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**Center said to be “devastated” by accusations, heads to Boston for *Not Guilty* plea**

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“He is innocent,” Center’s lawyer, Dan Cogdell, told reporters Tuesday.

Center, who was hired in July 2000 and is only the fourth men’s tennis coach at UT-Austin, is one of dozens of people named in a growing national college bribery scandal. An indictment unsealed Tuesday in Boston named more than 50 people — including actors Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin — who are accused of paying bribes to ensure their children got into prestigious universities including UT, Stanford, Georgetown, Yale, Wake Forest, and the University of Southern California.

At 2 p.m. Tuesday, Center appeared in front of U.S. Magistrate Judge Andrew Austin at a federal courthouse in Austin. Wearing a burnt orange T-shirt, dark grey sweatpants and house slippers, Center was represented by Cogdell, a Houston-based criminal defense lawyer.

In court, Austin briefed Center on his rights and said he had 72 hours to pay \$5,000, or 10 percent of his \$50,000 bond. Center will have to surrender his passport and must limit his travel, Austin said.

Cogdell said it is standard operating procedure for the university to place Center on leave and that Center is disappointed but understands the decision. Center was arrested at 6 a.m. at his home, Cogdell said.

“He is devastated by the accusation,” said Cogdell on the courthouse steps after escorting Center to a waiting car. “He’d have to be dumber than a bucket of hair not to be devastated by the accusation. But he’s a strong person, he’s got great character, and he’ll get through this.”

Center’s next court appearance will be March 25 in Boston, where he will plead not guilty, Cogdell said.

Hours after the allegations were made public, the UT-Austin men’s tennis team had a match against Rice University. Padma Sunkara and her



MICHAEL CENTER

husband, Ravi Arimilli, came to the match to watch their son, Nevin, a freshman on the team. Sunkara said she was “shocked” and “disappointed” when she first heard the news about Center earlier this morning.

“We’ve known Center for many years, and he’s always been an upstanding coach, human,” said Sunkara, who’s from Austin.

“We’re going to see what the courts have to say, but we want to be here to support the team and the players, who’ve worked really hard to be where they’re at right now.”

In addition to bribes taken by athletic coaches and other university administrators, the scheme involved parents paying a college prep organization to take the ACT or SAT college admission tests on

behalf of their children or to correct their answers after the test, according to the indictment.

The indictment says a Houston high school teacher who was also a standardized test administrator took bribes as part of the scheme. In July 2018, the teacher received a \$5,000 check from William Singer, the founder of The Edge College & Career Network LLC, documents show.

Collectively, parents paid Singer roughly \$25 million between 2011 and February 2019 to bribe coaches and university administrators, designating their children as recruited athletes or other “favored admission categories,” according to the documents.

At a press conference Tuesday, FBI officials said Singer helped or advised parents to stage photos of their children engaged in sports. In some cases, stock photos were used.

The indictment also lists Martin Fox, the president of a private tennis academy and

camp in Houston, as a key player. Fox allegedly introduced Singer and Center, for which he was paid \$100,000 by Singer for “assisting with the bribe transaction,” and he was also paid to help facilitate bribes for a varsity sports coach at the University of San Diego, the indictment states.

Lawmakers in Austin on Tuesday said they were shocked by the allegations and planned to keep an eye on the case as it moves through the courts.

“Students should be admitted to colleges and universities based on academic merit, character and talent, not through bribes and law-breaking,” said State Rep. Chris Turner, a Democrat from Grand Prairie who chairs the House Higher Education Committee.

Turner said he is confident that UT-Austin is working to better understand the situation.

“The House Committee on Higher Education will be closely monitoring this situation throughout the session and beyond,” he said.

**Statistics show women have historically been at the back of the line**

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**AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ACC) DISTRICT**

is requesting sealed proposals from qualified firms for the purposes of selecting a respondent to provide Digital Marketing and Media Buying Services.

**Request For Proposals RFP No. 915-19-0102-00-M-VJ**

All sealed proposals must be submitted to the Purchasing Department by no later than on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 2:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST).

ACC will host an optional pre-proposal conference on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at 1:00 PM Central Standard Time in Room 301.7 of the Highland Business Center Building, located at 5930 Middle Fiskville Rd., Austin, Texas 78752. Vendors attending this pre-proposal conference are requested to park in the Holiday Inn overflow parking lot directly across the street from the Highland Business Center.

Solicitation documents are available on the ACC Purchasing website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/office/purchasing/> advertised-solicitations, or at the ACC Purchasing Office with advance notice at (512)-223-1043 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

All responses must be sealed and returned to the ACC Purchasing Office, ACC Service Center, 9101 Tuscany Way, Austin, Texas 78754, by the date and time indicated above.

Electronically transmitted responses will NOT be accepted unless otherwise stated in the documents.

Annie’s List and I Live Here I Give Here.

This two-year program is targeted to juniors and seniors who have applied and demonstrated leadership potential and capacity to take an executive-level path upon leaving the University. Our goal is for these women to reach an executive-level position within the corporate world or launch their own ventures within ten years of leaving the University.

“Women have historically been at the back of the line when it comes to promotions, upward career mobility, and in receiving venture capital

for their businesses. The statistics are more disappointing when you consider women of color and women of color from the LGBTQ community,” said Director of Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Rubén Cantú.

“If we believe in equality then we must invest in creating programs that result in equity for all of our counterparts. We are stronger when everyone can contribute to the economy and wield power to shape their destiny and positively impact their community,” Cantú explained.

“We look forward

to seeing and shaping these phenomenal women to become our nation’s future executives. We believe in our students and we believe in giving them the resources to be successful. That continues to align with our vision of investing, innovating, and including all within our community,” said Vice President of Diversity and Community Engagement, Leonard N. Moore.

For more information, please visit [WIELD Texas](http://WIELDTexas.com).

**St. Mary Missionary Baptist Church**

Director of Music open position. Please find a detailed job description @ [stmarybaptist.org/Church\\_Information.html](http://stmarybaptist.org/Church_Information.html) \*Remember to complete & submit your application, attach your resume and a background check is require (to be submitted by the Church).



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 Visit one of our five Employment Assistance locations to get help with:

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**The City of Austin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**



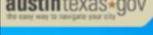
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
 Division of Diversity and Community Engagement



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“The Pflugerville Independent School District will open Proposals for: **2019 Middle School Classroom A/V Solution on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 @ 2:00 p.m.** And **Middle School Classroom A/V Power Upgrade On March 26, 2019 @ 2:00 p.m.** All proposals may be submitted (by mail or hand carry) to: Pflugerville ISD 1401 West Pecan Pflugerville, TX 78660 Attn: Janie Ornelas



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For information on the City of Austin’s Minority/Women-Owned Procurement Program please contact the Small & Minority Business Resources at 512-974-7600 or visit [www.austintexas.gov/smb](http://www.austintexas.gov/smb).

