

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Dr. Loren J. Blanchard, President
Subject: Hazing

UH-Downtown/PS 04.A.07
Issue No. 3
Effective Date: 9/11/2025
Page 1 of 9

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The University of Houston Downtown (“University”) is dedicated to fostering a welcoming and dynamic environment that prioritizes developing talent, generating knowledge, and advancing the socioeconomic progress of our communities toward a fair and sustainable future. The University considers pre-initiation activities as opportunities to support the development of talent through a positive educational approach that prepares students for involvement in student organizations. This policy addresses hazing, which runs counter to the University’s commitment to a positive educational environment.
- 1.2. Participation in hazing activities is against the law. Violation of the University’s hazing policy, whether on or off campus, may subject participants, including students and organizations, to arrest, prosecution and/or disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion of students and the revocation of an organization’s registration and/or recognition at the University. Consent to or acquiescence in hazing activity is not a defense.
- 1.3. The University strictly prohibits participation in hazing activities by any party, regardless of whether consent is given. Hazing activities do not contribute to the positive development or welfare of students. The University of Houston Downtown recognizes the act of hazing as illegal, irresponsible, intolerable, and inconsistent with the principles of higher education and basic human development.
- 1.4. Accordingly, this policy strictly prohibits participation in hazing activities by all parties. This policy provides a summary of the relevant provisions of the law regarding hazing.

- 1.5. UHD Campus Hazing Transparency Report
 - 1.5.1. Each institution of higher education in the State of Texas is required to publish or distribute a list of student organizations that have been disciplined or convicted for hazing violations on or off-campus during the previous five years.
 - 1.5.1.A. UHD's Campus Hazing Transparency Report can be accessed on the [Dean of Student's website](#).
 - 1.5.1.B. Hazing statistics can also be found in the Clery Annual Security Report on [UHD's Police Department website](#).
 - 1.5.2. In compliance with Texas Senate Bill 38, organizations found responsible for hazing will be listed in accordance with Texas Education Code, sections 37.151 (5) and (6).

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. "Pledge" means any person who has been accepted by, is considering an offer of membership from, or is in the process of qualifying for membership in an organization.
- 2.2. "Pledging" means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
- 2.3. "Student" means any person who:
 - 2.3.1. is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
 - 2.3.2. has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
 - 2.3.3. intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after a period of scheduled vacation.
- 2.4. Student Organization means an organization at an institution of higher education (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports team, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the institution of higher education, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution.

- 2.5. The term hazing means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate that:
- 2.5.1. is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and
 - 2.5.2. causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury, including:
 - 2.5.2.A. whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
 - 2.5.2.B. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
 - 2.5.2.C. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
 - 2.5.2.D. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
 - 2.5.2.E. any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
 - 2.5.2.F. any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State,
 - 2.5.2.G. Tribal, or Federal law; and
 - 2.5.2.H. any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.

3. POLICY

- 3.1. Hazing
 - 3.1.1. The University strictly prohibits hazing.

3.1.1.A. Personal Hazing Offense

- i. A person commits an offense if the person: engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge in writing to the dean of students or other appropriate official of the institution.
- ii. The offense of failing to report is a Class B misdemeanor. Any other offense under this section that does not cause serious bodily injury to another is a Class B misdemeanor. Any other offense under this section that causes serious bodily injury to another is a Class A misdemeanor. Any other offense under this section that causes the death of another is a state jail felony.

3.1.1.B. Organization Hazing Offense

- i. An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.
- ii. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor punishable by: a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$10,000; or if the court finds that the offense caused personal injury, property damage, or other loss, a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than double the amount lost or expenses incurred because of the injury, damage, or loss.

3.1.2. Consent Not a Defense

- 3.1.2.A. Consent to or acquiescence in hazing activity is not a defense. Any of the activities described herein where the initiation or admission into, or affiliation with, or continued membership in an organization is directly conditioned shall be presumed to be “compelled activities,” the

willingness of an individual to participate notwithstanding. It is not a defense to prosecution of an offense that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

- 3.1.3. Examples of actions and activities which may constitute hazing include, but are not limited to, the following:
- 3.1.3.A. Compelling individuals to consume alcohol or drugs.
 - 3.1.3.B. Paddling in any form, shoving, or otherwise striking individuals.
 - 3.1.3.C. Compelling individuals to consume alcohol or drugs.
 - 3.1.3.D. Compelling individuals to consume alcohol or drugs.
 - 3.1.3.E. Having harmful substances thrown at, poured on, or otherwise applied to the bodies of individuals.
 - 3.1.3.F. Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities which make an individual the object of amusement, ridicule, or intimidation.
 - 3.1.3.G. Transporting individuals against their will, abandoning individuals at distant locations, or conducting any “kidnap,” “ditch,” or “road trip” that may in any way endanger or compromise the health, safety, or comfort of any individual.
 - 3.1.3.H. Causing an individual to be indecently exposed or exposed to the elements.
 - 3.1.3.I. Requiring an individual to remain in a fixed position for a long period of time.
 - 3.1.3.J. Compelling an individual to be branded or tattooed.
 - 3.1.3.K. “Line-ups” involving intense shouting of obscenities or insults
 - 3.1.3.L. Compelling individuals to participate in activities (pranks, scavenger hunts, etc.) which encourage the defacement of property; engage in theft; harass other individuals, groups of individuals or organizations.
 - 3.1.3.M. Excluding an individual from social contact for prolonged periods of time.
 - 3.1.3.N. Compelling an individual to engage in acts of personal servitude.

3.1.4. Responsibility of the Organization

3.1.4.A. The organization has the responsibility to ensure its activities are acceptable under this policy. If you are not sure whether an activity is hazing, the activity should be dropped or discussed with the appropriate University official prior to further activity. Questions regarding the acceptability of a proposed organization activity should be discussed with the Dean of Students Office.

3.1.5. Enforcement

3.1.5.A. The President, Chair, or designated leader of each student organization is responsible for informing the members (pledges, associate members, initiated members, affiliates, etc.) of the organization of the University policy regarding hazing. The President, Chair or Leader should discuss and distribute a copy of this policy to each member of the organization during the first meeting of each semester.

3.1.5.B. The President, Chair, or designated leader of each organization is responsible for informing their guests and alumni members of that Organization regarding this policy and is additionally responsible for controlling the actions of their guests and alumni members of that organization regarding this policy.

3.1.5.C. It is the responsibility of any and all individuals who have firsthand knowledge of the planning or actual occurrence of a hazing activity to report promptly their knowledge to the Dean of Students Office.

3.1.5.D. Complaints may be made through the Dean of Students Office ([Student Conduct Referral](#)), the University of Houston Downtown Police Department, as well as through the University's anonymous reporting system at [Secure Anonymous Reporting Link](#).

3.1.5.E. Discipline and sanctions will be handled through the Student Conduct process as described in the [Student Handbook](#).

3.1.5.F. Retaliation against any individual, including victims of hazing, good faith reporters, witnesses and/or cooperating individuals, is prohibited, and may result in further disciplinary action.

3.1.6. Immunity from Prosecution or Civil Liability

3.1.6.A. A court may grant immunity from prosecution for the offense to each person who is subpoenaed to testify for the prosecution and who does testify for the prosecution.

3.1.6.B. Any person who voluntarily reports a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution to the dean of students or other appropriate official of the institution is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of the reported hazing incident if the person:

- i. reports the incident before being contacted by the institution concerning the incident or otherwise being included in the institution's investigation of the incident; and
- ii. as determined by the dean of students or other appropriate official of the institution designated by the institution, cooperates in good faith throughout any institutional process regarding the incident.

3.1.6.C. A person is not immune under Subsection (b) if the person:

- i. reports the person's own act of hazing; or
- ii. reports an incident of hazing in bad faith or with malice.

3.1.7. Prevention Program on Hazing

3.1.7.A. The University of Houston Downtown implements several research-informed, campus-wide prevention programs to educate and engage students, faculty, and staff in hazing prevention:

- i. National Hazing Prevention Week (NHPW): Hosted annually by Student Leadership and Involvement, NHPW includes educational workshops, awareness campaigns, and student-led events that promote safe and welcoming community- building practices.
- ii. Greek Leaders Summit: This program is for all returning and newly initiated members of fraternities and sororities. It focuses on hazing prevention and mental health.
- iii. Greek 101/Meet the Greeks: A program for aspiring members of a fraternity or sorority that provides an overview of hazing

prevention and an overview of university policies and expectations. This event focuses on fostering a community of safety and encourages team building.

- iv. Bystander Intervention Training: Offered through UHD Title IX /EEOC, these sessions equip students with the skills to recognize and safely intervene in potentially harmful situations, including hazing.
- v. New Member Education Standards: Student organizations are required to submit and follow approved new member education plans that emphasize respect, safety, and compliance with university policies.

3.1.7.B. These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to prevent hazing before it occurs and to cultivate a culture of accountability and care across the campus community.

3.1.8. Offenses in Addition to Other Penal Provisions

3.1.8.A. The University may enforce its own penalties against hazing.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. There are no procedures associated with this P.S.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Assistant Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students

Review Period: Every year on or before July 1 and as necessary.

Signed original on file.

President

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 08/11/20

Issue #2: 09/09/20

Issue #3: 09/11/25 (current issue)

7. REFERENCES

[Dean of Student's website](#)

[UHD's Police Department website](#)

[Student Conduct Referral](#)

[Secure Anonymous Reporting Link](#)

[Student Handbook](#)

8. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this P.S.