

UF woman charged with false report

By **KAREN VOYLES / Sun staff writer**

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The cheerleader admitted sending the stalking e-mails to herself.



A University of Florida cheerleader was arrested this week for allegedly filing a false police report claiming she was being stalked.

Lauren Beard, 20, was charged with the misdemeanor after reportedly telling University of Florida Police that someone had been sending her e-mails and instant messages claiming to know her routine, to be following her and watching her. UPD Detective Amanda Spurlin said Beard admitted she sent the cyber messages to herself after turning in another e-mail to police.

“This started on Feb. 12 when she told us she had received two messages,” Spurlin said. Investigators said Beard, who lives in an off-campus apartment, brought in a fifth e-mail to police on Monday and was arrested after admitting she had sent them to herself.

“We were able to trace this through an IP address,” Spurlin said. “These were sent from an AOL account. Anybody could have used her computer, but she did tell us that she sent these.”

One of the e-mails was sent to a man identified as Beard’s ex-boyfriend, according to a police report. The anonymous sender of the e-mail threatened to slip Beard a date rape drug and commit a sex crime against her, the report says. Disturbed by the e-mail, Beard’s former boyfriend reported it to police. The e-mail was among those ultimately traced back to Beard’s own computer, the report states.

Beard could not be reached for comment. Her attorney, Nick Zissimopoulos, said Beard had been under a great deal of stress and pressure and was taking responsibility for her actions.

“We feel strongly that this is a counseling issue and not an issue for the criminal justice system,” Zissimopoulos told The Sun on Thursday morning. He also said Beard was spending time with her family trying to work through the situation and the underlying problems that may have caused it.

UF cheerleading officials had not returned calls requesting information about Beard’s status with the squad on Thursday.

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