

Dear Parent of a University at Albany Student:

On November 16, 2012, the President of the University emailed our Parents Council membership regarding a hazing incident that occurred off campus with a reminder about the University at Albany's policy against hazing. I believe this topic is significantly important to follow up with additional information on this issue.

Hazing is any reckless or intentional conduct in connection with the initiation into or affiliation with any organization which degrades, humiliates or endangers the mental or physical health of any person. It doesn't matter if the person who is hazed is a willing participant, if the hazing takes place on or off campus, or if the hazing is subtle in nature (such as implied intimidation) – it is against the law in New York State and prohibited by the University's code of conduct, *Community Rights and Responsibilities*. It has absolutely no place in an academic community.

Hazing is serious and can become deadly. Young people who participate in hazing activities do not always see the inherent danger nor do they recognize the possible long-term deleterious effects of their actions. What may begin as something that seems innocuous, such as group exercise or sleep deprivation, can easily become much more serious very quickly. Many hazing incidents, including beatings, brandings, water boarding and consumption of large amounts of alcohol, occur “underground” which can make the situation difficult to address. And while such examples sometimes come to light during the “pledging” season for Greek organizations, hazing of this nature can occur in ANY organization and is in no way limited to fraternity and sorority groups.

I encourage you to recognize the warning signs of hazing and familiarize yourself with what to do if you suspect your loved one is being hazed, or otherwise participating in hazing activity. There are national resources available that can help. HazingPrevention.org is a valuable website and *The Gordie Foundation* (gordie.org) posts a documentary film on its website entitled HAZE that provides some important information.

If you suspect that your son or daughter has been or is being hazed, I strongly encourage you to take a proactive step and report your observations; do not assume that nothing serious will happen as a result of the hazing activity. If you wish to speak to someone directly, please contact the Office of Student Involvement & Leadership at 518-442-5566 or email hazing@albany.edu. If you believe the situation requires immediate attention and/or an individual's safety is at risk, please contact the University Police Department at 518-442-3131. You can report an incident anonymously at <http://www.albany.edu/involvement/hazing.shtml>.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.



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