



**MU News Bureau**

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## Why America Is Growing The Most Sweet Potatoes Since WWII

(Note—story originally aired earlier this year. Yesterday it aired again on NPR nations across the country for Thanksgiving)

By: Kristofer Husted

Sweet potatoes are undergoing a modern renaissance in this country.

While they have always made special appearances on many American tables around the holidays, year-round demand for the root vegetables has grown. In 2015, farmers produced more sweet potatoes than in any year since World War II.

### **War Effort**

"A lot of things were hard to get during World War II, and potatoes were easier to raise than some of the other vegetables," my grandmother Joyce Heise tells me.

She grew up outside of Philadelphia. Her grandfather farmed potatoes, and their orange sister tubers, sweet potatoes. "And then some things were rationed so you had to do with what the best you could," she says.

Regular potatoes and sweet potatoes were a staple in American victory gardens and on dining tables. Why? They were cheap and really easy to grow. Back then, we didn't have sweets like we do now. So sweet potatoes satisfied that sweet tooth at a discount for Americans strapped for sugar and cash.

By the end of the war, U.S. farmers were growing more than 3 billion pounds of sweet potatoes. But when soldiers returned home, people went back to work and the economy hummed.

"It became cheaper to buy russet potatoes than, you know, to grow your own sweet potatoes," [April McGreger](#) says. She grew up on a sweet potato farm in Mississippi and wrote about the history of the root vegetable in her book *Sweet Potatoes*.

"At around the same time, we really had this sort of movement away from small farming families in the U.S. into working people in more industrialized jobs," she says. "That means people purchasing more of their food instead of growing it."

Industrialization of farming and the rise of processed foods left sweet potatoes in the dust. U.S. production dropped by a billion pounds within two years after the war and it bottomed out in 1980, with less than 1 billion pounds total, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### **Fad diets and trendy restaurants**

Fast-forward to the 2000s when the sweet potato began its ascension. One big reason: the fad diet. For anyone on the South Beach Diet, Paleo diet or Atkins diet, the hearty sweet potato was a godsend. Even TV personalities like Dr. Oz highlighted the magic of the vegetable.

"All these diets that have tons and tons of followers are really touting sweet potatoes as being this 'super food,'" McGreger says.

As Americans were encouraged to cut sugar intake and eat more fiber and antioxidants, the sweet potato – chock full of vitamins — began to show up on plates again. With a long growing tradition and a climate suitable for cultivation, sweet potatoes are local to just about every farmer in the U.S. That makes them ripe for diners that care about eating local. Schools started serving them for breakfast and lunch. Top chefs incorporated them as a quintessential Southern food.

"Sweet potatoes are the darling of this local, farm-to-table eating movement," McGreger says. "They're a local ingredient that can be accessed 12 months out of the year."

### **Decline Of Tobacco, Global Demand**

In 2000, Americans ate about 4 pounds of sweet potatoes per person. Today, it's nearly [double that](#), at 7.5 pounds per person.

McGreger says farmers noticed – especially tobacco farmers.

"Right now, the largest producer of sweet potatoes is North Carolina," she says. "Those are tobacco farmers that have switched to sweet potatoes because it's a relatively good cash crop to replace tobacco."

Outside the country, global demand increased as well.

**"In the last 10 years there has been a tremendous increase percentage wise of sweet potato exports," says [David Trinklein](#), an associate professor of plant sciences at the University of Missouri. "A lot of them going to Europe."**

Trinklein says the majority is going to Northern Europe and Great Britain where it's too cool to grow sweet potatoes. Today, U.S. sweet potato farmers export about 11 percent of the total supply.

Hungry Europeans, hungry Americans, health-conscious eaters, local foodies. Add up all of these factors, and U.S. farmers produced 3.1 billion pounds of sweet potatoes in 2015. And it may not stop there.

"I think if they can develop new ways to market it, to eat it," Trinklein says, "there very well could be an increase."



## New incentive program for faculty adoption, adaptation or creation of affordable and open educational resources announced by UM System

By LAUREN BISHOP

**The UM System recently launched an incentive program for faculty that adopt, adapt or create affordable and open educational resources for their classrooms.**

A&OERs are teaching materials that are in the public domain or are released as free or at greatly reduced costs for others to use. These materials include textbooks, videos, software and even full courses.

Jana Moore, senior program coordinator for the UM System OER task force, works with the four UM System campuses to raise awareness of OERs and facilitate collaboration between universities. Moore said OERs should be available because of the universal nature of information, especially in lower-level science and mathematics courses.

“Basic algebra is not going to change. Basic chemistry is not going to change,” Moore said. “The knowledge behind the teaching has not changed for hundreds of years. This knowledge should be available to everybody. You should not have to purchase it.”

Considering these factors, among many others, the UM System has launched an incentive program for professors that choose to adopt, adapt or create A&OER materials. The grant amount varies from \$1,000 to \$10,000, depending on the amount of cost reduction and the choice of adopting, adapting or creating resources.

Additional grants can be earned based on the expected enrollment of the course or section. For MU, if more than 250 students are expected to take the course, an additional \$1,000 grant can be awarded.

According to Dale Sanders, senior academic director of campus retail, this fall, 30.2 percent of materials for an MU course per student were \$40 or under, which classifies them as “affordable” under the grant program. For first-year undergraduate classes, 33.2 percent were below \$40.

Sanders said this initiative is still relatively new, but many faculty members are beginning to be or are already involved.

“It is still early in the adoption process with only 25 percent of estimated adoptions submitted by faculty,” Sanders said. “So far, we have 54 confirmed faculty with an A&OER adoption, 35 of those were already offering an affordable option, [and] 19 of them are converting to something affordable this spring.”

Sanders said The Mizzou Store has saved students nearly \$1.6 million in the last two semesters combined from AutoAccess and other low-cost alternatives to published materials. AutoAccess is “a collaborative program between The Mizzou Store, faculty and publishers that provides required materials automatically when a student enrolls in the course, at a reduced cost,” according to the Mizzou Store website. So far, over 82,000 students across the four UM System campuses have enrolled in AutoAccess.

Moore said this program may be more effective than each campus creating its own grant program, due to a potential lack of funds and irregularities between the universities.

“One of the benefits to working together as a full system is that we are able to fund these projects in a way that maybe an individual campus could not,” Moore said. “Our primary focus is to make sure that students are successful in whatever discipline they choose and that they have the resources that they need.”

UM System President Mun Choi announced the initiative to increase awareness and use of OERs last spring. On Aug. 3, the UM System A&OER task force met for the first time. The group includes “faculty, students, librarians, instructional designers, and the system bookstore,” according to its website.

According to its website, the task force focuses on “providing more affordable and open educational resources,” “engaging faculty in converting existing and developing new courses into O/AER courses” and “developing a sustainable system-wide strategy to increase awareness and incentivize the transition to those resources,” among other priorities.

MU had a working group approximately two years prior to the UM System announcement to emphasize the use of A&OERs, according to Danna Wren, co-chair of the MU OER task force. She said the group had conducted surveys and worked to increase campus awareness of the assistance available on campus to find and use OERs. In October, the official MU OER task force met for the first time, Wren said.

Wren said the UM System is asking each of the four campus task forces to identify existing resources and recognize faculty who have begun to adopt, adapt or create materials.

“We have been charged by the system task force to spread the word on campus,” Wren said. “We are doing all kinds of presentations for faculty about how to incorporate them. We are gathering information about [current] OER use through the bookstore.”

According to the MU Libraries website, “61 percent of students have chosen not to purchase a required textbook” and “17 percent of students say a lack of access to course materials has negatively impacted their grades.” This information was found through a collaboration with the MU libraries, The Mizzou Store and the OER working group in spring 2017.

Steven Keller, associate professor of chemistry, has switched from a published textbook to OER online text materials in his Chemistry 1320 class. Keller uses Chemistry LibreTexts for reading assignments. He said he is able to tailor the course to the materials that he needs in the order that he wants them rather than following the chronology of a textbook.

“There is a point when they're all just looking the same,” Keller said. “I think [saving students money] is an admirable goal and it's one that we are succeeding in, but it also needs to have a pedagogical component. It allows the instructor to really mold the educational resources the way I want them.”

Keller's students were asked to pay \$58.99 for the AutoAccess to ALEKS electronic homework system, along with additional costs for a lab notebook and goggles for the course. While this is not in the “affordable” range of course cost, as dictated by the UM OER grant website, it is still a major cost reduction for the class. By making this switch, Keller saved each of his students \$133.61, totalling a savings of over \$100,000 for his students this semester, according to his records.

Keller said switching from the written textbooks to an OER option has not caused any noticeable differences in exam grades.

“I haven't seen any drop-offs in grades over the first two exams,” Keller said. “They're different classes, [and] they're different exams, but in terms of the measurable short-term outcomes, it looks like it doesn't have any global effects.”

Freshman Tommy Shotton is in Keller's chemistry class and said his math class is also using an AER option.

“I like looking at the paper textbook more because you can actually see it and move the pages,” Shotton said, “but the online textbook is definitely cheaper and you can use it on any computer so that makes it more convenient.”

Shotton said he prefers online textbooks due to the cost-effectiveness and ease of access.

“[OERs save] the students money and [lets] them be able to use the textbooks whenever they want to use it. All you have to do is log into your account,” Shotton said. “You wouldn’t always have to have your textbook on you, so if you have a computer, you have your textbook.”

Universities can either take a horizontal or a vertical approach to A&OER integration. Vertical consists of choosing a college or school and working through the entire program to implement A&OERs. Horizontal is looking at the options available for all lower-level classes first and working up to the more advanced courses.

Wren said MU is taking a horizontal approach and pointed out that the A&OER program is not mandatory. She said the UM System supports whatever choices faculty make for their course and course materials.

“We feel like a faculty member knows their course the best, so they can determine the best materials,” Wren said. “It’s going to be much more readily available for those intro classes [and] those high enrollment classes. We want to start with those because those [have] the most impact for students. We just don’t have as much of a call for vertical integration.”

Keller said the A&OER program will benefit students and the university because it may allow more students to come to MU and acquire the necessary materials that they could not in the past.

“If, on an individual basis, lowering the cost of a year of education allows some students to come to Mizzou that would not be able to otherwise, I think that’s tremendously beneficial,” Keller said. “I think it shows the state and the nation that the University of Missouri System and Mizzou care about how much education costs.”



## Small Colleges Can Save Towns in Middle America

### NO MU MENTION

By NOAH SMITH

Originally on Bloomberg View.

In 2016, economist Lyman Stone of the U.S. Department of Agriculture wrote one of the most important [blog posts](#) in recent history. It was promptly overlooked by almost everyone. But

Stone's post -- a deep dive into the economics of the small town of Pikeville, Kentucky -- shows the way forward for the U.S. economy and American society.

Pikeville, with about 7,000 people, is located deep in Appalachia near the West Virginia border - - the same kind of poor, dying coal-mining region described in books like J.D. Vance's "[Hillbilly Elegy](#)." But as Stone shows, Pikeville has been bucking this well-known trend, with an increasing population and a thriving downtown. Why? Because of the [University of Pikeville](#). The University of Pikeville has fewer than 3,000 students, and it won't show up on many elite college applicants' top 10 lists alongside Stanford and Harvard. But since the turn of the decade, this tiny school has been expanding dramatically:

School Days

University of Pikeville annual total enrollment

Source: Medium.com

In addition to educating the local populace, the plucky little university now has a medical center, and engages in research and patenting. That economic activity, in addition to the energy of a college town and the amenities that serve the student population, have revitalized the downtown -- even as people move out of the surrounding areas, they're moving into Pikeville. "It is not too much," Stone writes, "to say that the University of Pikeville is saving the city."

Pikeville's example has been repeated across the country. In his landmark book "[The New Geography of Jobs](#)," University of California-Berkeley economist Enrico Moretti demonstrated that human capital -- the supply of educated workers -- has been a crucial factor in which American cities have thrived in the new knowledge-based economy and which have declined. College towns have tended to do very well. This probably isn't because their graduates stay in town (most tend to move away), but because of the smart people who come to work at the university itself, and at the companies spun off by university research.

Other research confirms that the beneficial effect of universities isn't just correlation. A [2015 paper](#) by economist Shimeng Liu found that areas where the U.S. federal government made land grants to universities back in the 1860s have been flourishing in the 21st century. In other words, investing in universities was one of the most far-sighted moves that the government ever made.

The effect appears to be worldwide. Looking at countries around the globe in [a recent paper](#), economists Anna Valero and John Van Reenen find:

Increases in the number of universities are positively associated with future growth...Doubling the number of universities per capita is associated with over 4% higher future GDP per capita. Furthermore, there appear to be positive spillover effects from universities to geographically close neighboring regions.

There are a number of reasons why universities are good for towns. They produce educated workers, some of whom stick around after graduation. They employ lots of smart people. Many students work while they study. Universities generate innovation, share the revenues from patents and spin off cutting-edge companies. University workers and students also provide demand for local service businesses (though Valero and Van Reenen don't think this effect is very important). University medical centers give old people an incentive to move from rural areas into town. International students pay high fees to go to school in the U.S. -- higher education is an American export industry. And the density created by college towns is often a more efficient development pattern than the sprawl of the rural areas that surround them.

One would think, given the success of college towns, that every city council and state legislature in the country would be racing to upgrade, expand and advertise local universities. Sadly, this hasn't been the case. The Great Recession led to a [five-year dip](#) in higher-education funding as states tightened their budgets. That forced students to shoulder more of the financial burden, which they often do by taking out huge loans that limit their [life options](#). Spending has recovered somewhat since the economy got onto a firmer footing in 2013, but hasn't yet reached pre-crisis levels.

Meanwhile, U.S. leaders look determined to make life much harder for the country's universities. The tax reform plan now being put forward by congressional Republicans [contains big cuts](#) to higher-education funding. It eliminates tax credits and deductions that students use to help pay for college. And it makes certain kinds of financial aid taxable -- for example, [tuition waivers](#), which help graduate students eke out a meager living while they get their advanced degrees. Besides putting college out of reach for some, it would force many remaining students to borrow more, thus exacerbating the student loan problem.

These cuts -- about \$65 billion during the next decade -- would force universities to cut costs and tighten their belts. But they would also crush the nation's Pikevilles. The Ivy League universities and big flagship state schools would survive, but many smaller colleges in more vulnerable regions would be devastated. The same struggling working-class regions that Donald Trump promised to save during his campaign would find one more path to a brighter future cut off.

The potential of the U.S. economy lies not in coal mining or resource extraction, but in knowledge industries and denser towns. The university system is the country's last great economic advantage, and the only thing standing between many healthy small towns and the looming specter of long-term decay. Congress needs to stop trying to cut funding for higher education; if anything, it should do just the opposite and increase spending.

# THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

## Inside the U. of Virginia's Response to a Chaotic White-Supremacist Rally

### NO MU MENTION

By *Jack Stripling* NOVEMBER 20, 2017

The images are indelible now.

Hundreds of white men, carrying flaming torches across the University of Virginia's Lawn, chanting "Jews will not replace us." Then, a violent skirmish with counterprotesters at the base of a statue of Thomas Jefferson, the university's founder. And finally, young activists, covered in pepper spray, asking the police why they waited so long to intervene.

In the days before white nationalists overtook her campus, Teresa A. Sullivan, the university's president, conjured up an image far quainter than what the world would see. The university, she told board members, was prepared for the possibility that demonstrators from Unite the Right might come to grounds, but perhaps only as harmless tourists.

"Of course we anticipate that some of them will be interested merely in seeing Mr. Jefferson's architecture and Lawn," Ms. Sullivan wrote in an email on August 9, two days before the Friday night march.

Ms. Sullivan's email is among more than 3,000 pages of documents provided to *The Chronicle* through a public-records request. Together, the emails shed light on the mentality of a university administration and a campus police force that were caught off guard by a throng of white supremacists who used one of the nation's premier public institutions as the staging ground for a demonstration reminiscent of Nazi Germany and the worst days of the Ku Klux Klan.

The documents show administrators slowly coming to grips with the full scope of a menacing mob, which brought with it violence that, according to [an internal investigation](#), might have been defused or prevented had the campus police and university leaders heeded warning signs. So, too, do the documents provide a window into a changing paradigm of college leadership, as administrators and law-enforcement officers adjust to the heightened risk of confrontation between their students and outside groups spoiling for a fight.

The events at the University of Virginia, which have shaped how college leaders across the nation plan for and respond to campus demonstrations, challenged decades of thinking about dealing with campus protest. The police and administrators, biased against intruding on constitutionally protected speech, saw their predispositions upended by a crisis with no clear precedent.

The well-publicized Unite the Right rally, which was slated to be held in downtown Charlottesville on Saturday, August 12, was a sort of homecoming for Jason Kessler and Richard Spencer, two University of Virginia alumni who have become prominent in the white-nationalist movement. Leading up to the rally, most of the security concerns focused on how the group might clash off campus with counterprotesters at Emancipation Park, where white nationalists planned to express their opposition to the [removal of a statue](#) of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee.

But the police were also concerned that the University of Virginia, an iconic symbol with its own complex racial history, might prove an enticing target in its own right. What better place to kick off the weekend's demonstrations?

Capt. Donald H. McGee, a university police officer, appears to have heard these concerns as early as August 8, three days before the march on the Lawn. After a meeting that day of the Charlottesville Police Department, Captain McGee warned his superior about a possible "tiki torch march" to be held the night before the big downtown rally. The description proved prescient.

"It was stated that at 9PM there were plans to replicate the tiki torch march they made last month at an undisclosed location," Capt. McGee wrote to Michael A. Gibson, the university's chief of police, and several other officers. "There is concern that the location could be the Rotunda or Lawn area since Mr. Spencer, an alum will likely be at the Friday event."

The email is significant because it suggests that intelligence about the march came earlier and was more specific than the university has acknowledged in [its own timeline of events](#).

In a statement provided to *The Chronicle*, university officials said, "There were contradictory and misleading details about events, locations, routes, and timing.

"In response to the events of August 11 and 12 the university has been identifying the ways in which its response could have been more effective, and to institute policies and procedures that will prevent violence of this sort from happening again."

Captain McGee's email goes on to show that university officials were aware of the hazards that might be posed by torches on campus, but felt constrained in their authority to stop such an eventuality. The captain reported that "Barry," most likely Barry T. Meek, the university's associate general counsel, had suggested torches "should not be allowed." But the university police appeared unaware of an existing policy that would have empowered officers to extinguish the torches, which were later [employed as weapons](#).

"There is no regulation against torches or open flames (charcoal grills are allowed) but we should stress that is is (sic) a fire safety issue," Captain McGee wrote. "Something to think ahead and plan for the possibility."

In the wake of the incident, Virginia's Board of Visitors passed a resolution aimed at strengthening the university's open-flame policy, which will soon be published as a [state regulation](#).

Captain McGee declined an interview request.

Anthony P. de Bruyn, a spokesman for the university, responded on behalf of Mr. Meek, saying that "there was a university policy, but no regulation relating to the conduct of the protesters carrying tiki torches."

Regardless of how the rule was classified at the time, UVa's investigation concluded that the university police department was "not sufficiently aware of its authority to enforce" it.

Well before the march, [tensions were growing](#) between two loosely defined factions at the University of Virginia, pitting activists against an administration that would have preferred for students and professors to avoid any interaction with the Unite the Right group. Those tensions appear to have informed how both groups responded before and after the incident, affecting how they shared information and stoking a tendency to blame each other for perceived shortcomings.

In the tense days that followed the demonstration, Virginia's president criticized student activists for what she described as their failure to pass along concerns about the white supremacists' march.

"Nobody elevated it to us," Ms. Sullivan said in a videotaped exchange with a student. "Don't expect us to be reading the alt-right websites. We don't do that. Now you guys have responsibility here too. Tell us what you know."

But records and interviews show that students and faculty members did just that, even as they feared being dismissed as social-justice crusaders crying wolf.

Intelligence about the march circulated through a network of students and professors before reaching the top ranks of the university's administration and police force.

Jalane D. Schmidt, an associate professor of religious studies, first saw online chatter about a campus march on the afternoon that it happened, Friday, August 11. But she feared that the information, if related by a known activist like herself, might not be taken seriously. So Ms. Schmidt alerted a source that she presumed would be unimpeachable: The first lady of Charlottesville.

Through an intermediary, Ms. Schmidt conveyed the information to Emily L. Blout, an assistant professor of media studies at Virginia and the wife of Michael Signer, Charlottesville's mayor. In the eyes of the administration, Ms. Schmidt later told *The Chronicle*, Ms. Blout would seem more credible than "some brown-skinned, outspoken professor like me."

When violence broke out later that night, and the police presence seemed minimal, Ms. Schmidt emailed Ms. Blout with consternation: "Was the memo not received?"

"UVA has known about this since 3 pm," Ms. Blout replied. "I went to the top."

Ms. Blout confirmed to *The Chronicle* that she had elevated the information, but she declined to elaborate.

Email exchanges among administrators and the police indicate that a call was made around 3 p.m. to Louis P. Nelson, Virginia's associate provost for outreach, who was told of a possible "alt-right march on-Grounds this evening, beginning at a Jefferson statue (not sure which one)."

Mr. Nelson did not respond to interview requests.

University police responded to the tip with knowing acknowledgment. "Excellent," Captain McGee wrote to Chief Gibson. "Thanks Chief. This could possibly be the tiki torch march that was mentioned earlier this week."

As the intelligence was shared throughout Friday afternoon and evening, other law-enforcement agencies and city officials offered support to the university. In each email exchange provided to *The Chronicle*, university and police officials indicated that they had the situation under control.

"I think we are good for right now," Chief Gibson wrote at 8:11 p.m. to Al S. Thomas Jr., Charlottesville's police chief, and Ron Lantz, Albemarle County's chief of police. "My folks are watching this closely."

Around that same time, Maurice Jones, Charlottesville's city manager, wrote to Patrick D. Hogan, the university's executive vice president and chief operating officer.

"Pat, I just heard about Kessler March tonight," Mr. Jones wrote. "Do you need assistance?"

Mr. Hogan replied, "I think Mike Gibson has ample coverage for University. But hopefully City will be available to help in surrounding areas."

In another response to overtures from outside jurisdictions, Chief Gibson wrote, "We'll see how this plays out."

What played out in the ensuing hours was chaos. Counterprotesters would later question why there seemed so few officers relative to the situation.

In an email to *The Chronicle*, Albemarle County's Chief Lantz said he was "letting everyone know" that day that he had contingent officers nearby. But he said he could not comment on whether the university declined resources that might have helped to quell or prevent the violence that night.

Charlottesville's Chief Thomas declined an interview request.

Mr. de Bruyn, the spokesman, said in a statement that the university police "had coordinated with local and state police partners in advance of the Aug. 11 event and resources from those agencies were pre-staged nearby to respond as they were needed."

In an email to *The Chronicle*, Chief Gibson said that the university's on-duty shift commander had made a radio request around 8:30 p.m. for officers from other jurisdictions to be on standby near campus.

According to the university's official timeline, officers from other agencies did not arrive at the Rotunda Plaza until 10:17 p.m. — after the violence had ensued and just two minutes before the crowd began to disperse.

More than 40 officers were ultimately on the scene to restore order, according to the university's investigation. But UVa officials would not answer detailed questions about how many of its 67 sworn officers were actually present at the Rotunda when the Unite the Right group arrived.

As the white nationalists congregated Friday night at Nameless Field, a recreational space near the university's Memorial Gymnasium, university police officers projected a calm that some on campus interpreted as complacency, email records show.

Timothy A. Freilich, executive director of Madison House, a student volunteer center located at the university, had seen men unloading torches and reported his observations at a police substation, according to emails he sent days later. He then "spoke to a lone police officer on the Lawn" and reported again a now widely circulating rumor about a looming march on grounds.

"His response was along the lines of, 'Oh we know. They are everywhere,'" Mr. Freilich wrote to Mr. Nelson, the associate provost.

For the police and university leaders, the scope of the demonstration began coming into view not long after sunset.

"I am being told social media is lighting up over this," Chief Gibson wrote to his colleagues at 8:30 p.m. "It is certainly no secret."

Captain McGee replied, "Was afraid of that."

As the throng left Nameless Field, Mr. Freilich "did not see a single cop in the darkness other than the guy on the Lawn" and a gathering at a nearby church, he wrote to Mr. Nelson. Driving along University Avenue, Mr. Freilich looked on in horror as the torch-bearing marchers began to take to the streets.

"I kept driving rather than stop," he wrote, "both because I have two young girls who love their father, and because it was one of the most terrifying things I have seen in my life — even while under the misconception that law enforcement and the University had things under control."

Behind the scenes, the university police were in contact with Unite the Right's designated "security guy," who is identified in emails as "Eli." This appears to reference Eli Mosley, an Army veteran who would

later [identify himself to reporters](#) as the "command soldier major of the 'alt-right,'" executing the Lawn march "as a military operation."

True to Mr. Mosley's description, the group used drones to surveil the area before taking the Rotunda.

The following day, according to [a report in Vice](#), Mr. Mosley would encourage armed men to return to the Robert E. Lee statue, off campus in Emancipation Park, after they had been ordered to disperse. "I need shooters," he would say. "We're gonna send 200 people with long rifles back to that statue."

The university police, who had relied on Mr. Mosley as a point of contact within the group, came to question his reliability as Friday night progressed. He would tell the officers that the crowd was not as large as they had hoped and that the group had no intention of marching through the very heart of the campus. He also promised that they would pick up their trash.

"He says all is going good," Angela M. Tabler, a patrol lieutenant, wrote to fellow officers at 9:57 p.m.

But few within the university's administration shared this optimistic view. Communications during this critical period have the feel of an impending siege, as university officials exchange real-time intelligence from three vantage points.

Ms. Sullivan was stationed at Carr's Hill, the president's residence. Allen W. Groves, dean of students and the lone administrator on hand at the Rotunda, provided Ms. Sullivan with eyes on the ground. The president was also in communication with Larry J. Sabato, a professor of politics who had sheltered students in the basement of a faculty pavilion on the Lawn, where he lives.

"Lots of yelling west of us, but I can't see anything yet," Ms. Sullivan wrote to Mr. Groves at 9:45 p.m.

Mr. Groves replied, "We can hear it up here, too."

At 9:56 p.m., Ms. Sullivan wrote back, "I think they are headed to south lawn with open flames."

This was not what was supposed to happen. Mr. Mosley had assured officers that the group would march along University Avenue, a route that would take them to the north side of the Rotunda away from the core of campus.

"Wondering what his excuse is for lying," Captain McGee wrote to Lieutenant Tabler.

Mr. Mosley had told the police that the group changed its route to avoid counterprotesters, a claim that Captain McGee found less than credible.

"I have a hard time buying that," he wrote.

The torches were now a higher-order concern, as the group snaked past McIntire Amphitheatre, closing in on the Lawn.

"Amphitheater," Ms. Sullivan wrote to Mr. Groves at 10:01 p.m.

Captain McGee pinged Lieutenant Tabler two minutes later.

"Angela," he wrote, "does the security guy know the concern with the torches around buildings?"

Chief Gibson had the same question.

Marching in formation across the Lawn, the group of about 300 men yelled in unison, "Blood and Soil!" and "Whose Streets? Our Streets."

At 10:07 p.m., they reached the Rotunda. From there, they descended a long set of stairs to the Jefferson statue, surrounding a couple of dozen protesters, who were shouting "No Nazis! No KKK! No Fascist USA!"

The police hung back as tensions escalated. There were no orders to stand down, Mr. de Bruyn, the university spokesman, said. But the officers relied on the same tactics of minimal intrusion that they had used in decades of previous nonviolent protests, a strategy that the internal investigation characterized as "insufficient" to deal with a "large, highly organized, torch-bearing group intent on intimidation."

As the mob closed in on counterprotesters, violence appeared all but inevitable. A torch, wielded like a spear, struck Mr. Groves. His arm bled as he tried to pull students out of the melee, eyewitnesses said.

[Two Virginia law-school students](#), filming the events from a high perch and [streaming their footage live on Facebook](#), described the scene in panicked commentary: "Oh my God," one said. "There are torches going. They are beating up the counterprotesters."

At 10:22 p.m., Captain McGee wrote to his colleagues, "Do we need more help from CPD and County?"

By this time, the university police were treating people who had been pepper sprayed. Emily Gorcenski, a blogger and activist who was among those sprayed, [confronted the police](#) on camera about not intervening sooner.

"My face is burning," she said. "My face is burning. The cops did nothing."

In an email to Ms. Sullivan later that night, Mr. Groves said, "I was with them when the attack came. Totally unprovoked."

At 10:57 p.m., about 20 minutes after the police had declared the situation clear, Ms. Sullivan wrote to university communications officials and Mr. Hogan, the chief operating officer. She had called the chairman of the Board of Visitors, she said, and Virginia's governor, Terry McAuliffe.

"State has bumped up police numbers," she wrote, "will show force thru (sic) the night."

At 11:28 p.m., Mr. Sabato wrote to Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Groves and H. Douglas Laycock, a law professor and the president's husband.

"In my 47 years of association with the University," Mr. Sabato wrote, "this was the worst thing I have seen unfold on the Lawn and at the Rotunda. Nothing else even comes close."