

Chapter 14

HAZING

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THE STATE OF HAZING TODAY

WHEN RIDER UNIVERSITY STUDENT and Phi Kappa Tau pledge Gary DeVercelly died of alcohol poisoning following a so-called chapter party in 2007, the news was sickening, disheartening, and damaging to a Greek system largely dedicated at the executive level to hazing reform, but hardly unexpected. After all, as the Hazing Deaths and Information web site <hanknuwer.com> grimly observes, a hazing death had occurred on some college campus (and often more than one annual death on college campuses) each year from 1970 to 2007. For more than a decade, an attorney named Douglas Fierberg who had conducted numerous successful civil cases against hazing participants on behalf of the families of hazing victims, had argued that fraternities and universities were doing far too little to counter a widespread collegiate hazing culture. Eileen Stevens, a hazing activist whose son had died at Alfred University in a hazing incident, argued in 2008 in favor of passage of a toughened New York law which would increase penalties for criminal hazing in that state to a felony. "As Security on Campus has shown, too many institutions and organizations avoid bad publicity at any cost... and do not sufficiently educate or punish when hazing occurs," stressed Mrs. Stevens. "My prayer is that New York finally

puts a law into place that is a stiff law, that will stop hazers in their tracks... or have them imprisoned to carry a permanent record as felons."

What was newsworthy was that a prosecuting attorney agreed that colleges were doing too little too late to stop hazing and charged two Rider University administrators with aggravated hazing – along with three fraternity members – for the DeVercelly death. The charges against two of their own sent shudders through college administrators and staff members, particularly those charged with overseeing fraternities, athletic clubs and teams, and miscellaneous student organizations.

Although the prosecutor dropped the charges, and the case became tangled in civil litigation, he nonetheless sent a message to higher education. That message was that it may not be enough for colleges to publish a hazing policy or to kick out hazing groups caught redhanded while abusing their newcomers. The message was that universities had to take a proactive stance to address and to eliminate hazing conditions on campus, particularly those involving alcohol (since like DeVercelly's demise, nearly nine of every ten hazing-attributed deaths since 1970 have alcohol directly or indirectly listed as a cause of death).³⁷⁶

Significantly, in a handful of club and inter-collegiate athletic incidents, college coaches

either were present at a hazing, participated in a hazing, or did far too little to discourage such annual wrongs of passage, causing speculation among observers of the hazing culture that eventually it might be a coach who would face charges similar to those levied briefly against the Rider administrators.

Had the trial for the two administrators gone ahead, there is no question that attorneys for the prosecution and defense would have done what lawyers always do in hazing criminal cases. Namely, they would have argued and argued about the legal definition of hazing, as well as what constitutes proof that a dangerous hazing condition preexists on a campus prior to a death.

The 44 state laws on the books in the United States differ slightly in wording, but, in some cases, significantly from one another in terms of punishment options. While aggravated hazing trials in California and Florida have resulted in felony convictions for a fraternity death and a fraternity beating respectively, other trials in other states allow only a misdemeanor conviction or merely the opportunity to pursue civil litigation in a non-criminal court. Six sparsely populated states (Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, Wyoming) do not have a hazing law. Wyoming's state Senate in 2007 rejected a bill that would have made hazing a crime.

On the other hand, Stevens had seen immense positive changes in hazing awareness at the college level over the three decades since her son perished in 1978 during a series of mandated drinking events required of initiates by Klan Alpine fraternity in what she calls "the misguided name of tradition." Many Greek national and international organizations used the Internet as a base to disseminate information and to promote awareness activities. Nationally, activist Tracy Maxwell spearheaded the formation of the Hazingprevention.org website and organization to promote the group's well-received and well-attended annual National Hazing

Prevention Week and National Hazing Symposium. The Higher Education Center with Associate Director Linda Langford, identified hazing as a violence and school safety issue, using social norms training and bystander awareness as two weapons to educate collegians on the risks associated with hazing. In Indianapolis, the National Collegiate Athletic Association put hazing education, health, and safety on the table as one of its major policy concerns in 2008 and sponsored a Hazing Summit in January 2008 packed with college presidents and athletic directors under the direction of NCAA Assistant Director of Education Outreach Mary Wilfert. And Security on Campus, the national campus crime watchdog, expanded its focus on criminal hazing targeting campuses it regarded as failing in a duty to protect students from harm and violence.

A Common Definition of Hazing

Even with a standard definition of hazing, what a university or international fraternity regards as a clear-cut hazing violation, an undergraduate or alumnus may and frequently does term a hazing-free "tradition." Two of the few indisputable facts about hazing are that such initiations carried to extremes can result in deaths, and that both women and men can and do haze, although the number of hazing deaths of women over time is significantly less than the number of male deaths by hazing. Moreover, as many experts argue, while hazing deaths may grab headlines, it is actually the unethical, demeaning daily occurrences of hazing that cause dishonor to higher education, even if these do not result in an actual death.

Until the Rider case made headlines it was common for some coaches or bandleaders or fraternity alumni to turn their heads to reports of "initiation" rituals that almost certainly would have gotten a fraternity or sorority

chapter in hot water. The list of rationalizations was long but generally followed a similar self-serving pattern. Such hazing ought to be tolerated, it was argued, because it contributed to school spirit, or was harmless fun that let undergraduates blow off a little steam, or made the group and its members a little better and tougher. Often, with the definition of hazing either unclear or disputed, acts of initiation were labeled with euphemisms such as horseplay, pranks, stunts, and traditions.

Consequently, when hazing researchers from Alfred University, the University of Maine and elsewhere have asked students in formal surveys if they had been hazed, the number of positive responses usually has been relatively low. However, when athletes or group members are asked whether or not they have experienced specific hazing behaviors, the overall number is quite high. In a 1999 study of athletes, for example, researcher Norm Pollard found that 80 percent of all NCAA male and female athletes had endured at least one type of hazing ritual or occurrence.³⁷⁷ Of that number, about one in five had participated in something dangerous or potentially dangerous or illegal.

In 2008, University of Maine researchers Elizabeth Allan and Mary Madden conducted a survey entitled "Hazing in View: College Students at Risk" that concluded not only had more than half of all college students been hazed but that 47 percent of all high school students coming to college already had experienced hazing.³⁷⁸ That being said, for comparison sake here is one commonly cited definition of hazing. From the January 2008 National Collegiate Association definition of hazing distributed at its national convention in Nashville, Tennessee: "[Hazing is] any act committed against someone joining or becoming a member or maintaining membership in any organization that is humiliating, intimidating or demeaning, or endangers the health and safety of the person. Hazing includes active or passive participation in

such acts and occurs regardless of the willingness to participate in the activities. Hazing creates an environment/climate in which dignity and respect are absent."

Even so, debates over acceptable parameters exist among even the best known hazing researchers and authors. Dr. Norm Pollard, coconductor with Nadine Pollard of the 1999 Alfred University study, stopped short of referring to the common practice of having "rookie" athletes carry balls as a hazing occurrence, although he personally recommends more sophisticated teambuilding exercises in place of such traditions.³⁷⁹ However, Dr. Susan Lipkins, author of a book on hazing, opines that the practice does single out players for unusual treatment.³⁸⁰ The Chico State women's soccer program coach agreed and banished the tradition of freshmen carrying balls in 2005. Pollard and others recommend that schools institute positive teambuilding activities in place of cancelled traditions such as carrying balls lest students themselves invent a hazing activity to take place of the banned event.

Thereby lies the problem for educators trying to convey the definition of hazing. The term "hazing" now applies to all incidents as the same term whether a group makes a newcomer or rookie chug a fifth of alcohol or endure a brutal paddling (clearly dangerous, even criminal in most states) — as opposed to carrying balls to and from a practice field or wearing a pledge pin (neither dangerous nor illegal). Far more frightening, many groups (fraternity and athletic team members especially) downplay even the most dangerous hazing practice — "encouraging" members to drink copious amounts of liquor — on the argument that the decision to drink is a personal choice on the part of a newcomer. Yet, slightly over half of all state hazing laws and nearly 100 percent of all school hazing policies recognize that peer pressure and other pressures upon a newcomer trying to join a group make it irrelevant whether or not a

pledge, rookie athlete, or other neophyte "agrees" to undergo silly, demeaning, or dangerous activities in order to gain acceptance. Notably, many who haze are notoriously more creative in devising new rituals than they are in attempting to devise safe and acceptable alternative ways to welcome newcomers to a group that involve no hazing. An activity may be demeaning and dangerous, but the following examples may prove instructive.

Examples of Hazing

Silly

- Requiring pledges to wear silly clothing, diapers, or foolish costumes as many college and professional sports teams do. Such customs often are followed by requests that rookies purchase a team meal in which veterans order anything and everything on the menu to run up a bill that costs thousands of dollars.
- Blindfolding pledges and telling them that they will be required to show their loyalty by enduring a dangerous or unpleasant task such as removing an object from a toilet with their hands or teeth. The pledge is made sport of when the object turns out to be a banana, although educators also point out the hygiene dangers in such stunts.
- Ordering pledges to carry large painted rocks, stuffed animals, and other objects on campus and even to class.
- Locking pledges in a room and requiring them to smoke cigars.

Demeaning

- Asking sorority women to streak on campus and, in an inebriated state, and to knock on a fraternity house door, as occurred at DePauw University in Indiana. This particular incident escalated to

a dangerous activity when a member asked two pledges to accept a cigarette burn on their inner thighs.

- Asking pledges or new athletes to disrobe, to watch or to be touched by a stripper or to submit to the writing of crude vulgarisms on their bodies or clothing — often with alcohol present to reduce their inhibitions.
- Tying up a pledge or athlete.
- Ordering acts of servitude such as mindless errands.
- Forcing pledges into lineups where they are asked to touch genitalia of another pledge or athlete inappropriately as occurred during a University of Vermont hockey hazing — a well-publicized incident that led to the cancellation of one season of play.
- Forcing rookies to run with cookies in their buttock cheeks. Asking pledges to sit on blocks of ice, an event that could get out of hand and lead to hyperthermia.
- Asking newcomers to wear costumes that insult racial minorities or women, or which include the writing of slurs on the bodies or clothing of such persons.

Dangerous

- Locking initiates in a room and ordering them not to come out until the supply of alcohol has been consumed such as occurred in the death of a University of Maryland pledge.
- Ordering first-year students in a group to drink enormous amounts of alcohol along with a small serving of food. Such an initiation killed a pledge for a now banned athletic fraternity at American International College in Massachusetts.
- Ordering pledges to drink enormous quantities of water, thereby interfering with the normal chemistry of their bodies. Such a ritual led to the deaths of Matt Carrington, a Chico State fraternity

pledge, and Walter Dean Jennings, a pledge from Plattsburg State in New York.

- Ordering pledges to fill a trash can with vomit, as was the case with an alcohol overdose at a State University of New York school in the north-central part of the state.
- Ordering pledges to walk single file on a darkened or dark and remote highway, a practice that killed four members at a western Pennsylvania school and another pledge in Louisiana.
- Asking athletes to consume tremendous amounts of beer and liquor from a pretzel barrel and caused the nearly fatal overdose of a University of North Carolina soccer player. Such requests are especially dangerous since hazers and the hazed alike lose track of precisely how much alcohol has been ingested. Consequently, blood alcohol levels in hazing deaths run the gamut from lower .30 levels on up to .5 and above.
- Requiring pledges or athletes to accept blows, punches, or hits with paddles, canes or fists, as led to the deaths of young men at Morehouse College, Tennessee State, and Southeast Missouri State University. A number of high school athletes have been injured when punched in the groin.
- Requiring or strongly suggesting to pledges that they should swim or enter a body of water. Drowning victims during a hazing or alleged hazing include two California sorority pledges, a University of Miami pledge, and a University of Nevada pledge.
- Requiring pledges, rookies, or new members or to wear little or no clothing and to endure freezing temperatures outside or in a car trunk, as once threatened the life of a University of Michigan hockey player.

These are only a few examples of silly, demerit, or dangerous practices.

Two other forms of hazing frequently encountered by Greek advisors, coaches, and administrators are mental and sexual hazing incidents. *Mental* hazing is usually silly or mindless but can also be hazardous since not all pledges react in the same way to such activities and others bring life experiences that may cause them to react in unexpected negative ways. One nationally known speaker, Travis Apgar of Cornell University, silences audiences of Greeks and athletes when he tells them how he reacted in an extreme fashion after fraternity males expected him to handle a pistol during a mental hazing exercise. Unbeknownst to the hazers, Apgar's father had committed suicide with a firearm, traumatizing him prior to the hazing he was asked to endure.

Sexual hazing was rarely reported before an Arizona high school baseball team made headlines in 1983. The number of incidents slowly increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s. After 1995, such incidents became fairly common among high school athletes and to a lesser extent among college athletes. Like hazing laws themselves, such incidents can be interpreted in widely varying ways by local prosecutors. While some prosecutors charge athletes who place their genitals or bare buttocks on another's face or person as sexual offenses, other prosecutors have argued that these cannot be sexual offenses since they were intended to be gross events, not events designed to give the alleged hazers sexual pleasure. Families of several high school victims in Missouri were protesting such a call for reduced charges asked for by a prosecutor in a 2007 hazing incident that took place just over the state line in Arkansas at a sports camp. The survey by the aforementioned Maine researchers Allan and Madden uncovered large numbers of students saying they had to perform or simulate sex acts with the same gender. Methodist College in North Carolina, McGill University in Canada, and the University of Vermont are three schools

that have had to investigate charges or allegations of sexual hazing amongst undergraduate groups such as athletes.

As numerous writers and reporters have observed, hazing has grown increasingly more brutal and violent in terms of high school, athletic, and fraternity incidents reported on sites as <http://hanknuwer.com> and <http://in-sidehazing.com> and <http://stophazing.org>.

The issue also has drawn headlines as more and more hazing on the job gets reported in the press. These go beyond school into the workforce. For example, a hazing death of a laborer in Texas was treated as a homicide, resulting in 18- and five-year sentences for two men convicted in the case. A settlement was reached in a racially tinged hazing of a firefighter in Los Angeles who was made to eat dogwood, resulting in more than a million-dollar settlement payoff, one of two such large payments made by taxpayers locally in Los Angeles firefighter hazing cases. Other brutal occupational cases in recent years have seen involvement by police, restaurant chefs and employees, oil rig workers, and even ambulance team members (an 18-year-old young female died after being pressured into drinking a bottle of alcohol in the back of an ambulance). In 2008, three University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey paramedics were accused of coercing interns into wearing simulated Ku Klux Klan sheets.

COUNTERING A TOXIC CULTURE

As bleak as the hazing picture is in terms of the large numbers of perpetrators seemingly eager and willing to flout criminal laws and organizational rules, anti-hazing activist and past Executive Director of the National Pan-Hellenic Council Michael W. Gordon likes to say that he takes comfort from the equally determined army of fellow activists,

journalists, researchers, and educators lining up against the practice in ever-increasing numbers. Through the mid-1990s, the one determined group against hazing with any kind of solidarity at all were the parents – mainly the mothers – of young men who had died from fraternal or athletic rites gone wrong. Chief among these was the aforementioned Eileen Stevens who in 1978 founded a fledgling group called CHUCK – the Committee to Halt Useless College Killings – which made her a force for national fraternities at first to fear, and then over time, to ally themselves with as the reasonableness of her arguments against hazing (and the continuing string of Greek deaths) won her many converts in the fraternity and sorority movement. By 1990, her story had been told in the book *Broken Pledges: The Deadly Rite of Hazing*³⁸¹ and, slightly fictionalized, in a 1994 television movie starring Linda Gray as Stevens. Also by 1994, Stevens was joined in the fight she had taken to the media by articulate and outraged mothers Alice Haben, Edith Davis, Rita Saucier, Ruth Harten, and Adrienne Harris, whose sons had died in hazings respectively at Western Illinois University, Southeastern Missouri State, Auburn University, the University of Texas, and Morehouse College. When these activists retired, the parents of more recent hazing victims made their presence known nationally. William Meredith (father of a fraternity hazing death victim at the University of Miami) and his attorney David Bianchi worked with Florida legislators to gain passage of a felony hazing statute known as Chad's Law. In California, Debbie Smith and Edie Heideman (mothers of Chico State victims) raised their voices in support of Matt's Law, named for Smith's son Matt Carrington. In Colorado, Leslie Lanan (mother of University of Colorado deceased pledge Gordie Bailey) gained national attention when a powerful documentary about her son's death was released as a DVD in 2008 (Hazethemovie.com).

Also in the field of higher education, there were other well-organized individuals and organizations that often used one another's resources and members to promote hazing education. Elizabeth Allan, a University of Maine associate professor and cofounder of *Stophazing.org*, teamed with colleague Mary Madden and an advisory team to undertake a groundbreaking study of hazing with results published in 2008 at <http://hazingstudy.org>. In New York, Buffalo State College in 2007 announced the formation of "The Hazing Collection" in its library's special collections – the first institution to serve as a clearinghouse for all dissertations, theses, books, video documentaries, and journal articles dedicated to the study of hazing behaviors. In Greek affairs, the Association of Fraternity Advisors, under then-president Dan Bureau, launched an ambitious taskforce targeting hazing in fraternities and sororities that continues today at this writing under the auspices of *hazingprevention.org*. Finally, in 2008, a company called The Human Equation hired Nuwer and Jeff Meltzer to develop an online education course to train students, administrators, and coaches to reduce risks associated with hazing (for more information see <http://www.profraternity.org/the-human-equation.htm>).

Additional serious books, studies, and articles addressing hazing were turned out by Pan-African Studies chair Ricky L. Jones at the University of Louisville; journalism professor Hank Nuwer at Franklin College; sociologist Stephen Sweet at Ithaca College; psychologist Susan Lipkins; Human Kinetics professor Marjorie Holman; University of Toronto graduate student Jay Johnson; and the editors of this volume, John Nicoletti, Sally Spencer-Thomas, and Christopher Bollinger. Additional important studies, book chapters, or monographs were published by researcher Shelly Campo, now at Iowa; Indiana University Education professor George Kuh and graduate student James A. Arnold;

and State University of New York sociologist and men and masculinities professor Michael S. Kimmel.³⁸²

PUTTING INITIATION PRACTICES IN PERSPECTIVE

To conceptualize hazing, think of it as a phenomenon that resides somewhere in the cross-section of three dimensions or continuums. The first continuum, Rites of Passage, deals with self-growth. Where one end of the continuum might be characterized by coming to know yourself and overcoming new obstacles, the other end might be characterized by inflicting pointless harm of some kind on yourself or another. The second continuum, group development, deals with group team building. While one end of this continuum might include group team building in which all group members overcome shared challenges as equal team members, the other end might include social deprivation exercises working toward brainwashing and wiping out individual identity and accountability. The third continuum of power or influence deals with degrees of empowerment or disempowerment. Where one end of this continuum focuses on enabling people to feel confident and supported in who they are and the choices they make, the other focuses on controlling the group member's choices. Together, the cross-section of these continuums could represent initiation rites as a whole. Hazing is a subsection of this whole picture of initiation practices, one subsection that can cause harm to individuals and destroy the unity and reputation of an organization.

Rites of passage take on many forms in cultures, religions, communities, and organizations marking a significant transition in an individual's life. These rites are often characterized by a period of challenge followed by a period of celebration. Most religions have some form of ceremony and celebration as

young people take on their adult faith, and it is not surprising that research from Pollard and others points to church groups as a harbinger of hazing practices. Members of the military endure and complete boot camp, which can include hazing practices, such as the banned but continued practices such as "blood-pinning" (insertion of awards directly into the chests of airmen) or "Crossing the Equator" kangaroo courts. Greek organizations have pledging processes and induction ceremonies. High school, college, and professional athletes frequently hold annual initiation events to induct new team members.

One of the arguments for hazing is that it fosters group development and loyalty, a lofty sounding argument ignoring the evidence that newcomers are asked to sacrifice their personal identity, dignity, and will in the pursuit of group homogeneity. Some of the commonly cited techniques within this dimension are sleep deprivation, abusive treatment, and forced dependency. Sleep deprivation limits individuals' ability to concentrate and make decisions. Once their inhibitions are reduced, they need to depend on senior group members to provide them with direction and upon one another to make it through the hazing activities and abuse imposed upon the newcomers. A consequence of this technique is that it limits people's ability to make sound and independent decisions as well as their ability to accept the consequences of their decisions. The intent behind abusive treatment is to create a negative experience that a group has to live through together, thereby creating a tighter and stronger group of initiates. Some unspoken consequences of abusive treatment are the division created between the abusers and the abused and the reduced self-esteem of the abused. Inevitably cliques get formed and resentments build that never actually go away even after the newcomers become senior members themselves.

Forced dependency is a technique where members are taken away or prohibited from

associating with people outside the group. They may sleep in a confined space such as a bathroom or wear unclean or conspicuous costumes that keeps perceived outsiders at bay. They may be forced to parade across campus in a so-called "line" or be called down to a basement to be berated or physically manhandled behind closed doors in a so-called "lineup." These techniques get excused and explained away by group leaders because enforced isolation allows members to commit to learning about each other and their purpose. All the while new members also learn to flout institutional regulations and state laws, begin to lose their ability to function productively outside of the group, and often watch their grades plummet as their time to focus on their academics and their access to professors and other students is severely limited. Published research by Nuwer and James C. Arnold refers to the work of psychologist Margaret Thaler Singer concerning cults when it points out banned but all too-common practices among collegiate fraternities that use cultlike "systematic" manipulation and coercion to effect "psychological and social influence."³⁸³

Power and influence may be exercised in many forms of which empowerment and control are on opposite ends of the spectrum. In the process of empowering, an individual's choices or options are expanded and discussions are held to assist the individual in decision-making. The motivation in empowerment is principle oriented, choosing to act a certain way, because it appears to be the most "right" choice. In the process of control, an individual's choices are limited, so the decision is no longer entirely one's own. When there is only one way to achieve a desired goal, an individual must choose to follow the direction of another if she or he wants to achieve the goal. The motivation in control is consequence oriented. Newcomers must give up choice and act a certain way to achieve a specific outcome or to avoid punishment,

humiliation, or shunning that might lead to expulsion or so-called "blackballing" votes by the senior membership.

In our review of the issues concerning initiation, we have noted two common factors in hazing activities: (1) While forms of hazing can and do differ from one another in duration, severity, and construct, they all rally around the argument, often rationalized, that a group's status quo will be threatened by the admission of perceived "weaker" members unless hazing practices weed out weaker members and continue to enforce solidarity. (2) The perception of what constitutes hazing held by group members, those inside the culture, varies considerably with perceptions of those outside of the group. This lines up with separate surveys of college students conducted by Pollard and Allan in which a very large number of surveyed students acknowledge that they have endured specific hazing activities, but nonetheless insist in follow-up questioning that they have not been hazed. Author Stephen Sweet uses symbolic interactionism theory to conclude that group members legitimize subcultural definitions of their experience that essentially rationalize away hazing events because newcomers and members alike accept these as ordinary and necessary rites that have been accepted by prior members and must be experienced by all future members.

Many groups still see hazing as an integral part of creating group trust and loyalty, and proponents of bystander and social norms theory such as Alan Berkowitz try to change attitudes by getting members to see what is all-too-obvious to nonmembers — that hazing is humiliating, pointless, and risky. These varying perceptions challenge us with questions of needs and power: What is it about group bonding that groups are seeking to achieve with these practices? What is it about the actual practice of hazing that is unhealthy? How can educators persuade groups to abandon their belief that without hazing

their group solidarity may crumble as the doors to membership get thrown wide open? How can educators help groups to learn how to build orientation programs that develop group bonding in healthy and nonharmful ways?

In this chapter we focus on these questions with regard to hazing. First, we examine how hazing plays out in different contexts. Second, we examine the motivations behind hazing. Third, we explore how hazing relates to individuals and institutions. Finally, we offer recommendations on ways to address hazing.

HAZING IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Greek Life

Although hazing practices happen in many different groups, fraternities and sororities have received the most public attention over the years, obscuring the more positive aspects of Greek life. While detractors dismiss fraternities and sororities by arguing that member selection is based too often on appearance instead of shared values, for many other people, these social networks provide a sense of history and connection going back to the start of fraternal collegiate groups in the eighteenth century. By providing a training ground for leadership and service, fraternities and sororities have sought to uphold worthy principles. They have served students by helping them find their places in society and to develop social skills and connections. National Greek organizations and their alumni continue this service by providing connections and role modeling in the postgraduate world.

Fraternity and sorority legacy also has a less positive aspect. To wit, years of tradition and principle have been accompanied by years of deceptive hazing that make a mockery out of the values formally acknowledged

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by respective Greek groups. According to Nuwer, fraternity fatal hazing incidents date back to 1873 when a brother of the Kappa Alpha Society fell to his death in a gorge after being required to find his way back home in the woods.³⁸⁴ From this point onward, fraternity and sorority hazing has received increasing press coverage to the present day. The more drastic and lethal initiations in which initiates have fallen to their deaths from on high, drunk themselves to oblivion, been burned alive, drowned, or otherwise demeaned provide sensational newspaper reading that social norms advocates remind us constitute the exception, not the norms. Even if it were not true, as Nuwer reminds us, that hazing deaths have continued unabated each year for nearly four decades, hazing still should be abolished because it is an abhorrent practice that has no part in an educational system charged with civilizing and enlightening each and every student.

Some recent cases of Greek life hazing have captured media attention. All resulted in school and national group intervention and some have spurred legal action. The first cases involve female hazing. This is not to say that sororities do not haze, but Nuwer's collected list of hazing deaths demonstrate that males die in hazing events significantly more times than women do. In 2008, Missouri State University and Sigma Sigma Sigma stripped its MSU chapter of recognition after an investigation found evidence that some pledges had been allowed to illegally drink, be taken blindfolded into a cemetery, and asked to perform certain demeaning tasks. In 2007, three members of the historically black Zeta Phi Beta sorority found themselves in legal hot water facing third-degree assault and hazing after their national organization and Southeast Missouri State University claimed pledges were hit and made to eat disgusting foods. At Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, where the campus already was reeling from

the death of a blindfolded sorority pledge in an SUV crash, five students from an unrecognized sorority in November 2006 were charged with miscellaneous offenses connected to an alleged hazing of new members.

Other recent cases making headlines of late involved fraternities. In 2008, the University of Texas Lambda Phi Epsilon chapter settled the alcohol-related hazing death of Phanta (Jack) Phoummarath for \$4.2 million and paid for the filming of an antihazing video (www.inmemoryofjack.com). In 2008, Rider University found itself defending against a lawsuit brought by the parents of pledge Gary DeVercelly who died of acute alcohol intoxication following a fraternity party. In Boulder in 2008, individuals connected to the fraternity chapter at Colorado University where pledge Lynn Gordon "Gordie" Bailey died of alcohol poisoning found themselves in court facing a civil suit brought by the deceased pledge's parents. In Texas, law enforcement officials tapped the email of pledges to find that hazing was connected to the death of University of Texas fraternity pledge Tyler Cross, and at this writing, officials were looking into the possibility of criminal charges being placed. Because of the death of sleep-deprived Texas A & M pledge Clay Warren at Texas Tech, the state of Texas in 2008 passed House Bill 2639, mandating student activities' administrators on all campuses to attend an annual risk management course.

The irony of students willing to risk life, limb and reputation by engaging in hazing was not lost upon attorney Douglas Fierberg, involved in numerous suits against fraternities and members, representing the families of DeVercelly, Bailey, and fraternity pledge Daniel Reardon at the University of Maryland. In a letter to *USA Today*, Fierberg charged that the fraternity industry has known since at least the mid-1990s... that it plays a lead role in an unparalleled number of fatal incidents of binge drinking and hazing.

We established in the litigation involving Daniel Reardon's death that fraternities have a steadfast desire to keep alcohol available to members and guests, and they – unlike any responsible business in this country – rely on underage, untrained students (often intoxicated) to implement and manage alcohol policies that can mean the difference between life and death. We also established that the industry has long known that this method of managing alcohol is dangerous, and that it refuses to change because it fears losing membership and revenue."

On the other hand, Tracy Maxwell and Dan Bureau of Hazingprevention.org point out that while fraternities and sororities most often are the groups connected with a hazing culture by the general public, with the exception of a handful of activist mothers whose sons died in hazing, the best-known anti-hazing leaders all have Greek backgrounds as these two do. In an attempt to combat hazing behaviors, the North American Interfraternal Foundation and a host of national Greek groups have contributed heavily to the funding of research by Elizabeth Allan for her surveys connected with the "Examining and Transforming Campus Hazing Cultures" project. Ironically, the outspoken antihazing messages delivered by Charles Eberly of Sigma Phi Epsilon, David Westol of Theta Chi, and Marilyn Fordham of Delta Gamma underscore a calculated, prolonged attempt by a number of undergraduates in miscellaneous chapters everywhere to disobey and deceive their elders by not only hazing but also covering up their activities to avoid certain punishment mandated by antihazing regulations that virtually every Greek group now posts on official websites. Moreover, a hazing task force begun by Bureau, past president of the Association of Fraternity Advisers, has ensured that virtually every campus in the nation with an organized Greek system and formal adviser will run one or more antihazing educational events each year.

Athletics

While the Greek systems have been in the public eye for hazing, the 2008 Hazing Summit sponsored by the NCAA has demonstrated that organized college athletics clearly wants to combat dozens of alcohol-fueled hazing parties reported by national media. With the support of the NCAA, Elizabeth Allan at the University of Maine has included athletic teams and clubs in her survey of collegiate hazing practices. Her findings show a need for resolve by coaches and athletic directors who by and large have lagged behind Greek groups in terms of offering antihazing education or formulating policies with clearly designated punishments for teams and individual athletes who haze.

The list of schools and prominent teams ensnared in bad publicity over hazing continues to grow longer and more troubling each year. McGill University cancelled a football season following allegations of sexual abuse by a first-year player. Other schools that have followed suit include the University of Vermont (hockey), Kent State University (hockey), and Manhattan College (women's lacrosse). Other schools such as Alfred University (football) and Northwestern University (women's soccer) have suspended operations for a time in response to hazing allegations. And individual teams and members have been sanctioned at the University of Maine, University of Michigan, Harvard University, Miami of Ohio, Catholic University, and the University of Georgia – a small list of schools that is just the tip of the iceberg of those in the news.

The results of the 1999 Alfred study conducted on behalf of the NCAA were categorized as acceptable, questionable, alcohol-related, and unacceptable activities. Acceptable activities included activities that form team unity but do not degrade or humiliate new members such as preseason training, dressing nicely for team functions, completing a ropes course together, keeping

a specific grade-point average, doing community service work as a team, and signing team standards agreements. Questionable activities included activities that were humiliating or degrading, but not potentially dangerous or illegal. These activities include yelling, swearing, wearing embarrassing clothing, tattooing, piercing, head shaving, branding, sleep deprivation, food deprivation, and not allowing association with people outside the group. Unacceptable activities included activities that had a high probability of danger or injury, or the potential to result in criminal charges. Such activities include making prank calls and harassing people, destroying or stealing property, being confined, beating, kidnapping or abandoning, and other illegal activity. Alcohol-related activities include drinking contests and alcohol consumption on recruitment visits.

Preliminary reports demonstrate that students generally have little idea of the definition of hazing and tend to brush off the danger of drinking games, in particular, as potentially violent in themselves or offering the possibility of harm post incident to participants. Allan's research at the University of Maine found that a disturbing fifth of all athletic hazing incidents to have been conducted with the knowledge of one or more coaches. While 81 percent of all athletes had gone through one or more hazing rituals, merely 7 percent defined themselves as having been hazed.³⁸⁵

The Alfred and Allan studies have generated a media-frenzy, not all supportive of the findings. Richard Hoffer wrote an article published in *Sports Illustrated* titled, "Praising Hazing." Hoffer highlights a difference between "good clean fun and felonious assault." He contends that the idea behind hazing is the destruction of status to foster teamwork. His downplaying of high school hazing practices which include touching buttocks or genitals to the faces of rookie players brought an onslaught of criticism right up to and including the NCAA Hazing Summit in 2008.

While hazing deaths in athletics are far less common than in Greek groups, they have occurred, causing heartbreak and dismay at these campuses. For example, football player John Davies died pledging an athletic club at the University of Nevada, Texas Cowboys athletic club pledge Gabriel Higgins drowned in an unsanctioned University of Texas athletic booster club initiation, and lacrosse club rookie Nicholas Haben died at Western Illinois University.

At the Hazing Summit, one consistent message sent over and over to the constituents was that high school hazing incidents involving assault and sexual abuse or even activities legally defined as rape were growing in number, quite probably increasing the likelihood that similar incidents would be carried to future colleges by victims and hazers alike. The only organized athletic association targeting the phenomenon of high school hazing has been the National Federation of State High School Associations, a rules and procedures governing body. Under director of Educational Services Elliot Hopkins, the NFHS addresses hazing with attending coaches and hundreds of high school delegates in at least one session every international convention drawing high school athletes from the United States, Canada, and countries as far away as Israel.³⁸⁶

Miscellaneous Campus Hazing

Incidents involving university bands have included allegations of harassment and vulgarity during initiations. Unlike fraternities and athletes, no organized attempt to combat band hazing has ever transpired nationally. Attempts to educate members occur on specific campuses only, and they often follow media-publicized incidents or threats of lawsuits.

In October of 2006, University of Wisconsin Chancellor John Wiley publicly chastised band director Michael Leckrone who has been in charge of the acclaimed band for four

decades. An incident aboard a bus trip to the University of Michigan, which was revealed on ESPN and National Public Radio, involved head shaving and coerced disrobing of new band members forced the chancellor's hand. The band was placed on probation but allowed to continue playing while Leckrone addressed criticisms.

The more prestigious university bands have endured and paid off costly civil suits brought by members who have been hit, beaten, shaved, or accosted sexually by older members. The most publicized award was \$1.8 million paid by five band members to Florida A & M band member Marcus Parker in November 2004. He was so badly paddled that one of his kidneys failed, according to court records. Another band member settled out of court. Nonetheless, in 2006, Florida A & M was again in the news when campus police asked the state of Florida to pursue formal hazing charges against four band members. The state declined, citing lack of evidence needed to produce a conviction.

Military Campuses

Although athletics has been the recent focus of the press, military campuses have had their own long-standing tradition of hazing. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reports of military hazing were a frequent source of media scandals. The purpose in military hazing is commonly accepted as an effort to break someone down, so as to build him or her back up stronger, more confident, and more committed to the unit. Preparing military personnel for combat readiness is the primary objective; therefore, the ability to follow orders blindly and immediately is required. The task of military authorities clearly is to establish a mindset that since hazing is outlawed, these are illegal orders that cadets are following. Hazing in military organizations internationally has been problematic. Deaths in Russia from hazing brutalities or related

suicides have been particularly high. In February of 2008, soldier Roman Rudakov died of a blood disease, but his nearly fatal beating 13 months earlier had embarrassed the military and led to an all-out attempt to stop the savagery and human rights abuses. In 2007, 15 suicides were related to hazing brutality, according to Russian military records.

The purpose of this book is to help the reader understand violence, how to prevent it, and how to respond to it; this contrasts with the purpose of the military. Becoming combat-ready requires soldiers to learn how to be violent. Our hope for educational institutions is that students are being taught how to prevent violence. The military teaches blind obedience, whereas, our hope is that institutions and students critically reflect upon what they are asking or being asked to do. These purposes are at odds.

The intent in this book is not to debate the need for and the purpose of the military. Nor is the intent to disregard the choices we are privileged to make because of the military's existence. That being said, military academies have hazed in ways that General Douglas MacArthur, himself, has found to be inappropriate and not in accordance with the purpose of the military.

In a previous edition of this book, hazing incidents at the various prestigious academies, the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute, were reported due to a high number of well-publicized incidents. In recent years, as a result of stepped-up awareness programs the number of hazing scandals has dwindled dramatically, particularly as all institutions have adjusted to the incorporation of female cadets into the various academies. In 2005, VMI's so-called rat line was embarrassed when a series of highly sexualized photographs depicting a bound cadet in a shower room were widely distributed over the Internet. The threat of pulling an upperclassman's rank for hazing has been particularly effective. Whether less direct and less physical hazing

still continues behind closed institution doors is a matter of debate, but what is clear is that the number of media scandals involving the academies is clearly down by 2008.

HAZING AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The dynamics of hazing vary somewhat as it relates to individuals and institutions. As such, we will explore these dynamics in greater depth in the next two sections.

The Vulnerable New Member or Recruit

People who haze rarely consider the physical or psychological state of being of the people they are hazing. People who haze often assume all recruits are well-adjusted people, both physically and emotionally, capable of "being broken down to be built back up" as the saying goes. Reality suggests that recruits are drawn from a wider population yielding a group of people with all kinds of issues and vulnerabilities. Some recruits have medical conditions while others may be highly stressed and possibly suicidal. Hazing is not an activity that yields positive outcomes with these issues. Even the healthiest people can suffer the negative consequences of hazing, stresses hazing speaker Travis Apgar, who candidly shares with campus audiences his own breakdown following a hazing.

Physical and Emotional Consequences

Hazing can and has resulted in serious physical and emotional damage. Many pledges and recruits have been hospitalized following physical abuse such as paddling or beating, many with punctured eardrums, kidney failure, or flesh wounds to the buttocks area. Many have been hospitalized due to intoxication or other dangerous results of alcohol hazing

such as automobile accidents. Some victims of hazing such as Jessica Zimmerman, a Kappa Kappa Kappa pledge at DePauw, had a painful recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a clinical mental disorder that is highly debilitating. Zimmerman suffered burns on her inner thigh from a cigarette and was encouraged to perform highly humiliating tasks under the influence of alcohol.³⁸⁷

Those like Zimmerman who choose to report hazing are subjected to negative attitudes and behavior from the peer group and are often ostracized and harassed both physically and emotionally, similar to the ordeal faced by a workplace whistleblower. For example, in the workplace, when a person reports illegal or unethical activity being conducted by the company, he or she is often fired and blackballed from any similar employment. In the college setting, the group member is usually expelled from the group and the word is put out that the individual lacks loyalty and should not be allowed in any similar social circles. A second pledge with Zimmerman who also was diagnosed with PTSD dropped out of school.

HAZING VIOLENCE TYPOLOGIES

Most hazing falls into one of two violence typologies: group-induced violence or relationship-based violence. In group-induced violence there is a diffusion of responsibility. People just follow the crowd. In relationship-based violence, an individual is seeking control over another person. Both of these types of violence have the potential to lead to great physical harm.

Examples of Group-Induced Hazing

In 2004, at Colorado University, Gordie Bailey was a Chi Psi fraternity initiate. He

was asked to consume large amounts of alcohol. At the end, as he lay dying, fraternity brothers wrote epithets all over his body and attempted to scrub these clean after he was found dead. Hazing educational film information connected to this incident available at (<http://hazethemovie.com/>).

Two other notorious cases include the deaths of Walter Dean Jennings at Plattsburgh State University in New York and Matthew Carrington at Chico State University in California. Both were subjected to various tortures including the consumption of many gallons of water, throwing each's body chemistry out of whack. In addition, Carrington was abused in a cold, damp, and wet basement. In 2007, a judge awarded the family of Jennings a \$1.5 million judgment for the pain and suffering their son endured, and in addition, some members served a small amount of jail time and were asked to participate in the Public Television documentary titled "Unless a Death Occurs" (film available at www.mountainlake.org). Fraternity members involved in the Carrington death also were sentenced to terms of up to one year in jail.

For Nuwer's research, he interviewed Yale Professor Irving L. Janis who applied his well-known "Groupthink" theory to hazers in fraternities. In the interest of group unity and harmony, members of hazing chapters will recklessly require pledges to perform stressful and even dangerous tasks in the misguided belief that the latter are invincible. When the risky behavior inevitably results in an injury, death, or public disclosure, the groupthink factor will lead to denials that any wrongdoing occurred and even outright lies and pressure upon fellow members and pledges to cover up the hazing. Janis's theory explains why pledges will allow themselves to endure the unendurable in harm's way for the sake of camaraderie. "All of us are very hungry for that sort of thing," Janis said to Nuwer about such group-induced dynamics. "None of us can get enough of it."³⁸⁸

In 2007, Chico State's Beta Theta Pi allegedly was involved in an incident according to a pledge complaint. Yet just a few months later in 2008, not one Beta Theta Pi pledge was willing to testify as the case moved through the California court system.

Example of Relationship-Based Violence

There are multiple examples of control via personal servitude and humiliation. This kind of abuse often leads to greater physical abuse. In his 2004 book *The Hazing Reader*, Nuwer published a revealing interview with a pledge who stressed the physical and mental brutality that was done to him by a pledge "education" officer and an alumnus with the apparent support of the greater membership at a small Pennsylvania liberal arts college. "The minute you walked into the house, and the minute your foot crossed that door, you were in a prison, you were theirs," he said, noting that he still suffers headaches from a blow to his head that floored him though he was a ranked heavyweight wrestler. "Your spirits get crushed, and you're always someone's – I don't have a real good [term] – someone's bitch. All the time, you got to do this and you got to do that. Then someone would come up and say, 'The brotherhood – they never said 'they', just 'the brotherhood' – The brotherhood's really impressed that you're here all the time. It's been taken note of. I can't lie – it made me feel good. I felt I was a part of it.'"³⁸⁹

HAZING AND THE INSTITUTION

Duck and Cover

People create and operate institutions; thus, the instinct of self-protection is very strong. This instinct can lead to denial and

avoidance, neither of which is necessarily intentional. Earlier, we noted Allan's survey of athletes who often reported that their coaches were aware hazing was occurring on their teams, although it is safe to say most coaches would argue that what was occurring failed to meet their personal definition of what was meant by hazing. In judicial and criminal case after case, testimony from victims of hazing demonstrate that some Greek and athletic leaders downplay or even lie about their lack of knowledge with regard to hazing. Institutions, as a whole, are no different, and several administrators have been accused in court of turning their heads to blatant hazing. Hazing researcher James C. Arnold, a Ph.D. graduate of Indiana under George D. Kuh, refers to schools and groups who haze while proclaiming themselves hazing free as "addictive organizations."³⁹⁰

Blaming an institution and proving culpability are two very different things, of course. In 2008 the eyes of the academic world focused on Rider University and a civil suit by the family of deceased Phi Kappa Tau pledge Gary DeVercelly whose blood-alcohol content was an astounding .426 at the time of death. The suit claims that the school failed to give the chapter the same level of oversight that it gave residence halls. Given the nature of such lawsuits, it could drag on for many years before a verdict is rendered or be settled without any revelation of details or admission of culpability by the institution. "Greek organizations present unique dangers, real dangers, to students on campus. And Rider specifically chose to manage them with less supervision and to give them control over their own activities despite the risk," Douglas Fierberg, attorney for the family, told a reporter. Rider officials in turn either issued denials or pointed to years of hazing education programs they claim were offered in good faith to Greeks.³⁹¹

It is very rare for an institution to lose litigation brought by a victim who charges that

an institution has done too little to protect students. One of the exceptions was the case of *Jeffrey J. Knoll v. Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska* in which the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that liability does exist if the college fails in its duty to protect against an incident that in the court's judgment could or should have been detected. The court awarded a monetary payoff after finding that the Lincoln administration had prior knowledge of other hazing activity by its Phi Gamma Delta chapter. In court, Knoll testified that he had been asked to drink and was injured in a fall when he tried to get away from chapter members hazing him. Needless to say, this was regarded as a landmark decision by many observers of hazing litigation.

Sacred Cows and Sacred Herds

Every institution has a "sacred cow" to protect. At some institutions, the sacred cow is the star athlete who takes the team to a higher level filling the stands, making money for the institution, and providing a great deal of alumni support. The sacred cow is often protected and rewarded by the institution. Rewards come in the forms of camouflaged gifts and privileges from boosters even if such clearly are illicit under NCAA rules and regulations. Protection comes in the forms of institutional blind spots when these star students violate school policy or the law. Universities may conduct substandard investigations into the actions of these students and issue lesser consequences to these students.

In addition, institutions protect their "sacred herds." These may take the form of a sports team, a Greek organization, or another not as popular group that has the support of the board of trustees. Why would an institution protect individuals or entities like these? There are at least two reasons: money and politics. Sacred cows often bring in money or offer an alliance to an individual or organization that has considerable political strength.

These two reasons often accompany each other but not always. The money may take the form of revenue generated from games, alumni support, affluent potential donors, and potential lawsuits. Political strength has the potential to make the jobs of institution officials more difficult or easier. For these reasons, officials are often reluctant to harm the sacred cow.

Civil and criminal case decisions have many officials rethinking their philosophies on their sacred cows and sacred herds. College officials are no longer faced with the straightforward choice between acting, possibly leading to lawsuits and monetary loss, and not acting in hopes the problem goes away. Civil and criminal case decisions suggest that you may be sued for not acting appropriately with regard to an incident.

Following the death of Phi Delta Theta pledge Chad Saucier at Auburn University involving an exchange of bottles with his big brother at a traditional Dead-Day party, the school's handling of not just this incident but also other incidents was scrutinized when legal action was brought against the fraternity by the Saucier family. As it turned out, the school had warned or disciplined the fraternity over various complaints and infractions no less than 12 times in the years leading up to that fatal night.

Regulations and Laws

Hazing can result in both judicial and legal consequences. As noted, 44 states have adopted hazing laws and California and Florida have increased certain kinds of hazing to the level of a felony. Many laws undoubtedly will come under scrutiny, as has the New York State law at this writing. Media attention and broader legal influence has put colleges and universities under the looking glass by evaluating their policies and their judicial follow-through. Case law addressing an institution's responsibility for the prevention

of dangerous hazing continues to be made, as is clear in the suit brought by the family of Gary DeVercelly against Rider University.

Increased attention to hazing has certainly elevated accountability; however, many maintain that simply adopting laws is not enough. The issues of enforcement, consistency and consent need to be addressed. In his time on the bench, Judge Mitch Crane has seen very little use of antihazing laws and believes there needs to be greater enforcement. "To further protect the university official, I suggest reporting the alleged activity to law enforcement officials and sending a report to a superior university official," he wrote in an opinion for the Association of Fraternity Advisors.

As Crane noted in the same opinion, there is considerable variance from state to state on what is criminal hazing and what is not, and attorney David Bianchi has said there is a need for greater consistency when legislators pen these hazing laws. Hazing activists such as Stevens or Debbie Smith fight for amendments to these state laws that acknowledge that hazing yields negative consequences with or without consent of the victim. At this time, only about half of all state laws contain such a provision, according to research published by hazing legal expert R. Brian Crow.³⁹²

The Issue of Consent

Hazing expert Fierberg argues persuasively that there is no way a victim truly gives informed consent when under pressure to perform for members of a group who have the power to include or exclude a prospective member. The debate of what constitutes consent and whether or not it mitigates hazing is a powerful one and is similar to the argument fought by prosecutors in sexual assault cases. Investigation often shows that the person hazing and the person being hazed share different viewpoints on whether or not consent was given. In many sexual assault

cases, the person who exercised power over another viewed the consent or lack of consent differently than the person who did not have the power.

Consent has been an issue of confusion for sexual assault situations, and recently this issue has been clarified: the absence of refusal does not imply consent. The victim who is coerced into drinking may be too impaired to refuse, and this debilitated state must be taken into consideration when determining consent. Hazing laws still are clouded on this issue. About half of all state hazing laws inadequately reflect the notion that consent provided when the victim was sleep-deprived, intoxicated, or subjected to massive peer pressure is different from consent provided under normal circumstances. Activists in Florida and California successfully persuaded lawmakers to reform hazing laws in a way that protects potential victims from perpetrators who would take advantage of an altered mental state and the chaos that often marks a hazing incident.

To take the analogy one step further, we are faced with the issue of progressive consent. Some states consider individuals who consented to one part of hazing and not to another to be less victimized. The assumption is made that if the person was comfortable with one form of hazing, the person must have been comfortable with all forms of hazing. In sexual assault cases, assumptions are often made that women who consented to fondling also consented to intercourse.

In one oft-quoted ruling cited in *Broken Pledges: The Deadly Rite of Hazing*, a South Carolina court ruled against Sigma Nu in a civil suit brought by Ray and Maisie Ballou following the alcohol-related hazing death of their son L. Barry Ballou. Boiled down, the court ruled that Ballou did consent to some activities, but being of sound mind he would not have agreed to consume all that he did had he known fully beforehand that what he was consuming could and would prove lethal to him.

WHY DO PEOPLE HAZE?

Diffusion of Responsibility

The group dynamic involved in hazing interferes with members' ability to reason. Group members fail to recognize inappropriate activity for what it is when they see a whole group of people they trust acting in the same way. Group members also experience a diminished sense of responsibility for the consequences of their actions since multiple people were involved. There is a sense of anonymity in a group; members just follow along doing what everyone else is doing. Understanding such a mentality is critical to combating it, according to Berkowitz and other proponents of using a Bystander Model to awaken a conscience in lesser-involved members seeing a hazing incident. If bystanders can be awakened enough to protest or call hold enough, goes the theory, then others witnessing the event will also be conscience-stricken enough to realize the inappropriateness of an action and to call for an end to an activity.

Reciprocity

For all the loyalty development and personal growth rhetoric spouted by people who haze, some of the reason they haze is clearly, "This happened to me, now it's going to happen to you." While few group members enjoyed being hazed, most do not believe that the goals of hazing can be accomplished in a less abusive way or they lack the intellect to step back and see the abuse they endured for what it really was. Such an acknowledgment would require them to believe that what they experienced did not really need to happen. This pattern is seen in the cyclical patterns of abusive families. Abused children can grow up to be abusive parents unless they are able to come to an understanding that something was wrong with the way they

were raised. The process of diverging from those you have loved and trusted can be very challenging.

In addition to bystander training, most hazing educational programs offer new and senior members training in creative confrontation. Nearly all Greek Life offices either offer such training or post the need to learn creative confrontation skills on their web pages. See, for example, the Texas A & M website at <http://orgmanual.tamu.edu/Hazing.htm>.

Badge of Loyalty

Another reason people haze is because they have convinced themselves that they are doing a service for the people they are hazing and for the group. The philosophy is, "I am willing to get my hands dirty to make the group stronger and more loyal." Other members of the group value this commitment to the group and revere the hazing leader as a sort of guardian of the group. In return, the group members themselves start to believe that hazing makes them stronger and more loyal. Their philosophy is "I must be committed and loyal if I am willing and strong enough to endure this from the group."

Even after he came close to death in a soccer initiation, player Gregory Belanger berated himself for his team being punished – or he did so until he quit the team and was able to gain a little perspective he wrote in an essay for *The Hazing Reader*.

I was crying out for help, but it didn't seem to me like anyone at North Carolina cared. No one asked me how I was doing, not my coaches, not the players, not anyone at the University. Moreover, coaches and players continually blamed me for bringing disgrace upon the team. Upperclassmen would literally come up to my face and blame me for all the bad press. I was repeatedly ridiculed and given nicknames like "Detox" and "Pump." The initiation did bring everyone closer together, but they

were now close together – against me. I felt blacklisted and blackballed. It seemed I was the only one around with the plague, and everyone avoided me.

Most coaches and players could not even look me in the eyes. Even many of my fellow freshmen distanced themselves from me.

Yet, oddly perhaps, I didn't blame them. They wanted to play just as much as I did, and siding with me would have jeopardized their chances, so I couldn't blame them. So instead, I continued blaming myself.³⁹³

WHY DO PEOPLE ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE HAZED?

One of the most basic needs of human beings is to belong to a community, to have yourself validated by other members within your community. When people enter new environments that sense of belonging is often lost. For new students in college, this need is particularly strong. They are frequently faced with living with new people they do not know, learning where everything on campus is located, struggling with more difficult classes, and learning how to manage their time in a completely new way. For many, it is the first time they have been away from their family and friends. They find themselves in need of a new support system. Most students suffer from a sense of insecurity when they arrive on campus and organizations present a perceived immediate solution with a built-in social group. On some campuses, they are the primary social group. The need for acceptance, particularly for first year students, when so much of life is in flux, is enormous. In order to gain acceptance and social status, students are willing to endure a great deal more than they would under normal circumstances.

Hazers are in effect extremists; they justify actions that are outside the range of normal human behavior. People join extremist groups because they crave relationships and

acceptance, not primarily because they respond to a group's particular ideology. People who are friendless, who move to a new locale, who lack focus, or who need a romantic attachment are vulnerable to the recruiting efforts of extremists. Fraternities and sororities 'rush' predominantly first-year male and female students who find themselves in unfamiliar settings, away from family and childhood friends, and who seek a feeling of belonging. Part of the exhilaration some students experience upon their arrival at College involves their ability to choose a Greek group that offers them friendship, some of which are likely to endure for life. To these young people, enduring hazing beats the pain of loneliness.³⁰⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS

We developed the following intervention model, drawing from what we know of group-induced violence and relationship-based violence and from recommendations from the Alfred University study, Hank Nuwer, Judge Mitch Crane, Eileen Stevens, multiple focus articles on hazing, interviews with Greek members and advisors, and interviews with administrators and coaches.

Work to Convince Legislators to Enact Enforceable and Consistent Hazing Laws

There are currently three major concerns with hazing laws. One, there is not a high degree of consistency in the laws from state to state; consequently, clear messages are more difficult to communicate. Two, the question as to whether consent mitigates hazing is still highly debated. Activists continue to fight for greater recognition of the roles that social pressure, sleep deprivation, and vast alcohol consumption play with consent to hazing. Three, there are limited consequences for hazing resulting in death or severe injury.

The reason 44 states now have hazing laws is because of continued efforts of activists, increased public attention, and more legal action. Continued efforts such as these will be important for the development of stronger laws.

On the other hand, one of the dangers of the passage of laws following a specific incident is that the wording of such legislation may be too narrowly focused on the past hazing death or incident. This has led subsequent hazing charges in states such as Florida, Illinois, and South Carolina to be contested heatedly by lawyers for the defense representing accused hazers.

Stop Sheltering

Despite the demise of the "in loco parentis" doctrine, institutions still retain some responsibility for protecting students from foreseeable harm. Police departments and local law enforcement are often willing to allow colleges and universities to deal with illegal behavior internally. This partnership can unintentionally permit the inappropriate sheltering of "sacred cows." In an effort to help our students grow in a more protected environment, sheltering can prevent our students from feeling the full weight of appropriate consequences, and as a result, inhibit their ability to learn. Judge Mitch Crane has suggested that in the future, hazing will be eliminated as serious offenders are jailed and offending organizations are closed. As long as offenders are sheltered, this level of accountability cannot be achieved.

In courts of law, those accused of hazing are often attractive, well-spoken individuals dressed for a performance by their attorneys. Again and again, courts are told the effect a conviction will have upon a fraternity member accused of hazing and reminded what a bright future this person could have. Ironically, charges Eileen Stevens and other activists, slick defense attorneys somehow

manage to move the jury's sympathies from the victim or family of the deceased onto the group of individuals who would not be viewed as quite so attractive if they could be seen in the minutes and hours they were engaging in acts of criminal hazing.

Improve Communication

The first step in communicating a clear anti-hazing message is creating and communicating a hazing policy. The policy should include clear definitions, appropriate consequences, and a clear reporting policy. The policy should articulate the roles community members (staff, faculty, coaches, and students) should play in hazing prevention and reporting.

The second step in communicating a clear anti-hazing message is for such information to be made available to students and to quiz or check them in some way to be assured the materials have not only been signed but also read and understood. There is a need for Greek Life and Judicial Affairs to keep accurate records of hazing and to make the hazing records of groups available to potential recruits or their parents upon request. For example, if a chapter was disciplined or suspended two years ago for hazing, that fact should not be concealed from potential pledges during recruitment. There is a need to educate students about Bystander Interaction and group norms theory. Outside consultants such as Alan Berkowitz can be called in if necessary to train staff, Greeks, or athletes.

New students must be taught that they do not have to consent to being hazed. It must be made clear to all Greeks, athletes, band members, cadets, and others that actions will be taken against groups who expel, harass, or blackball students for refusing to be hazed.

The third step in communicating an anti-hazing message is establishing a clear method of reporting allegations. In addition to identifying the method of reporting in the hazing policy itself, students should know who has

been designated a hazing compliance officer. It is important to give the reporting and advising process a home. Many schools such as George Washington University offer students an 800 number that allows for anonymous reporting of hazing accusations, while taking caution that the rights of the accused be absolutely protected and not abused. In addition, the law firm of Manley Burke in Cincinnati, publisher of the *Fraternal Law Newsletter*, also operates a national hazing hotline (1-888-Not-Haze) and promises to refer allegations to the proper authorities. Other places to report include the Security on Campus organization and The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, which has explored social ecology models and partnered with alcohol use experts to change the hazing culture and find ways to encourage and to support bystander interventions.

The fourth step in communicating an anti-hazing message is establishing a record for strong action against hazing. Institutions need to establish a zero-tolerance policy that leads to a review of all suspected hazing actions followed by appropriate consequences if verified. It is important that consequences reflect the seriousness of the situation and that other factors such as a chapter's philanthropies not obscure the actual hazing that has occurred. Today, nonaction is as likely if not more likely to result in a damaging lawsuit since a school's turning a blind eye may violate a perceived duty to care; consequences can be even more severe in athletic hazing where a school actually recruited and invited an athlete to its doors.

Often administrators, coaches, and advisors do not know with certainty when hazing is going on until it is too late and someone is injured, and if they do know and do nothing, the institution then gets placed in a tenuous legal situation. Student leaders and team captains must be convinced to make and uphold these changes and to be responsible and inform an administrator or coach when a hazing incident comes to their attention.

Behavior accountability should be incorporated into advising and coaching. Students need to be convinced that accountability is a key to growth and that ethicality is not only desirable but also expected in a values-based educational environment. If inappropriate actions are not challenged, passive approval is assumed by hazing perpetrators. If the end goal is to develop and educate students, accountability for actions is paramount.

It is also recommended that a school set a philosophy and policy for recruitment visits, and that the school train its staff and hosts on this philosophy and policy. The Alfred University study clearly showed a problem with recruit visitations, and subsequent scandals at Colorado University show a pattern of veteran players and cheerleaders abdicating social host responsibilities by serving alcohol to recruits as a common occurrence. The study has recommended that clear guidelines be established, exercised, and enforced. The study also suggests that coaches screen potential recruits thoroughly for past behavioral concerns.

Education

The first step in educating the community is to provide training on hazing prevention. Experts recommend creating a structured format to discuss the hazing policy and the institution's philosophy on hazing with students, staff, faculty, and coaches to increase understanding of what hazing is and what can be done about it. The campus speakers network Campuspeak (303-745-5545) and Contemporary Issues Agency (800-843-2179) host several experts on the topic of hazing, including Judge Mitch Crane, Hank Nuwer, Rick Barnes, and Travis Apgar to help campus groups become more aware of the dangers and liabilities hazing presents. In addition, qualified NCAA sports programs are eligible for a \$500 hazing speaker grant (Contact Mary Wilfert of the NCAA for a list

of approved speakers at mwilfert@ncaa.org or 317/917-6313).

Alcohol education and support programs are important to educating the community. All the research indicates that alcohol is a significant factor in hazing and in hazing deaths. Focusing attention on the issue of alcohol education will also have a clear impact on reducing the worst dangers associated with hazing. At the same time, it is important that schools provide accurate information on the actual dangers of hazing and not exaggerate the number of deaths or incidents in a misguided attempt to raise awareness.

Enhanced community awareness also helps education. Major changes have occurred in hazing laws and institutional practices toward hazing in the past ten years. These changes are the result of increased awareness and attention. Greater numbers of civil cases are resulting in \$1 million awards and more for hazing abuse to families such as those of Chad Saucier, Nicholas Haben, and Walter Dean Jennings. Criminal penalties also are escalating to recent sentences of one and two years for hazing, but have not yet reached the seriousness of hazing death sentences in the Philippines which have put fraternity members in jail for life. Activists against hazing continue to present and educate. Media attention keeps institutions on their toes regarding their practices. Critics suggest that greater law reform still needs to occur and many institutional practices still beg for reform. Awareness and attention of the issue remains important.

Encourage Alternative Initiation Rites and Focal Points

Providing alternative initiation rites that have no hazing will require education and effort. Educating faculty, staff, coaches, and students on the importance of initiation rites helps people recognize realistic needs of groups. Integrating initiation philosophy and

goals into group or team goals empowers groups to be a part of the solution as opposed to part of the problem. Identifying positive initiation rites provides groups with examples they can emulate. Role modeling team building by creating and implementing positive initiation rites shows groups that you take the issue seriously and are willing to do the work necessary to help them meet their needs in positive ways.

For Greek life, a shift in focus to academics, leadership development, career connections, and service may draw individuals away from hazing traditions. The emphasis on such activities may through natural selection create an atmosphere where hazing is less prevalent.

Provide Appropriate Leadership

Leadership provides united support for addressing the issue of hazing and requires four components: Top-down support, role modeling, utilization of campus leadership, and a strong connection with students. Addressing issues of hazing without unified support from campus leadership is ineffective. In order to make real cultural change, campus leaders need to be active participants in discovering and providing new direction. Without support from higher-level administration, students will ignore the issue. Without student involvement, student acceptance and support will be very difficult to achieve. When deaths from first-year student hazing were the major concern of administrators in the 1920s, what turned the tide to end such hazing deaths (only one after 1929) was the collective voice of campus leaders such as Branch McCracken at Indiana University who called for an end to nonsensical, dangerous rites of passage.

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, we are faced with questions of needs and power. We have the responsibility to take the time to build teams in healthy ways. In a student culture, perception is often equal to reality. We

need to take care that our actions are beyond reproach.

The involvement of campus student leaders is very important. There are many leaders on campus who can deliver a message, sometimes more potently, than a written policy. Once these people are on board, cultural change can come more quickly. Without the involvement of student leaders, the ordinary rank-and-file of students will be more reluctant to follow.

Advisors and coaches must connect with students and gain their trust and respect and confidence in their leadership. Authority does not instantaneously equate to trust and respect in a relationship. Trust and respect are developed as people feel they are being heard, understood, cared about, and treated fairly. Support and accountability are two forms of interaction that occur with students that highly contribute to trust and respect. There is no substitute for spending time with people and listening to them. Accountability needs to be consistent, appropriate, and compassionate. Compassionate does not mean looking the other way or issuing a "slap on the wrist" for a serious behavior. Students have a strong sense of justice and expect that you show care for all the people involved when issuing just consequences. Compassionate sometimes means being willing to suspend a student or organization in a caring way.

In conclusion, we recognize that none of the perceived positive intentions behind hazing practices advocated by students can ever justify the death or injury suffered by even one student in a hazing. Group members and athletes need to be convinced, often and emphatically, that there are other, better ways of accomplishing the same bonding goals without the negative consequences. They need to hear the message that challenging experiences exist that do not include the abuse of new members. There is merit in having a group focus on its members for a period of time.

campus culture now and then?" Second, the community response in the aftermath of the tragedy can serve as a model for other schools facing such violence. At Kent State, at that time and for years to come, students, faculty, and staff all participated in the recovery and the future direction of the campus.

- January 14, 1978: The Chi Omega Murders
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida

Ted Bundy is probably the most notorious serial killer in American history.¹³ His modus operandi: preying on young women and luring them in with his charm and perception of vulnerability. On the night of the Chi Omega murders, Bundy apparently walked right in the front door of the sorority, leaving it wide open after he entered. He then attacked the sorority sisters in their rooms while they slept. He beat them, raped them, bit them, and strangled them. Two victims died and two survived. Like Richard Speck's attack on the nurses a decade earlier, this event magnified the vulnerability of women living on campus and perpetuated a perception of college women as accessible sexual prey.

- February 24, 1978: Chuck Stenzel
Alfred University
Alfred, New York

Hank Nuwer, hazing expert, describes the following tragedy in his books *Broken Pledges* and *Wrongs of Passage*. February 24, 1978 was Tapping Night at Alfred University's Klan Alpine fraternity.¹⁴ Chuck Stenzel had recently re-enrolled at Alfred. His mother thought, in hindsight, that he probably chose to join the fraternity to increase his chances for making the lacrosse team (several brothers played the sport) or to get closer to his existing friends. The "Klan" had a reputation of being an "animal house," and ironically, the theme for this particular Tapping Night was, "Don't Stop til You Drop." Sometime after 7:00 P.M.,

a fraternity brother came to Chuck's room to congratulate him on his acceptance with a pint of Jack Daniel's whiskey. The brother then led Chuck to the car where he was to ride in the trunk. The temperature outside was below freezing. There were two other pledges in the trunk with Chuck who later testified that he chugged not only his pint, but also most of another pledge's pint of Scotch.

Chuck arrived at the fraternity house at some point before 9:30 P.M. at which point he drank more beer and wine in festive celebration and drinking games.¹⁵ One of the goals of



Figure 1.1. Chuck Stenzel. February 28, 1978. Chuck Stenzel was a sophomore at Alfred University when his brothers at the Klan Alpine Fraternity locked him in the trunk of a car after giving him a pint of bourbon, a fifth of wine, and a six pack of beer, with orders to consume all before he would be released. He died of acute alcohol poisoning and exposure to the cold. Chuck's mother, Eileen Stevens formed C.H.U.C.K. (Committee to Halt Useless College Killings) in August of 1978 and has become a leading antihazing activist.

the night was to fill a trashcan up to a marked line with vomit. Chuck was given a shower at some point and when he began to pass out, he was placed on his side on an uncovered mattress. Chuck and another unconscious pledge were left in the room unattended until 11:30 P.M. when a fraternity brother came in to check on them and noted that Chuck's fingernails had turned blue. None of the three sober brothers on site knew CPR, and the rest of the brothers were too drunk to be of any assistance. By the time an emergency medical crew arrived, Chuck was dead. Chuck's blood alcohol content at the time of death was .46, a fourfold increase from the legal definition of intoxication. Two other pledges, one of whom the ambulance crew found in a locked closet, were close to death and were rushed to the hospital. They survived.

From that night on, Chuck's mother Eileen Stevens bravely chose to speak out against the dangers of hazing.¹⁶ She founded C.H.U.C.K. (Committee to Halt Useless College Killings), a national anti-hazing organization. She speaks to groups on this issue sharing her personal experience as a mother of a hazing victim. Alfred University is now leading the cause to prevent hazing.¹⁷ In 1999, Alfred helped orchestrate an NCAA study that exposed significant hazing activity in college athletics.

- April 5, 1986: Jeanne Clery
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Just a few days after her parents dropped her off at Lehigh University following her spring break, Jeanne Clery was asleep in her unlocked room when she was brutally raped, beaten, and murdered by a fellow student.¹⁸ Joseph Henry had easily gained entrance to the dormitory because the door had been propped open with empty pizza boxes. After the murder, he boasted about his attack to his friends. In 1987, he was sentenced to the electric chair.

Jeanne's parents thought they had been acting in her best interest when they encouraged her to attend Lehigh because it looked so safe.¹⁹ What they did not know was that Lehigh had experienced 38 violent crimes within a three-year period. The Clerys filed a \$25 million civil suit against Lehigh for negligence. The suit was settled out of court, and the Clerys used the settlement and their own money to begin one of the largest campaigns to stop campus violence to date. In 1988, they founded Security on Campus, Inc., and in



Figure 1.2. Jeanne Clery. April 5, 1986, Jeanne Clery was found dead in her residence hall room. She had been raped, sodomized, beaten, and strangled. Her attacker, Joseph Henry, bit her face and breasts, to make sure she was dead. The night of the murder, Joseph Henry walked through three security doors. In the months prior to the murder, students had lodged complaints about his behavior and threats to female students to administrators. Since this tragedy, the Clery family has developed a nonprofit organization called "Security On Campus" and is largely responsible for the passage of 27 campus safety laws.