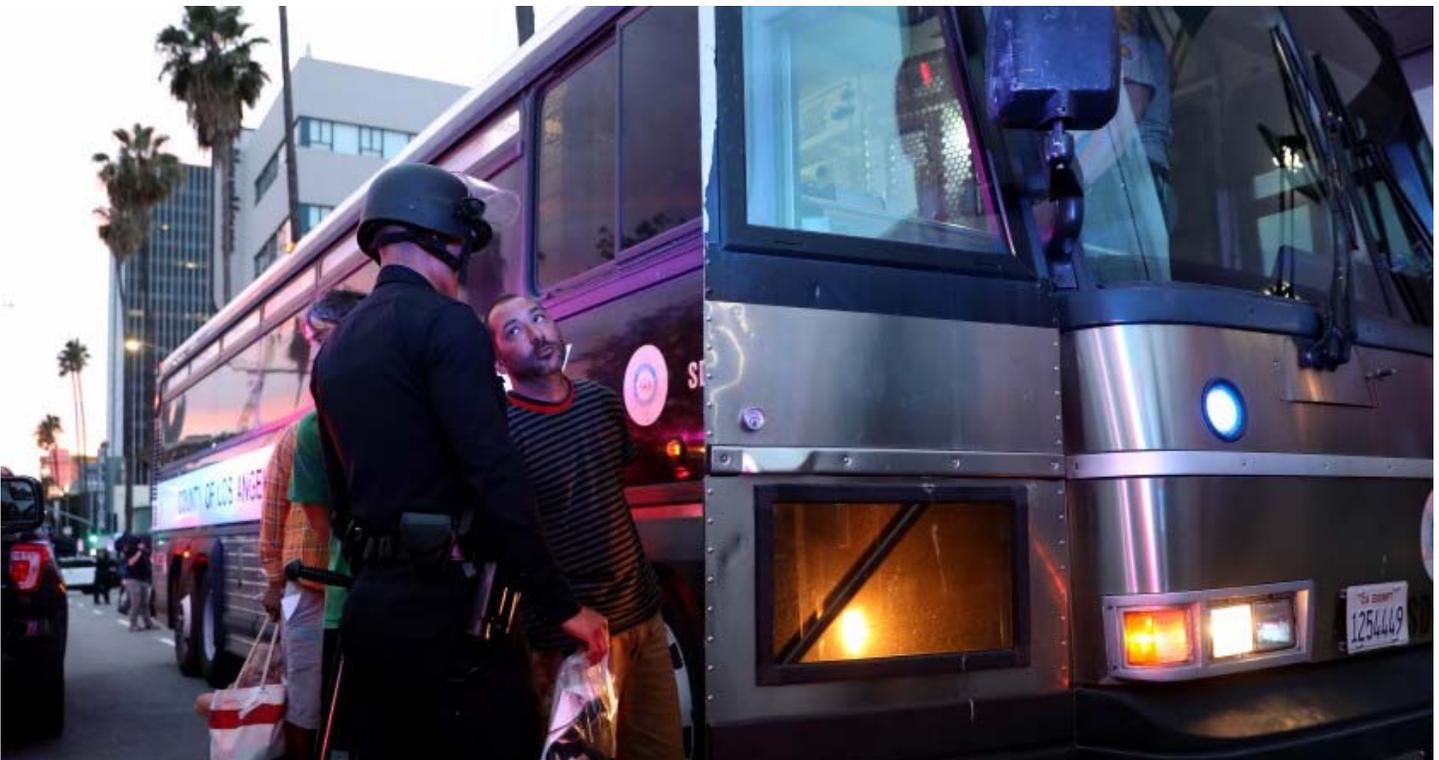


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## UCLA faces continued criticism over LAPD use of stadium for field jail



Protesters are arrested for violating curfew in Hollywood on Monday. (Gary Coronado / Los Angeles Times)

By NINA AGRAWAL | STAFF WRITER

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UCLA faced continued faculty outrage Wednesday as it tried to defend its role in the LAPD's [use of the university's Jackie Robinson Stadium](#) to process protesters and others arrested for curfew violations during the uprising sparked by the [police killing of George Floyd](#).

Dozens of faculty members signed [a letter](#) Tuesday complaining about the use of the university property as a detention facility. It was especially galling, they said, to have used a stadium named after Robinson, a UCLA alumnus who is “an icon of the long and unfinished struggle for Black freedom.” The university’s response — that it had been unaware of the use of the school property as a “field jail” — did little to satisfy its critics.

“This was a massive operation involving hundreds of arrested protesters, many, many LAPD officers, that went on for 10-12 hours at our university, and our leadership is telling us that they didn’t know?” said Ananya Roy, professor of urban planning and social welfare and director of the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy. She said the faculty was “incredulous” at the university response.

The issue arose after the Los Angeles Police Department crowded protesters arrested in downtown Los Angeles and Westwood into sheriff’s buses and brought them to the stadium, where the university’s baseball team plays under a lease with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



The LAPD said in a statement late Wednesday that it created a command post in the stadium parking lot on Sunday in preparation for planned demonstrations in Westwood the following day. It said the facility had been used “for previous city emergencies and was obtained with the approval of the staff” of UCLA.

Although the Westwood demonstrations “occurred with relatively few issues,” by Monday evening the surge in curfew violation arrests required “the provisioning of additional space in which to process and release curfew violators,” the LAPD said. “The Department identified the stadium as a location for a field jail, to process arrestees for immediate release. We regret that we did not inform UCLA of this intended purpose.”

The statement added: “In retrospect it was an unfortunate decision to establish this site [for] processing arrestees ... given the stadium’s namesake of Jackie Robinson, who broke Major League Baseball’s color barrier as the first African American baseball player. The location was a poor choice given his legacy and the spirit of the protests.”

Tammy Sanchez, who protested peacefully downtown on Monday and was picked up by police just after 6 p.m. that evening for a curfew violation, said others rounded up by the police included homeless individuals and residents of the neighborhood who were unaffiliated with the protests.



seven hours without water, food, access to bathrooms, or answers from officers about what would happen to them. Many suffered injuries from handcuffs that were too tight.

She said she could see 10 other buses in the lot.

Another detainee, who identified himself as Huzaifah, 29, described the operation as large and well-organized, with an “assembly line” of about 90 detained people at any given time. He said officers laughed as he was let go. He asked not to be identified by his full name out of fear of legal ramifications.

The faculty letter says officers did not wear masks and disregarded other CDC, city and county measures to curb COVID-19 contagion.

“The cruel irony that this took place at a location used as a COVID-19 testing site is not lost on those arrested or on us,” said the professors, who demanded the university end use of the stadium by police. The professors who signed the letter include Roy; Kelly Lytle Hernández, director of UCLA’s Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies and a MacArthur Fellowship recipient; and Cheryl Harris, professor of civil rights and civil liberties at the UCLA law school.

Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck wrote in a letter to the concerned faculty Tuesday night that UCLA was “troubled” by the accounts they had laid out.

“Please know that the use of the Jackie Robinson Stadium parking lot as a ‘field jail’ was not done with the administration’s permission, collaboration or knowledge,” he said.

Beck said that city agencies like the L.A. Fire Department occasionally request

LAFD asked to use the site for COVID-19 testing, Beck said, which the university allowed. However, it did not receive a request from LAPD or any other city agency to use the space for processing arrestees.

“Our understanding is that LAPD worked directly with the VA, not consulting UCLA,” Beck said.

He added that LAPD had vacated the property and would not receive future permission to use the site for processing arrests.

Roy and other faculty asked university leadership in response to issue a public letter to LAPD Chief Michael Moore demanding an explanation and compensation for use of the property without permission, make public all information the university has about use of the stadium on June 1, and issue a public statement that LAPD will not be able to use UCLA facilities. The letter further asks the university to sever ties with LAPD.

UCLA did not respond to requests for comment.

*Times staff writers Kevin Rector and Gale Holland contributed to this report.*

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