



TRINITY UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT • DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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Dear Trinity Parent:

I hope this letter finds you well in the New Year! I am writing to share information with you about Greek life at Trinity University. Specifically, I wanted to reach out to parents of our first year students, as nearly half of the first year class will participate in rush activities. In the end about 25% will join a social Greek organization. Overall, about 25% of students are in one of our 14 fraternities and sororities.

Overview of the Greek system at Trinity University

Greek life at Trinity is an important part of the campus life landscape. With 28% of our female students in a sorority and 19% of our male students in a fraternity, it is a facet of campus life that is certainly felt by everyone. With the exception of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, our fraternities and sororities are all local, meaning they are not affiliated with national Greek organizations. None of our Greek organizations have official housing on or off campus. As a result of being without formal housing, dues for our Greek organizations remain affordable with most organizations' semester dues around \$300.

Unlike many other Greek systems, Trinity's new member orientation period occurs in the spring semester, allowing students to acclimate themselves to college life and adjust to the rigorous academic life at Trinity before committing to a time intensive organization. During the fall semester, students interested in Greek life participate in informal rush activities. Rush is a time where current fraternity and sorority members invite potential new members to events ranging from lunches in the cafeteria and dinners off campus to theme parties and casual outings. Formal rush began January 15th and culminates on Bid Day, February 6. In order to accept a bid, a student must have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA (first year student-athletes must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA), be currently enrolled in at least twelve hours at Trinity University, and have completed one semester as a full-time student at Trinity, or be a transfer student with at least sophomore standing.

To learn more about the Greek system at Trinity, please visit our website at:
http://www.trinity.edu/cci/greek_life/index.htm

New Member Orientation and Hazing

Once a student accepts a bid from a sorority or fraternity, he or she becomes a new member. It is important for you to know a couple of things about our approach to orientation at Trinity. First, a new member should never have to "earn" their membership. Once someone accepts a bid, they become a full member in good standing. Gone are the days of "pledging" and earning your way to initiation. New members of groups can expect to participate in educational and fun activities that build a sense of teamwork and camaraderie among all members of the group. Such activities are intended to create a sense of identity and commitment within a group. It is a busy time, often filled with many activities including retreats, meetings, socials and study halls. We have policies in place to help organizations

manage their orientation programs. First, new members may not be asked to participate in either formal or informal activities for their Greek organization from midnight until 9:00 am on nights before classes. No orientation events may include alcohol. Lastly, all programs must end within 6 weeks, or by March 27 this year.

At Trinity, we have not been immune to hazing problems, both within and outside of our Greek system. We have had two major hazing cases within the last four years that have resulted in the revocation of two fraternity charters (Alpha Delta Epsilon in 2005 and Triniteers in 2006). Hazing is an issue we take very seriously at Trinity, and the University has taken several steps to educate all student organizations about hazing. Within the past three years we have rewritten our hazing policy, hired a nationally known speaker to address student organization leaders, hired private Greek consultants to assist organizations in reworking their orientation programs and conducted individualized trainings for organizations.

*We ask that you take some time to become familiar with Trinity's Hazing Policy. Highlights from our policy are **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 dynamic, consent to be hazed is not an excuse for 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, event if the hazing is presented as optional. 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 is inappropriate and unfair to the new members. Any activities of the membership should be equally shared among experienced and new members.*

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. 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. Though it would be impossible to list all the behavior that could be deemed hazing, here are some typical examples:

- *Physical activity, including calisthenics*
- *Excessive fatigue or sleep deprivation as a result of any activities*
- *Forced exposure to the weather*
- *Kidnapping, forced road trips, and abandonment*
- *Line-ups and berating*
- *Degrading games, activities or public stunts*

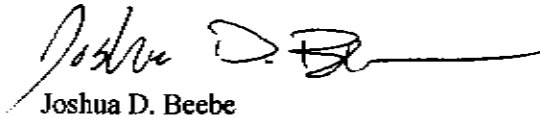
We encourage you to read the Hazing Policy in full at:
http://www.trinity.edu/departments/student_affairs/student_conduct/hazing.htm.

Staying in touch

If you believe something inappropriate is occurring during new member orientation, please contact the Campus & Community Involvement office immediately. We will discuss the issue and begin an investigation into the matter that may include interviewing student organization leaders, new or active members as well as other staff on campus. If it is determined that policies were violated, our staff will respond in one of the following ways: refer the case to Greek Council for a judicial hearing; amend, suspend, or end the orientation program; refer individuals to the Student Conduct Board; and/or remove officers or current members from activities with new members.

New member orientation should be a fun, safe, and memorable experience for students choosing to join a Greek organization. We have worked very hard to educate our student leaders about best practices and the dangers of hazing. We urge you to stay connected to your student and to us to make this year's orientation the best it can be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joshua D. Beebe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joshua D. Beebe
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Campus & Community Involvement
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