

PORTLAND, OREGON

LEWIS & CLARK STUDENTS TAKE SMALL CLASSES

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE = 17

WHERE THEY ARE MENTORED

STUDENT:FACULTY RATIO = 12:1

BY EXPERT PROFESSORS

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS = 0

AND GRADUATE READY TO TAKE ON THE WORLD

95% OF CLASS OF 2019 EMPLOYED
OR CONTINUING THEIR STUDIES

Lewis & Clark College


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Federal agents disperse Black Lives Matter protesters near the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse on Monday. Officers used teargas and projectiles to move the crowd after some protesters tore down a fence fronting the courthouse. (AP Photo/Noah Berger)

Wall of Moms Enter Fray

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"This is a democracy, not a dictatorship," Gov. Brown, a Democrat, said on Twitter. "We cannot have secret police abducting people in unmarked vehicles. I can't believe I have to say that to the President of the United States."

Multnomah County Commissioner Sharon Meieran says she joined a nonviolent group of protesters called a "Wall of Moms" on Saturday night and was tear-gassed by the federal police officers without warning. She returned to the protests on Sunday night, saying it was necessary to show her opposition to the "federal occupying force." The group of women wearing yellow shirts then grew more pronounced on Sunday and Monday.

Portland has seen nightly unrest since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on Memorial Day. The death of Floyd, a Black man killed when a white police officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck, have sparked massive protest around the country and a movement pushing for racial justice and changes to policing.

Constitutional law experts said the actions of federal officers in Portland are a "red flag" in what could become a test case of states' rights as the Trump administration expands federal policing.

"The idea that there's a threat to a federal courthouse and the federal authorities are going to swoop in and do whatever they want to do without any cooperation and coordination with state and local authorities is extraordinary outside the context of a civil war," said Michael Dorf, a professor of constitutional law at Cornell University.

"It is a standard move of authoritarians to use the pretext of quelling violence to bring in force, thereby prompting a violent response and then bootstrapping the initial use of force in the first place," Dorf said.

The Department of Homeland Security tweeted that federal agents were barricaded in Portland's U.S. courthouse at one point and had lasers pointed at their eyes in an attempt to blind them.

"Portland is rife with violent anarchists assaulting federal officers and federal buildings," the tweet said. "This isn't a peaceful crowd. These are federal crimes."

Top leaders in the U.S. House said Sunday that they were "alarmed" by the Trump administration's tactics in Portland and other cities. They have called on federal inspectors general to investigate.

Trump, who's called the protesters "anarchists and agitators," said the DHS and Justice Department agents are on hand to restore order at the courthouse and help Portland.

The Trump administration's actions run counter to the usual philosophies of American conservatives, who typically treat state and local rights with great sanctity and have long been deeply wary of the federal government — particularly its armed agents — interceding in most situations.

But Trump has shown that his actions don't always reflect traditional conservatism — particularly when politics, and in this case an impending election, are in play.

The protests have roiled Portland for more than seven weeks. Many rallies have attracted thousands and been largely peaceful. But smaller groups of up to several hundred people have focused on federal property and local law enforcement buildings, at times setting fires to police precincts, smashing windows and clashing violently with local police.

Portland police used tear gas on multiple occasions until a federal court order banned its officers from doing so without declaring a riot. Now, concern is growing that the tear gas is being used against demonstrators by federal officers

instead.

Anger at the federal presence escalated on July 11, when a protester was hospitalized with critical injuries after a U.S. Marshals Service officer struck him in the head with a less-lethal round. Video shows the man, identified as Donavan LaBella, standing across the street from the officers holding a speaker over his head when he was hit.

Court documents filed in cases against protesters show that federal officers have posted lookouts on the upper stories of the courthouse and have plainclothes officers circulating in the crowd. Court papers in a federal case against a man accused of shining a laser in the eyes of Federal Protective Service agents show that Portland police turned him over to U.S. authorities after federal officers identified him.

Mayor Wheeler, who's been under fire for his handling of the protests, said on national TV talk shows Sunday that the demonstrations were dwindling before federal officers engaged.

"Their presence here is actually leading to more violence and more vandalism," Wheeler said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Indeed, crowds of demonstrators had begun to dwindle a week ago, and several Black community leaders had begun to call for the violence to end.

But by the weekend, the presence of federal troops and Trump's repeated references to Portland as a hotbed of "anarchists" seemed to give a new life to the protests and attract a broader base.

On Sunday night, a crowd estimated at more than 500 people gathered outside the courthouse, including dozens of self-described "moms" who linked arms in front of a chain-link fence outside the courthouse.

The demonstrations continued into Monday night and grew to more than 1,000 people.

--Associated Press contributed to this article.