

How Conduct Educators Can Shape the Hazing Conversation

Hazing abuse by fraternities and sororities has included physical brutality, financial extortion, mental abuse, sleep-deprivation, alcohol or drug abuse, sexual battery, emotional torment, and death (Nuwer, 2001; Jones, 2004; Allan & Madden, 2008). It is critical that Student Conduct Officers take the lead establishing proactive education models for hazing on campuses. The opportunity for partnerships exist that could influence a variety of anti-hazing programs. Here are few to consider:

Keep Policies Current: Codes of conduct have evolved. So should anti-hazing policies. Refine policies as laws change or as court decisions influence the standard for campus due-diligence in responding to hazing complaints. Hazing is a felony or misdemeanor in 44 states.

Law and Policy Engagement: The requirement for all Greek members and aspirants to review campus and organizational anti-hazing polices is needed. Including a signed acknowledgement of receiving and understanding the policy in an educational setting reduces liability and enforces an anti-hazing stance.

Early Student and Parent Education: Allan & Madden (2008) concluded that students have limited knowledge of

hazing risks, also noting that 26% of students talk to their families about hazing experiences. Conducting anti-hazing sessions during orientation or welcome week clarifies the danger early in the student experience. Empowering parents with information about hazing and how to report it is a great prevention tool.

Create Campus Conversations: Facilitating campus community forums to create dialogue about hazing can be powerful. Such educative sessions must include discussion about values, legal implications, and risks for victims and perpetrators.

Certify Advisors: Student Conduct Officers can influence training for campus advisors on laws and policies. Requiring advisors to attend all rush or intake activities is a useful strategy.

Engage Everyone: I rarely use all-inclusive language, however, hazing's pervasiveness causes the exception. Proactive engagement with current and aspiring members, parents, faculty, administrators, graduate chapters, and state, regional, or national organization officers reduces liability and shapes the anti-hazing message.

Conclusion: Taking a proactive role, collaborating with campus partners,



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and engaging the entire community helps Student Conduct Officers shape the message about hazing. As influential as these ideas could be on reducing risk, the potential for behavior change in one student, one fraternity, or one sorority, could have the most important impact of all: saving the lives of our students.

References

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