REPORT ON ANTI-HAZING
POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Prepared for Dr. Robert Bottoms, President, DePauw University

By Norval Stephens

April 17, 2006

Purpose

This report was requested by Dr. Bottoms on April 5, 2006, to ensure that DePauw was current on its anti-hazing programming in light of recent violations and the forthcoming initiation period. Calls were made to Greek organization leaders who suggested other organizations whose policies were seen to be effective, to administrators at two large universities known for strong student service departments as well as to the project leader of the current research project on hazing being conducted at the University of Maine.

Summary and Recommendations

DePauw’s approach to hazing is consistent with what is typical on many college campuses. This report will identify what are believed to be best practices or enhancements to DePauw’s programming, focusing on but not limited to Greek students.

The unmistakable concern is that each fall a new crop of undergraduates arrives on college campuses that were hazed or knew of hazing in high school. They transfer that experience or expectation to college. They are aptly called the “rogue group.” Closely following this is the inability of students, especially in fraternities, to translate the broad statements in law and college regulations into judgment on specific actions that are seen as “harmless.” Add to this the “traditions” that some chapters have. This is the milieu.

Based on best practices and other programming, these actions are recommended:

1. Continue but expand education on hazing and its consequences to all students and organizations, Greek and non-Greek, from pre-admission to graduation.
2. Partner with the national offices of fraternities and sororities in revising DePauw’s programs. Make this a test campus. This would mean that the policy would be consistent from chapter to chapter based on an external policy now being adopted by the national offices amended as appropriate for DePauw.
3. Each student, not just Greek students, would sign his or her understanding of the policy, with a copy for the student, for DePauw and for the Greek organization if appropriate. The message would be clear: hazing must stop.
4. Provide a hot line and an internet address at DePauw and at every fraternity and sorority headquarters for anonymous reporting of hazing.
5. Notify Greek headquarters immediately when any incident is credible enough to be investigated.
Sources

The major source for information for this report was the fraternity and sorority headquarters, especially those with chapters at DePauw. Two other fraternities were contacted whose programs were seen to be effective: Kappa Alpha Order and Sigma Phi Epsilon. (Sigma Phi Epsilon has not been interviewed due to travel.)

In addition, the top student services administrators were contacted at a large private university, Southern Methodist University, and a large public institution, University of Central Florida, the seventh largest campus in the United States.

Finally, a major research project on hazing is underway at the University of Maine. The project director was interviewed and provided a preliminary summary of the research.

Greek leaders:
1. Brad Beacham, Sigma Nu
2. Steven Becker, Beta Theta Pi
3. Robert Biggs, Phi Delta Theta
4. Shawn Collingsworth, Phi Kappa Psi
5. Elizabeth Corridan, Kappa Alpha Theta
6. Jonathan Custis, Delta Upsilon
7. William Martin, Phi Gamma Delta
8. Thomas Pennington, Phi Kappa Psi
9. James Russell, Delta Tau Delta
10. Wynn Smiley, Alpha Tau Omega
11. Craig Templeton, Sigma Phi Epsilon (not yet interviewed)
12. Larry Wiese, Kappa Alpha Order
13. Susan Zabriske, Alpha Phi

College Administrators:

1. James Caswell, Vice President, Student Affairs, Southern Methodist University
2. Thomas Huddleston, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Admissions, University of Central Florida
3. Patricia MacKown, Assistant Vice President, Campus Life, University of Central Florida.

Research Director:

1. Dr. Elizabeth Allan, Assistant Professor of Higher Education Leadership, University of Maine

None of the recommendations in this report was reviewed with nor approved by the respondents. However, each was promised a copy of the report.
Significant Findings

1. **Hazing is a cultural problem**

Virtually all those contacted acknowledged that hazing is a persistent and recurring problem on college campuses. It is a cultural problem, similar to alcohol abuse, and should be approached on a population-level basis. Punishing individual and group violations is important but not as important as ongoing programming. As Jim Russell said, “If you have not said it in six months, you have not said it.”

2. **A new crop of undergraduates who have hazed arrives each fall.**

Tom Pennington stressed the need to recognize that a significant percentage of high school graduates have been hazed and have hazed in various settings in high school. Dr. Allan’s research confirms this. The point is made early because of its relevance in pre-admission contact with students and their parents, in orientation and in the first months of the school year. Jim Caswell warns that these students in their sophomore year become the “rogue group” who invariably are the ones that haze. This also suggests the sophomore class as an identifiable target sub-audience.

3. **Many fraternity and sorority members and pledges sign a risk management or hazing statement now**

This is very common practice. It makes the point strongly, it removes the option of pleading innocence and it demonstrates in any lawsuit that the organization was cognizant of the problem, programmed against it and requires evidence of understanding. Several said that this alone has not and will not stamp out the problem but feel that it is an essential element of any anti-hazing program. The policy statement of the Fraternity Executives Association (FEA) was suggested as a universal model that DePauw could consider and amend with the aid of student leaders. This is attached.

4. **College programming must be continuous, pervasive and enforced**

All three administrators stressed this, starting with the admission process, confirming the position with parents, explaining it cogently and directly in orientation, reminding all students and student leaders before recruitment, underscoring the policy immediately after pledging, reviewing the policy as part of the new member education programs, at the time of initiation and at the end of each semester or quarter..

Jim Caswell reported that a partnership with the Greeks really works.

SMU and Central Florida have each student sign a statement on hazing. Shortly after recruitment, SMU has the district attorney address members and pledges on hazing, what it is and what the penalties are. The impact is palpable. SMU has also mandated an
eight-week pledge period. Caswell has mailed material on hazing used in campus programming. It will be forwarded separately.

Several contributors mentioned speakers available for college education programs. Reference is made to the website www.stophazing.org for resources and speakers. Brad Beacham also recommended attending the National Hazing Symposium sponsored by CampusSpeak. The third annual symposium will be held in Atlanta this fall CampusSpeak also sponsors National Hazing Awareness Week.

5. Fraternities echoed the idea of a partnership

“If DePauw is serious about this, we’d like to partner in this effort—make this a test campus.” This was said variously by several leaders. They recognize hazing is endemic, campus-wide. “It would be much more effective if we all worked together.” This sentiment was in almost every conversation. Brad Beacham specifically mentioned that the Sigma Nu strategic plan calls for seeking strategic alliances to counter hazing. That would include partnering with DePauw. “Students are more fearful of a tough campus policy than they are of a tough fraternity policy. Working together would be even more effective,” he added.

There were some other remarks that are worth recording. “DePauw thinks it is different. DePauw is not that different.”

“DePauw wants to handle things their own way. DePauw does not call us in early enough. It would be better if we could get in earlier, together.”

As evidence of this spirit of cooperation, Bill Martin of Phi Gamma Delta offered a valuable insight and his solution. He would travel from campus to campus and clearly state the position on hazing. Then he would learn of an incident at a chapter he had visited. He concluded that describing hazing in the usual terms (anything demeaning, regimented, embarrassing or potentially harmful) did not translate meaningfully. So he devised a long questionnaire that made it clear what the dos and don’ts are. He believes it has helped Phi Gam reduce hazing. A copy is attached.

Jonathan Custis of Delta Upsilon restated that the fraternity was founded as non-secret, non-hazing. He sent the entire Chapter Excellence Program book, covering all subjects and programs a chapter must complete each year, verified in writing by the chapter president, the chapter advisor and a representative of the host institution. The CEP is a balance of education, positive requirements and prohibited activities.

Jim Caswell also cited the Men of Principle Program of Beta Theta Pi and the Balanced Man Program of Sigma Phi Epsilon as examples of fraternities that were carrying member education beyond pledge training into personal development.
6. Make clear the difference between challenge and abuse

Challenging a pledge class in terms of service, grade point average or volunteer chapter service planned by the class is different from abusing pledges as a challenge to them. The latter is hazing.

Several stressed that subjecting pledges to fear, loss of sleep, drinking anything, eating anything may cause death in a young man with unknown physical or mental problems.

7. Don’t moralize; focus on education, enforcement and consequences

Hazing is understood in the same anti-law lens as drinking. "The 21-year-old drinking age is wrong and therefore I ignore it." This is the underage justification for drinking. "Hazing is not that bad and it bonds the pledge class." This is the same type justification.

It is simply not worth arguing against these attitudes. State the law. State the campus and fraternity position on hazing and then present in detail, with examples, the consequences. Have a local lawyer or local police chief make it clear right here and right now. The Maine research indicates that sponsors or advisors often know of and condone hazing—possibly out of ignorance. In a surprising number of cases, the advisor was present. Education must extend to all adult advisors and house corporation members.

Fraternity leaders emphasized taking action. Larry Wiese said: "Catch ‘em and punish ‘em—now!" The fraternity must make it clear that hazing will not be tolerated. "At first hint, go in with guns blazing," said Wynn Smiley. The leaders admitted that, with over 100 or more chapters, it has not been possible to get the attention of every potential member who will haze and reprogram him to the values of the fraternity. That is clearly the objective heard time and again.

8. Provide a hot line and an internet address

Some fraternities and both sororities cited have a telephone hot line. While some are for any risk violation or concern, some are solely for hazing. SMU and Central Florida have a number to call. Parents should be made aware of the hot line and its anonymity. The more the hot line is known, the more use it will get and the more effective a deterrent it is. Sigma Nu also has a separate internet address to report hazing.

These avenues can be abused. Larry Wiese reported that the hot line can be used falsely to accuse another chapter of hazing. But every call, he said, is evaluated and investigated. At least 20% of the calls have led to uncovering a serious hazing incident.

9. Hazing is not limited to Greek chapters

The research from Maine indicates that hazing can be part of life for sports teams, marching bands, clubs and other organizations. (See the attachment on this research
project. Since the project is not at a stage to recommend action, it has not been quoted extensively in this report.

Both SMU and Central Florida make no distinction between Greeks and non-Greeks in programming and the judicial process.

Hazing can migrate from sports teams to the campus. A lap around the track for some infraction or training lapse is conditioning for a sports team. A lap around the track for a pledge class is or could be hazing. Coaches must be aware of the impact that such training methods have.

Almost universally the respondents offered any help, documentation and training materials each has in use to help DePauw in this effort.