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Fanshawe 'disgusted' by students' behaviour

POLICE: More than 600 charges have been laid in the back-to-school crackdown

By HANK DANISZEWSKI

Another night dealing with rowdy Fanshawe College students after a week of headline-grabbing mayhem led to dozens more charges yesterday.

Among the disturbances, a plainclothes police officer was assaulted and a cat kicked so hard it had to be put down.

While the college said the suspect in the cat-kicking wasn't a registered student, a spokesperson made it clear Fanshawe is "disgusted" by the rowdyism.

"I think last week we said 'disappointed and frustrated,' said Emily Marcoccia, referring to earlier back-to-school troubles with student behaviour, mainly in off-campus housing districts.

"And now, we're disgusted."

The assault on the officer and the abuse of the cat occurred just after 3 a.m. in the Fleming Drive-Farnsbrough Crescent area, just east of the Fanshawe campus.

"One of the reasons you are seeing all these charges is the zero-tolerance, no-warning approach" to rowdyism, said London police Const. Juan Romero.

"These people have been warned with letters that have been sent out," he said.

Curbside trash fires, wild late-night partying and loutish behaviour followed last week's return to school of thousands of post-secondary school students in London, especially in the Fleming Drive area near the college where many students live.

In all, police laid nearly 400 charges in the first week of their back-to-school crackdown, mostly for provincial offences or bylaw violations, but also including charges of sexual assault against two students after a woman was reportedly grabbed and fondled at a college residence.

The trouble sparked a political backlash, with the area's ward councillor making a renewed call for a police substation in the area and the college vowing to get tougher with unruly students.

But Friday night and early yesterday brought even more charges -- 168, involving what were thought to be 116 Fanshawe students and 18 from the University of Western Ontario, police said.

Despite the high number of charges, things didn't get out of hand in the Fleming area, said Romero, noting there was a heavy police presence there.

In one incident, two plainclothes officers saw a suspect trespassing at 190 Fleming Dr. The man resisted arrest and refused to give his identity. One officer was assaulted, police said.

A large crowd started to gather, trying to interfere with the arrest.

Other officers moved in and arrested five people, including three Fanshawe students.

An 18-year-old Londoner was charged with assaulting police, resisting arrest, mischief and public intoxication.

An Innisfil man, 19, was charged with assaulting police and obstructing police.

Three London men, all 19, were charged with obstructing police.

Officers on nearby Farnsbrough Crescent saw a man chase and kick a cat, leaving it so badly hurt that an animal control officer determined it had to be put down.

A Flesherton-area man, 18, whom Fanshawe said isn't enrolled there, was charged with hurting an animal and public intoxication.

