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RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THE TASK FORCE ON HAZING AND ALCOHOL

Prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs
The University of Texas System

April 2014

The University of Texas System Task Force on Hazing and Alcohol:

Major Findings, Highlights, and Recommendations

The University of Texas System Hazing and Alcohol Task Force was charged with developing an array of evidence based practices that target campus organizations and constituencies in an effort to change campus culture concerning hazing and high-risk drinking behavior that contributes to hazing.

The Office of Academic Affairs and institutional task force members are developing a website to facilitate resource sharing, best practices, honor codes, training modules, hazing prevention efforts, and binge-drinking awareness programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 50% of students involved in any type of club, team, or campus organizations have engaged in at least one hazing behavior meant to "humiliate, degrade, abuse, or endanger others." Drinking games are the most commonly cited hazing behavior on college campuses.

Most students also fail to report behavior as "hazing" because they perceive benefits of feeling part of a group as outweighing the emotional, psychological, and physical harm.

System-Level Requirements

- Develop a clear Systemwide message that helps to influence culture change

- The U. T. System and Board of Regents expect institutions to be vigorous in pursuit of creating a culture of zero tolerance concerning hazing

- Require a structure of shared accountability among administration, campus leadership, and student leadership

- Encourage institutions to engage in proactive, practical, and educational efforts to create awareness of hazing issues, high risk drinking, and other risky behaviors that perpetuate hazing

Campus-Level Requirements

Task force members are working with the Office of Academic Affairs to host a U. T. System website that provides policy and alternatives to hazing. Other recommendations include:

- Pursue promising and best Environmental Management practices that minimize risk to students

- Institutions should eliminate "pledging" and employ the term "new member processes"

- Provide organizations with a list of team-building activities that foster collaboration, self-esteem, and positive contributions to the community

- Encourage campus-wide participation in an online alcohol prevention program

- Collect data on the impact of educational programming and prevention efforts in order to assess the effectiveness of each program

- Encourage institutions to have a blended policy approach that includes amnesty policies and bystander awareness programs that encourage students to seek help for severely intoxicated students; include restorative and educational sanctions

Introduction and Purpose:

The Hazing and Alcohol Task Force was formed in the Spring semester of 2013 at the request of Chairman W. Eugene Powell and with the support of the U. T. System Board of Regents, Chancellor Francisco G. Cigarroa, and the Office of Academic Affairs. The task force membership consists of four representatives from the U. T. System Student Advisory Council, four representatives from the U. T. System Faculty Advisory Council, and two other institutional administration leaders representing student affairs and athletics. Members represent a variety of institutions and have helped inform a comprehensive and well-rounded conversation on this topic from the perspectives of Greek organizations, athletic teams, academic organizations, and other social groups on campus that may currently be at risk for engaging in hazing behavior and/or high risk drinking.

The University of Texas System Hazing and Alcohol Task Force was charged with developing for the U. T. System institutions an array of evidence-based best practices that target campus student organizations and other university constituencies in an effort to change campus culture concerning hazing and alcohol abuse.

In addition, the task force was asked to formulate recommendations targeting advisors and others who work with student groups to help them proactively address hazing and alcohol use in their organizations and to intervene when appropriate. Finally, the task force was charged to develop additional recommendations and resources designed to actively engage students in campus programs to help combat high-risk behaviors.

Approach:

The task force relied upon national hazing research to identify the types of students most likely to engage in hazing behavior and to determine how pervasive the issue may be. A nationwide web-based survey conducted in 2007 surveyed almost 12,000 students at 53 campuses.[1] Results indicated alarming trends:

- More than 50% of students involved in any type of club, team, or campus organization had engaged in at least one hazing behavior meant to "humiliate, degrade, abuse, or endanger others or oneself regardless of willingness to participate."
- Hazing behaviors occur across all types of organizations, among both male and female students, and are clearly not limited to Greek and athletic organizations, as is sometimes reported.

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[1] Elizabeth Allan and Mary Madden, "College Students at Risk: Initial Findings from the National Study of Student Hazing," (3/11/2008), http://www.hazingstudy.org/publications/hazing_in_view_web.pdf

- Most students fail to report behavior as "hazing" because they perceive the benefits of feeling part of a group as outweighing the potential risk of emotional, psychological, and physical harm.
- Drinking games are the most commonly cited hazing behavior at all college campuses surveyed.

Current Practice:

As required by law, U. T. System institutions currently distribute to students the Texas Hazing law[2], campus hazing policies, and an institution-specific list of organizations found in violation of campus hazing rules for a three year timeframe. Over the past three years, four U. T. System academic institutions received no formal hazing reports and two institutions had a small number of reported incidents. The three larger academic campuses with a significant number of student organizations and teams tended to have more reported hazing incidents within the last three years.

In all cases, the U. T. System academic institutions have taken swift and appropriate action to discipline organizations and to implement proactive prevention efforts on campus to reduce hazing behavior in the future. Additionally, student and organization leaders participate in risk management training, new member education programs, and a variety of student educational events and programming sponsored during National Hazing Prevention Week. The institutions are to be commended for their progress on this very important issue and the Task Force has developed recommendations that can complement current efforts and enhance some of the established best practices at U. T. System institutions.

The Task Force recognizes that historically, across the country, it has been the intersection of hazing-related behaviors and initiations processes combined with excessive alcohol consumption that often results in risky behavior, physical and emotional harm to students, and possibly the most serious, sometimes deadly, outcomes.

It has become evident through research and discussion that many institutions are engaging in proactive hazing prevention efforts, at the very least, on an annual basis. However, the Task Force has developed recommendations that extend proactive prevention efforts beyond the current status quo, in order to provide guidelines and resources to combat further the culture of hazing and high risk drinking at U. T. System academic institutions.

System-Level Recommendations

The following recommendations address system-level messages and actions that will help facilitate the implementation of proactive awareness efforts at U. T. System institutions. Refer to Attachment A for more information.

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[2] Education Code §37.152 and §51.936

1. **Develop a clear and concise Systemwide message that helps to influence culture change**. Any significant attempt to reduce the incidents of hazing behavior must begin with a culture change. Many students do not accurately perceive the potential harm of hazing behavior and a significant number of students come to college having already experienced hazing in or before high school. As a result, it becomes imperative that institutions change the expectations around what is and is not acceptable group dynamics, culture, and behavior.

The U. T. System will develop messaging specific to the potential harms and consequences of hazing and messages that provide specific direction on desired behavior and instill a culture of care. Messages can then be tailored for adoption at each institution. By encouraging the adoption of this campaign, the task force expects that a clear and consistent message will exist across all U. T. System institutions.

2. **Require that hazing behaviors will not be tolerated and are not in-line with community values.**

U. T. System leadership needs to help facilitate culture change. Changing expectations involves buy-in from the highest levels of administration to each and every individual student and student organization, faculty, staff, and alumnus. Hazing behavior runs along a continuum from mild to severe, from seemingly harmless to potentially deadly. Often, apparently harmless hazing behavior escalates to more severe and potentially dangerous behavior. Only a zero-tolerance stance will create a culture that recognizes that all types of hazing are demeaning and incongruent with campus values. It should be communicated widely throughout the campus community that participating in student activities and organizations is an essential and important aspect of the college experience but an experience in which hazing will not be tolerated. Students who wish to participate in any activity should be able to do so without fear of being hazed. The institutions need to reinforce that hazing is not acceptable in the academy, that all hazing will be addressed, and that the elimination of hazing is a Systemwide priority.

3. **Require a structure of shared accountability among administration, campus leadership, and student leadership.**

A structure of accountability involves creating a shared, collective ownership among administrators, campus leadership, and student leadership in eliminating acts of hazing and high risk drinking. Accountability extends beyond having campus policies, programs and practices, and interventions in place to creating structures that lead to a sustained cultural change with regard to hazing and high risk drinking. While U. T. System institutions have been successful in creating policy and practices that educate the campus community about hazing, high risk drinking, and taking action when incidents arise, more can be done in creating a proactive culture of shared accountability and responsibility. Emerging research in the field of effective campus health and safety programming identifies key factors that contribute to successful prevention efforts, including leadership, building

coalitions, utilizing evidence-based programming, and implementing a strategic plan.[3] Successful strategy involves multiple collaborative and coordinated efforts that identify factors that lead to hazing and high risk drinking, and provides policy, prevention, and intervention efforts. To reinforce a structure of shared accountability, the Task Force recommends that each campus form a campus coalition involving multiple partners to address hazing and high risk drinking from an institutional perspective. The coalitions on each campus can be instrumental in reinforcing Systemwide expectations, identifying areas of improvement, and identifying strategies for improvement at the campus level.

4. Require institutions to engage in proactive, practical and educational efforts to create awareness of hazing issues, high risk drinking, and other risky behavior that perpetuates hazing behavior.

There are numerous factors that contribute to hazing and high risk drinking. While institutions should continue to educate students about policies, consequences, and alternatives to hazing and high risk drinking, efforts should advance beyond educating students about hazing and high risk drinking, to include strategies that examine contributing factors that perpetuate risky behavior. Research on effective prevention programming suggests that one-time or uncoordinated programming efforts are not effective in changing risky behavior. Effective approaches undertaken by public health models emphasize adoption of healthy, non-risky behaviors. Similarly, effective campus level strategies should include coordinated, sustained and evidence-based approaches involving campus and community partners that utilize environmental management strategies to examine hazing and binge drinking, along with other risky behaviors in which students engage. Environmental strategies examine policies, campus culture, and norms around hazing and binge drinking, available campus programs, services and intervention efforts, and national research. With a better understanding of why risky behavior occurs, effective strategies can be developed for campus implementation. The Task Force recommends that the U. T. System host a Systemwide webinar to discuss environmental management strategies and implementation at the campus level.

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[3] Langford, L. 2008. A Comprehensive Approach to Hazing Prevention in Higher Education Settings. (Working paper May 23, 2008)

<center>**Campus-Level Recommendations**</center>

Additionally, the task force has worked to compile valuable resources and reputable programs that could be implemented at the campus level. Although providing directives and guidelines can be helpful, Task Force members also want to provide valuable, practical resources that institutions can leverage and adapt for various uses. For more information, please refer to Attachment A.

1. **Task Force members continue to work with the U. T. System Office of Academic Affairs to host a U. T. System website that references the following:**

- Provide research data on hazing behaviors, especially in relation to high risk activities like binge-drinking, among college students

- Provide links to hazing prevention organizations and web materials

- Create a storage location for hazing prevention resources that can include training materials and modules, templates for anti-hazing student handbook language, suggestions for alternative team-building activities, bystander awareness education tools, etc.

- Exhibit materials that reflect the Systemwide anti-hazing message

- Host a forum to share best practices among institutions

- Develop a platform to recognize campus leadership, students, and organizations for praiseworthy anti-hazing initiatives

When the web platform has been developed, institutional and System leadership will be provided a link to the site with a description of its significance, use, and key features. The site will be developed with the support of the Office of Academic Affairs, members of the Task Force, student affairs staff at U. T. System institutions, and interns at the U. T. Austin campus. Resources compiled throughout the research of the Task Force will be featured, and the site will provide a mechanism for others to share ideas and resources in the future. The Task Force expects the site to be ready for the Fall 2014 semester.

2. **Task Force members work with the Office of Academic Affairs to host a System website that will reference an advisor training module.** The Task Force recommends that each campus adapt and utilize the advisor training modules and recommends that the student organization advisor also be familiar with other required training that the student organization must undergo as part of the annual requirement for registration as a student organization. This module can be provided online and covers materials such as hazing law and definitions, advisor best practices, alternative team building activities, and risk management. As a Systemwide hazing prevention and awareness

website is developed, institutions will be informed of the location and potential capabilities of the website.

3. Institutions should eliminate "pledging" and employ the term "new member processes." Additionally, organizations should be required to meet with campus staff prior to beginning these processes. University officials should work with campus organizations and leadership to develop a safe and appropriate plan for new member processes. As institution administrators work more closely with these groups, they can inform campus culture and organizational behavior based on institutional, system, and national expectations. Additionally, as campus administration consults with organizations, they may also discuss the length of the new member processes, review planned activities, and set expectations. Through these discussions trust will be further developed and processes can become more transparent.

4. Systemwide adoption of a policy handbook developed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is particularly effective, not just for sports teams and organizations, but for any type of student organization. The handbook should be provided to advisors of student organizations as well as coaching and athletic staff.

5. As part of an overall campus culture shift from behavioral awareness programs to prevention programs, **"Environmental Management" is the new framework** often used in an effort to reduce risky behavior, especially related to high risk drinking. Traditionally, some campus prevention activities focus only on awareness of individual choices and behaviors, assuming that students would make healthier behavioral choices when faced with facts about alcohol and the impact of hazing behaviors. Environmental Management strategies focus on interpersonal and group processes designed to change student social norms and behaviors. Environmental Management also seeks to address policy issues on campus and within the community.[4]

A blended policy approach that allows for a combination of amnesty policies, bystander awareness, and other mechanisms can best encourage students to seek help for severely intoxicated students in life-threatening or dangerous situations.

The Task Force encourages institutions to pursue promising and best Environmental Management practices that minimize risk to students. Some of these practices may include[5]:

- Designing interventions and programs that establish positive social norms and expectations about alcohol use and behavior; the use of personalized and relevant feedback through the peer norming process

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[4] William DeJong and Linda Langford, "A Typology for Campus-Based Alcohol Prevention: Moving Toward Environmental Management Strategies," Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Boston University (2005), http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/supportingresearch/journal/dejong.aspx

[5] "Environmental Strategies to Prevent Alcohol Problems on College Campuses," U.S. Department of Justice Report Prepared by the Pacific Institute of Research and Evaluation (2011), http://www.udetc.org/documents/EnvStratCollege.pdf

- Promoting bystander intervention programs that teach students positive ways to notice potentially dangerous situations and to intervene appropriately, especially as it relates to hazing behavior, high-risk drinking, and potential sexual assault

- Creating amnesty policies that encourage students to seek help for severely intoxicated or impaired students, and promoting laws regarding immunity from prosecution to encourage students to report incidents of hazing

- Reviewing and revising housing policies and academic calendars to reduce high risk drinking opportunities

- Developing a campus and community coalition to ensure a consistent message regarding hazing behaviors and high-risk drinking

- Enforcing expectations and policies among individuals and student organizations

- Creating incentives and recognition programs for student organizations that implement positive prevention practices

6. The Task Force recommends inclusion of a restorative or educational component into the sanctioning process for groups as part of the process to remain in "good standing." Incorporating a restorative or educational component provides the opportunity for individuals within the organization to address the consequences of their actions and learn from their actions. The sanctions are used in combination with other sanctions such as probation or suspension where groups would complete the requirements as a condition to remain in "good standing" at the university.

7. The Task Force recommends providing organizations with a list of team-building activities that afford an opportunity for groups to foster collaboration, self-esteem, and positive contributions to the community. Since students often perceive a "benefit" of hazing, in that students feel more bonded to each other in the group; team-building activities provide a positive alternative that accomplishes the same outcome. A list of these activities will be featured on the hazing prevention website. If institutions have funding available, the Task Force encourages providing small grants to organizations for positive team-building activities. Organizations could receive funding as an incentive for attending educational programs on risk management, anti-hazing, and high risk drinking and/or for signing anti-hazing pledges.

8. Campus collaboration among U. T. System institutions can facilitate the sharing of resources and best practices in hazing prevention. The most successful strategies will include a sustained effort that blends policy, staff training, educational programs, and interventions. Each campus has expertise and approaches that can benefit the entire System. Beyond the hosted website, institutions are encouraged to create a network among Systemwide campus leadership to share best practices.

9. In recognizing the dangerous combination of high risk drinking and hazing behavior, the task force **recommends campus participation in an online alcohol prevention program. Online**

programs such as AlcoholEdu are nationally recognized and provide a personalized approach and experience that impacts both individual decision-making and, when implemented properly, campus culture. The task force recommends that U. T. System administration work with institutions to find the most effective online tool available that meets the needs of a diverse student body, incorporates student learning theory, and uses innovative and effective tools to educate students and curb high-risk drinking behavior. The U. T. System Office of Academic Affairs could pursue negotiating a contract that leverages the participation of all System institutions and reduces the average cost per student/institution.

10. As the U. T. System and individual institutions work to impact campus culture around hazing and alcohol use, it will become important for institutions to **collect data on the impact of educational programming and prevention efforts** in order to assess the impact and effectiveness of each program. The recommended campus coalitions and a Systemwide network to share resources will be valuable tools in developing and implementing systems to evaluate the impact of educational programming and prevention efforts.

11. The Task Force recommends that each institution consider implementing an honor code that affirms the values and guiding principles of the institution and the worth of each student. A sample honor code will provided online.

Conclusion

Hazing behavior, especially when combined with the potentially deadly impact of high risk drinking, has no place within a world-class system of higher education institutions. Certainly, U. T. System institutions have already taken steps to become proactive and effective leaders in the prevention of hazing behavior.

The recommendations and resources provided can further serve to transform campus culture and help students to make informed, responsible decisions and to engage student groups in positive team-building experiences that can transcend hazing culture. As institutions work to ensure a culture change among students, conversations will continue between U. T. System and institutional leadership so that meaningful, lasting change can result.

The Task Force members sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve on this group dealing with issues that directly impact the health and safety of students. The U. T. System and institutions have the potential to become proactive state and national leaders on hazing prevention efforts.

Task Force members:

Tim Allen Co-Chair	Faculty Advisory Council	The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
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- Additional input was provided by students Eileen Curry (U. T. Health Science Center at San Antonio), Zack Dunn (U. T. San Antonio), and Columbia Mishra (U. T. Austin)

The U. T. System Anti-Hazing Website will provide a variety of resources for use on institutions and within campus organizations.
The following are a preview of some of the resources that will be provided:

What is Environmental Management?

Bystander Intervention programs that establish positive social norms and expectations about behavior and alcohol consumption

Create amnesty policies that encourage students to seek help for severely intoxicated or impaired students; providing immunity from prosecution to report incidents of hazing

Design housing policies and academic calendars that reduce high risk drinking and behavior opportunities

Develop a campus coalition to reinforce consistent messages and expectations

Alternative Hazing Team Building Behaviors

Team building and leadership challenge courses

Group overnight trips; camping trips

Game nights and skit nights

Community service projects

Alumni/motivational speaker involvement

Sporting events

Bonfires, outdoor movies, sporting activities, and competitions

Sample Honor Code (Partial Sample)

My signature indicates that I recognize and will not engage in . . .

Intentionally inciting others to engage immediately in any unlawful activity, which incitement leads directly to such conduct

Hazing, or conspiracy to engage in hazing, which includes:
Any method of initiation into a student organization or living group, or any pastime or amusement engaged in with respect to such an organization or living group, that causes, or is likely to cause, bodily danger or physical harm, or serious mental or emotional harm, to any student or other person
Conduct associated with initiation into a student organization or living group, or any pastime or amusement engaged in with respect to an organization or living group not amounting to a violation, but including such conduct as humiliation by ritual act and sleep deprivation. Consent is no defense to hazing.