

THE PROBLEM OF HAZING

In establishing goals, give attention to this basic assumption: The functioning of the active chapter is equally as important as the functioning of a potential new member/intake class. What you need to know about a new member, quite simply, is how will he/she function as an active member? To learn this, the rules and programs for potential new members must be similar to those for actives; unique to each group, but equal.

In other words, the overall goal for a new member/intake program is the preparation of a potential new member for lifelong membership in the active chapter. Given this goal, hazing is an ineffective means of imparting responsibility, self-respect, confidence, and acceptance.

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT HAZING

Adapted from www.stophazing.com

Myth # 1 Hazing is a problem for fraternities and sororities primarily.

Fact: Hazing is a societal problem. Hazing incidents have been frequently documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, religious cults, and other types of clubs/organizations. Reports of hazing in high schools are on the rise.

Myth # 2: Hazing is no more than foolish pranks that sometimes go awry.

Fact: Hazing is an act of power and control over others-it is victimization. Hazing is pre-meditated and NOT accidental. Hazing is abusive, degrading and often life-threatening.

Myth # 3: As long as there is no malicious intent, a little hazing should be O.K.

Fact: Even if there is no malicious “intent,” safety may still be a factor in hazing activities that are considered to be “all in good fun.” For example, serious accidents have occurred during scavenger hunts and kidnapping trips.

Myth # 4: Hazing is an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline.

Fact: Respect must be EARNED-not taught. Victims of hazing rarely report having respect for those who have hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds mistrust, apathy and alienation.

Myth # 5: If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing.

Fact: In states that have laws against hazing, consent of the victim can't be used as a defense in a civil suit. This is because even if someone agrees to participate in a potentially hazardous action it may not be true consent when considering the peer pressure and desire to belong to the group.

Myth # 6: It's difficult to determine whether or not a certain activity is hazing-it's such a gray area sometimes.

Fact: It is not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and refer to your campus policy or chapter policy.

HAZING

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. Is the activity going to contribute to the moral development of the person?
2. Is the activity one that you would have no problem explaining in a court of law?
3. Would you want the Fraternity/Sorority staff, parents, or media to view the event?
4. Does the activity require individuals to perform illegal or immoral acts?
5. Does the act mentally, emotionally, or physically threaten an individual?
6. Does the activity involve alcohol?
7. Are you willing to videotape the activity and show it to a future employer?