

PROTEST STORY FACTS AND GUIDELINES

Use the following information to write a news story of between 375 and 425 words.

The university should be identified as Fairmont University.

The information is not organized in media writing format. In fact, the information is quite disorganized. Your task is to distill and organize the most vital information, paying special attention to the lead.

That paragraph should report the most significant news. It should summarize in 35 words or fewer what were the day's most newsworthy developments.

Note that the protest produced a great deal of news, overshadowing the regents meeting. The issue of cultural diversity was not resolved as had been expected.

You will have to be mindful of what information to include and what to leave out.

Be sure to write with an eye toward accuracy and balance.

Submission details have been provided separately.

There was a protest on campus Friday just before 12 p.m., and 64 people were arrested. Three university police officers were also injured.

More than 800 demonstrators—most of them students—were on campus during the Board of Regents meeting that has held in Regents Hall.

One of the items on the regents' agenda was the university's proposed plan to require a class in cultural diversity for all students and

faculty. Regents must approve, reject or suggest changes to the plan.

Two newly formed campus groups organized the protest,

Students Against Racism (SAR), which favors diversity, and the American Student Organization (ASO), a group opposed to diversity training. This group has in recent weeks held rallies in support of President Donald Trump.

All the 64 arrested were students. Sixty-three were taken to Fenton County Jail. An attorney for several students, Susan J. Keegan, said that she expected bail to be set at \$500 for each person arrested. One student, a 17-year-old high school senior, was released into his parents' custody.

Fifty-four of those arrested are believed to be members of Students Against Racism, according to police. All of them were charged with trespassing on state property after they refused police orders to disperse.

Twelve were also charged with resisting arrest. Fifteen were charged with assault after they allegedly threw rocks and bottles at university police officers.

Administrators agree that training designed to instill faculty and students with greater respect for diversity.

In recent months, there have been a series of incidents that prompted the university plan, and the regents to consider mandatory cultural diversity training. These include:

*A history professor who said during a lecture that African-Americans and Latinos had contributed almost nothing of value to the development of the United States. Administrators placed him on administrative leave for six months. ASO denounced the action as a violation of free speech.

*A fraternity party with a "ghetto" theme. Partygoers wore low-slung pants, gaudy jewelry and carried 40-ounce bottles of malt liquor. Several wore black face.

*A sorority also had a party themed "Taco Tuesday." Revelers donned sarapes and huge sombreros, and some wore droopy mustaches. Several wore T-shirts with the word "Wetback" printed across the front.

*Randy Jennings, president of "America First," spoke at a noontime open forum. Jennings' group advocates an end to all immigration, mass

deportations and “reaffirmation of America’s Christian and pro-heterosexual” traditional values. In his remarks, Jennings called undocumented immigrants “a cancer” and Muslims as “the enemy among us.”

*The library was defaced with spray painted swastikas and insulted Jews and Africans-Americans with racial epithets.

University President Margaret Magnuson denounced all of the incidents, and the fraternity and sorority apologized for their parties. However, she defended the Jennings appearance, saying banning him would have been suppression of free speech.

Against that backdrop the two opposing groups assembled to indirectly pressure the regents who were meeting in Regents Hall.

A few hundred Pro-diversity demonstrators locked arms and chanted, “Hey, hey, ho, ho! Racists have got to go,” and “Do the right thing,” a reference to the pending regents’ decision.

Some 30 yards away 200 or so anti-diversity protestors yelled, “America for Americans!” Later they chanted, “F__Diversity!” They also chanted “Make America Great Again.”

Approximately 20 minutes after the demonstrations began, the groups surged toward one another. University police, however, were stationed between them.

“It just got out of hand,” said University Police Chief R. Barclay Peterson, explaining the two groups appeared intent on fighting each other.

“First they were gathered around the fountain at Central Mall. One group was chanting, ‘No more racism’ and the other was saying ‘To hell with diversity.’ Then they started marching toward Regents Hall, where the regents were meeting. They were disrupting classes. When they were asked to disperse, all hell broke loose.”

Peterson said he did not call extra officers in until the protesters started marching. Then, about 50 police officers, two of them on horseback, started toward the demonstrators to force them to disperse.

Two YouTube videos posted Friday showed officers using batons to shove and, in some cases, knock down several protestors.

“They should not have come at us,” said Jonathan Walteson, SAR president said, referring to police. “We would have remained loud, but peaceful” He said SAR did not intend to fight ASO, just confront them.

He said at least 12 members of his organization had suffered painful abrasions and bruises at the hands of advancing police.

“We were doing what we believed in,” said Walteson. The cops initiated the violence. The university must do more to promote diversity and put an end to the ugly racists incidents we’ve witnessed.”

Walteson, a junior journalism student, was one of those arrested. He was charged with assault, resisting arrest and trespassing. His comments came shortly before his arrest.

Peterson said that his three officers were injured when they were hit by stones or bottles.

Officer Andrea Wilson was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital with a gash on her forehead. She was the first officer hit, Peterson said. Officer James Nelson and Sgt. Jerico Turner were taken to Community Hospital with bruises they received from thrown items, Peterson added.

Walteson said he did not know if injured students required medical care.

Peterson said the two groups began a rally just before noon. The regents had been meeting since 8 a.m. and were on their lunch break in the Student Union from noon to 1:30 p.m.

The first item on their afternoon agenda was the class requirement. Currently, neither students nor faculty are required to take a cultural diversity class.

At about 12:30 p.m., protestors from both groups started marching to Regents Hall, where they hoped to meet the regents at the steps as the officials returned from lunch, Peterson said.

They never made it to Regents Hall.

Peterson said he called in the extra officers at about 12: 40 p.m. because “the demonstrators just got too loud and rowdy. This is a university, a place where classes are held; it’s not a place for disruptive protests. We asked the protestors several times to disperse and go back to the fountain, where the rally was to be held, but they would not. They shouted at each other even louder, and some of them began throwing things, mostly rocks and bottles.”

He denied Walterson’s allegation that police initiated the conflict.

Until extra officers were called in, there were a half dozen officers watching the two groups.

Peterson said that the protesters were stopped midway between the fountain and Regents Hall, near the Liberal Arts Building.

He said that officers using bullhorns ordered the demonstrators to disperse.

Peterson said that the demonstrators refused and shouted obscenities at officers.

By 12:55 p.m., the demonstration was at its worst, Peterson said. That’s when most of the protesters began jeering the police and started throwing rocks, bottles and baseballs at them, Peterson added.

He did not deny that officers used batons to push protestors. “That’s what conditions required,” he said. “We were facing people who wanted to hurt us or anyone who got in their way, and they would not obey commands.”

Officer Wilson was hit in the head about that time, Peterson said.

He said that by 1:30 p.m., most of the demonstrators began to back off. Those who did not were arrested, he added.

Peterson said that the two officers on horseback were used to push back students who had failed to disperse. “The horses worked well,” he said. “The demonstrators were not afraid to push police officers, but they couldn’t push the horses.”

Peterson said that the protest delayed the beginning of the afternoon session of the regents meeting. The regents stayed in the

Student Union until about 2 p.m. and then returned to Regents Hall, he said.

The regents did not act on the new requirement. They decided to study the matter more and discuss it again at their next monthly meeting, which will be held next month in Regents Hall.

“We will continue protesting until the regents vote to mandate diversity training,” Waterson said. “We’re done negotiating with them. Now it is time to cause trouble.” Walterson said that there will be more rallies, not only at the next regents meeting but before then.

“We’re not against rallies,” Peterson said. “They can hold them all they want, if they get a permit from the university. But we don’t want them to get out of hand. We don’t want our officers hurt. They can rally, but other peaceful students also have the right to attend classes without being disrupted by shouting and violent demonstrators.”

It was not clear if the protest played any role in the regents’ decision to delay action.

The regents refused to comment on why they took no action Friday. “Until we make our decision on faculty training, we will not discuss it,” said Regents President Clifford Eisel. He added that the demonstrations would not affect their vote.

Brian Allen, a senior biology student and ASO president, said his group will continue protesting, too.

“We’ll do whatever it takes to keep the regents from caving into every demand that comes along,” he said.

“Nobody at this university needs additional training in diversity,” he added. “America went through a long, drawn out civil rights fight. Many of our faculty aren’t even from this country. This is just more of the political correctness patriotic Americans oppose. Thank god we have President Trump. He agrees that America for Americans needs to come first”

Allen was one of the students arrested and charged with assault, resisting arrest and trespassing. Nine others of those arrested were from his

group.

“The two groups never began fighting, but they kept screaming at each other as though they would begin a brawl at any second,” Peterson said.

“There never would have been a problem if they simply would have moved back when we asked them. Instead, both groups decided to gang up against the police.”