

State University of New York

College at Oneonta

Hazing Prevention Information



Hazing...What you need to know

Statement of Position

The State University College at Oneonta is a community of faculty, students and staff whose mission is to foster the individual student's intellectual development through excellence in teaching, advisement, community service, scholarly activities, and with a concern for its students' personal, cultural and ethical development. The College strives to educate its students to become:

- skilled in thinking critically and communicating clearly;
- knowledgeable about themselves, other cultures and the world;
- complete, productive human beings who will continue to learn and contribute to improving the world in which they live.

Hazing - What Is It?

- According to the State of New York, "A person is guilty of hazing in the first degree when, in the course of another person's initiation into or affiliation with any organization, he or she intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury or death to such other person or a third person and thereby causes such serious injury or death to such a person or to a third person. Hazing in the first degree is a Class D Felony."
- According to the State of New York, "A person is guilty of hazing in the second degree when, in the course of another person's initiation or affiliation with any organization, he or she intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes such injury. Hazing in the second degree is a Class E Felony."

- According to the State of New York, "A person is guilty of hazing in the third degree when, in the course of another person's initiation or affiliation with any organization, he or she intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such a person or a third person. Hazing in the third degree is a Class A Misdemeanor."



The following information has been prepared to assist individuals and organizations in understanding the position of the College at Oneonta with regard to hazing activities. This information is not intended to be all-inclusive, it is merely a guide to help members of the campus community better understand the crime of hazing.

A list of activities which have been determined as hazing by the courts and/or colleges is included in this pamphlet. Some of these examples may surprise you!

Examples of Hazing:

Depending on the circumstances, these activities have been determined as hazing by the courts and/or institutions of higher education. Such actions are often required or implied as conditions in or exclusion from a group, formal or informal, and may be perpetrated by an individual or a group of individuals.

1. Psychological hazing, which is defined as any act which is likely to: (a) compromise the dignity of another; (b) cause embarrassment or shame to another; (c) cause another to be the object of malicious amusement or ridicule; (d) or cause psychological harm or substantial emotional strain.
2. Humiliation in front of non-members by reference to "pledgeship." (Lesser than members)

3. Line-ups of new members/recruits, or grilling individuals or groups with questions of any kind.
4. Deception prior to the end of an initiation process to convince a new member that he or she will not complete initiation or training.
5. (Non)Members told to do anything exclusively for the entertainment of the organization members.
6. Forcing, coercing, or permitting students to disrupt scheduled classes, public forums, or other facets of the College's academic programs such as creating activities that are so time consuming that students cannot go to class, do homework, sleep, etc.
7. Any form of obtaining signatures of members or alumni (i.e. lists, on paddles, on balloons, etc...) or obtaining handshakes/greetings/phone calls in a manner inconsistent with the Hazing Policy.
8. All form of physical activity not a part of an organized athletic contest and not specifically directed toward constructive work. (Push-ups, sit-ups, morning walks, calisthenics, etc.). No one truly knows the physical limitations of individuals and the safety of our students must come first.
9. The application of foreign substances to the body, such as throwing food, spraying water of any temperature, etc.
10. Such activities, such as scavenger hunts, new member ditches, kidnaps, blindfolding, etc.
11. Forcing, coercing, or permitting students to be deprived of sufficient sleep. (Eight consecutive hours per day is the standard.)
12. Any paddling, swatting, or spanking (individual or collective).
13. Personal errands run by new members for returning organization members.
14. Assigning pranks such as stealing, painting objects, or harassing another team/organization.

15. Depriving students of access to their residence hall rooms such as taking their keys, requiring them to spend the night in another's room or at a house, etc.
16. Depriving students access to means of maintaining a normal schedule of bodily cleanliness (including a minimum of one shower per day and the ability to wear clean clothes).
17. Forcing, coercing or permitting students to eat or drink foreign or unusual substances such as raw meat, salt water, onion, hot peppers, baby food, or unusual combinations or preparation of food.
18. Forced nudity and/or forcing or suggesting that students dress in a conspicuous, embarrassing and/or degrading way.
19. Forcing all new members to dress in uniform.
20. Forcing, coercing, allowing, suggesting, or permitting students to drink excessive amounts of alcohol.
21. Branding/Tattooing any part of the body, whether voluntary or involuntary.
22. Forcing coercing or permitting an individual to be "buried alive", for any period of time.
23. Forcing coercing or permitting students to disrupt the operation of the College dining halls.
24. Any form of punishment and/or demerit system is prohibited.
25. Any activity or ritual that involves the abuse or mistreatment of an animal.

This list by no means covers all activities and actions which can be considered to be hazing.

Should you have questions or desire clarification of any of these items, call the Office of Campus Life.

(607) 436-3591

Student Code of Conduct Hazing Policy

No person, either singly or in concert with others, shall for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization or group, recklessly or intentionally take any action or create or participate in the creation of any situation that endangers the mental or physical health of another person. No person shall take any action or create any situation, whether on or off campus to produce embarrassment, humiliation, harassment or ridicule. This includes, but is not limited to, the forced consumption of liquor, other liquids, legal or illegal drugs, food or condiments. Further, it shall not constitute a defense to the charge of hazing that the participant(s) took part voluntarily, that they voluntarily assumed the risks or hardship of the activity, or that no injury was suffered.

Warning Signs of Hazing:

- Members justifying an activity by saying "it's tradition"
- The presence of alcohol
- Secrecy
- Peer pressure for everyone to participate
- Singling out an individual of specific group
- Miscellaneous bad judgement

Conduct an organization self test:

Would we be ok with this being in our city
or campus newspaper?

Would we perform this activity in front of our parents
or a University administrator?

Does this activity involve criminal acts?
(Including consuming alcohol)

Would we be prepared to go to court to defend
the merit of this activity?

Remember, hazing is a form of abuse.

How to Report Hazing:

A hazing incident may be reported by anyone: a person whom the activity has directly affected, a person who assisted in the implementation of the activity, students or college personnel who witness the activity, or community members who witness the activity. Therefore, any activity which an individual may determine as hazing can be reported by students, staff, faculty and administrators, community members, or visitors to the college. Situations involving hazing may be reported to the Office of Campus Life, Hunt College Union via our confidential Hazing Hotline. Phone: (607) 436-2410, option #2.

Risk Management:

A number of lawsuits have been filed in the United States court system against organizations and individuals for activities and actions which resulted in mental or physical harm to a member or members of an organization (Ballou v. Sigma Nu, 352 S.E. 2d 488).

Charges can be filed not only against the organization but against the organization president/captain, the advisor or coach, other individuals associated with the incident, the national affiliate if there is one, as well as the college.

The advisor/coach and president/captain must be aware that they can be held liable for the actions taken by their organization. The advisor/coach and president/captain run the risk of legal action if all organizational activities and actions are not carefully monitored, and if they do not halt activities which, in the eyes of the college and the law, can be construed as hazing. Even if a member or an officer was not present when the incident occurred, they can be named in a suit or charges can be brought against them.

What Can Be Done Instead of Hazing?

- Organize new and old members to complete a community service project together
- Participate in a ropes course at College Camp (Call x3157 to reserve)
- Attend or participate in an athletic event as an organization
- Encourage everyone to join another campus or community organization
- Develop a mentor program
- Invite speakers to talk about campus, business, or community aspects of life
- Plan social exchanges with other organizations
- Attend CUAC movie nights (x2550)
- Designate study hours for all members
- Offer workshops of resume writing, dressing for success, and interviewing skills
- Conduct fund raisers for the community (CSRC x2651)

All hazing facts and alternatives adapted from www.stophazing.org