



Rowdy students face more charges

By KELLY PEDRO

For the fourth consecutive weekend, London police had to swoop down on rowdy Fanshawe College students on Fleming Drive.

More than 20 officers were called to control a large party on the street early yesterday.

"They (police) had to pull everyone (other officers) from downtown and the UWO area to control the party," Const. Rob Fraser said.

Project Learn officers were patrolling the area around Fanshawe after midnight when they came across broken beer bottles and a large group of people on front yards and on the road chanting.

Officers told the group to break up or they would be charged.

"Many heeded the warning and went back in their houses," Fraser said.

But when police swept the area again a short time later, people were still gathered outside.

Six men, who police said were Fanshawe College students, were charged with unlawful assembly and another was charged with causing a disturbance.

The area has been plagued by problems during recent years and large gatherings of students on Fleming has escalated from parties to clashes with police.

This year, groups have set fire to large piles of discarded furniture left behind by previous tenants and a cat had to be put down after it was kicked.

Police Chief Murray Faulkner conceded there's no short-term solution to the problems.

Part of the problem, he said, is the area has a reputation through social networking websites, such as Facebook, for partying.

"To my astonishment, I see there are homes where people walk right in and party and we get calls from people who say, 'I don't know these people.'"

A quick Facebook search found more than one group dedicated to listing parties around Fanshawe College.

Faulkner said the area will "calm down" when cooler weather hits.

Until then, police said the Crown is willing to prosecute those charged with unlawful assembly, Faulkner said.

"Here you have a lot of young people coming to our city to get an education and what are they going to end up with? A diploma and a criminal record," he said.

Fanshawe has hired a bureaucrat to deal with student discipline and has warned students about a beefed-up code of conduct.

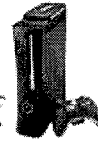
At least two students have been indefinitely suspended this year.

During the first three weeks of the London police initiative Project Learn -- Liquor Enforcement and Reduction of Noise -- almost twice as many charges have been laid as during the same period last year.

As of Sept. 15, officers laid 57 drug charges and issued 958 provincial offences tickets -- a total of 1,015.

Last year's total was 835.

During the annual crackdown, police increase their presence in student-dominated residential areas around the University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe and Richmond Row. Tickets under the Provincial Offences Act cover noise, liquor, urinating in public and other violations.



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