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## UA12/2/1 Up Next on the Hill, Vol. 97, No. 6

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# UP NEXT ON THE HILL

WKU's Master Plan provides framework for campus renovation



PHOTO BY MARSHALL CANUPP



Photo by Jacob Latimer



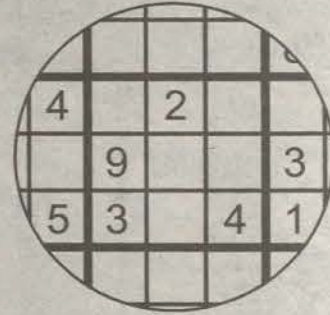
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# 'I went to school there?': University plan marks new era of campus for next generation of students

By Michael J. Collins

A field of grass now blankets the spot where generations of students studied for degrees in education, military science, professional studies and more. Tate Page Hall, originally known as the Education Complex, was torn down in 2021 after over 50 years of use.

The view from Guthrie Tower now offers a straight shot toward the First Year Village, which first opened to students last semester. The view from the Kissing Bridge was similarly transformed with the demolition of Garrett Conference Center, 70 years after its construction.

All of this is part of WKU's 10 year Campus Master Plan, an effort to "modernize and update" the campus, according to Chief Facilities Officer Bryan Russell.

"We're making history, you're living in history," Russell said. "And you're gonna go, in some time, 'I went to school there?'"

The plan is the product of years of work by administration, students, business firms and architects. The Board of Regents approved the plan in March 2021 at the recommendation of its Steering Committee, made up of Russell, President Timothy Caboni and other high-level administrators.

"Universities typically will do a master plan that sets guiding principles — what's the bigger idea for the university, what direction do we want to take going forward," Russell said.

The plan identifies five "guiding principles" intended to frame the design process from the start. In general, they aim to improve accessibility on campus, create new business opportunities, foster a welcoming atmosphere and connect students with the community.

Three major projects are highlight-

ed throughout the plan: The First Year Village, The WKU Commons At Helm Library, and Hilltop Planning Study.

The Commons began construction in 2019 but fell behind schedule due to supply chain and labor issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Russell said.

Caboni spoke with Herald staff on Feb. 1 and said it will open this semester "even if I've got to go in there and paint and throw the doors open myself."

The project is "extremely close" to a temporary certificate of occupancy, which certifies a building as safe to use before official completion, according to Russell. The university would be given a timeframe in which they must complete the building.

"We anticipate getting that [certificate] this month, and all that means is that then we can start occupying the building," Russell said. "It means that we can start utilizing it, preparing to bring in our food company, Aramark, and others there, and training people to get it prepared."

While no opening date has been set, Russell is confident that students will have access this semester.

"I don't think we're not going to [open this semester], I just think it's a matter of what day it is," Russell said. "That's how close we are. A lot of work to do, but we're getting really close."

Dining options will include Panda Express, Moe's Southwest Grill, Spencer's Coffee, Rising Rolls and Bèné Pizzeria. It will also host rotating vendors, the first being Road Trip Through America, according to Jace Lux, director of media relations.

The project is partly funded by the mandatory Flex Dollars fee for students who opt out of a meal plan, per WKU's contract with its dining provider, Aramark.

The completion of The Commons



Top: Rendering of a seating area within the WKU Commons At Helm Library. (Luckett & Farley)  
 Bottom: Comparison map of the current vehicle routes. (Luckett & Farley)

will mark a major milestone to the top of the Hill, but the plan does not stop there. The Hilltop Planning Study, designed by Louisville-based architecture firm Luckett & Farley, will redirect traffic from Hilltop Drive away from campus.

"The proposed solution removes all through traffic between College Heights Boulevard and State Street, developing a singular 'loop' drive which will greatly reduce traffic flow on the hill," the plan states. "The solution maintains service areas at Van Meter Hall as well as accessible parking on the hill."

Along with reducing traffic, the change will allow pedestrians to travel across campus without crossing roads.

"Several of these things we talked about are basically about pedestrian safety — moving vehicular traffic on the outside edges of the university. That's been going on for at least 20 years," Russell said.

Russell said the change will bring about more greenspace, which was identified as a priority for students when the plan was being designed.

"We invited students to come in and have conversations, we also put out boards and public places so they could add comments or what they were interested in on campus," Russell said. "I think you see a lot of that in this new Master Plan — taking some of our old buildings down, getting rid of some of the ones that aren't as desirable and putting back green space."

The Campus Master Plan does not stop there. The 47-page document outlines infrastructure in need of upgrade, accessibility improvements and potential future projects, including a pedestrian plaza along State Street and a new college of business to lessen the use of aging Grise Hall.

Caboni said it is "highly likely" the new business college will be built where Tate Page formerly stood. He has made several visits to meet with Kentucky legislators in recent weeks and is hopeful that the university will receive funding for the new college.

"We've gotten [funding allocation] in the House budget and I'm optimistic that we will have a good chance of having that in the Senate budget," Caboni said. "I think that'll be a really positive development for the university."

Grise Hall, Cherry Hall, Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center, Kelly Thompson Hall and Gary A. Ransdell Hall were identified as buildings with the greatest need for infrastructure improvement or replacement due to their age and heavy use.

"There's a lot of infrastructure that you do not see behind the walls, underground, that has exceeded its useful life and needs to be replaced," Russell said. "It was going to cost more money to take that [Garrett Conference Center] down than it was to prepare and fix that building."

Deferred maintenance is infrastructure in need of improvement that can be put off for a later date. Russell



Top: Rendering of proposed State Street Plaza. (Luckett & Farley)  
Bottom: Proposal to redirect traffic Chestnut Street. (Luckett & Farley)

said these improvements can only be made gradually due to the high costs.

"We have about 500 million plus of things that need to be replaced in deferred maintenance and capital improvements that we don't typically think about," Russell said. "I've got six million square feet [of campus], I've got 800 restrooms on campus that need to be taken care of on a daily

basis." Facilities like pipes, air conditioning, internet infrastructure and classroom necessities all need constant maintenance and improvement, which Russell said must be "chipped away" as time passes. "This pandemic has created a real Herculean effort by faculty, staff and others to modernize classrooms so

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that we could teach remotely," Russell said. "Well, that's a great idea, and it's pushed things forward. Part of the Master Plan talks about infrastructure, the classroom and the real need to modernize some of these classroom spaces."

Russell emphasized that the overall plan is not set in stone and that progress will be made as funding becomes available. The university will ultimately have to assess their financial situation before deciding on any new projects.

"Now, if something great comes up or a donor comes in and says 'hey, I've got a \$25 million gift and I'd like to build a new facility,' that might accelerate that idea and make it possible for the university to support a building, or landscape, or site work, or whatever project," Russell said.

Regardless of the difficulties and delays brought on by COVID-19, Russell said these changes are necessary to meet the expectations of both students and faculty in order to keep the university competitive.

"That's why new buildings get built; we're literally competing for



Above: Proposed improvements to the Collonnade, featuring trees to provide shade along the steps and outdoor seating areas. (Luckett & Farley) Right: Rendering of new College of Business, parking lot removal, landscaping improvements and upgrades to Avenue of Champions. (Luckett & Farley) Map: Google Earth, Michael J. Collins



resources, students, and I think that's normal," Russell said. "A lot of people will say 'oh, we need to stay the same.' We can't stay the same, if you're not growing in some capacity, we just wouldn't make it."

Editor-in-Chief Michael J. Collins can be reached at michael.collins527@topper.wku.edu. Follow him on Twitter @mjcollinsnews.

Read more about the hill on  
**WKUHerald.com**



Burke Family Farms, as seen from above.

# Like Farmer, Like Son

Photos by Arthur Trickett-Wile  
 Story by Arthur Trickett-Wile and Jake Jones

A blonde-haired woman sits in a leather-back chair in the lobby of an office. Several colorful plastic toy tractors are parked at her feet and photos of farms hang around her.

A young man in jeans emerges from a room on the other side of the building. They meet by the entrance and shake hands.

"Take care of my farm," she said.

With a pat on the shoulder, she leaves, and their business is done.

Twenty-year-old accounting and finance student Alex Burke just bought his first farm from his neighbor, 75-year-old JoAnn Jones, at Farm Credit Mid-America on Friday afternoon, Feb. 11 in Hardinsburg, Kentucky.

Jones' husband farmed cattle on their land before he passed. After a difficult round of surgeries, he was unable to maintain the land himself, she said.

"I wanted it to stay a farm," Jones said. "I didn't want it to be broken up . . . to auction it off into little sections. I've had that happen to neighbors around

me."

Jones says she feels comfortable selling the land to Burke.

"The Lord put him in my life to be a caretaker of that farm," Jones said.

Burke, a fifth-generation farmer, said he's excited to do just that. As a junior on the Hill, he has the virtue of being a full-time student and helping to run his family's cattle farm in Breckinridge County, roughly an hour and a half away from campus.

Burke's family was, and largely still is, in the agricultural circuit, which helped develop Burke's deep rooted love for farming.

"All of my family farmed, I started helping my grandparents out in the sixth grade," Burke said.

Burke's father was a veterinarian and a farmhand, which inspired him to not only work with animals, but to develop a sense of compassion for them.

"We never really want to hurt the animals," Burke said. "We want to make them as comfortable as possible."

Burke often finds himself hauling hay back and forth from Bowling Green to Breckinridge County. Though to most people this may seem strenuous, Burke doesn't seem to mind. His passion for the craft outweighs any complaints he may have.

"I leave the house and feed the cattle in the mornings," Burke said. "I haul grain back and forth. During the summer months I am on the tractor a lot."

Burke has a message he wants to relay: that farmers are people, too.

"I've had a chance to meet and speak with many farmers in my county, and they are some of the most unique people out there," Burke said. "When farms go out of business, it's devastating."

Burke, as of now, plans to graduate and continue working on his farm even after his degree is completed. He holds devotion to his community dear, and devotion to his family even dearer.

"When I graduate, I'd love to farm with my family together," Burke said.



Top Left: A portrait of WKU junior Alex Burke in the loft of a barn on his family's farm on Feb. 11, 2022.

Top Right: Alex Burke's father, Jonathan Burke, loads a feeding truck with a mixture of distiller's wet cake and straw.

Bottom Left: Alex Burke holds a handful of distiller's wet cake, sourced from Maker's Mark, which he and his family blend with straw they raise on Burke Family Farms to feed to their cattle.

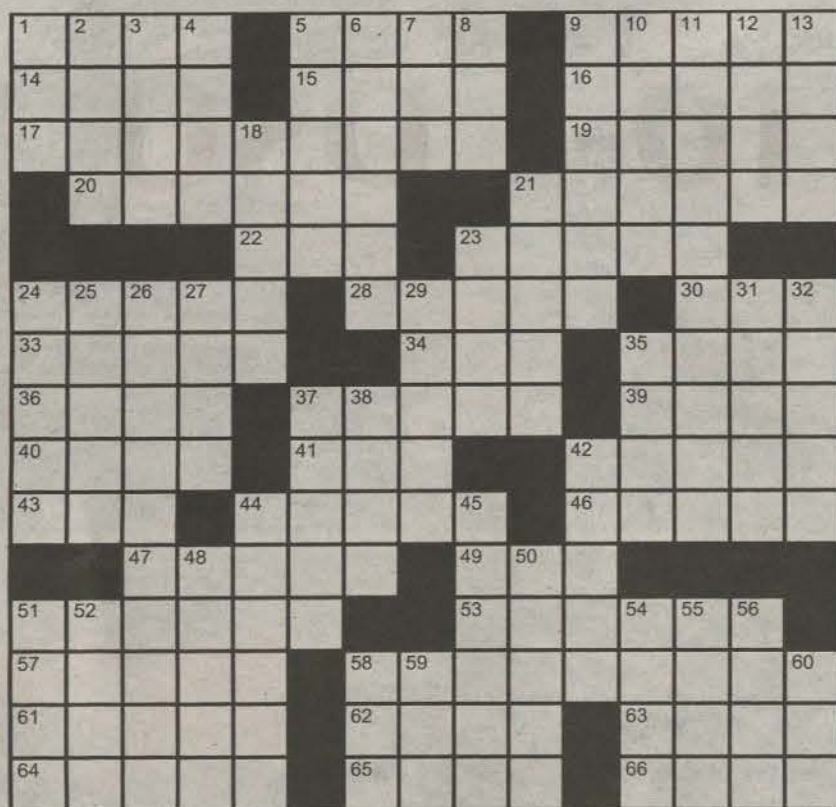
Bottom Right: "Take care of my farm," says JoAnn Jones as she shakes Burke's hand. Jones, 75, sold him the land, after her husband passed away.



# Fun Page

## Across

- 1 Metric units
- 5 Attention getter
- 9 Mojave plant
- 14 Genesis victim
- 15 Distort
- 16 Checked out, illegally
- 17 Mesozoic era creatures
- 19 Matchmaker, possibly
- 20 Giant planet
- 21 Saskatchewan capital
- 22 Tennis item
- 23 Confetti starter
- 24 Rustic digs
- 28 Holy person
- 30 Blonde shade
- 33 Hero
- 34 Squid's squirt
- 35 Director Preminger
- 36 *New Yorker* cartoonist Peter
- 37 Gives up
- 39 Young lady
- 40 Headliner



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- 65 Gusto
- 66 Old dagger

## Down

- 1 Certifiable
- 2 Nile wader
- 3 Musical Horn
- 4 Opening
- 5 Savvy
- 6 Frequent hangouts
- 7 Drop the ball
- 8 Army cops
- 9 Endure
- 10 Guesstimate
- 11 Cherished desire

- 12 Blood carrier
- 13 Icelandic epic
- 18 Bright
- 21 Grades
- 23 Conifer
- 24 Great divide
- 25 See 12 Down
- 26 Area of clement weather
- 27 Operatic prince
- 29 White House workers
- 31 Swagger
- 32 Supports
- 35 Gawk at
- 37 Gives a darn
- 38 Rams' mates
- 42 Muscle problem
- 44 Long-necked wading birds
- 45 Claws
- 48 Inclined
- 50 Manservant
- 51 Robin Cook thriller
- 52 Norse war god
- 54 Work units
- 55 Middy
- 56 Pitch
- 58 Shriner's cap
- 59 Refinable rock
- 60 Retainer

Previous crossword solution:

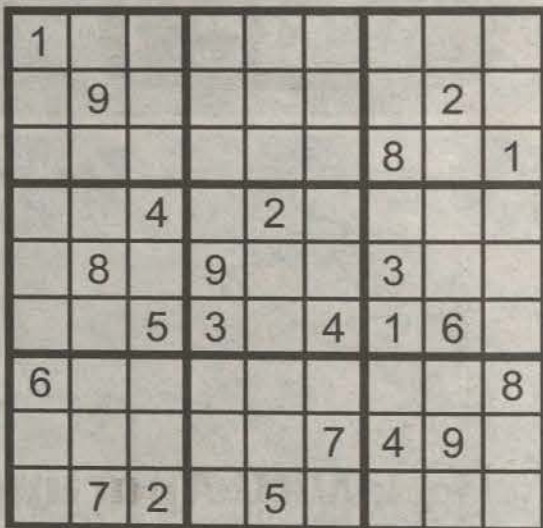
## Trivia Assortment

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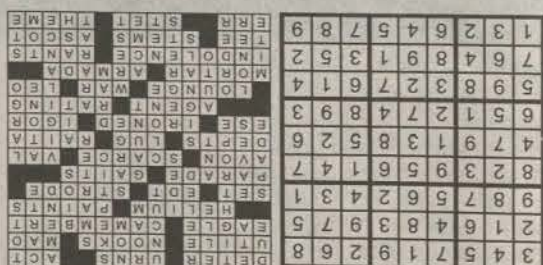
1. In what business would you expect to see a 'zarf'?  
(a) Tiffany and Company (b) Starbucks (c) Jack in the Box
2. What is the space between your eyebrows called?  
(a) Pinna (b) Hallux (c) Glabella
3. What country has a cedar tree on its flag?  
(a) Lebanon (b) Kuwait (c) Iran
4. What athlete married Patty Smyth in 1977?  
(a) Larry Bird (b) John McEnroe (c) Wayne Gretzky
5. What color is fulvous?  
(a) Pale green (b) Light orange (c) Brownish yellow
6. What country traditionally rewarded blood donors with a pint beer?  
(a) Scotland (b) Ireland (c) Wales
7. Where is Camp David?  
(a) Virginia (b) Connecticut (c) Maryland
8. What city's name was decided by a coin toss?  
(a) Austin, TX (b) Portland, OR (c) Chicago, IL
9. What European city has the nickname "The Athens of the North"?  
(a) Edinburgh (b) Helsinki (c) Vienna
10. Famine in what country triggered the Band Aid charity?  
(a) Ethiopia (b) Bangladesh (c) Sudan

Solution

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column, and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.



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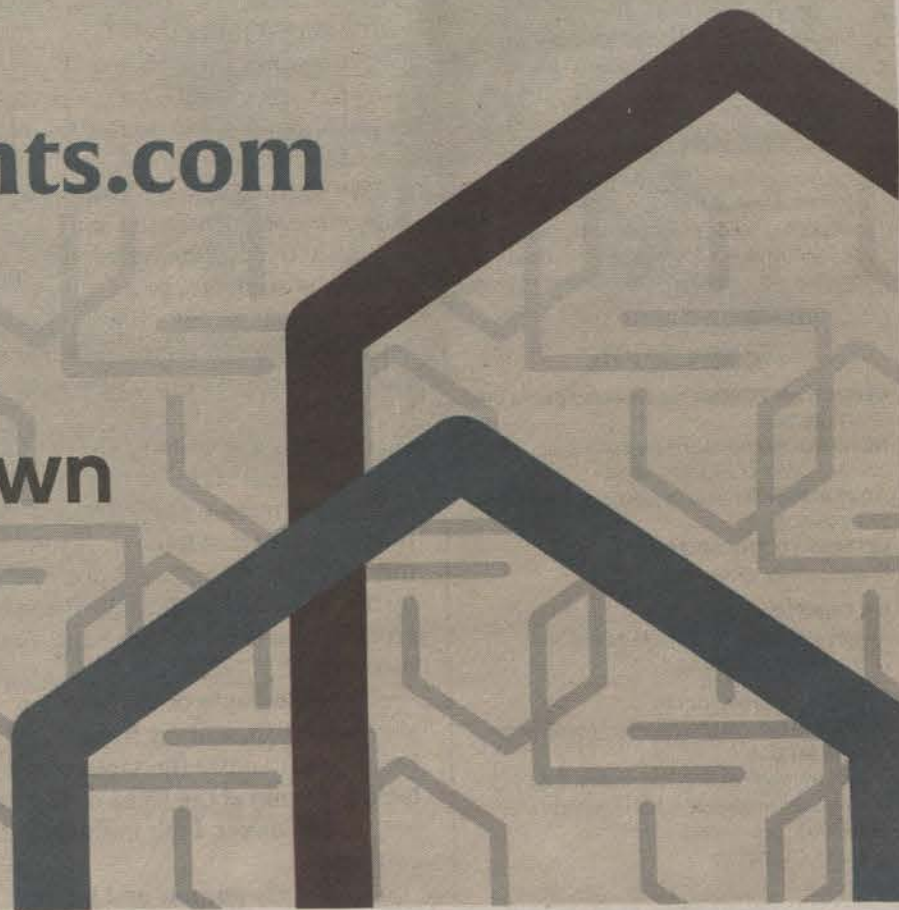
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# OPINION: Gun violence hasn't left, from a survivor of Marshall County

By DJ Stover

The high school I attended, Marshall County High School, was victimized by gun violence on Jan. 23, 2018. I started off the school day by walking through the main entrance and saying goodbye to my friends before heading off to my first block class.

As I walked into the classroom, I went and grabbed my laptop then sat on the couch. My friends piled in and sat down with me after grabbing their things. We talked and messed around like any high schooler would with their friends.

That's when we heard the horde of students running down the hallway.

I thought it was a fire drill or alarm so I peeked outside the door. My friends behind me, I saw students with panic and terror in their faces. Tears running down their cheeks. We could hear the screaming. They were violently pushing open the double doors that lead outside.

We stepped into the hallway and saw our teacher running at us with a panicked look. She yelled at us to follow the students, so we did exactly that. We had no idea what was going on, but we knew everyone was running from the common area, so whatever happened originated there.

We got outside, and followed the crowd of students to the left of the building where we passed over a trampled fence. At that moment, I thought three things: What if I get crushed by the crowd? What if I injure myself crossing the fence? What happened to cause this?

We loaded onto buses lined up along the road, and my friends and I managed to enter the same one. I looked around at the faces of sadness, emptiness, anger. I felt nothing but confusion.

I texted my parents and heard

another student say it was a shooting. They didn't believe me at first but after seeing the news coverage, the fear set in.

The buses took everyone to the nearest elementary school, and they gathered us in the gym. For an hour or so, we all talked, cried or sat in silence waiting for our parents to pick us up. The school announced they were transporting us somewhere else so we got on the buses and went to a middle school in the next town over. Our parents were able to pick us up then.

I will never forget the look on everyone's faces as I was walking out of the gym. I will never forget that day and the weeks after.

Unfortunately, MCHS isn't the only school to go through this.

Less than a month later on Feb. 14, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, also faced the terror. Then, three months later, the students at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas, suffered a school shooting.

Since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, gun violence and school shootings have become a fatal and devastating epidemic in the U.S., making high school or college campuses hazardous to attend.

After 1999, there have been a total of 304 school shootings in the U.S., whether that be on high school or college campuses.

David Riedman, Homeland Security Advanced Thinking Program co-founder and principal investigator for the K-12 School Shooting Database, told the New York Post in October 2021, "What we do know is across every demographic and region there is increasing gun violence bleeding over to school campuses."

Aside from shootings, there have been threats towards campuses either

by social media or verbally. Shooting threats are all over the news and social media.

In December 2021, a WKU student made a post on YikYak threatening a shooting near Pearce Ford Tower. The person stated "Shooting up pft around 4:30ish," and added "Y'all gonna feel my pain."

The police searched the student's room but found no weapons. He was charged with terroristic threatening in the second degree.

According to USA Today, schools have been experiencing an increase of social media shooting threats and school violence threats since September 2021. In December 2021, numerous schools, from Minnesota to Texas announced they were closing in response to threats of school shootings and bombings on TikTok.

Little Falls Community School in Minnesota said it would close on Dec. 17 after the district said it was mentioned in a threatening TikTok video. Atlanta Public Schools in Georgia increased security that day.

There should be a push for universal background checks, mental health screenings and extra measures to ensure school shootings or mass shootings don't occur on elementary, middle school, high school or college campuses.

The 1993 Brady Act requires anyone who wishes to purchase a gun from a licensed firearms dealer undergo a background check. Background checks may work for legally licensed firearm deals, but there are loopholes in this system.

Individuals who are prohibited from buying firearms legally can choose to buy from unlicensed dealers or private sellers. Many states have fought to close this loophole, but federal law does not require checks to take place in private transactions.

According to ABC News, a 2019 study by Boston University and Harvard University medical researchers found that U.S. states with universal background checks for all gun sales had homicide rates 15% lower than states without those laws.

Controlling arms sales is not the only way to prevent violence. Onlinetherapy.com surveyed 1,250 Americans in August 2021. 49% said the federal government should implement a law requiring mental health evaluations for anyone wanting to purchase a firearm.

Dr. Ira Glick, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University, and his team studied 35 mass shootings cases that occurred in the U.S. between 1982 and 2019. Their research showed that 28 of the shooters had a mental illness diagnosis.

Unfortunately, none of those shooters were treated or were seeking treatment prior to their crimes.

Violence in schools is often handled in a reactionary way, rather than proactively. Schools who are threatened or victimized by gun violence often implement extra security measures afterwards to ensure something like that never happens again. This happened at Marshall County High School and Marjory Stoneman.

However, this has the potential to create new pressures and worries among students.

University at Buffalo education professor Jeremy Finn and Canisius College psychology professor Tim Servoss in 2015 studied data from 700 American high schools and three national surveys to analyze the impact of enhanced security measures, such as cameras, police patrols, metal detectors and drug surveillance.

The results showed that increasing security often results in students feeling more stressed, as well as higher rates of suspensions and arrests that disproportionately affect African American students.

Instead of extra security, one effective way to prevent shootings is the

use of threat assessments and intervention teams. Threat assessments are designed to help schools assist students with grievances or mental health needs.

College campuses pose different challenges that may require a more constant security presence.

Umpqua Community College, a public college where 17 were shot in 2015, had campus security consisting of three full time officers, one part time officer and a supervisor. When the shooting took place at Umpqua, only two officers responded.

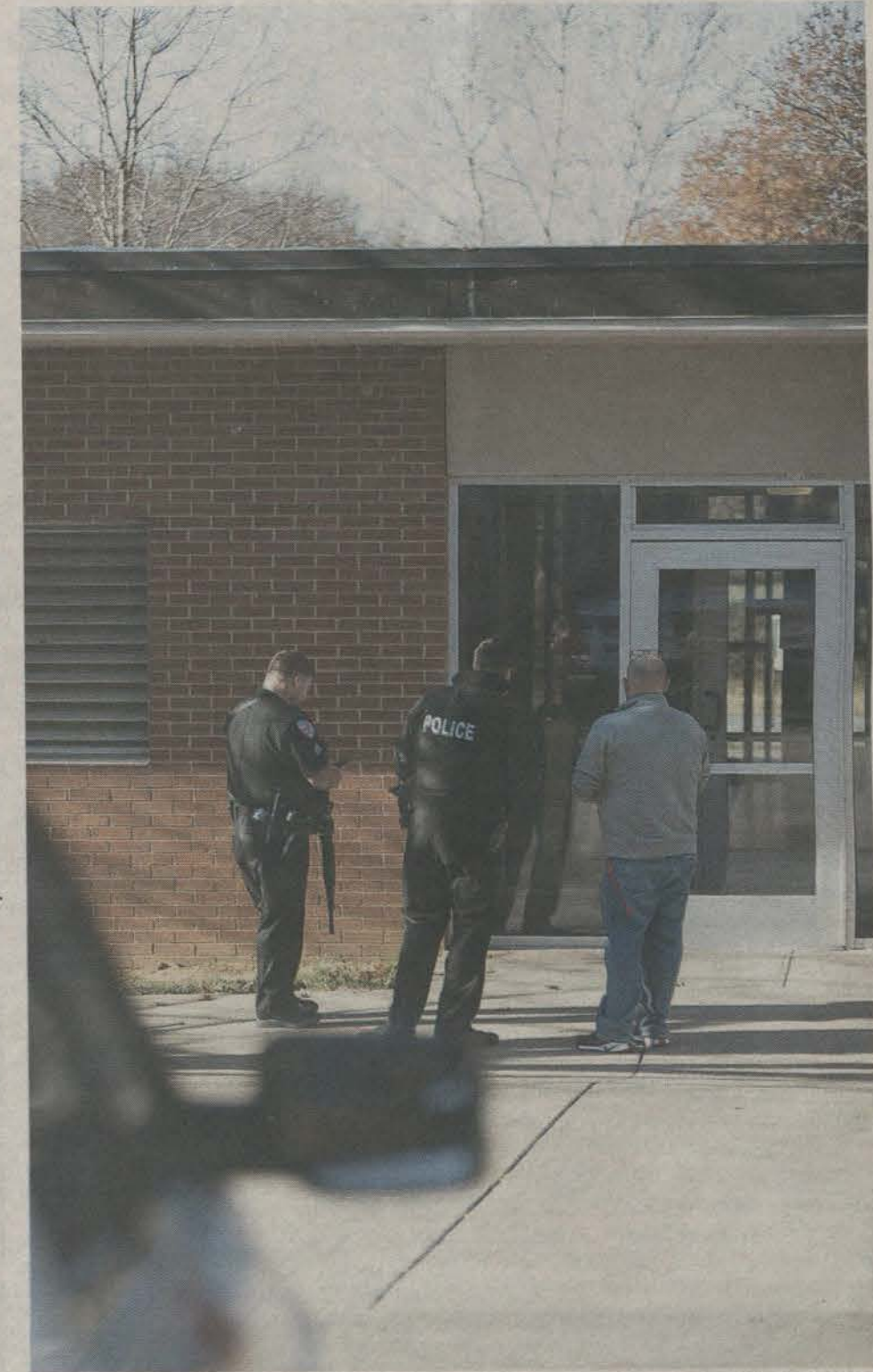
WKU is lucky to have the WKU Police Department, consisting of 21 officers in total. WKUPD were quick to respond to the Pearce Ford Tower shooting threat last semester.

After the Marshall County shooting, I didn't know what to do or expect in the following week. Everyone I knew was in shock. The shooting affected my small community in ways we couldn't comprehend at the time. We were all in a state of confusion and mourning, on edge and scared of what could happen next. No student in any American school system should have to worry like we did.

It wasn't until years later as a junior that I started to research more about gun control, gun violence, school shootings and prevention methods. I knew something had to change. Laws need to change and our treatment of others needs to change. The way we deal with shootings needs to change.

It wasn't until then that I became a strong advocate for stricter gun laws and better awareness of mental health. These are what keeps students all around the U.S. safe.

Being a victim in a close, compassionate community impacts you in ways you can't imagine. The experience is life changing, scary, hard and unimaginable. Though it may appear a daunting task, stronger gun laws and better mental health treatment are necessary to combat this national threat to student safety.



Commentary writer DJ Stover can be reached at [david.stover976@topper.wku.edu](mailto:david.stover976@topper.wku.edu). Follow him on Twitter through @DeJayeJJ.

Two armed WKUPD officers stand near PFT after a shooting threat was posted on YikYak on Dec. 8, 2021.

# International bonds key to WKU Tennis' success

By Izzy Lanuza

WKU Tennis started its season with, its best start in Division I program history. Along with its hot start, the Lady Toppers have the most diverse sports program at WKU with seven of its nine players coming from outside the U.S.

Most of the team is from South America, and they regularly speak Spanish.

"I have two teammates from Venezuela, and one from Bolivia," Redshirt sophomore Paola Cortez said. "They're similar to my culture, they're very close. Then, Laura [Bernardos] is from Spain. She's very, very nice. Also Cora[-Lynn von Dungern] is from Germany, she's a sweetheart. We don't have any issues between each other. We try to help each other a lot with everything we need."

Cortez is from Bolivia in South America. She said the people there are very different from in the U.S.; they're very familiar and warm.

Cortez became interested in tennis after watching her cousins, brother and dad play. Before long, she was on the court playing with her whole family.

"I got my first tennis racket when I was like five," Cortez said. "I started practicing when I was six, and then I started competing when I was eight, then [I] started winning championships [and] nationals."

Cortez originally came to the U.S. to play tennis at Kennesaw State in Georgia. She played there for two years before putting herself in the transfer portal.

"At the end of my second year, I didn't have a good experience with my coach," Cortez said. "We kind of were not on the same page anymore."

WKU coach Greg Davis saw Cortez in the transfer portal and started reaching out to her about potentially joining the team. Davis told Cortez that her experience at WKU would be

different than at Kennesaw State.

"I really like him, and I think he really likes us," Cortez said. "And he's excited for the season. We're excited for the season. We're on the same page."

Davis is looking for the best players for his team and he saw that Cortez fit his criteria.

"They've got to be high achievers, academically and athletically," Davis said. "I gotta see both of those."

Cortez reached out to the members on the WKU Tennis team to get a feel for the other players. She said they were so nice and welcoming to her she decided to join the team.

Cortez's teammate, sophomore Samantha Martinez, is from Venezuela. Tennis is not a very popular sport in Venezuela, she said. There aren't many tournaments, so Martinez would travel internationally to play. If she wanted to practice, she would have to drive an hour away from her home to the courts.

Martinez was recruited after she posted a video of her play on YouTube. Martinez reached out to Davis for a spot on the Lady Toppers' team.

"We started talking, and he said even though my ranking wasn't as high as it should be, he believed in me," Martinez said. "He said I had to work as hard as I can."

The tennis culture in the States is very different from Venezuela, Martinez said. The junior tournaments that Martinez used to play in are different from the college competition she plays in now.

"I used to play just on my own," Martinez said. "I was playing for me and now I am playing for a team... You still have a lot of pressure, but you have the team, you know that the team is always going to be there to support you."

Martinez has been able to improve her skill and knowledge about the sport despite this change.

"I know more; what I have to do

well when I'm playing, what I have to do when I'm playing bad," Martinez said.

Her knowledge and skill wouldn't be what it is today without her teammates. The team is like a family, especially since most of their families are a continent away. When the team isn't on the courts, they are with each other relaxing. They have movie nights and study dates.

Martinez said the team is "always gonna be there to support you." This love for each other translates to the courts.

"You don't have to get better only for yourself, you have to get better for your teammates," Cortez said. "You have to win for your teammates."

With a team so close, it can be a stressful process bringing in a new recruit.

"I come across a lot of really good players, but I don't like what I'm hearing about them," Davis said. "Meaning, as a transfer, sometimes those things concern me when I've got a group that gets along together."

The team needs to be strong both internally and externally. If the team isn't getting along, they may not do as well in matches.

"You have to navigate from the front of the bus to the back of the bus," Davis said. "Whether it's the top player, or the last player — they've got to all be on board, drinking from the same Kool-Aid and pulling on the rope in the right direction."

This season, the players are competing as a team, rather than playing individually like they did in the fall. There's more pressure when playing as a team; one player can be on the court deciding if the team wins or loses.

Many of the new players haven't played in a team setting before. Davis is not sure how they will respond to the pressure. He is trying to develop comfort between the pairs.

"I'm so happy here and I'm glad I transferred, because I'm happier than ever," Cortez said. "I know it's going to be a great season, because we have a great team now."

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*Sports Editor Wyatt Sparkman contributed to this story.*



ARTHUR H. TRICKETT-WILE

Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers women's tennis team celebrate with redshirt sophomore Paola Cortez (center) after she won the last set in their match against Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Jaguars on the afternoon of Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022, at Michael O. Buchanan Park's tennis facility. WKU won the match 7-0.