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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Northwestern roiled by criminal charges

Two Black students are accused of distributing controversial parody copies of student newspaper

By Zareen Syed and Madeline Buckley
Chicago Tribune

Divisions over the war in Gaza, questions about race as it relates to how the law is enforced, and what free speech means on campus are part of a controversy

at Northwestern University and its student paper after two Black students were charged criminally for distributing a parody of the publication.

Nearly 90 Northwestern students, professors and community members criticized the response to the incident late last

week, calling it part of an effort to silence pro-Palestinian voices that disproportionately affect people of color.

The two students were accused of distributing a parody of The Daily Northwestern and the consequences have many students and faculty calling it an overstep and a “symptom of the over-policing of Black students” on campus.

The men, 20 and 22, were charged in December with theft

of advertising services, a class A misdemeanor, according to Cook County court records. The records say they were released on the scene, but the charge is still pending.

The men were the subject of the letter that identified them as Northwestern students who allegedly created an imitation front page of the campus newspaper that critiqued the university’s actions in connection to Israel’s bombardment of Gaza in response to last

year’s Hamas terror attacks.

An attorney representing the men declined to comment. They are scheduled to appear in court again Feb. 29 in the Skokie branch court.

Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx also declined to respond to messages seeking comment.

“I think the approach to these two students was extremely

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Residents evacuate past a vehicle damaged in a storm-caused mudslide Monday near Los Angeles. **MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP**

Panel targets police staffing

Aldermen call for report on deployment around city, plus age at which cops retire

By Jake Sheridan
Chicago Tribune

Aldermen took aim Monday at two sacred cows of policing in Chicago: How officers are deployed around the city and when they have to leave their jobs.

The City Council’s Committee on Police and Fire voted to require the Chicago Police Department to conduct a city-wide staffing analysis. The ordinance could lead to a push for widespread changes to where and when police are deployed if passed by the full council.

Such debates can get heated, as certain areas of the city stand to lose patrol officers while others gain them.

Aldermen also considered raising the age at which police and firefighters are required to retire from 63 to 65, an effort that would give department veterans the opportunity to keep working longer.

Concerns about police staffing levels hovered over the back-to-back discussions. The effort to fill long-standing vacancies in hundreds of police jobs has left Chicago with a department that has gotten “very young, very quickly,” Chief of Constitutional Policing and Reform Angel Novalez told aldermen.

The Police Department is backing the mandatory retirement age change in a bid to retain older cops, Novalez said.

“We lose those informal leaders and that institutional knowledge walks out the door with retirement,” he said.

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Historic storms soak Southern California

West Coast socked as Hollywood, Beverly Hills suffer flash flooding, mudslides

By John Antczak, Christopher Weber and Julie Watson
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A deadly storm of historic proportions unleashed record levels of rain Monday over parts of Los Angeles, sending mud and boulders down hillsides dotted with multi-million-dollar homes, posing grave dangers to the city’s large homeless population and knock-

ing out power for more than a million people in California.

Downed trees killed at least two people.

The storm was the second one fueled by an atmospheric river to hit the state over the span of days.

About 1.4 million people in the Los Angeles area, including the Hollywood Hills and Beverly Hills, were under a flash-flood warning Monday morning. Up to 9 inches of rain had fallen in the area, with more expected, accord-

ing to the National Weather Service, which called the flash flooding and threat of mudslides “a particularly dangerous situation.”

Already crews were rescuing people, including two homeless people, from swift-moving water in parts of Southern California.

Gushing rivers carried mud, rocks and objects from people’s homes, including coolers, ladders and plastic crates in Studio City, an area named for a movie studio

lot, on the backside of the Hollywood Hills. Several homes were damaged, including one with a crumpled garage door from the debris slide.

A text late Sunday alerted Keki Mingus that a neighbor’s house at the top of a hill was in trouble.

“Mud, rocks and water came rushing down through their house and another neighbor’s house and into our street,”

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INSIDE

Former state legislator Collins going on trial

Annazette Collins is scheduled to go on trial on federal tax charges Tuesday, nearly three years after she was indicted amid the sprawling investigation tied to then-House Speaker Michael Madigan. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

US seeks support on Gaza in Saudi Arabia

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Saudi Arabia’s crown prince, hoping to press ahead with a potential cease-fire deal and postwar planning. **Nation & World**

Retirement home residents face losing refunds

Some or all of hefty entrance fees could be lost as Bartlett facility struggles to finance debts

By Robert McCoppin
Chicago Tribune

Continuing care retirement communities offer seniors their own home, meals and activities, and assisted living or nursing if they need it. They can accommodate residents who range from being independent to those who require 24-hour care.

Also known as life plan or life care communities, they require a hefty entrance fee, often ranging from \$250,000 to \$400,000 or more, plus significant monthly payments. When a resident leaves or dies and their unit is resold, depending on the contract, that fee may be repaid to the family at up to 90%.

So when residents of The Oaks

at Bartlett were called into meetings with management in December and asked to sign agreements to reduce the refund on their entrance fees to as low as 30%, they were upset.

“People are scared to death,” said Rick Stanko, whose parents lived in The Oaks. “People like my parents, they did the right thing their entire lives. They saved and prepared, and lived within their means. Passing on money to descendants was important to them.”

With more than \$50 million owed in entrance fees, the full amount is unlikely to be fully repaid.

The Oaks, with more than 250

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Helen Smith, right, pushes the wheelchair of Loretta Goddard as they visit an art show on Jan. 26 at The Oaks of Bartlett. The facility filed for bankruptcy in 2019 and has had to delay making its debt payments, which is likely to affect residents’ refundable entrance fees. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

