

OUR STANCE

New bar may curb drunken driving

Whether you think it's a good thing or a bad thing, Gainesville is the epitome of the term "college town." Almost everything is within walking distance and the town basically operates around the university. That said, it's no secret that Orlando isn't exactly a college town in the traditional sense of the definition. This area boasts an expansive offering, with thousands of possibilities to explore when going out for a night on the town. When you're in college, bars and clubs are usually the first things that come to mind when looking for something to do.

Unfortunately, many of the nicer bars are located near downtown, which is not quite a hop, skip and a jump from UCF. Although inconvenient, the distance isn't really the problem. The trouble is that when people go downtown for a night out, some of them are inevitably going to attempt to drive home in an inebriated state. Bearing in mind that most students use the State Road 408 toll road to get downtown, driving can be incredibly dangerous, even when sober, because speeds often reach 60-70 mph even in areas where the speed limit is lower.

Sadly this fact proved to be true recently when an intoxicated man on a party bus fell out of the back onto the 408 and lost his leg as a result.

Even if you don't go downtown, it can be risky getting back

from the bars that are in close proximity to the school. Last year, UCF student Austin Gilpin was killed walking back across Alafaya Trail from the plaza where two popular college bars are located. According to police reports, he tripped in the crosswalk and was struck by two cars.

To be straightforward, we don't condone or support the combination of drinking and, well, doing anything else. Heavy drinking is dangerous no matter where you are, but the fact is, it still goes on everyday and we only wish to see more responsibility come from students who decide to partake in alcohol consumption beyond moderation.

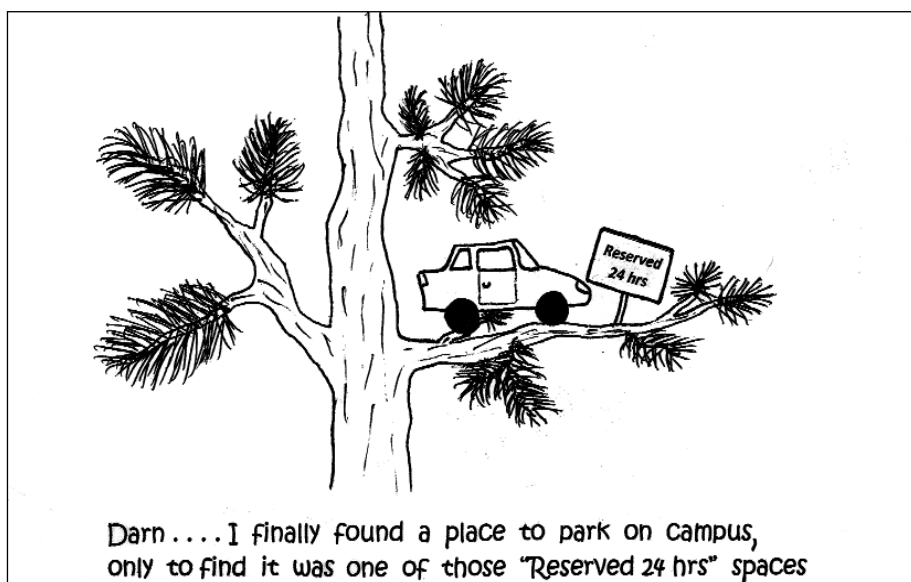
On August 1, there will be a new option for students and it will be right on campus. A new bar will be opening up right across from the UCF Arena — the first on-campus bar in the country to attain a full liquor license. We couldn't be more excited for more availability on campus because, in all likelihood, this could become a very popular place to spend a night out.

Hopefully, the location of Tailgaters will spur the interest of students who live either on campus or nearby to drink there rather than venture downtown. At this point it seems like the management is targeting the pre-game and post-game football crowds — but can a business really thrive on only six good months a year? We saw the Nature's Table Cafe open in Knight's Plaza right before the

first game at the new stadium last year, and it went out of business shortly after the football season ended.

Other schools around the country have proposed building full scale bars and pubs on campus because they realize the safety benefit that it could provide. A Southern Methodist University task force recently proposed building a pub on their campus to target students who go out to drink and to reduce the number of drunk drivers on their roads. According to the *SMU Daily*, the proposed resolution reads, "In addition to connecting students to university life and providing a safe alternative to off-campus social activities, the formation of a pub would 'break down the division between social and academic life on campus by providing a place where students and faculty could mingle outside the classroom.'"

As of fall 2007, there were 6,036 students living on campus, and obviously not all on-campus residents are of legal drinking age. An on-campus bar could provide a safe alternative to venturing off campus for a night of drinking and we hope to see it be a success. It's too early to tell whether the kind of atmosphere and incentives Tailgaters plans to offer will entice the legal drinking crowd on a regular basis. But through smart marketing (low prices) and the right environment, it could definitely keep more students out of cars to help curtail drunk driving.



Darn . . . I finally found a place to park on campus, only to find it was one of those "Reserved 24 hrs" spaces

JESSE HILL / CENTRAL FLORIDA FUTURE

A student's ode to Parking Services

Let's get this song started. I shall use my violin and make sweet music for the camera. Watch out, folks, I am no longer biting my tongue. I have been a student at UCF since August 2004, and by now anyone would be shouting from the rooftops about how infuriating Parking Services is. I have indirectly seen how many cars have had boots on them and could spot a neon envelope from a mile away.

During my sophomore year, I had frustrations with failing to park in the Lake Claire lot when I dished out more money for a special decal. Enter Parking Services to enforce their rules. I often find some of their policies a little ludicrous. Case in point: when you say it is very expensive to build a garage, and an events garage at that, how about letting students on this over-crowded campus use it? Enforce your rules on event days only. A garage is built as a place to store cars, not a pretty, empty thing to look at. If you are "dedicated" to learning from your mistakes, learn from this one.

Excuse me while I sarcastically tune my violin, I sympathize. Junior year: what I like to call "hurricane tickets." It was a time when I worked in the old Arena. There was a paved staff lot behind the Arena, and even a dirt area that Parking Services oh-so-graciously gave to students. I used my car like it was a golf cart around the Arena, frequently moving it since there was no available parking. My co-workers began to receive tickets, and eventually, so did I. By the time I received my sixth ticket I'd had enough. Now don't get me wrong, half of those tickets were probably my fault, or so I thought. That was, until a particular day when I got to trap the predators in action.

My boyfriend and I both lived in the Towers community. Talk about a double whammy — that side of campus is parking hell. If Parking Services were a slot machine, the north side of campus would be the jackpot. While parked in a metered



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spot one rainy day, I lost track of time. As I walked out, ready to move my car with seven minutes left on the meter, there was something strange happening. No Arena event was in sight, and there the tan-shirted man was, placing cones next to the meters. I intentionally waited until he got to my car to see if he would "unlawfully" ticket me. As he began to write a ticket, I walked over to ask what he

was doing. He didn't say a word to me, rather, he looked down and fake smiled — the first sign of someone lying.

I asked him to read what the meter said. Five minutes left. All I could think was "what's your excuse now?" After realizing he wasn't going to respond, I asked him to dispatch his supervisor. The supervisor arrived and apologized for his employee disrespecting me. They were taught to keep quiet and let the patron talk, but never smile sarcastically. He had the nerve to act like I was the one who was in the wrong. Needless to say, from that point on, they knew me and my car and have targeted it ever since.

In my long conversation with the supervisor, I learned that Parking Services is not a UCF department. Parking Services is its own entity. Ah ha! No wonder they shower the campus in tickets — their budget comes from citation revenues. That's no excuse to slowly burn a hole in people's wallets. Just because you do not receive state funding does not mean you have to resort to shady practices.

For those of you who may not know me, I am not a bitter person. As much as this symphony seems so, a person can only take so much until they have to let it all out. I am only human, and yes, I make mistakes just like everyone. But at least I learn from my mistakes and afterward I am still able to sleep at night. Then again, I forgot Parking Services is nocturnal. Drink away, Parking Services, drink away. Just don't forget to wipe the blood from your mouth.



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Textbook bill should receive approval

At the beginning of each semester, there is always a line that coils through-out campus bookstores. Within each of these lines are students with the same mentality and an innate dislike for frivolously spending their money on textbooks that display the same information as the year before, but at an inflated price.

In places such as Texas, legislators are beginning to realize how unaffordable education is in terms of textbooks. In response, Texas Rep. Scott Hotchberg, D-Houston, vice chair of the Education Finance Committee, has proposed a bill to the Higher Education Committee in the House of Representatives, where it was approved.

Unfortunately, this is the same place where the bill died as it never left the House Calendar Committee.

It is not surprising that a bill intended to increase textbook affordability was denied in Congress.

Perhaps one of the most unabashed offenders are the textbook publishers who continue to raise the prices once the most trivial changes are made to the text. In this way, they can hike the price while students are left to suffer the consequences of the so-called "changes."

Luckily, HB 4903, better known as the College Textbook Transparency Act, "Provides that a public institution of higher education in this state may not buy, sell or allow the sale on its campus of a textbook unless and until the publisher of that textbook posts on its Internet Web site or otherwise makes available to the public . . . the price difference between the bundled textbook and the same unbundled textbook . . . a summary of the substantive differences between

the new edition and the prior edition . . . an estimate of how long the new edition will remain in print; and the amount and recipient of any compensation provided to faculty or administrators of the institution as inducement to adopt particular textbooks for courses."

This kind of transparency would make textbook initiatives on behalf of the publisher less of a mystery to students, allowing them to speculate the value of textbook prices.

However, the most recent activity associated with HB 4903 ended on May 31, 2008, when it was re-referred to the Rules Committee.

Once again, this shows the apathetic nature of the government when it comes to benefiting the consumer, the college student in this case, and creating a product that corporate America will not excessively profit from.

One would think that in a time of economic turmoil and unemployment rates at an all-time high, the government would be urging for the productivity of our present day college students. These students are the future of our economy and therefore an integral part of our industrialized America.

According to the *Daily Texan*, Hotchberg said, "the bill was opposed by publishers, bookstores and faculty members who felt they should not be required to select books based on price."

Of course publishers, bookstores and faculty members (who sometimes write their own textbooks) oppose the legislation. Why do proponents of high textbook prices insist on using the newest edition or rewriting the textbook when there is nothing more to be written? According to the National Center for

Education Statistics the nationwide average for tuition is at an all time high, so why is it that corporate greed trumps the financial needs of students every year?

While Florida does have the lowest tuition in the country, it's still no reason that students should have to bear the costs of overpriced educational materials.

Fortunately, states such as Missouri, California, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida and New York have considered bills similar to the College Textbook Transparency Act, as reported in the *Daily Texan*.

Hopefully this kind of initiative will go far beyond consideration and lead its way to enactment so that education does not become unaffordable with the increasing cost of tuition and the incessant decrease in funding for financial aid.

Specifically, in Florida, one of the leading scholarship services for students is forced to bear the brunt of insufficient funding. Florida Bright Futures Scholarship is facing financial instability with the growing needs of students.

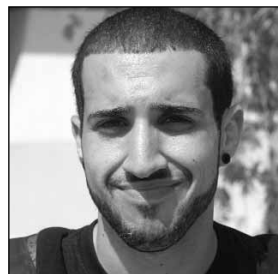
Textbook affordability should not be added to the to-do list of the American government — it should be a top priority in higher education reform. However, to garner this kind of attention and respect would take national cooperation, which can only be achieved through awareness and increased knowledge.

We can't let an important bill like this die again. Send a letter to your congressional representative, to your senator and to your school's administration and let them know that you won't stand for outrageous profiteering at the expense of defenseless students.

MAN ON THE STREET

THE WORD AROUND CAMPUS

"How do you feel about test sharing Web sites?"



GREG FRONTIERO
I/O Communications, Senior

"I'm not going to lie, sounds like a pretty good Web site."



VICTOR ESLAVA
Hospitality, Senior

"That's wrong. I don't see how that's fair to anyone else."



ALEX MACK

Social Studies Education, Freshman

"That doesn't sound fair at all. Nice for the people who get to see it though."



ERIC ANZALONE
Marketing, Senior

"Having that site is sort of like cheating yourself once you graduate."



DANIEL MATOS
Creative Writing, Junior

"It's clever and all that, but why not just learn the material instead of the test?"



DANIELA MONJE
Biology, Sophomore

"That's practically cheating."