Iowa State Campus Disturbances

1985: During VESHEA weekend’s “Ash Bash,” cars were overturned and burned.
1988: Disturbances took place on three consecutive VESHEA weekend nights. During the Sunday morning riot, people in a crowd of approximately 5,000 threw bottles, bricks and rocks and made a bonfire from furniture. Of the 40 people arrested, 25 were ISU students.
1989: During VESHEA weekend, in a large crowd (est. 8,000) three rocks, cars and bottles at police. Twenty-seven rioters were arrested and 47 were treated for injuries. A total of 200 people were arrested, 11 of whom were students.
1990: Prior to VESHEA, students in a crowd of approximately 300 chanted profanities, set off fireworks, and attempted to tear down a light pole in the Towers Residence Hall courtyard before being dispersed by police. The event was viewed as a protest against the first “Dry VESHEA.”
1993: During a planned event three weeks before the second “Dry VESHEA” and near the anniversary of the previous Towers Residence Hall disturbance, students chanted anti’s acts of vandalism and chanted profanely in a crowd that moved from the Towers to the Knoll and then to Jack Trice Stadium, stopping at various points on campus in between to rally loudly.
2004: Rioters in a crowd of approximately 2,000 destroyed property in Campustown and three objects at police. Police arrested 27 individuals, including 22 Iowa State University students and three recent alumni.

Campus Riots

April 13, 2005

http://www.iastate.edu/~wooc.134

Riot overview

✔ Types of riots
- Communal riot (“race riot”): people targeted because of ethnic group, language or religion
- Commodity riot: property is destroyed regardless of ownership
- Protest riot: violence to protest policy or actions by authorities or others
- Police riot: police beat people instead of arresting them
- Celebratory riot: violence to celebrate sports victory or other occasion
- Not found in contemporary U.S.: soccer riots, food riots, machine breaking

✔ Riots often take place in waves
- Race riots in 1910-20s and 1940s
- Urban (commodity) riots in 1960s
- Campus riots in 1990s-2000s

Campus unrest

✔ Campus unrest has a long history in the U.S.
- Students protested in favor of the U.S. Revolution
- Late 18th Century: Harvard students rioted against bad food
- 19th Century: Riots against in loco parentis and other institutional policies; land-grant students protested against mandatory military training
- 1960s-70s: Widespread protest regarding the Vietnam War and civil rights
- 1990s-2000: Riots unrelated to protest become common; these are called “celebratory riots,” “mixed-issue campus disturbances,” or “convivial disorders”

Campus riots (unrelated to protest)

The riot overview indicates that riots have occurred in various forms throughout U.S. history. The campus riots section highlights the events that took place on Iowa State University's campus, including recent incidents and the riot chronology.

April 17-18, 2004, riot chronology

11:20 p.m. Area police receive complaint of party on Hunt Street
11:40 p.m.-2:30 a.m. Police arrest apartment occupant for barbqueing. Two officers arrested worshipper (individual was let or was pulled to the ground. Officers were treated by robots. Violent act occurred in the student housing area of campus.
12:15 a.m. More than 200 rioters were in the student housing area.
12:15-12:20 a.m. More than 200 rioters were in the student housing area.
12:30-1:10 a.m. Police arrested more than 10 people.
1:10 a.m. More than 200 rioters were in the student housing area.
1:15 a.m. More than 200 rioters were in the student housing area.
1:30 a.m. More than 200 rioters were in the student housing area.
1:30:45 a.m. Most riot activity occurred along Lincoln Way between Welch and Shelden. Police made multiple trips from the Welch Avenue fire station, attempting to disperse the crowd. Approximately 2,000 people were in the street and in front of Welch. Officers from the Ames Police, ISU Police, Story County Sheriff’s Office, Iowa State Police Division and Iowa State Highway Troopers were on the scene. By 4:30 a.m. the crowd had dispersed.

The riot chronology provides a timeline of events during the April 17-18, 2004 riot on Iowa State University's campus, detailing the actions of police and the crowd along with the number of people involved.
Explaining riots

Unsupported explanations
- People are driven mad by the crowd (recall lecture on panic)
- Community strain

Prerequisites/contributing factors
- People with access to riot area
- People temporally available to riot
- Social cues may serve as “invitations to riot,” e.g., rumors, media stories, administration/police preparations, police intervention, police in “riot gear,” history of rioting
- People with purposes for rioting

Two types of purposes for rioting (McPhail 1994)
- Intended violence: violence that results from people pursuing inherently violent goals
- Outcome violence: violence that results from people with non-violent goals, but who face resistance to these goals

Purposes in a riot area

Non-violent purposes:
- Majority of people in riot area do not commit violence
- People were in Campustown riot area to watch, transport friends, help injured, protect property.

Intended violence (results from inherently violent goals)
- “A majority of this violence [at the April 18 riot] was committed because it was fun for both the actors and their audience.”
- “Entrepreneurs” take the lead in attempting to start a riot. They are typically young white men. (Buettner 2004)
- E.g., man chanted “Riot, riot!” from balcony at Hunt Street; “Spartacus” urged on crowd on Lincoln Way

Soc 134 survey:
- “I would like to participate in a riot during my college years.” 29.7% of males and 14.6% of females agreed
- “I would like to watch a riot during my college years.” 54.3% of males and 36.3% of females agreed

Outcome violence and alcohol restrictions

Alcohol has been an important part of university life for centuries
- 2003 ISU student survey: 73% had used alcohol in past month, 41% engaged in high-risk drinking during past two weeks. Majority believed alcohol helps break the ice (71.4%) and allows people to have more fun (56.1%).

Alcohol can contribute to rioting in two ways:
- Lowers inhibitions and impairs thinking and coordination
- Restrictions may create encounters between partiers and police attempting to enforce restrictions and respond to problems

Alcohol restrictions at ISU include under-21 ordinance, residence hall restrictions and “Dry VEISHEA” (enacted after 1997 murder)
- Restrictions may drive drinking to large off-campus parties and create additional encounters with police

Outcome violence and police

Policing a riot is very difficult; police are often unable to distinguish between rioters and onlookers/passersby

Observers/passersby may increase involvement after being affected by police tactics:
- Many eye witnesses complained about overuse of force, usually by pepper spray. Some blamed police for precipitating/escalating the riot.