Authorities now seek criminal charges against Anderson University coed

By Pearce Adams
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ANDERSON, SC — A student at Anderson University now is expected to be the focus of a warrant that accuses her of making a false statement by telling authorities that two men abducted her from near the campus Thursday and assaulted her.

Randall Williams, spokesman for the Anderson police, said police plan to charge the 18-year-old woman with making a false complaint, according to a statement released around 12:45 p.m. Friday.

According to a report filed Thursday, the student told police that she was abducted around 1 a.m. Thursday near the university’s soccer field near Calhoun Street and taken to another location, sexually assaulted and returned to campus roughly an hour later.

“The investigation revealed that this incident did not occur as it was reported and that no kidnapping or criminal sexual conduct took place,” Williams said through the release.

Security for students at Anderson University was stepped up Thursday morning after the student filed the report.

Reached by telephone Friday, Williams said the student’s name would not be released this week.

“Any additional information will be issued after the first of the week,” he said.

A warrant for making a false statement has not been signed by a judge, and the student is not in custody, said Williams, who indicated that the student is not considered to be a fugitive.

Williams could not immediately say Thursday why police issued the press release Friday prior to making an arrest.

Barry Ray, the university’s director of marketing and communications, said the university would make no comment on Friday and would leave the responsibility with the police.

Any disciplinary action by the university would be addressed at a later date, Ray said.

Following disclosure of the alleged kidnapping and rape, Ray said university students have the option of seeking campus escorts 24 hours a day.

According to information provided by Ray, about 900 or the university’s 2,000 students live on campus, including about 540 women.

The incident Thursday was the first report of a sexual assault on the campus in 20 years, he said.

Friday, Ray said he had no information that would indicate if there was a higher than normal level of requests for escorts after Thursday’s report.

Fay Brown, the executive director and chief professional officer of Foothills Alliance, issued a statement Friday about the situation. Foothills Alliance serves Anderson and Oconee counties offering prevention, intervention, and support services to survivors of sexual assault and child sexual abuse.

“Foothills Alliance regrets hearing that a false report of a rape was made by an Anderson University student,” Brown said. “Sometimes, persons under emotional duress do things that we do not understand. When a false report of sexual assault is filed, the incident usually garners a tremendous amount of negative media attention.

False reports should never impact the credibility of the hundreds of victims of sexual crimes, both child and adult, that we serve each year at Foothills Alliance, cases that do not generate publicity, but that are real and life-altering for the victims. We seek
the community’s help in supporting victims of crime, and we applaud the Anderson Police Department for their efficient and professional handling of this case.”