

## **ALTERNATIVES TO HAZING**

A non-inclusive list of hazing practices commonly found in chapters is provided below with suggested alternative activities.

### **INSPIRATION WEEK AND NATIONAL EXAMS**

Often new member classes must conclude their program with two to seven days of full-time activity, usually including numerous activities late into the night, which interrupt study and sleep habits. Inspiration sessions, oral exams covering fraternity/sorority history trivia, and other forms of mental and physical hazing are performed. Many times inspiration week will end with an artificial Inter/national exam, administered by someone disguised as the National Examiner, Grand Inquisitor, or another inane title. Even though the hoax is dispelled after inspiration week, everyone is left with a misconception of the value and worth of the organization's history and ideals, and the true role of the Inter/national headquarters.

**Suggested Alternatives:** Delete the false national exam practice and replace inspiration week with meaningful exercises that can be accomplished through a combination of discussions, reflective papers, seminars, workshops, written and/or verbal exercises, and other constructive methods.

- A. Exercises in gaining knowledge of fraternity/sorority operations.
  - 1. Relationship of chapter to IFC/Panhellenic, district and national organization
  - 2. Financial Responsibility
  - 3. Alumni Relations
  - 4. Scholarship
  - 5. Recruitment Techniques
  - 6. Chapter Management
  - 7. New Member Education
- B. Exercises in understanding the philosophy of fraternity.
  - 1. Role of the fraternity/sorority in the community and in higher education
  - 2. Brother/sisterhood
  - 3. Self-actualization of needs
  - 4. Chapter Unity
  - 5. Group patterns of behavior
- C. Exercises in group communication
- D. Post-initiation seminar on highlights of the ritual

### **HOUSE CLEANING DETAILS**

A new member's primary responsibility to the chapter is often his/her role as "The Janitor." Disguised as house duties, he/she must clean up after active members to develop a pride in the house. This, in effect, says to the new member, "be neat as a new member, and sloppy as an active."

**Suggested Alternative:** Work TOGETHER on house details in new member-active groups. This provides an excellent opportunity to test the acceptance of each other, resulting in a constant mutual respect for the maintenance of the physical structure.

## **NEW MEMBER EDUCATION THROUGH MEMORIZATION**

New members are frequently required to learn minute details of fraternity/sorority history and are tested weekly on their assigned materials. Sometimes members demand oral recitation of new members' knowledge and then verbally reprimand new members when answers are repeated too slowly or incorrectly. Engaging members in active learning is a more effective means of mastering a topic.

### **Suggested Alternatives:**

- A. Assign groups a specific decade or time frame for research into chapter history (people, places, events, etc). Groups can present, in a professional manner, to the chapter/alumni the results of their research.
- B. Develop a list of important information regarding fraternity/sorority history, chapter management procedures, Inter/national structure and other areas which will assist new members in understanding the total picture of the Greek system.
- C. Inform new members that the reason for learning important fraternity/sorority information is to develop an understanding of the ideals which founded, extended, and preserved the organization for over a century (in many cases).

## **STUDY HALLS**

New members are often forced to study collectively, usually in the university library, during specified hours determined by the active chapter. The setting is usually uncomfortable, noisy, and seldom conducive to academic needs. Actives usually accompany them to make certain they are sitting at their desks.

**Suggested Alternatives:** Develop academic programs designed to meet individual needs. Create big-little academic teams, have new members complete a weekly academic progress report, assist with study schedules and class schedules, offer individual courses tutoring and group seminars. Make available a list of student counseling services. Encourage house quiet hours at appropriate times. Invite instructors and counselors to the chapter house to discuss good study habits, job interviewing, writing resumes, and so on. Scholarship program opportunities available to chapters are virtually unlimited.

## **PERSONAL SERVITUDE**

New members frequently are required to carry change and matches, answer telephones, shine shoes, clean individual rooms and so forth, which tend to make new members avoid active members.

**Suggested Alternative:** Delete all forms of personal servitude in the new member program and substitute with healthy, constructive group activities which foster new member-active communication.

## **ACTIVITIES DEMANDING NEW MEMBERS' RESPECT**

New members must often call members Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, or say “yes, sir”/ “yes, ma’am” or “no, sir”/”no ma’am” when spoken to. They are frequently restricted from using the front door, eating with actives, and subjected to other degrading practices. New members must immediately respond to any demands made by actives or they are orally reprimanded and are sometimes required to perform calisthenics

**Suggested Alternative:** When members have personal criticisms or requests of individual new members, they should maturely approach him/her as they would another active. Utilizing the chapter relations board, new member review board or executive board to confront more serious behavior is recommended.

## **FUN AND GAMES SESSIONS**

New members are often forced to entertain actives by participating in food races, eating unfit items, running up and down stairs with water in their mouths to extinguish artificial fires, and other dehumanizing activities. Road trips or kidnappings (where actives take new members - and vice-versa - miles from the chapter house and leave them stranded, sometimes ill-clothed, and often in dangerous areas) are other forms of this abuse. These practices have resulted in accidents, permanent personal injury and in death.

**Suggested Alternatives:** Recognizing that new member programs can certainly include entertaining activities, produce game sessions which everyone can enjoy and where there is no chance of personal injury, property damage, or humiliation. Have contests with active/new member teams, big-little teams and the like. Road trips should be eliminated and replaced with annual pilgrimages to other chapters, national shrines, and other places that would allow the new members to learn more about the organization outside their local setting.

## **SIGNATURES IN THE “BLACK BOOK”**

New members are forced to acquire the signature of each active member, and must usually include hometown, major, significant other’s name, favorite brand of booze, or other ‘pertinent’ information about him/her. The active can then test the new member on the accumulated knowledge, may sometimes be allowed to rip pages out of the book if answers are incorrect, and the pledge must then repeat the process. The intent of this activity is usually disguised as either an opportunity to become acquainted with each active, or a convenient method to acquire member addresses.

**Suggested Alternative:** Construct individual active/new member conferences throughout the education process to seek out areas of mutual interest and become more personally acquainted. Photocopied address lists appear to be a much easier method for producing that information.

## **INSPIRATION SESSIONS**

Active members attempt to “discipline” pledges under uncomfortable circumstances, usually in the form of a line-up and/or under lights. Members criticize new members by asking numerous, and often ridiculous, questions and new members are rarely given the opportunity to respond. Group punishment occurs, the individual causing harm is rejected, and cliques result.

**Suggested Alternative:** Encourage constructive one-to-one consultations between actives and new members in a comfortable setting, and allow the new member the opportunity for rebuttal when the active criticizes his actions. If further action is required after individual consultation, utilize the chapter relations board, new member review board, or executive board.