



The official student newspaper of Alabama State University The Hornet Tribune

“WE NEED A FREE PRESS. WE MUST HAVE IT. IT’S VITAL.”

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PHOTO BY ESAELYN CAMERON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students sit quietly in front of William Hooper Council Hall in an organized protest regarding their living conditions and the amount of the disbursements distributed from the American Rescue Plan Act.

IT'S TIME TO PROTEST

Students want changes to living conditions and transparency in the dissemination of ARPA funds

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Thirty five students gathered in front of the John Garick Hardy Center around 11:15 a.m. on Wednesday, March 30 to protest what they feel to be “the misuse of COVID-19 funds and poor living conditions within the on-

campus housing facilities.” As the minutes ticked away more students began to join.

The day began in unity and strong-will as the protesters rallied in support of one another in Alabama State University apparel, while holding signs that read “#STATEFRAUD, ‘We Won’t Stay Silent’ and #Cancel ASU.”

However, days before the protest began, restlessness and an uneasiness dissipated throughout the campus as students began spreading the word and receiving fliers regarding an upcoming “Peaceful Protest,” seemingly in response to the recent disbursements of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Spring funds that

began on March 28, 2022.

According to al.com, Alabama State University received \$42,725,038 from the American Rescue Plan Act. The American Rescue Plan requires half of these funds to be used to provide direct financial relief to students, while the Department of Education expects the money will ultimately be used for

educational purposes. In addition to funding provided under previous coronavirus relief legislation, these funds are already being used by colleges and universities across the country to serve students and ensure learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once the funds began to be disbursed, a large per-

centage of Alabama State University students received a disclosed amount ranging between \$570-\$600 in total, which caused outrage amongst students who felt as though, “something doesn’t add up.”

One of those students is junior Brooklyn Alena, an

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KPMG awards master of accountancy program \$750K

STAFF REPORT
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Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), one of the nation’s “Big-Four” accounting firms awarded the Vaughn College of Business Administration (COBA) master of accountancy program a \$750,000 grant to implement a program titled the “Master of Accounting with Data and Analytics (MADA).”

The master of accountancy program was one of only 16 programs in the nation to receive the prestigious honor. The three-year grant will support student scholarships.

Kamal Hingorani, Ph.D., dean of the Vaughn College of Business Administration explained that the college is now part of an award-winning, collaborative, first-of-its-kind program, which prepares students to be competitive in today’s data-driven age by providing specialized skills for practical use of the latest analytics technology.

“The MADA program will begin in the Fall 2022 semester and will be overseen by the College of Business Administration and its department of accounting and finance,” Hingorani said. “We are very humbled and proud to be included among such an elite group of only 16 schools awarded grants by one of the nation’s most acclaimed accounting firms.”



Kamal Hingorani, Ph.D.

Our program is listed among such institutions as the University of Georgia and The Ohio State University.”

Hingorani stated that KPMG is adding new universities to its MADA program, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), with the expectation of creating increased diversity and inclusiveness in the field of accounting and to encourage underrepresented individuals to pursue a graduate education in accounting.

“This collaboration with one of the Big-Four accounting firms will enable ASU to upgrade its curriculum, train its faculty, and have access to the latest data analytics tools and technologies on a state-of-the-art hosted cloud platform provided by KPMG,” said Hingorani. “The aim of the program is to develop students that can ingest and analyze data as most businesses are now seeking professionals that are comfortable with both data analytics and auto-

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PHOTO BY ESAELYN CAMERON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ronald Martin, Micah Sanders, Camille Zanders, Khalil Stewart and Lateef Oloko are the 2022 award winners of the “Best of the South” Competition that is sponsored annually by the Southeast Journalism Conference. 29 universities entered the competition.

The Hornet Tribune captures five awards at SEJC’s ‘Best of the South’ competition

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Student journalists representing 29 colleges and universities assembled with anxiety and anticipation as the 34th annual Southeast Journalism Conference’s (SEJC) ‘Best of the South’ awards were announced virtually on Friday, March 25.

Since SEJC’s beginning as an idea of Alabama professor David Sloan, Ph.D., in 1986, the South-

east Journalism Conference has worked hard to meet its two original purposes: 1) to encourage greater interest in student journalism and 2) to create closer ties among journalism schools in the Southeast United States.

Staff members from The Hornet Tribune earned five awards - the most the staff has received from the ‘Best of the South’ competition since joining the Southeast Journalism Conference in 1998.

The individual winners

are:
Khalil Stewart
First Place
Best Special Event Reporter/Editor
Camille Zanders
Fourth Place tie
Best Feature Writer
Ronald Martin
First Place
Best Artist/Illustrator
Lateef Oloko
First Place tie
Best Newspaper Layout Designer
The Hornet Tribune
Fourth Place

Best Newspaper Website

Ronald Martin, a freshman art major who joined the staff last semester was totally surprised at the announcement.

“I had no idea I was in the competition, but I’m extremely happy that I managed to get first place in a regional competition,” he said. “I love being around

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Captures: “I just feel like it was just like any other vaccine ...”

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everyone and just being in a productive environment. I also get to do what I love and have exposure as well the experience in return.

Khalil Stewart, a sophomore communications major from Birmingham, Alabama said the award was unexpected, “but it raises my bar to be a better writer.”

Micah Sanders, The Hornet Tribune’s editor-in-chief, said he is proud to work alongside these dedicated student journalists.

“Just seeing four of my staff members being placed as the best of the best in the Southeast for journalism is amazing. The fact that we are an HBCU, which is usually known to have fewer resources and we are placing ahead of larger universities like the University of Alabama and the University of Tennessee speaks volumes,” he said. “I am super proud of Khalil, Camille, Lateef, and Ronald for always putting 110% into their work ethic, and it truly paid off. To those who did not win an award, including myself, let it be known that awards don’t define a person but just add a sparkle to an already accomplished resume.

He continues.

“This is just the beginning, we still have two more competitions to enter, so I hope that we continue to

Awards: “... that are comfortable with both data analytics and ...”

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mation technologies.”

This expansion aligns with the firm’s “Accelerate 2025” commitments and is one of several ways KPMG is creating pathways for underrepresented future leaders to build their careers in the profession and with KPMG as an employer of choice.

“Expanding the master’s program will help close the gap between academic preparation and accounting career readiness,” said Scott Flynn, KPMG vice chair of Audit. “Importantly, our HBCU-focused

Receives: “You do not want a child to grow up too soon, but ...”

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search, Wardlaw does not have a clear solution, believing that the world is still constantly “changing.” She compares the current generation with the previous ones. This upcoming generation may be much different from hers. Due to those differences, they may have a different perception of adultification.

“I do not know what their main values are and what they perceive to be important, other than the fact they do not appreciate being wrongly identified. I do not know how that works in terms of adultification, because while some may be more mindful of it, others may believe having certain responsibilities at young age helps you prepare for the future as you get older,” Wardlaw said.

She sees the dilemma that parents can face when dealing with the issue of adultifying their children.

“You do not want a child to grow up too soon, but at the same time, you want to make sure they learn certain responsibilities and how to take care of themselves whenever the time comes,” Wardlaw said.

According to Cothran, Wardlaw’s research has “helped to establish something crucial in literature,” bringing attention to the extent of discrimination and adultification of Black children, especially in comparison to white children. She went on to explain how “this

showcase our immaculate talent to the world and let everyone know why we are ‘The Oldest Black College Newspaper,’ and as editor-in-chief, I will continue to make this ‘Experience Amazing,’” he said.

Kenneth A. Dean, J.D., the general manager for The Hornet Tribune, said the newspaper submits entries for as many categories as they can every year.

“It is important for students to know how they actually stack up in this ever-changing industry and since these entries are judged by professionals in the industry and some faculty members, it gives them a true sense of where they stand in terms of the quality of their work,” he said. “Journalism is both a craft and a skill and the better students become, the more likely they are to be hired.

Dean believes that the variety of the awards earned reflects the kind of well-rounded journalists that The Hornet Tribune seeks to produce and it also allows students to display other skills that our staff possesses.

The awards ceremony was hosted by Lipscomb University associate professor of communication and journalism Jimmy McCol-lum, the adviser for Lumination, as well as Belmont University’s Dorren Robinson.

investments will support underrepresented individuals and diversify our profession, better enabling us to deliver quality and innovation long-term.”

The firm explains that it has deepened its relationships with HBCU’s. Hires from HBCU’s have increased more than 40 percent over the previous year and at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, there was a 13 percent increase in KPMG’s three-year retention rates of professionals from HBCU’s and a 19 percent increase in the five-year retention rate of its HBCU alumni.

current research is helping to understand how being victimized in this way as a child may have a tendency to manifest itself later in adulthood.”

The two are currently working on getting Wardlaw’s article published in the Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research, so that it can reach more people.

Wardlaw, being a Black woman giving insight on a topic composed of mostly Black women, adds even more weight to her work. Cothran describes this feat as “rare” and “commendable.”

Wardlaw felt this experience was crucial in her development in the field of psychology. She understands that she will be expected to do more in the future and having this achievement and experience will better prepare her.

In the future, she plans to go to medical school to be a psychiatrist and/or a cardiothoracic surgeon.

As far as her research goes, Wardlaw has an answer that describes her perfectly.

“I definitely do not plan on ending this research or any of my research in the future. Being at the conference and listening to other presentations, I formulated numerous research questions that I feel compelled to find answers to. That is really what psychology is about, having questions and doing what it takes to find answers.”



Student protestors stand in front of William Hooper Council Hall expressing their concerns about living conditions and their checks. PHOTO BY ESAELYN CAMERON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Protests: “In the end, he told me that I represented the gender well ...”

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outspoken student who made it known that she, along with Tray Barnett and Neveah Archer were all organizers of the student protest.

“We started this protest to vocalize the issues and needs of the students,” Alena said. “We are demanding to see how the funds that Alabama State University received have been distributed. We have been told that the fund distribution list is already in the hands of higher ups, it’s just not being presented to the students.”

She continued.

“Yesterday the SGA (Student Government Association) and SOS (Student Orientation Services) made a website trying to present the fund distribution breakdown, but we do not want web-based documentation, we want to see the actual document. In addition, we want the funds to be disbursed to aid in poor living conditions here on campus. We have mold, no heat or air, showers and ceilings leaking and two people placed in the group chat today said that they found rodents in Towers (C.J. Tower). Also, college work study is not being paid like it is supposed to, we have only received January checks, so where is this money going? So there is a lot to discuss, we are not backing down.”

Alena feels “it’s about way more than the money, it’s way deeper and they know it. The biggest thing that I want to note is that Dr. Ross had not said anything and it had been over 48 hours.”

Although ASU has not issued an official response to student concerns, after recognizing the large outcry for answers, on March 28, the Student Government Association (SGA) President Gem Richardson sent out an email to the student body with a digital form link attached, urging students to utilize the google form in order to “vocalize questions and concerns about the Cares Act” after the initial conversation of a protest arose.

However, Richardson’s email did not calm the crowd or the students who felt like they had not been dealt with fairly.

SGA Treasurer Jeremi Moore (who is running for re-election) approaches the protestors in an effort to hear their concerns, but also attempts to diffuse tensions by explaining how the funds were disbursed according to his conversation with ASU officials. However, the attempt to de-escalate the situation fell on deaf ears as stu-

dents then begin to get into a heated debate with Moore, claiming to have evidence of the university’s misappropriation of funds and demanded to see records and documentation of the disbursement in person.

“I feel like we allow ‘State’ to do things behind our backs and they just expect us to deal with it because we have been here for so long,” said Kay Jayy, a senior early childhood education major. “All we are doing is providing a path for the change that we want to see. If you want change you have to be the change, use your right as a citizen to protest.”

“I do believe that this \$500 that we just received is a portion of the nine million that the school received for the fall semester,” said sophomore, political science major Neveah Archer. “However, we have records that show that ASU was awarded \$42 million on March 7. And while other schools on the list have received their Cares Act money, I find it unacceptable that we have not received ours yet. This is why we need to see the layout of how funds are disseminated, where they are going to and how they are being used.”

Archer continues.

“For example, the ‘Retool Your School’ money that was received in 2017 to ‘fix the Health Center’ has not been fixed yet. Simpson went viral for needing to be rebuilt and yet that is still an issue. Now we just received the ‘Retool Your School’ grant again and they’re saying they want to add on to the John Garrick Hardy Center, so what happened to the money from the Health Center project or The Blue Meridian Project. Students have a right to know what the university is doing with the funds, because we pay our tuition and keep the lights on here.”

Protesters marched from the Shuttlesworth Dining Hall holding their strikingly colored signs and brought attention to important issues that concern them greatly. They ended up at William Hooper Council Hall where they were ultimately met with a confrontation between the protestors and President Quinton T. Ross, Jr. Ed.D.

Sources close to the situation said the students were in the president’s office for at least an hour conversing about their issues and listening to the university’s side of the story.

However, according to Alena, they were actually the ones who sought out an interview with Ross after protesting for over an hour.

She said upon entering the building, the president’s staff was hostile and told the protestors that the president was not available, but did take the contact information of Treyonous Burnett, a fellow organizer.

After being denied, they began exiting the building and at that point they were abruptly called back to the office by Ross’s secretary. Once they returned to the office, all cell phones and other devices were confiscated. Alena describes the scene as hostile and very tense, initially.

She continues to describe the meeting once they entered into the president’s office.

“We said hello to him when we entered into his office and we did not receive a response. He asked us what was going on and we dove right into our issues. We did not sugarcoat anything because we wanted to get to the bottom of this situation. For the first hour we tried to explain our problems with the university and asked to see documentation. It was a lot of back and forth, I mean it was very intense.”

She continues.

“The first thing that Dr. Ross said was ‘first of all, hello.’ He then asked why we didn’t go to the SGA with our issues as they were the first line of defense for the student body and then he disclosed that they had all the documents, which when we spoke with them, they denied having anything. I then asked him when was the last time he had stepped into Bessie Sears Estell Hall, Simpson Hall, or Martin Luther King Jr. Hall. Admittedly, he revealed that his issue was that the protest and social media posts brought the university bad publicity and a possible investigation.

As the meeting began to cool down, according to Alena, she informed Dr. Ross that he was invalidating her as a woman, because he was only addressing Trey.

“In the end he told me that I represented the gender well and I should consider running for SGA,” Alena said. “I am appreciative of the encounter because I think we got to know each other a bit better. He actually showed us his yearbook and some protests that he became involved with on campus. In the end he revealed that we actually don’t have access to the \$42 million yet and the disbursements that went out this week was from the previous \$9 million that they received, so we will be getting another check, they just do not know when. He even offered to help us structure the protest in a more

effective way, but we kindly declined because this protest represents the students’ voices, but he did say that he wasn’t going to try and stop us. We are trying to grow our numbers and a lot of people are scared to get arrested or reprimanded by the school.”

After the meeting, students seemed to have disbanded and were content with the results of the conversation that they had with Ross, but as promised, they are “not backing down,” and vow to keep any future conversations of wrongdoing going via social media and other gatherings.

“It’s most definitely important for students to protest because we need numbers. When you look at your environment and what you’re getting fed, where you stay and lay your head at night, you should know there is a problem and it is up to the students to take action,” Alena said.

“If one thing can be said,” Alena said, “it is that the power of vocalizing concerns and meaningful protest was utilized and depicted an impactful statement to students and staff alike.”

“Lastly, I want people to know that we have many more gatherings planned and we are rebranding the protest as #REFORM and #CLEAR COMMUNICATION,” Alena said. “Our goal isn’t to bash our HBCU, but simply to hold it to a higher standard. We need to have those conversations.”

Once the smoke cleared, Ross provided Alena and Barnett with contact information to several different offices to answer any other probing questions revolving the Cares Act, housing and any other issues and concerns.

While Alena is glad to finally have her voice recognized, she is upset that the situation had to go this far in order for to meet the university president for the first time.

“I actually told him that there should be no reason why my first time meeting him should be under these circumstances,” she said. “He was shocked that I had not seen him in-person before.”

Alena goes on to say that equal opportunities and equal power is vital for the success of the student body, and mentions that her and the protestors are far from done voicing their concerns.

“Stay locked in because we have more planned for the upcoming semesters so that we can transform ASU into the HBCU that we all deserve.”

It’s got to be

