

From Columbia to UCLA

By Gary Fouse



Last night, Columbia University in New York City and UCLA in Los Angeles experienced disturbing scenes surrounding the pro-Palestinian occupations being carried out by students and outside activists in the name of Gaza. At Columbia, after so many days of a pro-Palestinian encampment, followed by an occupation of Hamilton Hall, the NYPD finally moved in and cleared the hall, arresting dozens of occupiers, who, no doubt, will be quickly released by DA Alvin Bragg. Last night, we watched images of NYPD Swat officers climbing up a ladder and into a second-story window at Hamilton Hall in order to remove the occupiers. This is what it had to come to after the dithering and negotiating efforts of Columbia's feckless president, Minouche Shafik, failed to solve anything. She needs to resign.

Late last night at UCLA, numerous outside people came to the campus and attempted to tear down the encampment. According to various reports, there were fights that raged for about three

hours before LAPD and the California Highway Patrol moved in to break it up. According to the [LA Times](#) there were “security personnel” present at the outbreak, but they took no action. [Here](#) is how the campus newspaper, *Daily Bruin* (generally sympathetic to the pro-Palestinian protesters), reported it.

Yesterday, I was at the UC Irvine campus observing the encampment there. I observed that there were about 10 security officers present. They were wearing blue and yellow polo shirts bearing security logos. I am assuming that UCLA was using the same type of personnel, but I could be in error.

At any rate, here are a few observations: It is inexplicable why it took so long for real police to respond to UCLA. I don't know the answer, and we need to await the explanations. While I cannot condone outside people coming to campus to take matters into their own hands, as the LA Times article mentions, people in the Jewish community for years have been frustrated by UCLA's failure to protect its Jewish students from the increasing anti-Semitism brought to campus by pro-Palestinian students and outside activists. For this, I blame UCLA Chancellor Gene Block, whom I have criticized for years on this issue. It has been reported that he will be testifying before Congress in the coming days (and he can expect a good grilling). He is scheduled to step down July 1.

Finally!

The final point I want to make is this: Universities need to abandon their long-standing attempts to keep a low police profile. The situation has become much too dangerous. “Security” people in nice polo shirts simply cannot deal with this situation. The same is true of campus police. Many campus police forces do a good job of de-escalating volatile situations. That is certainly true of the UC Irvine Campus Police, whom I have observed over the years. But I don't feel that campus police are capable of handling incidents like what

occurred at UCLA. Nor are they equipped to carry out operations like what the NYPD had to do at Columbia.

It's going to cost the universities a lot of money (which they have in abundance anyway), but it's now going to take trained police officers to be brought onto the campuses as soon as trouble starts brewing.

God knows that the NYPD and LAPD have other things to do besides dealing with campus issues that the universities have failed dismally in dealing with. Unfortunately, the situation nation-wide is fast approaching the point when someone is going to be killed on one of our campuses over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Gaza. It's going to take effective and quick coordination between the universities and police. Last night's events showed that very clearly.