

## ALTERNATIVES TO HAZING

A non-inclusive list of hazing practices commonly found in chapters is provided below with suggested alternative activities. Although this section provides suggested alternatives, all chapter activities must comply with the Inter/Nationally mandated process.

### INSPIRATION/HELL WEEK

Often potential new member classes/pledges conclude their intake 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/sets, oral exams covering fraternity/sorority history, trivia, and other forms of mental and physical hazing are performed.

Suggested Alternatives: Replace inspiration/hell 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 MGLC, district/region and national organization
  - 2. Financial Responsibility
  - 3. Alumni Relations
  - 4. Scholarship
  - 5. Recruitment Techniques
  - 6. Chapter Management
  - 7. Membership Intake
- B. Exercises in understanding the philosophy of fraternity/sorority.
  - 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/induction ceremony

## HISTORY LESSONS THROUGH MEMORIZATION

Potential new members/pledges 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 potential new members'/pledges' knowledge and then verbally or physically reprimand them 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 potential new members in understanding the total picture of the Greek system.
- C. Inform potential new members that the reason for learning important fraternity/sorority information is to develop an understanding of the ideals that founded, extended, and preserved the organization for years.

## STUDY HALLS

Potential 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 potential 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. Invite instructors and counselors to dinner with the chapter to discuss good study habits, job interviewing, writing resumes, and so on. Scholarship program opportunities available to chapters are virtually unlimited.

## PERSONAL SERVITUDE

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

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

## ACTIVITIES DEMANDING RESPECT

Potential new members must often call members Mr./Ms. or Big Brother/Big Sister \_\_\_\_\_, 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. Potential 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 potential new members, they should maturely approach him/her as they would another active. Utilizing the chapter relations board or executive board to confront more serious behavior is recommended.

## FUN AND GAMES SESSIONS

Potential new members are often forced to entertain actives by participating in food races, eating unfit items, running up and down stairs, and other dehumanizing activities. Road trips or kidnappings (where actives take potential new members - and vice-versa - miles from the chapter 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 membership intake 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/potential 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 potential new members to learn more about the organization outside their local setting.

### SIGNATURES IN THE “BLACK BOOK”

Potential 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 potential 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/potential new member conferences throughout the intake process to seek out areas of mutual interest and become more personally acquainted. Photocopied address lists appear to be a much easier method for providing that information.

### INSPIRATION SESSIONS/SETS

Active members attempt to “discipline” pledges under uncomfortable circumstances, usually in the form of a line-up and/or under lights. Members criticize potential new members by asking numerous, and often ridiculous, questions and potential 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 potential new members in a comfortable setting, and allow the potential new member the opportunity for rebuttal when the active criticizes his/her actions. If further action is required after individual consultation, utilize the chapter relations board or executive board.