, including decisions about how to define and describe safety emergencies and appropriate responses. They will take a close look at the roles social media played in this event, Ballard said.

“The good thing about it is that we had the opportunity to test all our systems and how they operated in what we thought was a real-world situation.”

A day after the events, it was clear to Ballard the lockdown was necessary.

“In my view, there was no other choice we had, based on the information we had from the police about a probability of a gunman, but to give 100 percent toward protecting the safety of the campus,” he said.

While the ECU chancellor coped with the situation from California, Greenville Chief William Anderson was in Florida on family business, and Deputy Chief Joe Bartlett also was out of town.
That left patrol division commander Capt. Thomas Forrest in charge when the incident occurred, Bartlett said during the department’s weekly news briefing.

Anderson also stayed connected via phone and email as Forrest coordinated efforts from police headquarters with Lts. Richard Allsbrook, Ken Laws and Cheryl Curtis, as well as Shelton’s officers at ECU.

About 35-40 city officers were involved in tracking down leads and searching the campus, carrying shotguns, AR-16 assault rifles and department issued handguns, Bartlett said.

“We took the information at face value and initiated our response based on that,” Bartlett said.

He said events remained fluid, and actions were coordinated to respond to incoming information.

One woman reportedly sent a Facebook message to her boyfriend, telling him that a man boarded an ECU bus and forced the occupants to throw their cellphones in a pile, Greenville police Sgt. Carlton Williams said Thursday.

The woman allegedly told her boyfriend she hid her phone from the gunman and was using it to contact him, Williams said.

Officials are looking into the possibility of criminal charges against the woman for the false reports, he said.

At one time during the lockdown, the man who triggered the report actually was on campus, Williams said Thursday.

Officers learned of his address from a neighbor and went to his residence, where they first confirmed his identity and then confirmed his “rifle” was an umbrella, Williams said.

His identity also had been confirmed by a Pitt County deputy who had seen him earlier in the morning and almost confronted him before realizing he was carrying an umbrella.

That deputy’s confirmation, together with the officers’ reports from the man’s home, brought the lockdown to an end, Williams said.
“Until we had conclusive evidence, for the protection of our citizens, and in fairness to their faith in us, we could not simply stand down from a situation like this until we had exhausted all means trying to confirm the community’s safety,” Williams said. “Otherwise, they would lose faith in us.”

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or 252-329-9571.
Faculty learn how words can hurt
By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
Friday, November 18, 2011

“You speak excellent English” sounds like a compliment.

But when it’s said by a well-intentioned stranger to an Asian-American man who has a doctorate in psychology, another meaning emerges.

“It appears to be a positive or neutral statement, but there is an underlying message,” said psychologist Derald Wing Sue as he recounted this personal experience to a gathering of faculty and staff at a diversity seminar at East Carolina University on Thursday.

He and other multicultural experts call these subtle and often unintended put-downs “microaggressions,” an everyday form of discrimination.

Sue, an Oregon native and professor of psychology and education at Columbia University, was on his way to a conference when a cab driver gave the real-life example of a microaggression.

“The cab driver wasn’t mean, he thought he was complimenting me,” Sue said. “But there was an underlying message, that Asians don’t speak good English, that you are an alien in your own country.”
Microaggressions are brief and commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, intentional or unintentional, that communicate derogatory or negative slights toward marginalized groups, according to Sue.

“This topic is of critical importance in our everyday lives, even more so for those of us who interact in the classroom setting,” said Taffye Benson Clayton, associate provost for equity and diversity at ECU. “Our goal today is to be better informed about microaggressions.”

Microaggressions happen frequently in everyday conversations: a patient assuming a female physician is a nurse, a young person using the term “gay” to describe something as undesirable, a teacher or professor asking a black student if he or she is in the right class.

“They are symbolic of large-scale issues,” Sue said. “It has meaning beyond the surface statement.”

Microaggressions can make students and faculty of color feel isolated, questioned or threatened. The damage accumulates over time, making them an insidious form of discrimination far more prevalent than outright bigotry, Sue said.

White Euro-American males make up 33 percent of the general population, but 80 percent of tenured faculty positions, according to Sue. Ethnic minorities hold 22 percent of the faculty positions at ECU.

“There is an urgent need to bring greater awareness and understanding of how microaggressions operate ... and the educational strategies needed to eliminate them,” Sue stated in a journal article he provided at the seminar.

Thursday’s diversity seminar, themed “Improving institutional climate,” is the second event this year held by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Relations, Clayton said.

“The idea is to bring in high quality individuals who can speak to the diversity issues of the day. That’s our mission,” she said. ECU defines diversity very broadly, Clayton said. “We have a mission-driven commitment to diversity. It’s in every document, policy, activity, curriculum. We’re giving students the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in what is clearly a global economy and multicultural society.”
UNC-Chapel Hill students quietly applaud student body president Mary Cooper for urging UNC-Chapel Hill trustees to defer a decision on a $2,800 tuition increase proposal. The proposal passed anyway.

UNC-CH trustees OK tuition hike

CHAPEL HILL UNC-Chapel Hill trustees voted Thursday to move forward a sweeping plan to raise most students' tuition by at least $2,800 over the next five years.

The plan, which now goes to the UNC system's Board of Governors, would raise undergraduate tuition for North Carolina residents next year by $800, or 15.6 percent. Total in-state tuition and fees would increase from $7,005 to $7,795.

Undergraduate students from out of state would pay $1,622, or 6.5 percent, more in tuition. Their tuition and fees next year would rise to $28,442, from $26,830.

Chancellor Holden Thorp said the state's flagship university could no longer hold off, after an 18 percent budget cut this year. Faculty have not received raises in three years and the past cuts have left many departments' viability at risk, he said. Course sections have been reduced, and students are sitting on the floor in some classes.
An increase in class sizes "is the best indication that we've cut everything we can think of because we wouldn't do that unless we absolutely have to," Thorp had said this fall, when he told the trustees the university was "running out of magic beans."

On Thursday, the chancellor said the tuition hike was unavoidable.

"It's time for us to wrap these conversations up and direct our efforts towards the next steps," he said. "We still have a lot we need to get done between now and when the budget gets done ... We are running out of runway."

UNC-CH has long prided itself on affordable tuition. Article IX of North Carolina's Constitution says "the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense."

Still, nearly one in three graduating seniors last spring borrowed an average of about $16,000, according to the university.

And while the poorest students will be protected from the tuition increase by financial aid, many middle-class students will be hit hard. North Carolina's unemployment rate rose to 10.5 percent in September.

Student Body President Mary Cooper urged the trustees to wait.

"I believe in order to find the right proposal we need to listen and consider all proposals," she said Thursday, supported by about 30 students who asked the board to delay its vote until December.

"Moderation is key in the midst of trying times," said Cooper, a senior from Nashville, Tenn. She presented an alternative that would raise tuition 6.4 percent for in-state students and 4 percent, or $1,000, for out-of-state students. Incoming first-year students would pay a 5 percent supplemental increase in addition to the 6.4 percent increase. Cooper said the plan would be fairer to current students who will end up paying for a diminished quality of education.

The plan would produce $7 million less in 2012-13 than the $15 million in the administration's plan, but still enough to restore lost credit hours and give faculty members a 1.6 percent raise, she said.

Trustees said the $2,800 increase over the next five years would help maintain the quality of education and retain faculty members.

"We will not be great unless we have a world-class faculty," Thorp said.
While many trustees expressed their interest in seeking other means of creating revenue, like cutting more expensive programs on campus that are not as productive or looking more closely at elements in Cooper's proposal, ultimately they agreed the five-year plan had to move forward.

The proposal can be revisited at any time, Chairman Wade Hargrove reminded the board.

Douglas: 919-932-2008

A look back at UNC tuition

UNC-Chapel Hill's tuition and fees have more than doubled from a decade ago.

In 2001-02, the debate over public university costs was raging in North Carolina. The economy was shaky after the dot-com bubble burst, and the UNC system was absorbing a huge enrollment surge as the echo boomers reached college age. The year before, taxpayers had voted to spend $3.1 billion on construction and renovation of state campuses.

In-state undergraduate tuition and fees at UNC-CH hovered at $3,200 in 2001-02 - a 19 percent climb from the previous year. Out-of-state undergraduate tuition and fees were about $13,200 - an 11 percent hike from the year before.

Students at other UNC campuses were seeing similar jumps. The UNC system's Board of Governors in 2000 first allowed individual campuses to request tuition increases and to use the money for faculty salaries, library support and other priorities. Campuses were required to set aside a portion of the revenue for financial aid.

Campuses now seek such increases annually. When raising tuition, UNC campuses like to point to the higher price tags of similar public campuses across the United States. UNC campuses annually are listed near the top in national "best buy" rankings.

But most competitors are not in states with constitutional mandates on free tuition.

Staff writer Jane Stancill
Tuition hikes go to NCSU board

BY JAY PRICE - jprice@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH Tuition for in-state undergraduate students would rise at least 29 percent over the next five years at N.C. State University if its Board of Trustees approves a proposed package of cost increases for students today.

A trustees committee voted Thursday to recommend the increases to the full board.

They would begin with a tuition increase of at least $564, to a total $5,717 annually for in-state undergraduates in the 2012-13 academic year, and higher amounts for other types of full-time students.

University officials say they are meant to undo some of the damage from repeated cuts in state support for the UNC system. This year alone, NCSU's state allocation was slashed 15 percent, $79 million.

The cuts have triggered problems that include soaring class sizes and reductions in the numbers of classes and sections offered, making it harder for students to graduate on time. And even as enrollment has been rising, the number of faculty has been shrinking.

With classes in some cases growing from 200 students to 300, faculty members struggle against a growing tide of test grading and other mundane chores, Chancellor Randy Woodson told the trustees committee.

"It takes them out of the business of being scholarly, of doing research and of moving the economic engine of this state forward," Woodson said.

Much of the additional money would be used to hire more tenured and tenure-track faculty to counter problems with class size and availability, he said, with a goal of eventually adding 200.

A substantial portion also would be used to offset the effects of the increases on students receiving financial aid, and a small percentage could go for raises to help the university hire and retain staff and faculty.

Panel's suggestions

An annual review of tuition and fees by two campus committees led to the recommendation that the university increase tuition for 2012-2013 by $330 for resident undergraduates and $660 for other full-time students. Fees would rise by $84.45, or 6.5 percent.
Also, last month the UNC Board of Governors authorized universities to enact a "catch-up" increase that would vary in size from campus to campus, based on comparisons with their peers across the country.

How the UNC system will calculate the amount is still in question, university officials said, but for NCSU the maximum increase for in-state undergraduates, by far the largest category, likely would be $1,168. It should be added to tuition in increments of $234 a year for five years.

Charles Leffler, vice chancellor for finance and business, said the university hadn't yet decided on the appropriate "catch-up" amounts for resident and nonresident graduate students and out-of-state undergraduates. Factors such as competition for certain kinds of students could lead the university to hold those increases below the maximum allowed.

Costs to students could rise higher still. If the university raises tuition at the current system cap of 6.5 percent annually, tuition and fees could hit $10,707 by fall 2016. That would be an increase of 56 percent.

Across the 16-campus system, tuition has increased an average of 39 percent in the past three years.

Remaining affordable

Woodson said that rising tuition was a national problem but that the increases he proposed would be among the lowest in NCSU's peer group.

Woodson cited a recent national ranking that listed NCSU as a terrific value in higher education. "I don't anticipate this increase changing the view of this institution as affordable," he said.

Only Student Body President Chandler Thompson voted against recommending the package of increases to the full board. Still, other committee members said they were worried about the effect of ever-higher tuition on the affordability of the university.

Trustee Norris Tolson of Pinetops said he feared NCSU eventually would be priced beyond the reach of potential students from modest backgrounds.

Randall "Randy" Ramsey, a trustee from Beaufort, said he also worried about the effects on those of limited means, but said the current rate of erosion among staff and faculty needs to be halted to preserve the quality of the university for those students.

"I understand that, Randy," Tolson replied. "But you've got to get them here before they can enjoy it."

Price: 919-829-4526
Editorial: Freeboot part of arts landscape
Friday, November 18, 2011

This year’s Freeboot Friday series ends another successful season tonight, with performances by Those Meddling Kids and Parmele providing the soundtrack for one of this community’s most popular annual events. Though it was begun in 2001 as a way to harness the economic might of East Carolina University’s home football games, the effect of these outdoor concerts is now much greater.

There are precious few opportunities that encourage the city to gather in good cheer and enjoy the company of family, friends and neighbors, but that’s precisely what Freeboot provides. So pull out a heavy coat (probably no need to bring an umbrella) and come on down to the newly refurbished Five Points Plaza to show some support to those working to promote a stronger community.

Too often, individuals are consumed by life’s minutia — the obligations of work and family, for instance — and fail to recognize the need for recreational interaction that builds and strengthens relationships. Uptown Greenville struck directly at the need for community gatherings a decade ago when it launched the Freeboot Friday series, now held before most East Carolina home games.

The events usually feature two bands, a variety of food and drinks, some entertainment for kids and a heaping helping of Pirate spirit in the run up to Saturday’s game. More importantly, Freeboot Fridays afford Greenville an opportunity to unwind after the work week, to meet with friends and family and enjoy the city we share. It is an outdoor cultural event in a community that has too few.

That last point bears emphasis.

There are some who take measure of Greenville and can only see its flaws and the absence of a strong arts community relative to other similarly sized cities. Some look with skepticism on those who try to promote art or music, dismissing those efforts as better suited for Asheville or Chapel Hill. And
yet, despite the common problems this town does have, only imagination and commitment keep such an arts-centric culture from taking hold here as well.

That starts with the continued support of events like Freeboot, which features local musicians and the many other arts events both in the community and through East Carolina. There is ample reason to believe that Greenville can rekindle hopes of being an Asheville in the East, but it will take the active and consistent participation of this community to realize that aspiration.
Addelyn Esposito dances in a scene from Smiles and Frowns production of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe at the Ayden Community Theatre on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2011. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Children's classic takes the stage
By Kelley Kirk
The Daily Reflector
Friday, November 18, 2011

For the past 25 years, Smiles and Frowns Playhouse has provided an outlet for local children to get involved in theater.

The Playhouse will present “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” at 7 p.m. today and 2 p.m. Saturday at the Doug Mitchell Memorial Theater in Ayden’s Arts and Recreation Center, 4354 Lee Street, Ayden.

Smiles and Frowns is a children’s theater organization that was established in 1986 and typically does two shows a year.

“I’ve been involved since their second production in 1987,” said Smiles and Frowns Artistic Director Andrea Croskery.

Croskery said that while they do two shows a year, that doesn’t mean that this year marks the theater group’s 50th show.

“We’re probably at number 46,” she said. “The year that Hurricane Floyd hit we didn’t do any shows.”

For “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” 93 children auditioned. Including the technical crew, Croskery said 45 students are working on the show.
“We actually had more children who helped out through coming on Saturdays and building the set,” Croskery said.

The lighting people, sound apprentice, stage manager and all the actors are students.

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” is a C.S. Lewis novel adapted by Joseph Robinette.

The story is set in Narnia where the great lion Aslan struggles with the White Witch to retain leadership of the land. Four siblings, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie, stumble upon Narnia when they wander through an old wardrobe. The children help Aslan in his fight to keep Narnia out of the rule of the White Witch.

Opening the production will be a snowflake dance.

“They create the blizzard that is referenced at the beginning of the play,” Croskery said.

Croskey said that they tried to get as many children involved in the show as possible, which is how the snowflake dance came about.

An East Carolina University student choreographed the dance specifically for the show.

With a cast of 38, Croskery tries to break scenes up so that the children aren’t sitting around too much waiting for their turn.

“There’s no way I could have 40 children waiting for their scene. These kids all have more than one thing they are doing,” she said.

Croskery credits the adult volunteers and the Smiles and Frowns Board for enabling her to get the shows staged.

Advance tickets are available at Edward’s Pharmacy in Ayden, Round Table Toys in Winterville and Twice is Nice and Artisans in Greenville.

Contact Kelley Kirk at kkirk@reflector.com or 329-9596.
The Wilmington Star News
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East Carolina's Dominique Davis (4) throws a pass as Southern Mississippi's Dasman McCullum (45) adds pressure. (SCOTT DAVIS | THE ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Pirates on verge of walking the plank**

**Two victories can prolong ECU’s streak, help young football players**

By Brian Mull
Brian.Mull@StarNewsOnline.com

Without question, East Carolina has endured a disappointing football season. Crushed by self-inflicted mistakes and crippled with injuries, the Pirates have sputtered since September and stumbled to a 4-6 record.

After a six-point loss at UTEP last week, there's unrest among the fan base. Sensing this, athletic director Terry Holland posted a letter Wednesday on the university's athletic website, urging fans to attend the final home game Saturday night.

The seniors deserve the support, Holland wrote.

A tangible goal also remains within the Pirates' reach. Although consecutive losses dropped the Pirates from Conference USA East Division title contention, they can become bowl eligible by beating Central Florida and Marshall in their final two games.

The program has played in a bowl game for five consecutive seasons. But an invitation would do more than extend a streak. The younger players could grow during the extra month of practice prior to a trip to Dallas or St. Pete. And reaching a bowl would mean a winning season remains possible.
ECU coach Ruffin McNeill knows his seniors will be emotional as they say goodbye to Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium on Saturday. But he knows what this game means for a team that's had 24 players make their first career start this season. Many of those players are expected to form the program's foundation in coming seasons.

"We need to finish off the year strong," he said. "It's for the seniors, but it's for the program, too. The program is as important as the seniors."

Besides the obvious – the Pirates have committed 29 turnovers, most in the nation – what else has gone wrong?

ECU entered the season inexperienced and lacking depth at several key positions, specifically at running back. That's where injuries hit the hardest. Reggie Bullock rushed for 428 yards in the first six games, but was injured on the final drive vs. Navy, and missed the last three games. He's listed as doubtful against the Golden Knights, and backup Michael Dobson is questionable after suffering a concussion in last week's loss to UTEP.

With a makeshift backfield running behind an offensive line fragmented by injuries, the Pirates have managed only 99.1 yards per game (112th in the nation).

The Pirates also anticipated another stellar season from quarterback Dominique Davis.

Yet, the most important player on the offense has been the most inconsistent. Davis, a senior, broke an NCAA record for consecutive completions against Navy, but has also thrown 15 interceptions.

He threw a school-record 37 touchdown passes a year ago. He's thrown only 18 this season and his target on eight of them, Lance Lewis, missed the last two games with a foot injury and is questionable Saturday.

McNeill said Davis is putting too much pressure on himself and missing Lewis, who demanded double-coverage from the opposing secondary.

"It's tough to watch those mistakes," McNeill said, referring specifically to an interception Davis threw against UTEP on the game's final drive.

"Making decisions is a big part of the quarterback position. We have to understand game situations as an entire unit. We have to understand where we are on the field and take care of the football. Those things are very important."

Brian Mull: (910) 343-2034 On Twitter: @BGMull
UNC-CH department gets new head

From staff reports

UNC-Chapel Hill officials have named a replacement for a department chairman who stepped down amid concerns that he was providing too much academic help to football players caught up in a long-running NCAA investigation.

Eunice Sahle, a professor in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies since 2001, succeeds Julius Nyang'o.

Nyang'o had been the department's chairman since its creation.

Sahle takes over Jan. 1. University officials said she is an award-winning teacher and scholar known for her expertise on Africa's political and economic development. She has received research awards from the International Development Research Center in Canada and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation. She has won two university honors for teaching excellence.

Sahle has a doctorate in political studies from Queen's University in Canada, a master's degree in political science and a bachelor's degree with honors in political science and international development from the University of Toronto.

She takes over a department that is facing university scrutiny over the high percentage of enrollment by football players in independent-study classes.

Nyang'o, who remains a professor at the university, is also under scrutiny for not catching a plagiarized paper by one of the football players involved in the investigation.
Suspect in UNC student body president's death pleads not guilty

BY ANNE BLYTHE - ablythe@newsobserver.com

HILLSBOROUGH Laurence Alvin Lovette, one of two men accused of murdering the UNC-Chapel Hill student body president in March 2008, pleaded not guilty Thursday.

Jury selection in his trial is set to begin Nov. 28 in Orange County Superior Court.

Lovette, 21, of Durham, was charged along with DeMario Atwater of kidnapping, robbing and fatally shooting UNC student Eve Carson.

Atwater pleaded guilty in 2010 and is serving life in prison in a case that not only moved a community but also exposed major weaknesses in the state's probation system.

Carson, whose benevolence and curiosity won high marks inside and outside the classroom, was working on a paper in the wee hours when she encountered her killers.

It is not clear to investigators whether Carson was inside or just outside the home on Friendly Lane in Chapel Hill that she shared with several other students. Atwater told Shanita Love, his girlfriend, that he and his co-defendant had walked through the unlocked door of what they thought was a sorority house and found her working at her computer.

When Atwater pleaded guilty for his part in the crime, prosecutors revealed some details of the killing on March 5, 2008.
Investigators say Atwater and his co-defendant kidnapped Carson and forced her into her Highlander. They drove through Orange and Durham counties and forced Carson to withdraw $1,400 from automated teller machines before they shot her numerous times with a .25-caliber handgun and the sawed-off shotgun, investigators say.

Prosecutors have said the medical examiner's autopsy report showed that Carson was shot five times, with the first four shots from a small-caliber handgun.

Blythe: 836-4948
RALEIGH The state Court of Appeals has upheld a judge's dismissal of a lawsuit filed by a former visiting professor at N.C. State University who said she was frozen out of consideration for a permanent post after making comments about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The court voted Tuesday to uphold the ruling by Superior Court Judge Shannon Joseph to throw out the complaint by Terri Ginsberg, who said the university violated her constitutional free-speech rights.

In her lawsuit, Ginsberg said she had been a leading candidate for a tenure-track position in the school's film studies department until she gave remarks at a screening of a film called "Ticket to Jerusalem," thanking the audience for "showing its support for the airing of Palestinian cultural perspectives, especially those which promote Palestinian liberation."

Her lawsuit said that NCSU faculty members had encouraged her to apply for the job before the screening but that suddenly she found herself out of favor with the hiring committee.

In its ruling, the appeals court said there was no proof of that.

"In fact, the record does not show that plaintiff's remarks were a decisive factor in the committee's decision," Judge Rick Elmore wrote.

He called Ginsberg's argument "mere speculation."

Instead, the university made its hiring decision only after a lengthy search process for the best available candidate, the judge wrote.

Rima Kapitan, Ginsberg's lawyer, said her client plans to appeal to the state Supreme Court.

"For the court to accept without analysis the university's claims about Dr. Ginsberg's non-hire when those claims were vigorously disputed not only usurps the role of the jury in the justice system, but renders the North Carolina Constitution's free speech section, which is even stronger than its federal counterpart, meaningless in the employment setting," Kapitan wrote in a statement.
Penn State scandal puts campus police in spotlight

BY JUSTIN POPE - Associated Press

At Penn State, as at many colleges, campus police occupy an unusual and much-misunderstood spot on the law enforcement spectrum - and when scandal breaks, that often leads to questions about divided loyalties.

The latest developments in the sex abuse case there have put the university's police front and center of some of the most prominent unanswered questions. Did Penn State officers thoroughly and professionally investigate allegations that former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky sexually abused children on campus, only to have their findings quashed by prosecutors and image-conscious university administrators who preferred to handle things in-house?

Or were the police themselves part of a cover-up?

The grand jury report alleging sexual abuse by Sandusky and perjury and failure to report by two university administrators - including the vice president who oversaw the campus police - suggests it was others who dropped the ball. But it also leaves many questions unanswered.

Campus police conducted a "thorough" investigation of one victim's allegations in 1998 along with local police and state investigators, the report says, only to have the district attorney decline to prosecute.

And the report says university police were never notified by anyone at the university that assistant coach Mike McQueary reported he had seen Sandusky rape a boy in a campus shower. Former vice president of finance Gary Schultz oversaw the police department, and he is charged with breaking the law by failing to report the accusation to actual university police officers or other authorities.

But in an email obtained earlier this week by The Associated Press, McQueary insists he did "have discussions with police and with the official at the university in charge of police." That contradicts the grand jury report, however, and on Wednesday both police departments reiterated they had no record of any report by McQueary.

The grand jury report also leaves ambiguity about the tone and substance of the investigation campus police conducted in 1998. For instance, when campus police Detective Ronald Schreffler and a state child welfare
investigator interviewed Sandusky, the report says Sandusky admitted showering with the victim and "that it was wrong. Detective Schreffler advised Sandusky not to shower with any child again and he said that he would not."

**Keystone Kops?**

For decades, campus police had reputations as Keystone Kops who couldn't hack it as "real" police and who spent most of their energy breaking up fights and busting keg parties, turning more serious matters over to local government authorities.

But in the last 20 years - and especially since the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings - things have changed so much that sometimes the reverse is now true. Most large universities, at least, have transformed their police forces into thoroughly professionalized forces that are very often better staffed, trained, equipped and even armed than their budget-strapped local counterparts. Officers often are former local police who want better pay and more support.

Another misconception: Campus police aren't real police. In many jurisdictions, including at Penn State, they're functionally no different than local officers. The grand jury report makes clear Penn State officials could have met their obligation to report child sex abuse allegations simply by notifying campus police officers.

But there are important differences. Campus police face additional regulations under the federal Clery Act, which requires them to publicly report campus crimes and warn students when they happen. The Department of Education is now investigating Penn State for possible Clery Act violations. Universities also face an array of civil requirements under Title IX governing how they must conduct sexual assault investigations, which could also come into play at Penn State.

**Campus culture**

Indeed, perhaps the biggest difference is campus police work for institutions - not elected officials and taxpayers - and often report their findings into parallel campus judicial systems that are typically set up to handle student infractions.

And therein lie inevitable concerns that campus police can be sucked into a culture that prefers to handle matters in-house and sweep embarrassing crimes under the rug.
"When you're dealing with some crime on the campus, it certainly raises some political concerns," said Douglas Tuttle, a campus safety expert who led the University of Delaware police force for 12 years and now teaches there. But he points out any police department could face similar pressures.

Michael Dorn, a former university police officer and now executive director of Safe Havens International, a nonprofit group focused on campus security, said many universities remain poisoned by cultures that send a message to lower-level employees that preserving reputation is paramount.

"This culture, it's a decision with the leadership of an organization," he said. "It comes back to decision-making and a culture where people in authority are keeping a proper focus on serving the people they're supposed to serve."