



FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE NEW MEMBER ANTIHAZING STATEMENT & BILL OF RIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Hazing is a serious cultural and public health problem that causes physical and mental harm to students nationwide. Widener University acknowledges the general misperception that hazing only occurs in the fraternity and sorority life community, and therefore holds all individual students, student organizations, or student groups accountable under the University Anti-Hazing Policy. In continued support of hazing prevention and awareness, Widener University continues to prohibit all acts of hazing and adheres to the Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law, which defines hazing to include Hazing, Aggravated Hazing, and Organizational Hazing as outlined in this policy.

For the purposes of this new member antihazing statement, the term “new member” shall refer to any student seeking affiliation and membership with a recognized fraternal organization that is not already a fully initiated member. This statement does not differ between the individual organizational preferences toward the term.

Widener University adheres to the following policies and definitions in regards to hazing behavior and will take the necessary action to prevent and mitigate the consequences of a reported incident of hazing:

HAZING. A person commits the offense of hazing if the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a minor or student into or with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing a minor or student’s membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a minor or student to do or participate in any of the following behaviors or actions: (1) Violate Federal or State criminal law; (2) Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the minor or student to a risk of emotional or physical harm; (3) Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements; (4) Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment; (5) Endure brutality of a sexual nature; or (6) Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the minor or student. Hazing also includes any action or situation that requires or encourages violation of University policy.

AGGRAVATED HAZING. A person commits the offense of aggravated hazing if the person commits a violation of Hazing that results in serious bodily injury or death to the minor or student; and (1) The person acts with reckless indifference to the health and safety of the minor or student; or (2) The person causes, coerces, or forces the consumption of an alcoholic liquid or drug by the minor or student.

ORGANIZATIONAL HAZING. An organization commits the offense of organizational hazing if the organization knowingly, or recklessly promotes or facilitates a violation of Hazing or Aggravated Hazing.

Any student, student group, student organization (recognized or not), team, or other persons associated with a student group or organization found responsible of Hazing, Aggravated Hazing, or Organizational Hazing under this Policy, whether occurring on or off campus, may face disciplinary action from the University, and may also face criminal charges under state law or federal law, including The Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law, 18 Pa. C.S. § 2801, et seq. **It is not a defense that the consent of the minor or student was sought or obtained, or that an instance of hazing was sanctioned or approved by the organization.**

POLICY DEFINITIONS

Student: An individual who has been admitted and enrolled at Widener University who has not completed a program of study and has not been awarded a degree.

Student Organization or Group: Any University student association, group, organization, or club whether recognized or not whose members are primarily undergraduate or graduate students. This definition applies to all athletic, marching band, and ROTC programs at Widener University.

University Employee: Any person employed by Widener University.

Other Persons Associated: Any individual that is not a student or University employee that may be associated with a student group on campus, which will include alumni members and advisors or other group affiliates.

MEMBERSHIP BILL OF RIGHTS

The *Membership Bill of Rights* specifically outlines activities that a fraternity or sorority members **cannot** require of its members. If found responsible of facilitating any of the listed (or similar) activities, then the organization or individual will be subject to severe penalties, which may include the permanent removal of an organization, suspension or expulsion from Widener University, and the assessment of criminal charges. **It is not a defense that the consent of the minor or student was sought or obtained, or that an instance of hazing was sanctioned or approved by the organization.** The list provided below is in no way exhaustive of all possibilities considered. No current or new member shall be required by any person or persons to perform any act which:

- Interferes with academic responsibilities – causes the student to miss or be unprepared for classes, labs, study sessions, assignments, or exams
- Causes the student to violate Widener University policies and guidelines
- Requires or pressures the student to consume alcohol or drugs
- Prevents the student from securing normal amounts of sleep (new member activities **should not** occur on Fridays and Saturdays, nor between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. from Sunday – Thursday)
- Requires the student to perform personal services for other collegiate or alumni members
- Is sadistic -- treats the student in a “sub-human” manner
- Is illegal or immoral – including the use of drugs and alcohol
- Places the student in physical danger or in jeopardy of losing his or her life
- Places severe emotional distress upon the student
- Requires the student to be present at activities for unreasonable periods of time
- Requires the student to participate in a “Kangaroo” Court or other individual questioning activities
- Prescribes the wearing of anything to identify new member status (this includes new member specific bid day T-shirts, wearing of required clothing or color, ribbons, pins, etc.).
- Requires the student to carry items that they would not normally carry or bear (including paddles, signature books, and other miscellaneous items)
- Requires the student to answer the telephone in a manner unlike they would normally answer it
- Prevents the student from speaking for a period of time
- Involves the abandonment of student thereby requiring them to find their own way back to campus
- Requires the blindfolding of the student (exceptions: during low ropes course with trained facilitator, or as prescribed in writing for an approved inter/national Ritual)
- Requires the student stand when a collegiate or alumna/us member enters a room or space
- Requires the student to intentionally deface chapter or university property
- Requires changing the student’s legal name to a “new member” name or calling other new members “names” other than their legal name
- Requires the student to enter or exit a building or room through a specific door
- Requires the student to eat meals together, attend unscheduled “call-down” meetings, or sleep in chapter space together for any length of time without written permission from Widener University

- Requires the student to address or refer to active members in a manner different from how they are addressed (i.e. Mr./Ms./Brother/Sister Smith for initiates)
- Requires the student to participate in scavenger hunts (or similar activities by any name) that involves the theft of items, timed deadlines, or excessively long road trips, etc.

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

A student or student organization found responsible of Hazing, Aggravated Hazing, or Organizational Hazing under this Policy, whether occurring on or off campus, may face disciplinary action from the University, and may also face criminal charges under state law or federal law, including The Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law, 18 Pa. C.S. § 2801, et seq. The disciplinary process is governed by the Office of Student Conduct. Disciplinary action taken by Widener University may include the following sanctions:

- The imposition of fines.
- The imposition of probation, suspension, dismissal or expulsion from the institution.
- The withholding of diplomas or transcripts pending compliance with the rules or payment of fines.
- The rescission of permission for the organization to operate on campus or school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the institution or secondary school.

For more information regarding the disciplinary process at Widener University, please refer to the Widener University Student Handbook located at www.widener.edu/academics/handbooks.

RETALIATION

It will be a violation of the *Widener University Student Code of Conduct* for a student or student organization to retaliate against a student or other person for reporting an incident of hazing or cooperating in any investigation or disciplinary proceeding regarding an incident of hazing.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY. Any violation of this Policy shall be deemed a violation of the *Widener University Student Code of Conduct* and may also constitute a violation of the Widener University Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy. Widener University encourages all members of the campus community who believe that they have witnessed, experienced, or are aware of conduct that constitutes Hazing, Aggravated Hazing, or Organizational Hazing in violation of this Policy to report the violation to the Office of Student Life or the Office of Student Conduct. Incidents can be reported in person or by dialing 610-499-4411 for the Office of Student Life and 610-499-4391 for the Office of Student Conduct. In an emergency, dial (610) 499-4200 to reach the Department of Campus Safety or dial 911.

Incidents of hazing can also be reported online by using the appropriate incident report form provided by the Office of Student Conduct (see below). All reports of hazing will be investigated promptly and shared with the Dean of Students, Campus Safety Department, Office of Student Life, Office of Student Conduct, Chapter Advisor(s), Organization Inter/National Headquarters. Online reports maybe submitted anonymously. However, an anonymous report may hinder the institution's ability to take appropriate action in addressing the reported behavior. Additionally, false reports impede the ability of the University to meaningfully address legitimate hazing concerns. Those found to have intentionally submitted a false report may be subject to disciplinary actions.

Widener University Online Hazing Incident Report Form:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WidenerUniv&layout_id=42

POLICY REFERENCES

- Widener University Student Code of Conduct
- Pennsylvania Statutes Title 18 Pa C.S. § 2801, et seq.