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National Council Probation Imposed by Sigma Kappa Sorority On Eta Chapter at Illinois Wesleyan University

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--In the aftermath of a Nov. 12 hazing incident, the Eta Chapter of Sigma Kappa, a social sorority at Illinois Wesleyan University, has been placed on National Council probation until Dec. 31, 1999, by the group's national organization.

National Council probation is deemed a serious sanction by Sigma Kappa.

The hazing activity involved an early morning kidnap breakfast in which new members were blindfolded and taken from their residence hall to a local restaurant. Although no one was physically harmed, the national organization and IWU take hazing seriously.

After numerous consultations between IWU and the national organization concerning the hazing incident, Illinois Wesleyan was informed of sorority's final decision in a Nov. 17 letter from Lisa Doughty, Sigma Kappa's national vice president for collegiate chapters.

"After thoughtful consideration and communication with Sigma Kappa national representatives and discussions with our students," Matthews said, "the University also finds the Eta Chapter of Sigma Kappa responsible for violating the hazing policies of Sigma Kappa and the Panhellenic Council at Illinois Wesleyan University."

Consequently, IWU has placed the Eta Chapter on probationary warning status also until Dec. 31, 1999.

"This status," Matthews said, "will be reviewed during May of the spring semester of 1999 to determine the chapter's progress and decide whether or not this status remains necessary. Any subsequent violations of university policy during this time will result in placing the chapter on university social probation."

Social probation is the highest level of probation a chapter can be placed on by the institution.

Terms of the Eta Chapter probation by the national organization include mandatory educational sessions, alumni involvement in the new member program, review of all new member activities, and weekly reporting to the national organization.

"Failure to fulfill the terms of the probation or further violations of Sigma Kappa national policy, chapter code of conduct, university regulations and/or state laws," Doughty wrote, "may result in a review of the status of Eta's charter."

IWU is requiring all active members and new members involved in the hazing incident to design and implement an Anti-Hazing web site to be used by the Division of Student Affairs to educate the campus about this issue.

"The chapter," Matthews said, "is required to provide me with documentation on how each of the individuals involved in the hazing incident contributed to this project. The chapter may use the IWU's Information Technology office and other campus resources in carrying out this project.

The web site must be completed and reviewed by the Dean of Students by April 30, 1999.

"The goal of assigning this project," Matthews explained, "is to help the women involved gain a better understanding of the effects of hazing."

These requirements, explained Kim Stash, assistant dean of students and Greek affairs, are intended to be educational with the goal of supporting and strengthening the chapter.

"The university," Stash said, "is fully willing to assist the chapter in whatever way possible to

meet these requirements and those imposed by the national organization."

The university appreciates Sigma Kappa's proactive, timely, and collaborative effort in responding to this incident, according to Stash.

Sigma Kappa defines hazing as "any activity or attitude directed toward a new member or member which ridicules, humiliates or embarrasses, any action which may cause mental anguish or physical discomfort to a member or pledge, any activity or attitude directed toward a member or a new member which confuses, frustrates or causes undue stress, any activity or attitude which may endanger the life or health of a member or a new member or any action or activity which has the potential to cause bodily injury or psychological damage. Examples include but are not limited to: paddling, demeaning, pledge walkouts, dares, forced activities, line-ups, requiring drinking or drugs, interfering with sleep, scavenger hunts, tuck-ins, etc."

IWU prohibits hazing activities.

Sigma Kappa's Eta Chapter, established in 1906 at IWU, has 55 active members. The Sigma Kappa sorority house is located at 1011 N. East, Bloomington. Sigma Kappa is one of five social sororities on the IWU campus. Four hundred twenty-four female students at IWU are sorority members.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

For further information, contact: Kim Stash, assistant dean of students and Greek affairs, at 309/556-3111.

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| [Top of Page](#) |
