

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2025-1058

TITLE: Resolution for Facilities of the Future – Volume IV (Blue Lights on Campus)

AUTHOR(S): Change Caucus Leader Max Banach

SPONSORS:

WHEREAS, the University of Florida (UF) is committed to providing a safe, welcoming community for all students, as stated in its core values [1]; and,

WHEREAS, blue light emergency systems act as an effective visual deterrent for crime and serve as a crucial resource for individuals feeling unsafe on campus [9]; and,

WHEREAS, UF has installed over 300 blue lights since the 1990s to serve as a 24/7 “direct line . . . to the University of Florida Police Department” [6]; and,

WHEREAS, blue lights are intended for students to report crime, fire, medical emergencies or request a police escort and once a call is made a strobe light is activated to increase visibility [8]; and,

WHEREAS, former UF Police Maj. Blake Barber reported that blue lights “have been activated 754 times since 2017” at the time of the article’s publication in 2019 [6]; and,

WHEREAS, UF “reported its highest number of rapes and sexual battery cases last year” in 2023 with 19 cases [10]; and,

WHEREAS, a “spring 2019 campuswide survey at UF by the Association of American Universities showed that about 30% of women undergraduates experienced nonconsensual sexual contact by force or inability to consent” which was “an increase of nearly 10% over a similar survey in 2015” [10]; and,

WHEREAS, “female students, LGBTQIA+ students and students of color responding to the survey . . . tend to feel less safe.” [13]; and,

WHEREAS, other higher education universities such as Rice University, Villanova University, and High Point University, that have installed additional blue light phones “saw the university’s overall crime rate plummet” [9]; and,

WHEREAS, the UF Student Senate has discussed the need for additional blue lights in Spring-Fall 2019 and Spring 2022 [2][6][7]; and,

WHEREAS, the UF Student Senate has passed previous legislation calling for the adding of lighting and blue lights to specific areas on campus [3][4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University has made efforts to upgrade thousands of exterior lights to LED while adding light poles and lights to areas identified by “the university’s security team identified as needing more illumination” [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the University has a Gatorsafe app functionality in coordination with UFPD that triggers a mobile bluelight that sends one’s location and calls UFPD simultaneously [11][12]; and,

WHEREAS, blue light phones provide a critical method for individuals whose cell phones may be inaccessible or out of service during emergencies, natural disasters, or infrastructure failures that disrupt cellular networks; and,

WHEREAS, students have consistently voiced concerns regarding lack of adequate blue light installations in specific areas through informal feedback to student government representatives; and,

WHEREAS, the authors have compiled a non-exhaustive list of locations currently lacking blue lights including Honors Village, Murphree Area, Wilmot Gardens, Reitz Ravine, Jennings Hall Parking Lot, Woodlawn Dr, West Fraternity Dr, the intersection of Union Rd and Newell Dr, the intersection of Longleaf Rd and Natural Area Dr, and the intersection of LR Chilled Water Plant Service Dr and Mowry Rd; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate urges UFPD and UF Facilities Services to conduct a comprehensive campus-wide assessment to identify areas where blue lights are needed to ensure full campus coverage.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate re-affirms the need for additional lighting and blue lights at Yulee Park [3].

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that UF Student Senate recommends the continued integration of blue light systems into campus safety education initiatives to promote their usage and functionality.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate requests UF Administration and UFPD to provide regular updates to the Student Senate on the status of blue light installations, maintenance, and emergency activation data.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate commends UFPD and UF Facilities Services for their continued efforts in maintaining and improving campus safety measures.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate recognizes this initiative be recognized as part of the larger "Facilities of the Future" plan, aiming to modernize and improve the infrastructure and facilities of the University of Florida for the benefit of current and future students.

Proviso: The author of this bill would like to recognize Off-Campus Senator Emeritus Roman Quattrochi for aiding in the creation of this bill.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to UPD Chief Bart Knowles, Director of Planning Linda Dixon, Assistant Vice President of Facilities Services Mark Helms, Director of Sorority and Fraternity Affairs Simonne Horman Paparella, and Nightlife Navigators Agency Head Evan Fleischer.

[1] - <https://www.ufl.edu/about/core-values/#e1-877a98b1>

[2] - <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/02-01-2022-3.pdf>

[3] - <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SSB-2024-1084-Senate-Resolution-to-Add-Lighting-and-Blue-Lights-to-Yulee-Park.pdf>

[4] - <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Agenda-01-30-24.pdf>

[5] - <https://news.ufl.edu/2023/01/campus-safety-enhancements/#:~:text=As%20of%20December%2C%20%2C434%20exterior,lot%20behind%20the%20Stephen%20C>

[6] - <https://www.wuft.org/education/2019-09-17/uf-students-to-hold-protest-calling-for-emergency-blue-lights-on-fraternity-row>

[7] - https://drive.google.com/file/d/16j-JhXrQY_NRs-KmNf1BYsLQY9K8locR/view

[8] - <https://dental.ufl.edu/2017/08/28/safety-reminders-and-resources/>

[9] - <https://thegreyhound.org/15454/opinions/emergency-blue-lights-phones-an-effective-means-of-safety-or-outdated-technology/>

[10] - <https://www.wuft.org/fresh-take-florida/2023-04-18/university-of-florida-removes-years-of-campus-crime-data-online>

[11] - <https://ufprism.com/2019/09/24/the-fight-for-blue-lights/>

[12] - <https://publicsafety.ufl.edu/gatorsafe.html>

[13] - <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/06/22/survey-campuses-perceived-safe-some-students-not-all>

