

# Hazing Policy

Trinity University is concerned about the emotional, psychological, and physical health and well-being of its students. Any form of hazing is unacceptable and is in direct conflict with institutional values related to the rights and dignity of students, all of whom have the right to belong to groups without risk of danger or humiliation. Consent to hazing is never a defense to a violation of this policy.

New members of groups and teams can expect to participate in educational and fun activities that build teamwork and camaraderie among all members of the group. Such activities are intended to create a sense of identity and commitment within a group and are generally acceptable and encouraged. Students should check with Campus & Community Involvement staff, advisors, sponsors, and coaches if there is any question about an activity constituting hazing.

## **There are two primary conditions that create a hazing dynamic.**

New members often wish to be accepted, either formally or informally, into any group, and will submit to hazing in order to be included. Because of this, consent to be hazed does not excuse hazing. Students have died or been seriously injured as a result of participating in activities to which they have “consented.” The psychological pull to be accepted is so strong that hazing victims cannot be expected to resist hazing, even if the hazing is presented as optional. That this pull can be so coercive should make this need to prohibit this conduct, to any degree, undeniably clear.

Any activity that places new members in a subservient position to experienced members creates an unhealthy and unsafe power dynamic in which control has been yielded to the experienced member. New members in any organization may expect to be trained, oriented, or indoctrinated, but membership in any group that puts a new member in a lesser role, unrelated to the original conditions for membership or mission of the group, is inappropriate and unfair to the new members. Any activities of membership should be equally shared among experienced and new members.

## **The University prohibits hazing by individuals or groups and defines it as follows:**

Hazing is any reckless or intentional act, occurring on or off campus, that produces physical, mental, or emotional pain, discomfort, humiliation, embarrassment, or ridicule directed toward other students or groups (regardless of their willingness to participate), that is required or expected of new members and which is not related to the mission of the team, group, or organization. This includes any activity, whether it is presented as optional or required, that places a new member in a position of servitude as a condition of membership. Prohibited acts of hazing include those covered under Texas State law.

Though it would be impossible to list all behavior that could be deemed to be hazing, the following are some typical examples of hazing and are prohibited:

- any physical act of violence expected of, or inflicted upon, another
- any physical activity expected of, or inflicted upon, another, including calisthenics
- pressure or coercion of another to consume any legal or illegal substance
- making available unlawful substances
- excessive fatigue or sleep deprivation as a result of any activities
- forced exposure to the weather
- kidnapping, forced road trips, and abandonment
- required carrying of or possessing of a specific item or items
- servitude (expecting a new member to do the tasks of an experienced member)
- costuming and alteration of appearance
- line-ups and berating
- coerced lewd conduct
- degrading games, activities or public stunts
- interference with academic pursuits
- violation of University policy
- assignment of illegal and unlawful activities

Alleged violations of this policy will result in campus judicial action and may be subject to criminal prosecution. Any retaliation against any person who reports, is a witness to, or is involved with or cooperates with the adjudication of hazing is strictly prohibited.

## **Texas State Law on Hazing**

Students should be acquainted with the law on hazing. The following excerpts are from the law that makes hazing at or in

connection with an educational institution a crime.

Hazing includes but is not limited to:

- any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
- any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or which adversely effects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely effects the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described in this subsection;
- any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Penal Code. Sec. 4.52.

A person commits an offense if the person

- engages in hazing;
- solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
- intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
- has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report said knowledge in writing to the Dean of Students or other appropriate officials of the institution.

An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.

***Consent Not a Defense***

It is not a defense to prosecution for the offense under this subchapter that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

***Immunity from Prosecution Available***

In the prosecution of an offense under this subchapter, the court may grant immunity from prosecution for the offense to each person who is subpoenaed to testify for the prosecution and does testify for the prosecution. Any person reporting a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution to the Dean of Students or other appropriate official of the institution is immune from liability, civil, or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of the report. Immunity extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the report. A person reporting in bad faith or with malice is not protected by this section.

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the Hazing Policy and as a student leader in \_\_\_\_\_, I am responsible for ensuring that all members are educated on this policy.**

Organization Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization President Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Secretary Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Vice President Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Treasurer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received by Campus & Community Involvement

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received by Campus & Community Involvement