

National Hazing Symposium
University of Maine
Thursday October 1, 2009 (7:30pm-8: 15pm)

Question(s):

What do we know about hazing from practitioner experiences?

What do we know about hazing that can inform our approach to prevention?

Table Notes- Experience:

- University judicial offices-chapter violations they look at it as a rule broken and a sanction
- Different approaches by different offices
- Rule breaking punishment (Judicial)
- Talking about hazing differently and different approaches until community
- Different messages from office-lack of consistency
- Policy compliance is not enough we need to be innovated
- Institutional issues with lack of communication between offices
- Shut down when topic comes up
- Disconnect between the values and principles of their organization, getting away from to purpose (specifically for Greek students)
- As a student positive experience is seen with hazing
- Hazing such a narrow definition
- No harm no foul
- I don't want to get them in trouble
- Social consequence- want to be accepted
- Not engage in hazing prevention outside of policy and compliance
- Students unwilling to talk about what is going on in their chapter
- Hazing has different facets – there is a need to understand that groups see it as differently – physical abuse, alcohol etc.
- Students don't want to discuss that it's going on – it's a four letter word – difficult to have real discussions about it to talk about what they can do and what they can't. – not labeling at hazing if not physically hurtful
- Advisors are reluctant to take the policy hat off and relate to students and try to help – rather than “bust”
- Difficult to mentor students: advisors have little oversight/influence-Social norms are developed – walls are there. They don't recognize it as hazing, and are influenced by peers
- Advisors can have difficulty connecting, or having influence over hazing/sexual abuse/destruction by the time the students reach college – exists and idea of machismo – “take it like a man” – lack of education can play a role in this
- Parents of students coming to school today do not see hazing as a problem – from a time when hazing was considered positive/natural

- Alcohol plays in – impairs judgment and makes hazing seem like a good idea
- Definition of hazing is not directly defined
- Telling a leader he/she is wrong – that what she/he did was wrong – threatens identity and self image
- Students unaware nationally about what’s going on nationally. Students just don’t know, they hear news but they don’t put it together
- No known definition of hazing, very cloudy, hazing assumed to be part of culture because its not defined
- Campuses may not have the resources to work with students on hazing
- Campuses teach alternatives to hazing not how we confront it
- What do we know about hazing that can best inform our approaches to prevention?
 - Just say no policies are ineffective
 - Policy: Lack of consistency: talking about policy differently. Not being on the same page. Policy compliance language not the same.
 - Policy not effective. Policy mindset. What is my role as a professional: bust or teachable moment.
 - If you have a policy, enforce it.
 - Enforce consistently.

Table Notes Summary- Experience:

- Judicial and Other Offices
 - Seen as “you broke a rule now you get this sanction”
 - No harm no foul
 - Students see it as a positive experience
 - Policy compliance not enough
 - Not engaged in prevention outside of policy and compliance
- Communication between offices/departments
 - Different approaches
 - Talk about hazing differently
 - Lack of consistency
 - Silos
 - Lack of collaboration
 - Students do not want to talk about what is going on
- Different types of hazing
 - Hazing has different facets (physical abuse, alcohol, emotional abuse, etc.)
 - Hazing definition is not clear and used across the board
- Advisors
 - Have trouble relating to students
 - Never take the policy “hats off” to connect with members
- Parents
 - Do not see hazing as an issue
 - Considered positive

- “Normal”
- Social Norm/Development
 - Social consequences
 - Want to be accepted
 - Unwilling to talk
 - Don’t want to get in trouble
 - Social Norms developed
 - Influenced by peers
 - Students 18-25 are still developing (brain, identity, ect.)

Connections-Experience:

- Communication issue seen across the tables as a major issue (between offices and with student)
- Seen as just breaking a rule instead of the significance of the behavior and the affects of hazing
- No clear definition of hazing was found on all table notes and the need for developing a universal definition is imperative for the expansion of prevention and education around the issue of hazing
- Students development was on all the tables notes and specifically talked about how student are still growing and developing biologically, socially, and cognitively

Table Notes Prevention:

- No known definition of hazing, very cloudy, hazing assumed to be part of culture because its not defined
 - We can't come to a definition, need to reframe the conversation
 - Don't always know that their activities are unacceptable
 - Pressure from alumni, they see hazing as a tradition
 - Alumni boards are not connected with the national idea of hazing
 - Don't want to talk about hazing, because that may mean hazing is Happening
- Campuses may not have the resources to work with students on hazing
 - Institutions need to make a commitment to no hire entry level positions
 - Some campuses view the Greek advisor as a pledge
 - Institutions wants to outsource the risk to national organizations
 - Administrators don't know its happening or are oblivious
- Campuses teach alternatives to hazing not how we confront it
 - How to respond to hazing needs to start earlier than college, grade and high schools
 - There is a lot of work that comes after step one and we need to be ready for it
 - Stop using how hazing affects the organizations and instead focus on how the "behavior" affects the group.
- New Traditions
 - One challenge is that when there is not prescribed programming, that students are developing their own way to celebrate the situation, and it can be problematic as it can be unhealthy, they may borrow from other groups
- Alumni
 - Dependant on how involved alumni or advisors are, the education efforts need to be just as focused, if not more focused, on the alum as they see what they used to do back then. They see physical assault as being bad, but the problem is when you experience subtle hazing, they don't see that, and it's hard to nip that in the bud.
 - Some schools will not deal with the students until they work with the alumni.
 - You are getting input from the alum even when you get the students to agree to the changes. The issue is that they may be willing to make the changes, but the alum will come back in and say, "wait hold on, this is how we do it."
- Make it Public and Potentially Kill an Organization
 - If we make it a public issue, no one will want to join the group and then the group will die.
 - If we bring attention to that, it may be detrimental.

- Do we need to prove that something is wrong or can we just go off that something just isn't right.
- Schools and Programming
 - Some schools work on explaining what hazing is and how to identify it, instead of saying that it is bad or to not do it.
 - It takes the community to address it, and it needs to be multifaceted.
 - This is by far not an issue with just Greeks as well. It also happens with athletics, particularly with sports that bring in a lot of money.
 - Worth and scale
 - Making the term hazing not taboo is beneficial. Talk about it with the faculty, staff, and students, and parents. Make the message broad based because we're making it more beneficial. Parents are calling. They are watching what their students are doing, and they care and they are staying in close contact with parents.
 - They are getting complaints.
 - Reporting can be anonymous, online, or personal
 - Multifaceted
- How to Work with Students
 - Don't scare the hell out of them. Don't scare them to not haze. The grim isn't good enough, it isn't beneficial. The benefits, and social norms may be more beneficial.
 - Students can have the mentality that it won't happen to them.
 - Maybe try to keep it specific to the institution.
 - It needs to be ongoing
 - Target education should be sophomores and juniors. They tend to be the most involved in the hazing activities.
 - Beneficial to do the bystander piece, that it is just as wrong to see it happen and not say anything. They needs to become a university message, it can't just be Greeks or just athletes.
- Need to build a bridge between students and practitioners
- Engaged students on what is hazing
- Having a adult influence or supervision
- As practitioner we need to put alternative out there for them
- List of conduct code which is hazing move to is it harmful to an individual
- Ask them if you were starting over what would a new member program look like
- What would help this new member become a good brother, sister, and athlete?
- Emotional strength of student, engage more on cognitive level, bystander, act on right action in group context
- How will funding be found to implement a new membership programs
- Conceptually belonging to a group is part of the high school and college experience. – we need to establish a substitute, a replacement to fulfill this desire, this history. We feel that mentoring may be that answer and there is an opportunity to draw in alumni?
- How do we go about changing this process?
 - Could there be an application process
 - Could alums be a part of this process

- It takes the less popular approach – I want to take a hard line on this – what are our values – back to basics – bring everyone to the table.
 - What is our heritage – what will bring our longevity
- Students looking for rite of passage, they want to experience a struggle and then experience a sense of accomplishment
 - Many enablers; parents, fraternity brothers, alumni, advisors
 - Would be okay to have other activities if allowed them the same sense of accomplishment that hazing brings; they want something that is a challenge
- One generation was hazed, want to create same experience for new members, not because it was negative, but because it shaped them, positive experience for some
 - Intention is not generally to disgrace; didn't realize they were doing something wrong
- There is a fear of a “list” of all the things and events that are not allowed.
 - Developmentally, students see things as black and white. We want a list, but we don't want a list. Practitioners want to help them see the gray.
- Consider how difficult it is for a victim to come forward. They see how they could get in trouble themselves. They know that other groups get away with hazing, so why would someone listen to them? Certain groups get away with murder; why are you picking on us?
- Alumni who oppose changes to how things “used to be”.
 - Can be a very powerful force opposing change
- WE are not putting enough alternatives out there.
- Students want to have this experience “Haze me” to complete the experience. They want to go through. Rite of passage. Earning their way.
- More of awareness of what hazing is—students become more intelligent about how to hide the behaviors
- Certain interventions widely adopted not working
 - Key note speaker
 - Leadership retreat (or comparable event)—only one member of group attends
- Limitations of alternatives to hazing
 - Working with crude concepts—doing alternative activities but they not work
 - Some intervention is designed to work with a certain group
- More of awareness of what hazing is—students become more intelligent about how to hide the behaviors

Table Notes Summary- Prevention:

- What is Hazing?
 - Create a national definition
 - Apart of culture
 - Do students know too much and fall under the radar?
 - Policy and enforcement

- Get away from the “List”
- Alternative to Hazing
 - Keynote Speakers
 - Leadership retreats
 - Are they working?
 - More effort need into the alternatives
- Alumni
 - Friend or foe
 - How do we get them onboard for the alternatives?
 - Don’t seem to like change
 - Like tradition
 - Generational
 - Need to be used as mentors
 - Make them apart of the process/develop alternatives
 - New membership program
 - Where will money come from?
- Student Perspective
 - Some groups get away with murder
 - Should their behavior and consequences be more public than hush hush?
 - Singled out
 - Difficult to come forward
 - Rights of passage
 - Sense of accomplishment
 - Earn their membership
 - Gap between Student and Practitioner

Connections-Prevention:

- Alumni seen as a resource but how to get them on side of administrator to help develop the new alternatives is the larger task
- The definition of hazing is not formalized or uniform across the board. Instead of a laundry list of hazing behavior/events there needs to be more conversation about what it is.
- For alternatives to hazing there needs reflection and evaluation of what is not working (retreats and keynote speakers) before developing new alternatives.
 - Student and Alumni need to be involved and support the changes