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# Staying Out of Hot Water: A Legal Guidebook on HazingStaying

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# STAYING OUT OF HOT WATER:

## A LEGAL GUIDEBOOK ON HAZING

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Prepared By: Jasmine Kelly, Alex Kennedy, Keira Martin, and George Woodard

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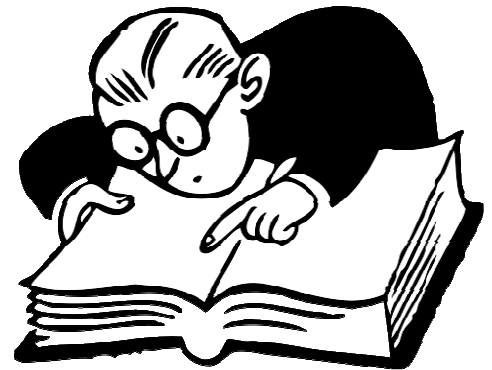
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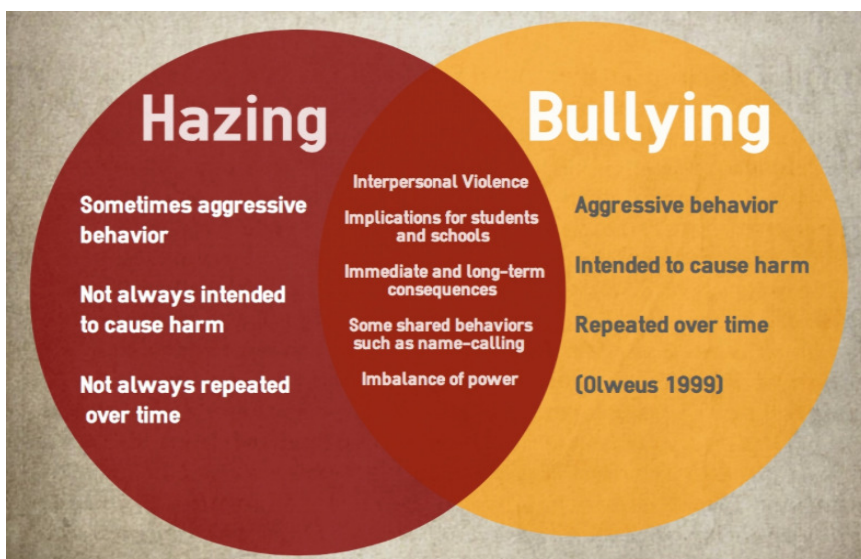
# WHAT IS HAZING?

... the practice of activities and rituals that often humiliate or harm individuals or groups of individuals in order to earn membership into an organization or society.

According to the Office of the Dean of Students at the University of Michigan (2015), hazing is any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the mental, physical, or academic health or safety of a student. Hazing includes but is not limited to any situation which; creates a risk of injury to any individual or group, causes discomfort to any individual or group, causes embarrassment to any individual or group, involves harassment of any individual or group, involves degradation of any individual or group, involves humiliation of an individual or group, involves ridicule of an individual or group, involves or includes the willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in an organization. The University of Michigan (2015) goes on to state that hazing also includes physical injury, assault or battery, kidnapping or imprisonment, intentionally placing at risk of mental or emotional harm (putting “over the edge”), degradation, humiliation, the compromising of moral or religious values, forced consumption of any liquid or solid, placing an individual in physical danger (at risk) which includes abandonment, and impairment of physical liberties which include curfews or other interference with academic endeavors.



<https://deanofstudents.umich.edu/article/what-hazing>



## HAZING AND BULLYING

Hazing and bullying, while similar to one another ARE NOT the same, according to stophazing.org. This graphic shows the similarities and differences between hazing and bullying,

# HAZING: MISDEMEANOR VS. FELONY

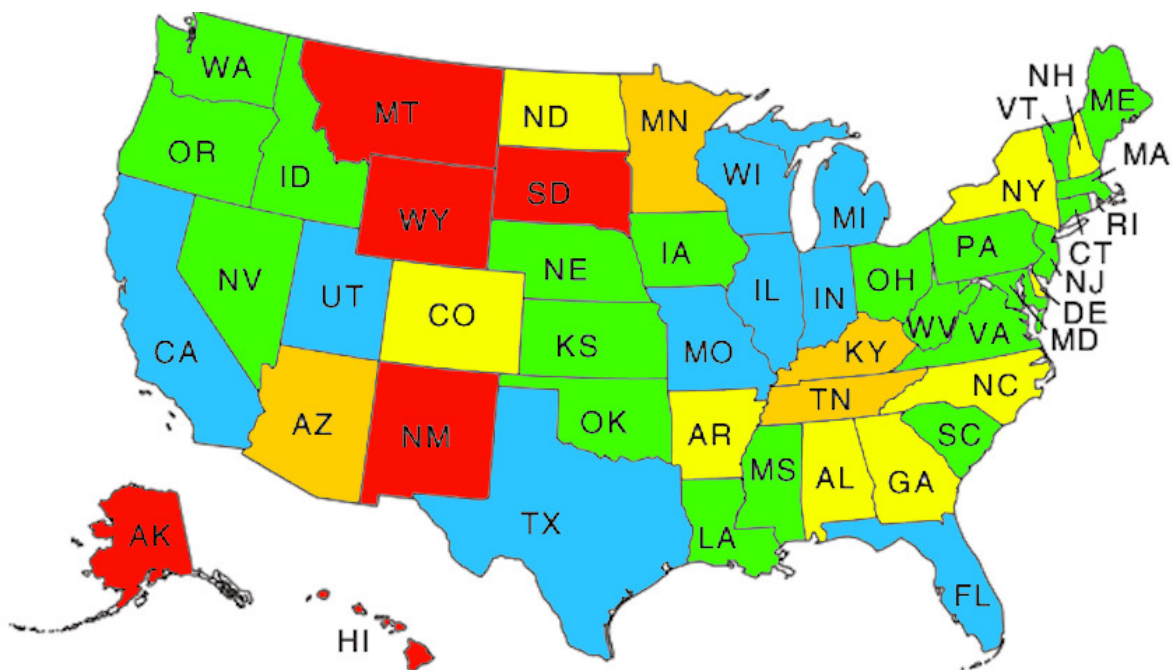
## DEFINITIONS:

Misdemeanor - a minor wrongdoing; a nonindictable offense, regarded in the U.S. as less serious than a felony:

- Class A misdemeanor receive the highest sentence, generally up to one year in county facility.
- Class B misdemeanors are punished between 90-180 days in county jail.
- Class C misdemeanors receive the least amount of time, usually 30 days or less.

Felony - a crime, typically one involving violence, regarded as more serious than a misdemeanor, and usually punishable by imprisonment for more than one year or by death:

- Class A and Level One Felonies - Felonies classified as “Class A” or “Level One” are the most serious crimes, short of death penalty crimes. They incur long prison sentences and hefty fines.
- Class B and Level Two Felonies- Less serious than Class A/Level One felonies, Class B/Level Two crimes nonetheless carry significant prison sentences and fines.
- Class C and Level Three Felonies- The least serious felonies are classified as Level C or Level Three. They all involve fines and prison time, but sentences may be as short as a year. Probation is sometimes an option.
- Class D and Level Four Felonies- Here you'll find an explanation of a Class D Felony classification, crimes that are considered Class D, and sentencing and penalty information.
- Class E and Level 5 Felonies-Some states classify crimes as Class E (or Level 5) felonies, which are typically less serious than felonies in Classes A, B, C, and D.



## HAZING POLICY STATE-BY-STATE:

### STATES THAT DO NOT HAVE A HAZING STATUTE:

- Alaska
- Hawaii
- Montana
- New Mexico
- South Dakota
- Wyoming

### STATES THAT DO NOT HAVE A CRIMINAL HAZING STATUTE:

- Kentucky
- Minnesota
- Tennessee

### STATES THAT HAZING RESULTS IN "CLASS A, B, & C" MISDEMEANOR

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- New Hampshire
- New York
- North Dakota

### STATES THAT HAZING RESULTS IN MISDEMEANOR

- Connecticut
- Idaho
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Mississippi
- Nebraska
- New Jersey
- Nevada
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Washington

### STATES THAT HAZING RESULTS IN MISDEMEANOR AND FELONY

- California
- Florida
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Texas
- Utah
- Wisconsin

For more information please review: [http://b3cdn.net/raproject/969346b764b11860f9\\_70m6ivefo.pdf](http://b3cdn.net/raproject/969346b764b11860f9_70m6ivefo.pdf)

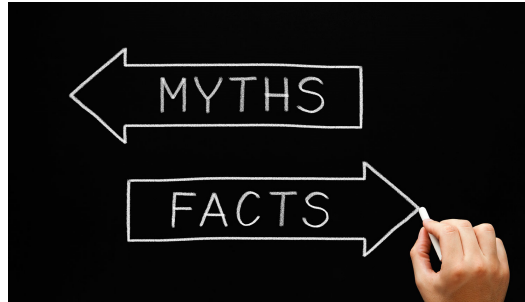
## IDENTIFYING HAZING

According to Bucknell University (2014) key indicators to identify hazing in members include; activities that are degrading and/or demeaning, members justifying actions as “tradition” in an attempt to convince others that it is an acceptable event, changes in behavior such as oversleeping, constant exhaustion, an inability to focus, and a drop in GPA.

[www.bucknell.edu/current-student-resources/fraternity-and-sorority-affairs/hazing/identifying-acts-of-hazing.html](http://www.bucknell.edu/current-student-resources/fraternity-and-sorority-affairs/hazing/identifying-acts-of-hazing.html)

This guidebook should provide you further information on hazing, how to identify hazing, and what you can do to help prevent hazing

# POPULAR 'ARGUMENTS' FOR HAZING



## **MYTH #1: HAZING BUILDS UNITY!**

Hazing may create unity among new members, but often there are costs as well. The effect of hazing on a group can be like the effect of a hurricane on a community: residents feel closer to each other afterward but some may be suffering. More often, Hazing builds animosity between people and does nothing to foster trust, unity or respect. It simply makes better hazers.

## **MYTH #2: I WENT THROUGH IT, THEY SHOULD TOO – IT'S TRADITION!**

"Tradition" does not justify subjecting new members to abuse. Groups create traditions, and groups hold the power to change or eliminate them. It only takes one year to break a hazing tradition. Remember that the founding members of organizations were not hazed. One class can break the "tradition" of hazing- it just takes some courage and integrity to do what is right.

## **MYTH #3: IT'S THE ONLY METHOD TO HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE!**

While holding new members accountable may be important, there are effective ways to do so without hazing. Effective parents, teachers, and bosses all know ways to hold others accountable without humiliating, degrading, or physically hurting them. These skills can be learned.

## **MYTH #4: ENDURING HAZING IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH!**

While it does take a certain strength to make it through hazing, many people submit to it because they desire acceptance by others, are afraid to resist, or feel a need to prove to themselves or others that they are worthy or tough enough (e.g., "a real man"). These motives reflect conformity, fear, and insecurity, which are not qualities typically associated with strength. In contrast, standing up to a group of abusive peers or breaking free from hazing takes courage. That's real strength.

## **MYTH #5: IT'S AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO TEACH RESPECT AND DISCIPLINE!**

Respect must be earned, not taught. Victims of hazing rarely report having respect for those who have hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds mistrust, apathy and alienation.

For further information, check out: [www.babson.edu/student-life/community-standards/hazing/Pages/hazing-facts-and-myths.aspx](http://www.babson.edu/student-life/community-standards/hazing/Pages/hazing-facts-and-myths.aspx) and <http://studentconduct.osu.edu/page.asp?id=55>



# WHERE IS HAZING TAKING PLACE?

## UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Hazing in Greek life is a well-documented phenomenon and usually the first thing people envision when they hear the phrase “hazing”. However, wherever there is a group of people that a person wishes to gain entry into, there is a possibility for hazing to occur. Another common source of hazing issues is university athletics, as it seems especially common for leaders on sports teams to feel the need to “initiate” or “welcome” new team members onto the team with embarrassing and sometimes dangerous tactics. A few such instances are documented below.

### ***Kent State University (Ohio) Hockey Team, 1988***

Seven team members of the Kent State University Hockey Team took five freshman members of the team to the basement of an off-campus house, shaved their heads into a Mohawk-style haircuts and forced them to drink a mixture of rum and beer. One of the students had an adverse reaction to the alcohol and had to be taken to the hospital. All five freshmen students were charged with underage consumption of alcohol, a first-degree misdemeanor, and faced sentences of up to six months in jail and fines of up to \$1,000 each. Two students were charged with furnishing alcohol to minors, also a first-degree misdemeanor, and five other students were charged with hazing, a fourth-degree misdemeanor which carried a maximum penalty of 30 days in jail and \$250 in fines. The university decided to cancel the 1988-89 hockey season because the President did “not believe that [the hockey program] is an acceptable representation of our university or of our athletic program in general.”

This is an interesting case in that the students who were hazed faced the same (or worse) penalties than the students who did the hazing. This seems to be a result of the times: hazing was taken much less seriously in the late 1980s than it is today. From a student affairs practitioner’s perspective, we see the possible ramifications of failing to prevent hazing incidents: the failure to serve students and foster a healthy, safe learning environment; cancellation of a sports season; and, of course, untold public embarrassment and possible issues with future recruiting of students due to the incident impacting public image.



### ***Haben v Anderson et al, Appellate Court of Illinois, Third District, 1992.***

On October 18, 1990, student athlete members of the Western Illinois University lacrosse club, a university recognized and sanctioned club, “initiated” new recruits to the club by forcing them to smear their faces and bodies with food and to drink large amounts of alcohol. This initiation was a requirement of membership in the club. One of the students, Nicholas Haben, passed out shortly after this “initiation” and was taken to the dorm room of Anthony Kolovitz, another member of the club, and was left alone. Kolovitz checked in on Haben on a few occasions and heard him “gurgling”, before Haben was found dead of acute alcohol poisoning at approximately 9 o’clock the following morning. His blood alcohol content was above .340.

The initial complaint, filed by Dale Haben, administrator of Nicholas Haben’s estate, was dismissed on the grounds that the complaint did not state a cause of action. This appellate ruling found that 1) membership in

the Lacrosse Club was a “valued status” and therefore supplied Nicholas Haben’s motivation for drinking excessively regardless of his own will, 2) that the defendants assumed the duty to ensure Haben’s safety when they took him into a dorm room occupied by one of the members, and 3) that they neglected their duty when they did not take action, such as calling an ambulance or taking him to the hospital, after hearing Haben’s “gurgling” and realizing that he was in serious danger. Therefore, the appeal was granted and the initial court’s ruling was overturned.

This case, sadly, is representative of issues on college campuses that are not as uncommon as we would wish them to be, and the key aspect here for Student Affairs Professionals is that we realize and recognize our duty to protect and ensure the safety of the students of our University. We are unlikely to find ourselves in the position of the defendants in this case, but if we are working in a residence hall, issues of alcohol overconsumption are likely to crop up, and professionals must be aware of proper university protocol for handling these situations. WKU has security personnel on call at all times for situations such as these, and the University website (“Alcohol Information”) advertises the Counseling Center and Health Services departments for students who are concerned about their own or a friend’s drinking behavior. It is important for us, in turn, to help students remain aware of these services to hopefully remediate or prevent alcohol abuse incidents in the future.

#### ***Cameron v. University of Toledo, et al, Ohio Court of Appeals, Sixth District, 2014***

Kyle Cameron was recruited to play football at the University of Toledo. However, in the summer before his freshman year, he was injured in a hazing incident which effectively ended his football career. He appealed the initial ruling that the common court of pleas did not have jurisdiction over his action (requesting punitive damages, no retaliation against him by the defendants, and to keep his scholarship despite inability to play) and lost the appeal.

This is an issue that can be a tricky one for Student Affairs personnel, especially those working in the academic affairs or financial aid offices. If a student athlete is injured by actions of university representatives (whether they are coaches, players, or staff), what is that athlete entitled to? Can he still force the university to pay his athletic scholarship since they could be at least partly at fault for the injury that is preventing him from competing in athletics? It is certainly a complex issue, one with an answer that varies based on state law.

#### ***Burlington Free Press v. University of Vermont, Supreme Court of Vermont, 2001***

Beginning in the fall of 1999, the University of Vermont became aware of hazing practices performed by its hockey team and began to take steps to eradicate them. The Burlington Free Press (BFP) requested that the University of Vermont release documents to them that would reveal the nature of the hazing incidents and the University’s response to them, but the University refused. After an initial hearing, the court then ordered the University to release documents to the BFP that did not include information that may violate FERPA in regards to releasing the identity of involved students, stating that any information that had to be included in such documents would not violate FERPA, because the plaintiff forfeited his rights to identity privacy by filing the initial federal court action which had been so heavily reported by the local media.

This third and final case offers a different facet of hazing than one that we might normally consider: the media’s reporting of hazing events and how FERPA affects the dissemination of such reports. Though it is necessary for us to be familiar with FERPA in our day-to-day practice, it is vital to have a more complete understanding of this law and how it relates to what we are and are not allowed to tell media outlets in the

event that hazing or other negative incidents occur in our universities in our area of operations. In an instance like the one mentioned above, best practice would indicate that we should always avoid giving personal information about students to media without express consent from the student or his/her legal guardian unless the student or his/her guardian deliberately forfeits his or her anonymity through legal action or other public statement. In cases that involve sensitive information, it is of course always better to err on the side of caution.

For further information, check out:

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=19880922&id=0fY0AAAAIBAJ&sjid=JYgDAAAAIBA J&pg=3827,8424650&hl=en>

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=17156984604518585573&q=lacrosse+++hazing&hl=en &as\\_sdt=6%2C32](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=17156984604518585573&q=lacrosse+++hazing&hl=en &as_sdt=6%2C32)

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=6566614881001188799&q=football+hazing&hl=en&as\\_sdt=6%2C32](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=6566614881001188799&q=football+hazing&hl=en&as_sdt=6%2C32)

[https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=4735091860096316991&q=vermont+hockey+hazing&hl=en&as\\_sdt=6%2C32](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=4735091860096316991&q=vermont+hockey+hazing&hl=en&as_sdt=6%2C32)

## ROTC

“Department of Defense policy recognizes the potential adverse effects hazing can have on morale, operational readiness, and mission accomplishment. **Hazing is prohibited and should never be tolerated.**”



"Although the Secretary of Defense has authorized all services to incorporate this policy into a punitive regulation, the Air Force does not have such a regulation and there are no plans to incorporate the policy into such a regulation; however, the Air Force may pursue disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) for dereliction of duty or for the underlying misconduct, such as assault, battery, maltreatment of subordinates, etc.”

([www.ncdsv.org/images/MilitaryCommanderAndTheLaw\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/MilitaryCommanderAndTheLaw_2009.pdf))

While we read plenty of articles about hazing taking place in the military ([like this](#)), it would not be unreasonable to assume some of these incredibly awful things take place in ROTC on college campuses.

## GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS (FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES)

**National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) –**

Tristan Cunningham’s research article titled, “Hazing in Black Greek Lettered Organizations: A Symbolic Interactionist Study”, goes into great detail about how serious and yet common hazing is in the historically black Greek Letter organizations.

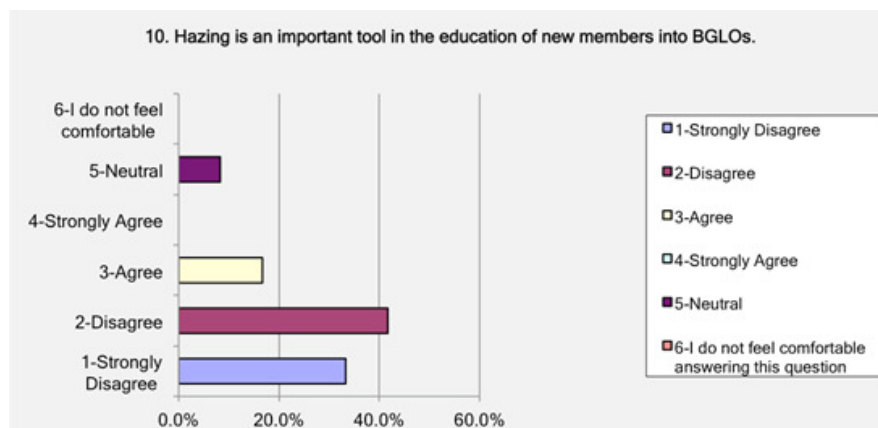
These organizations were all founded on the betterment of the African American population and its members were and are important figures in our society. Without these organizations present on college campuses, great leadership skills and opportunities would be denied to those whom would have become members of BGLOs.

Tristan cites that since pledging was outlawed in 1990 there has been an average of 4 media reports on hazing per year, and since 1999 that number has risen to 7 per year.

With the continued reports of hazing in these organizations and the continued deaths of students many have tried to postulate solutions for this current issue; some include the drastic concept of dissolution of undergraduate chapters as a whole.



His study shows that hazing is not an effective tool for building a strong sense of unity and camaraderie amongst members and that it has no bearing on continued commitment beyond the undergraduate experience. During the study, he asked members of BGLOs many questions. One such example: “Hazing is an important tool in the education of new members into BGLOs” on a likert scale. Surprisingly the research showed that a large number stated that they didn’t agree that hazing was important. (blogs.longwood.edu)



### National Panhellenic Conference and Interfraternity Council –

The NPC and IFC, both predominantly white organizations were founded in the year of 1902 and 1909. Since that time a lot of things has changed for those organization.

The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), one of the world’s largest organizations advocating for women, is the umbrella group for 26 inter/national sororities. NPC supports efforts to eliminate hazing. NPC has adopted Unanimous Agreement IX, which condemns hazing and hazing-related behaviors. Hazing and hazing-related activities contradict all expectations of the proper behavior expected of the undergraduate and alumnae members of NPC member organizations as set forth in Unanimous Agreement IV, Standards of Ethical Conduct.

Each NPC member organization has its own set of bylaws, policies and rules condemning hazing and governing the investigation and discipline involving hazing allegations, as is the case with each individual college or university — whether public or private. (www.npcwomen.org)

IFC defines hazing as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule. Such activities and situations include but are not limited to: paddling in any form, creation of excessive fatigue, physical and psychological shocks, quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities carried on outside the confines of the house; wearing, publicly, apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste, engaging in public stunts and buffoonery, morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; late work sessions which interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual or policy or the regulations and policies of the educational system.  
([www.stuorgs.oregonstate.edu](http://www.stuorgs.oregonstate.edu))

To men and women who are pledging or participating in hazing in any capacity, reviewing each school's individual policies (usually found on the Greek Life section of university websites) is important, as is utilizing hotlines to report any hazing, but particularly activities that are emotional and physically harmful.

What makes more men and women die at the hands of hazing in fraternities and sororities as opposed to other student organizations? According to Dr. Gentry McCreary, it all boils down to the lack of "adult" figures. Where as in bands, ROTC, sports teams, other student organizations, etc. the peers do not truly hold the power – there is always someone above them (a coach or instructor). While fraternities and sororities have advisors, many of the new member processes are largely hosted entirely by the older chapter members. This creates a power differential, which is the basis of all bullying and hazing. For further information, check out [Dr. McCreary's blog post](#).

For further information:

<http://blogs.longwood.edu/incite/2014/05/20/hazing-in-black-greek-lettered-organizations-a-symbolic-interactionist-study/>

[www.npcwomen.org/resources/pdf/Hazing-1.pdf](http://www.npcwomen.org/resources/pdf/Hazing-1.pdf)

[http://stuorgs.oregonstate.edu/files/interfraternity-/council/bylaws/ifc\\_appendix\\_a\\_hazing\\_guidelines.pdf](http://stuorgs.oregonstate.edu/files/interfraternity-/council/bylaws/ifc_appendix_a_hazing_guidelines.pdf)



## OTHER

Cases of hazing can take place anywhere, but they often happen in bands. Robert Champion Case – This is the case involving the FAMU drum major who was killed.

[www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/recounting-the-deadly-hazing-that-destroyed-famu-bands-reputation/1260765](http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/recounting-the-deadly-hazing-that-destroyed-famu-bands-reputation/1260765)

Follow up for the Robert Champion case

[www.theroot.com/articles/news/2015/09/robert\\_champion\\_his\\_family\\_settles\\_lawsuit\\_with\\_famu\\_for\\_1\\_100\\_000\\_in\\_hazing.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/news/2015/09/robert_champion_his_family_settles_lawsuit_with_famu_for_1_100_000_in_hazing.html)

# MOVING FROM REACTIVE PROGRAMMING TO PROACTIVE HAZING PREVENTION

Hazing prevention is something that many groups don't take seriously or do not consider a priority but is a necessary step towards building a healthy, successful group. Hazing prevention does not have to be some huge, extremely organized program, though we will enumerate some of those below. Hazing prevention is as simple as changing the way we view student groups and letting that change guide our everyday action.

## Bystander Intervention

There are almost always three categories of people in groups that haze: The people doing the hazing, the people being hazed, and the bystanders. In many cases, the bystanders outnumber the hazers, so if we can create a culture of bystander action, hazing could be dramatically reduced. Every-choice-bystander.com offers videos which are geared towards bystander intervention in "campus sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking" by enabling students to prevent these activities with intervention tools. Many of these tools can be applied to hazing prevention, and the steps read as follows:



1. Notice the event
2. Interpret it as a problem
3. Feel responsible to act
4. Possess the skills to act in a way that is reasonable
5. Intervene safely (Every-Choice-Bystander.com)

It is not difficult to see how these can be applied to hazing prevention. Perhaps the most difficult parts are getting people to recognize hazing as a problem, and then feel responsible to act. If we can instill this knowledge into our campus community, students would feel more responsibility and ability to act and prevent hazing, as well as other violence committed by students against other students.



## National Hazing Prevention Week

National Hazing Prevention week is the last full week of September each year and is a country-wide effort to raise awareness about hazing and equip students with the knowledge to prevent it from happening in their Greek organizations, athletic teams, and other student groups.

HazingPrevention.Org is a great resource for information about hazing, tips for organizing hazing prevention events on your campus, and promotional items about hazing prevention. This year's Hazing Prevention theme was These Hands Don't Haze and emphasized community on the college campus.

## Break the Tradition

But what we do isn't hazing... some activities are easily categorized as hazing. Others may not be so easily classified. If you're not sure about whether an activity may be hazing, consider the following questions:

- Is this activity an education experience?
- Does this activity promote and conform to the values of the organization?
- Will this activity decrease a new member's respect for themselves, the organization and its members?
- Is a reasonable person going to think this is a normal activity?
- If you videotaped this activity would you be willing to allow your parents to watch the tape? The new members' parents? A judge? Prospective new members? The media?
- Would you be able to defend this activity in a court of law?
- Does this activity meet both the spirit and letter of standards prohibiting hazing?

**A good rule to follow when deciding  
whether an activity is hazing?  
If you have to ask if it's hazing  
... IT PROBABLY IS.**

### Steps to Break the Tradition

1. Awareness of Your Members
  - Use news stories, pamphlets, and national policy statements to let your members know what actions are hazing and why hazing is not appropriate
2. Education of Your Members
  - Teach your members that there are alternatives to hazing
  - Take advantage of workshops, conferences, and retreats to educate everyone in your organization
  - Use positive programming that assimilates new members into the chapter
3. Detection of Violations by Your Members
  - Hazing does not necessarily have to be an entire organization function individuals in your organization can haze your members without approval. It is important to look for activities and comments that may indicate a member or group of members is hazing other members
  - Be alert and don't look the other way
4. Taking Corrective Actions
  - After you have found a problem, don't overlook it. Members who haze must be held accountable by the organization and the university for their unacceptable behaviors

For more information, check out: [www.uncw.edu/fsl/hazing/prevention.html](http://www.uncw.edu/fsl/hazing/prevention.html)

## #40Answers Campaign

Every fall, [www.hazingprevention.org](http://www.hazingprevention.org) hosts National Hazing Prevention Week. In the 40 days before the kickoff of the week, a twitter campaign takes place online, hosted by [hazingprevention.org](http://hazingprevention.org) and Sigma Nu Fraternity. This campaign posts popular excuses for hazing, and allows people to answer interactively why the excuses just don't work. Here are some excuses (and some answers replied back) during the campaign:

### Day 40: Pledges must pay their dues to become a member.

- Hazing takes time away from true purpose of membership – leadership, service and other positives. A true waste of time at BEST. –HazingPrevention.Org (@PreventHazing)
- ...but only until initiated- then they can be irresponsible, right? (@GreeksRISE)
- Sounds like a scam: work hard, pay money work more, THEN maybe we'll let you in. (@GreeksRISE)
- We pay dues to keep the chapter running smoothly and pay for things that promote the brotherhood. Hazing does the opposite. (@gmoser1210)
- Pledges should show dedication to the fraternity through loyalty and pride, not through ability to withstand hazing. (@WebGreek)
- Hazing creates arbitrary, one-time requirements for initiation but hazers still wonder why Brothers are apathetic – Sigma Nu (@SigmaNuHQ)

### Day 23: They wanted to be hazed.

- Really? Please. –Kappa Alpha Theta (@BettieLocke)
- Then you recruited the wrong people—try again. (@GreeksRISE)
- No, they wanted deep relationships, transformational ceremony and a challenge to be better. Hazing can't achieve that. (@GreeksRISE)
- Hmm. Where are "they", then? Let's take a look at your retention. Not so hot? Shocker. –Sigma Sigma Sigma (@trisigma)
- If new members misunderstand the purpose of fraternity, educational-based programs are even more necessary. – Sigma Nu (@SigmaNuHQ)

### Day 19: Every other chapter on campus hazes too.

- And your allies in those chapters are saying enough is enough, too. Lead, not follow. –Chad Ellsworth, Coordinator for the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Minnesota (@ChadEllsworth)
- Then take pride in being the one organization that doesn't! –Kappa Alpha Theta (@BettieLocke)
- Since when do we want to be like everyone else? (@GreeksRISE)
- So even the best chapter is still top turd in a pile of crap. How does that feel? (@GreeksRISE)
- Allow me to reference Kouzes & Posner: Challenge the Process (@TriciaCesarino)





- Translation: "At least we're not the only chapter lacking integrity." – Sigma Nu (@SigmaNuHQ)

### Day 11: But all of the sports team haze too!

- Be leaders on your campus; invite student athletes to anti-hazing educational sessions. –Chad Ellsworth, Coordinator for the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Minnesota (@ChadEllsworth)
- You can't control what others do, but you can and must control your values and actions. –Kappa Alpha Theta (@BettieLocke)
- They didn't take an oath live with Honor, Integrity, Love, Virtue, Service, etc. You did. (@GreeksRISE)

For more information, check out <http://hazingprevention.org/40answers-campaign/> or [www.sigmanu.org/documents/forty\\_answers.pdf](http://www.sigmanu.org/documents/forty_answers.pdf)



### Hazing and Alcohol

Some fatal cases of hazing have been labeled as episodes of "binge drinking," a term that suggests that the students who died of alcohol poisoning just used poor judgment and did not know when to stop drinking. It is more accurate to refer to such episodes as "ritualized drinking" in which there is systematic pressure applied to vulnerable new members that leads them to consume dangerous amounts of alcohol.

A common argument in defense of groups that pressure new members to drink is that they do not "force anyone to drink." Comments such as "No one poured it down their throats," and "They could have walked out at any time" ignore the reality of coercive power in groups and the fact that **psychological force can be as strong as physical force.**

### Alcohol plays two main roles in hazing:

1. **Consumption by current members.** Intoxication of current members is in essence "strategic disinhibition" designed to achieve the following:
  - Enhance the fun of making new members go through experiences that current members had to endure.
  - Reduce anxiety or guilt about subjecting new members to mental and physical distress. Alcohol enables members who feel conflicted about hazing to temporarily suspend their moral standards.
  - Provide a sense of "insurance" against culpability by allowing hazers to point to their inebriated state as the explanation for hazing incidents. The "we were drunk and things just got out of hand" defense seeks to obscure that fact that hazing is generally premeditated and systematic. Intoxication, however, is not a valid legal defense.
2. **Consumption by new members.** Providing alcohol to new members can serve a variety of functions, including the following:
  - As a "social lubricant," alcohol is used to increase new members' comfort with each other and facilitate self-disclosure that can enhance group bonding.

- Alcohol impairs the judgment of new members thus decreasing their resistance to engaging in risky behavior.
- When combined with their lack of knowledge about what they are being subjected to, being intoxicated further lowers new members' power relative to those who are hazing them.
- The withholding of alcohol at times from new members while current members drink serves to underscore the "privilege" of full membership, thus increasing the desirability of both alcohol and membership.

### Risks of Alcohol in Hazing

In addition to potential legal and judicial consequences, there are three health main risks that alcohol poses in hazing:

#### 1. Acute risk to new members

- Rapid consumption of large quantities of **alcohol can kill** by suppressing brain functions:
- A person can pass out and drown in his or her own vomit because of an impaired gag reflex.
- A person can pass out and then suffocate with his or her face in a pillow.
- A person's breathing or heartbeat can stop.
- **It is never worth risking someone's life** for the sake of the group

#### 2. Chronic risks to new members

- One in ten students reports worrying that they might have **a problem with alcohol or other drugs**. Many of these individuals have either developed or are at risk of developing alcohol dependency (the clinical term for alcoholism).
- New member processes that involve alcohol pose extra risk for students with alcohol problems. The consequences for the individual can be serious and can have a major negative impact on the group as well. By creating conditions where it is **difficult for a person with an alcohol problem to decline to drink**, the group contributes to the person's problem.
- In some cases, members are either **unaware of such risks or recklessly disregard them**. In one case, a new member explained to current members that another new member was recovering from a drinking problem. Rather than exempt the recovering member from drinking rituals, the members targeted this person for drinking activities.

#### 3. Risk to hazers and the group

- In addition to increasing their own risk of the acute and long-term individual consequences described above, members who haze **risk harming others and bringing sanctions** upon themselves or their organization. When the members of a group that is hazing become intoxicated, they may make disastrous decisions. Impaired judgment can turn a premeditated act of hazing into a tragedy. ([www.hazing.cornell.edu](http://www.hazing.cornell.edu))

# Theoretical Perspective to Understand Why People Haze

FROM [WWW.HAZING.CORNELL.EDU](http://WWW.HAZING.CORNELL.EDU)

There are many theoretical explanations for hazing. One-way to understand why hazing occurs is to **ask individuals who engage to explain their motivations.**

Beyond the reasons given by individuals who haze, there are other influences that likely contribute to hazing. Since **no single theory** can adequately explain hazing entirely, it is important to consider how multiple factors may lead individuals to deviate from their own ethical standards or the norms of society.

Below is an overview of some elements that may play a role in hazing:

- **Evolutionary psychology:** our ancestors survived by forming groups that had strong bonds. Consequently, we are social creatures with needs for affiliation. Our innate drives for connection and preservation may contribute to practices such as hazing that are perceived to strengthen the ties between group members.
- **Lack of external constraints:** the social order of civilizations depends on accountability and shared agreement to conform to behavioral norms. When external security is decreased (e.g., in the aftermath of natural disasters), conformity to societal standards decreases (e.g., looting). In the absence of strong internal leadership and prosocial norms, groups that operate in secrecy, isolated from external constraints, are at greater risk of deviating from societal norms of conduct. Hazing among students, the abuse of prisoners in Iraq, and the Enron corporate scandal each reflect in part the absence of external constraints on group behavior.
- **Conformity and obedience to authority:** Research has demonstrated that social context has a powerful influence on people's willingness to inflict harm on others. In Milgram's classic study, subjects being pressured by interviewers delivered what they believed were highly painful (even lethal) shocks to a person screaming in another room. In Zimbardo's (1973) Stanford Prison Experiment, college students were assigned randomly to play the role of either a prisoner or prison guard for a two-week, live-in experiment. The study was stopped after five days because the "guards" became vicious toward the "prisoners."
- **Cognitive dissonance:** when an individual holds two opposing beliefs in tension, he or she experiences



tension which may be resolved by changing one of the views. When people who view themselves as smart, reasonable people participate in degrading experiences, they may look back and minimize the extent that they experienced degradation. Otherwise they would be left saying to themselves, "I'm a smart person and I joined a group that degraded me," which would create tension. Saying to oneself, "It wasn't that bad," creates less tension. As a result, individuals in a group that is hazed may eventually feel positively about the group that subjected them to the experience.

- **Groupthink:** Irving Janis (1997) described a process in highly cohesive groups in which faulty decision-making arises as a result of a convergence of dynamics, including pressure for unanimity, suppression of individual moral objections, and degradation of outsiders. These dynamics result in a failure to realistically appraise alternative courses of action and may contribute to disregard for the safety of others. In *Wrongs of Passage*, Hank Nuwer (2001) adapted the term "groupthink" to become "Greekthink," a reference to the dangerous process in which fraternal groups engage in reckless rituals, put newcomers in danger, and demonstrate post-incident denial in the face of clear evidence that they have made a mistake.
- **Beliefs about masculinity:** culturally-constructed notions of what it means to be a "real man" place an emphasis on physical and mental toughness, obedience to superiors, and the value of force as a means of accountability. Such beliefs, combined with desires by heterosexual men to demonstrate that they do not possess qualities associated with gay men (e.g., vulnerability, emotionality, nurturance), contribute to the perpetuation of hazing and in some cases even requests to undergo hazing (Allen, 2004). It is notable that of the more than 60 documented hazing deaths, only three have been women (Nuwer, 1999).
- **Sociopathy:** some individuals within groups have personalities characterized by anti-social tendencies. Psychologically speaking, "anti-social" does not mean "doesn't like to party." It means traits such as to disregard the rights and safety of others, failure to conform to societal norms, and lack of remorse. While such individuals tend to be a small subset of groups, they can exert significant influence as hazing ringleaders.
- **Shared coping:** when individuals go through a highly stressful experience together (e.g., a natural disaster, a battle), they may feel closer to each other as a result. Enduring hazing together may make a group feel more unity, but as with hurricanes, the experience may yield damage as well as benefits.
- **Cycles of abuse:** individuals who are hazed may be at greater risk of hazing others because of a displaced desire for revenge. As one fraternity pledge said immediately after being hazed intensely, "I can't wait to do this to the pledges next year." In addition, being hazed involves a learning process by which members model for new members the accepted methods for initiation.
- **Identification with the aggressor:** intensive hazing can involve complex strategies to "break down" individuals and "remold" them to conform to the belief structures of the group. The group may isolate new members and expose them to repeated experiences designed to conform the new member's beliefs to those of the group. They may be told that the group is special and superior, and that attainment of this status is worth whatever must be endured to achieve it. Eventually, new members may desire to become like the individuals who abuse them.
- **Symbolic Interactionism:** Stephen Sweet (1999) argues that hazing is not simply the result of

psychologically- or morally-flawed individuals, but “is the result of a confluence of symbols, manipulated identities, and definitions of situations that are organized in the context of initiation rites.” Symbolic interactionists view hazing as a cultural phenomenon in which the meaning ascribed to social encounters and the power of these “realities” shape individuals' choices about their actions.

- **Rites of passage:** As adolescents and young adults pass through the developmental stage of identity formation, rites of passage may help them mark their transition to full adulthood. Rituals serve as a way for a community to assist members through this process (e.g., commencement, birthday parties, religious confirmation, initiation into a group). Most initiation practices do not involve hazing, while some do.
- **Need for esteem:** self-esteem is bolstered by a sense of accomplishment and acceptance by others. "Surviving" hazing may contribute to a sense of achievement and garner the "respect" of group members, both of which can enhance individuals' esteem. Those who haze may enhance their own sense of esteem and heroism by maintaining membership in a group that "weeds out the weak." Television shows such as *Survivor*, *The Weakest Link*, *The Apprentice* ("You're fired!"), and *My Big Fat Obnoxious Boss* are cultural reflections of an underlying need to earn esteem.
- **Expression of power:** hazing may gratify individuals' desires for a sense of power and control. As one Cornell sorority sister stated, "There is no need to subject girls to degrading acts; it is selfish and only provided the elder girls with a sense of power." Some individuals acknowledge enjoying exerting power over others and even seeing others experience pain.
- **Need for intimacy:** many members of groups that haze cite closeness as a goal of hazing. Among males, however, cultural definitions of masculinity tend to undermine overt attempts at intimacy (e.g., talking about one's feelings). Hazing activities may thus be designed to meet intimacy needs without violating cultural norms. For example, being intoxicated makes it more acceptable to share one's feelings (e.g., "I love you, man!"). Men who feel uncomfortable hugging each other may nonetheless perpetuate naked "elephant walks" in which new members hold onto each others hands or genitals in what some would describe as a homoerotic ritual.
- **Misperceived norms:** in some groups, the majority of members believe that it is not important to humiliate, intimidate or physically abuse new members. These members, however, mistakenly believe that they are in the minority. They may therefore reluctantly perpetuate these practices because they assume that everyone else believes that they are the right things to do.
- **Fear of reprisal:** even when an individual who has been hazed wishes to not perpetuate the practices, he or she may do so out of fear of disapproval or retaliation by the group. Groups may exert considerable pressure on dissatisfied members in order to maintain secrecy about their hazing practices.
- **Perceived lack of alternatives:** while the underlying needs of individuals and groups can be met through non-hazing means, a lack of knowledge about those means and an absence of creativity enables individuals to perpetuate the belief that hazing is necessary. When presented with credible alternatives, many individuals agree to pursue them in place of hazing.

# IDENTIFYING PARTNERS TO END HAZING



## Judicial Affairs

This is one avenue to hazing prevention that we hope we don't have to use because of hazing incidents, but that can be an important resource for hazing prevention. Of course these offices issue punishment to offenders, including suspension of the group from campus or even expulsion of some individual hazers, in extreme cases. However, judicial affairs can be a willing and effective partner in advertising the legal and ethical consequences of hazing and deterring student groups from hazing members.

## Housing and Residence Life

HRL offices can have a bigger impact on hazing prevention than we might anticipate because they tend to spend more time interacting with students than most or any other university personnel. Through postings in the residence halls and other communal areas, they can assist in raising awareness about the dangers and detriments of hazing practices.

## Greek Affairs Office

This is a seemingly obvious but no less important friend in hazing prevention. These offices have a great deal of interaction with and influence on Greek organizations and their everyday actions.

## Parents

It is easy to forget the role that parents can play in students' lives because they are not as much of a consistent presence on campus, but the importance of his or her parents to a student is an important factor in hazing prevention. If the parent was a part of a Greek organization, he or she can talk with the student about why hazing was detrimental to their Greek experience if they experienced hazing, or can tell the student about how much better off their group was for not abusing and denigrating new members through hazing practices if hazing was not a part of their group.

## ROTC

As one of the previously highlighted areas where hazing occurs, ROTC is a natural and important target for hazing prevention. With the respect that ROTC commands on many campuses and their basis in military preparation, they can have a big impact on the effectiveness of any hazing prevention program.

## Chapter Advisors

These important officials, the university liaisons for Greek organizations, play a vital role of communicating the chapter needs and plans to the University and communicating University standards to the organization. Therefore, they can work with the University as well as their chapters to coordinate hazing prevention plans and update the University on their successes and drawbacks in program implementation and effectiveness.

# CASE STUDIES – WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



## ATHLETICS

Brian has just joined the university baseball team and is very excited. After the first practice, he is invited to his teammate John's off-campus house for a party. Brian has never been great at making friends, so he agrees to go to the party with the hopes that he will grow closer to the guys on the team and maybe meet some other people as well. As soon as he gets to the party, Josh hands him a beer and tells him to drink it in 20 seconds or he'll have to run around the house in just his underwear. Brian is reluctant at first, but is told by Josh that "everyone has to do it", so Brian does. Next thing Brian knows, he's having drinks pushed on him and his "friends" on the team are throwing food at him as he tries to finish a drink as fast as he can. After the party, Brian discloses to you, his athletic director, the events that happened at the party the night before.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What should you tell Brian to do next?
2. Do you have an obligation to go "up the ladder" to your supervisor with this issue, or should you perhaps tell the coach and let him sort it out?
3. Should you consider legal action? Can you advise Brian to consider legal action?

## GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS (FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES)

It is Ashlee's "Hell Week" which is traditionally the last week of pledging where hazing is most severe (it is now a weekend because the school cracks down). Everyone in Ashlee's pledge class has to sleep at the same place, and they have a buddy day where they have to pick one person within the group that they have to dress like. The pledge class can be kept up all weekend long. Ashlee and her pledge class was instructed to write a song about pledging, and a greeting for the members of the organization/sisters. Ashlee and her pledge class don't get a lot of sleep and they have to spend a lot of their own money on what the "big sisters" want them to buy, which often includes alcohol. The pledge class has to do whatever is asked of them by their "big sisters" and if they get it wrong the big sisters can put stuff in their hair like eggs and sour cream. Ashlee and her pledge class were not allowed to shower the whole weekend. But the next day, they were initiated."

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What would you say to a student who says "Hell Week is really just for fun"?
2. Do you think that the school knows about the "Hell Week"?
3. What do you do?

## ROTC

Jeff is a freshman who is involved in his campus' ROTC program. Jeff and four other ROTC freshmen have been seen around campus limping and wincing in pain. An anonymous tip was provided by an instructor on campus

who is concerned that these young students are being hazed as part of the ROTC program on campus. The instructor also reported the students have missed a few classes and have come to campus looking visibly intoxicated. You ask the students to come into your office to talk but they seem to be ignoring your communication. You see one of the students on campus and confront them. They let you know they will talk to the fellow students and schedule a time to meet with you. The next day the students stop by before the office has even opened. You ask a few questions and find out the students have been forced to drink alcohol, do extreme levels of calisthenics (outside of the reasonable expectations for ROTC students) and have been beaten with their wooden rifles by their ROTC officer. One of the students states she does not think what is happening to them is hazing, because ROTC prepares students for the military and it's simply weeding out the weak.

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- 1. What would be the popular arguments about why ROTC hazing is “preparing” students for the military?**
- 2. What would your response be to those arguments?**
- 3. What do you do?**

### **BAND**

April is a sophomore transfer student and is involved with her new university's marching band. April is a music major, so she quickly grew accustomed to her new institution's music program and understood what was expected of her musically both on and off the field and has even been appointed leader for her band section. Only the best of the best become section leaders. Despite her success as a musician and student, April still has a hard time fitting in and the only way that she can gain the respect of her fellow bandmates is to “cross her section,” which ultimately entails rigorous exercises and at times public humiliation from band members during practice who are already initiated section members. You are an academic advisor and one day April comes into your office for a regularly scheduled advising session. April is wearing shorts and during your advising session you notice that her thighs are bruised and after checking April's grades you notice that her GPA has declined five points. Suddenly, April bursts into tears and begins to sob uncontrollably. In the midst of her tears, she explains that she is beaten every night before practice and fears road trips with the band. After she wipes her tears, April urges you not to tell anyone as she really wants to gain the respect of her section and fears that if you tell her chances of being selected for a scholarship next spring will be limited. Despite April's wishes, you take this information very seriously and decide to inform your department director who is an alumni of this institution and its marching band. After informing your director about April, he laughs and says that it is band tradition and the main reason why it is the top music program in the country. Your director assures you not to worry because the university would never suspect hazing in the music program.

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- 1. What do you do?**
- 2. How do you bring attention to hazing in the music program as a new employee?**
- 3. What would you say to April?**



# SUGGESTED INVESTIGATION FLOW CHART



# SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## FOR NEW MEMBERS

1. What are the requirements of your new member/pledge process?
2. Are you required to carry anything around with you that a member can ask for at any time?
3. Have there been events for new members where drinking alcohol was a major activity?
4. What place does alcohol play in your new member events?
5. Were there any physical requirements? (push ups, wall sits, runs, calisthenics, etc.)
6. Where you ever forced to line-up and share memorized information when called upon?
7. Were you ever given a new member “task”?
8. Is there any specific thing you had to know for actives?
9. Have you been put into any situation that has made you feel uncomfortable?
10. Have you seen any others in your new member class treated poorly?
11. Have you done anything that you would not do in front of others?
12. If you were the active member in charge of the new member process, what would you do differently?
13. Anything in addition you’d like to say?

## FOR ORGANIZATION PRESIDENT/ADVISOR

1. What does your new member process, sanctioned through your organization look like?
2. We found a few things we’d like to draw attention to. Please explain the value these things add to your organization:
  - a. AREA OF CONCERN
  - b. AREA OF CONCERN
  - c. AREA OF CONCERN
3. Have these things always been done or are they new?
4. Are these actives sanctioned through your organization/headquarters?
5. What do you think the campus/community newspapers would say if they were told about the things occurring within your organization?
6. What sanctions do you believe we should provide your organization?

# SAMPLE SANCTION LETTER

**DATE**

To **ORGANIZATION NAME**:

This letter is to inform you that **ORGANIZATION NAME** has been found in violation of the **UNIVERSITY HAZING POLICY**. The Hazing Policy states:

**INSERT HAZING POLICY**

The following sanctions apply for this violation:

- 1. HAZING SANCTION ONE**
- 2. HAZING SANCTION TWO**
- 3. HAZING SANCTION THREE**

It is the hope of the **YOUR OFFICE NAME** office to refocus **ORGANIZATION'S NAME** new member process to revolve around creating healthier relationships. These sanctions are meant to serve as an educational process – to help further the message that hazing is a serious offense.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office via email at **YOUR EMAIL** or via phone at **YOUR PHONE NUMBER**.

Sincerely,

**YOUR NAME AND TITLE**

cc.

**YOUR SUPERVISOR(S)**

**HEADQUARTERS STAFF MEMBER (IF APPLICABLE)**

**ORGANIZATION PRESIDENT**

**ORGANIZATION ADVISOR**

# FURTHER RESOURCES

## Books (click on the title to be taken to Amazon to purchase)

[Black Haze: Violence, Sacrifice, and Manhood in Black Greek-Letter Fraternities by Ricky L. Jones](#)

[Broken Pledges: The Deadly Rite of Hazing by Hank Nuwer](#)

[Hazing 101: How We Did It and Why We Did It by Darren W. Bryce](#)

[Hazing: Through a Victim's Eyes by Adam Sand](#)

[How to Eradicate Hazing by Ronald W. Holmes, PhD](#)

[Inside Greek U. by Alan D. DeSantis](#)

[Wrongs of Passage: Fraternities, Sororities, Hazing, and Binge Drinking by Hank Nuwer](#)

## Speakers (click on the speaker's name to be taken to their website)

[Travis Appard](#)

[Dr. Mari Ann Callaris](#)

[Judge Mitch Crane](#)

[Rasheed Ali Cromwell](#)

[Mike Dilbeck](#)

[Michelle Guobadia](#)

[Dr. Lori Hart](#)

[Tracy Maxwell](#)

[Gentry McCreary](#)

[Kim Novak](#)

[Mindy Sopher](#)

## Miscellaneous (click on the link to be taken to the source)

[Hazingprevention.org](#)

[StopHazing.org](#)

[The National Collaborative for Hazing Research and Prevention](#)

[Inside Hazing: Understanding Hazardous Hazing](#)

[Unofficial Clearinghouse to Track Hazing Deaths and Incidents](#)

[Sports Hazing Incidents](#)