



Compliance Community

*System Compliance Program
Office of Audits & Analysis*

Hazing Harms

As the fall semester approaches and student organizations begin recruiting new members, students and administrators should be aware of that hazing is illegal in Texas (Texas Education Code, Section 51.936). In addition to being against the law, hazing can have detrimental psychological and physical effects ranging from anxiety and depression to suicide, injury, or accidental death.

Hazing is defined as any act, occurring on or off campus, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for being affiliated with or a member of an organization. Such acts include:

- any type of physical brutality,
- any type of physical activity that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects a student's mental or physical health or safety,
- any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, drug, or other substance that subjects a student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects a student's mental or physical health or safety,
- any activity that intimidates or threatens a student with ostracism; that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation; that adversely affects a student's mental health or dignity; or discourages a student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, and
- any activity that induces, causes, or requires a student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code.

Hazing does not only take place at the hands of other students, a simple search on Google returns numerous reports at multiple institutions where advisors, alumni, and

coaches actively participated in or were present or aware of instances of hazing. According to *Hazing in View: College Students at Risk* (Allan & Madden), more than half of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing.

Individuals and organizations can be held accountable for hazing. ***Consent is not a defense to the prosecution of a hazing offense.***

A personal hazing offense occurs when someone engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing; or allows hazing to take place. A personal hazing offense also occurs when an individual has firsthand knowledge that a hazing activity is being planned or fails to report a known instance of hazing. Personal hazing offenses are classified as Class B misdemeanors if serious bodily injury is not caused, Class A misdemeanors if bodily injury is caused, and a state jail felony in the event hazing causes death.

An organizational offense occurs if an organization (such as a fraternity, sorority, association, corps, honor society, or similar group whose members are primarily students) 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. Such an offense is punishable by a fine of not less than \$5,000.

Institutions are required to distribute, during the first three weeks of each semester, a summary of the hazing provisions outlined in the Texas Education Code and a list of organizations that have been disciplined or convicted for hazing on or off the campus during the preceding three years.

No organization or student is immune to hazing risks. As a community, it is imperative that hazing is actively discouraged and prevented through informational campaigns, prohibiting hazing in the student code of conduct, enacting consequences when hazing occurs, and providing mechanisms for students to confidentially report suspected or known hazing. Most instances of hazing go unreported due to fear of negative consequences

(www.stophazing.org). Hazing must not be tolerated in any form at any TSUS institution.

Community Spotlight



Vicki L. McNeil, Ed.D., Vice President for Student Engagement at Lamar University

Vicki McNeil joined Lamar University in June 2014 as Vice President for Student Engagement. She is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with degrees in music, curriculum design, and an Ed.D. in Student Personnel Administration. Her oversight of the following areas directly focuses on engaging and enhancing student life and providing positive experiences for Lamar University students:

- Housing & Residence Life
- Recreational Sports
- University Police
- Student Health Center
- Center for Career & Professional Development
- Setzer Student Center
- Orientation & Leadership

Dr. McNeil's extensive experience as a student conduct officer provides her with a deep understanding of student behavior, mental health issues, and the impact of alcohol and drugs. During her career she has advised numerous student organizations in activities and experiences that impact and refine leadership skills. She created the first fraternity and sorority Greek Council for self-governance at Temple University and initiated the self-governance structure of Greek organizations at Loyola University New Orleans. This extensive experience has allowed her to educate students about making individual and group decisions, actions, and accountability in challenging their choices.

Dr. McNeil is well-versed in the leadership, fraternal bonding, and service experiences that are hallmarks of belonging to a student organization. She has brought hazing awareness and prevention, social-change models, and alcohol reduction programs to campuses. While hazing has been and continues to be an unconscionable way to engage and treat those who wish to become members of an organization, Dr. McNeil actively provides constructive guidance to students to aid in mitigating the occurrence of hazing instances.

Compliance & Cocktails

The TSUS Compliance Office recently hosted a reception for compliance staff members from all Texas university systems. Guests toured the new TSUS administration building in downtown Austin, networked with compliance colleagues from across the state, discussed emerging compliance issues, and enjoyed a variety of refreshments. Kelly Wintemute, Compliance Officer, was joined by special guests Chancellor Brian McCall and Dr. Fernando Gomez, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel, who greeted attendees on behalf of TSUS.



Compliance Hotline

The Texas State University System maintains a reporting hotline through a private contractor, EthicsPoint, to provide a confidential avenue for reporting concerns about potential waste, fraud, and abuse of resources, the lack of compliance with laws and regulations, or violations of the System's Code of Ethics. A detailed description and the opportunity to make a report can be accessed [here](#).

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Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested or who may benefit from the information. The goal is to expand readership to offer this ongoing resource to as many members of the TSUS community as possible. New readers can subscribe by using the link below.

Subscribe

The Texas State University System is committed to complying with all applicable laws, regulations and policies. The System compliance program advises and collaborates with components to develop effective ways to mitigate compliance risks on TSUS campuses. Serving to advance the goals of the System and its institutions, the Compliance Office offers resources, education, information and guidance while promoting a culture of responsibility and accountability.

Feedback regarding the System compliance program or the Compliance Community newsletter is welcome. Please contact [Kelly Wintemute](#) with suggestions.

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