The University’s stifled response to an unattended gun in a Wescoe Hall bathroom on Tuesday speaks volumes about its priorities

On Tuesday, as Deputy Police Chief James Anguiano conducted an investigation on active shooter procedures to a group of five people, a violin, loaded gun was left unattended in a men’s restroom on the fourth floor of Wescoe Hall.

This incident ultimately begs the question: Is the University of Kansas more concerned with catering to a conservative state legislature and governor out of fear of losing more education funding rather than ensuring its campus is safe?

Rep. Barbara Ballard, who represents the University in the state House of Representatives, said the Kansas that, while she didn’t know all of the specifics from Tuesday’s incident, it continues to highlight the importance of practicing safety in spite of a law she doesn’t support.

“You don’t know what somebody else will do with a gun that’s registered and loaded, and if it was out of fear of losing more education funding rather than ensuring its campus is safe?

The University has known since 2013 that its exemption to the Kansas Personal and Family Protection Act would expire on July 1, 2017, and concealed weapons would be allowed on campus. Four years later, the security provisions and education it has made available to students, faculty and staff toward the campus community are lacking.

Nothing productive can result from a law being flawed unattended on a college campus. There is no reasonable explanation for the University not being completely transparent with the community about this particular incident — and about concealed carry in general.

This incident could have been a chance for the University to right those wrongs and get ahead of a matter of public safety. Instead, it chose to keep a major situation out of the public eye.

The University’s stifled response to concealed carry to continue to voice their protests, concerns and outrage. Instead of openly addressing these issues and working to benefit the campus community it serves, the University has chosen to conduct matters of public safety. Instead, its offices choose yet again to keep a major situation out of the public eye.

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The University’s response to the law leading up to and since its implementa- tion, has been tepid at best. Students and staff have continually in- dicated they don’t feel safe and don’t know what new policies are regarding both the concealed carry law and the University’s safety procedures during active shooter situations.

It is concerning to think how the University would handle a hypothetical situation with a more serious firearm of harm — to the point where it’s not clear whether the campus community would even know something happened.

This spring, the University announced the results of a commissioned campus climate survey that indicated an overwhelming opposition by stu- dents, faculty and staff toward the new concealed carry law. It’s clear that University administration opposed the implementation of concealed carry but were prohibited by law to say so publicly.

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