

my sister  
my responsibility



a program by zeta tau alpha  
preventing and confronting hazing

## The Heart of the Matter: An Honest Conversation About Hazing

*Developed by Angela Guillory,  
Assistant Dean and Director of Greek Affairs at Louisiana State University*

### **Learning Objectives:**



1. To identify the values of the organization
2. To understand the definition of hazing
3. To identify the needs of new members and initiated members and compare their needs with what we provide them through our chapter programs and activities
4. To commit to the purpose and the mission of the organization

### **Technical Requirements:**



Flip chart and markers  
One blank sheet of paper per person

Pens/pencils for each person  
Two index cards for each person

### **Handouts:**



Hazing Checklist  
What is Hazing? (in the Resources section)  
Needs of a New Member

Needs of an Initiated Member  
Suggestions to Improve New Member  
Programming

### **Time Needed:**

60 minutes

### **Group Size:**

All Initiated members in the chapter

### **Physical Setting:**

Chapter room, classroom or meeting room

### **Room Setup:**

Classroom-style preferred, or everyone sitting on the floor

### **Preparation:**

Look up the university and state hazing policies and add them to the What is Hazing? handout in the Resources section to create a handout that includes all three. Be sure to review these in advance to gain a clear understanding of each and any differences between them.

## **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)**

*The facilitator(s) should introduce himself/herself, welcome and thank everyone for attending the session.*

### **Desired Outcomes**



The information we discuss today should help you to identify the values of the organization, understand the definition of hazing, identify new possibilities for chapter programming, and to individually better our organization.

### **The Facts**

As undergraduates you may or may not understand the details and specifics surrounding hazing. Your definition of hazing and the definition our international organization and university administrators, parents and lawyers use may be two different definitions.

You have inherited behaviors from older members, and unknowingly, you may be repeating behaviors that could be construed as hazing. After this session you will understand and know about hazing. Ignorance cannot be a defense.

The organization's concern is not about the other chapters on our campus, it's about us. We are responsible for you and to you.

As your facilitator, I am not here to judge or condemn you, preach to you or lecture you. I am here to educate you.

My expectations as a facilitator:

Have fun;

Get to know each other;

Meet your expectations;

Teach you about our values and the standards of behavior;

To have you feel good about yourselves and the organization;

To have an open mind.

- What are your expectations for this program?

## **WHO ARE WE? (10 minutes)**



- When someone sees a member in one of our T-shirts, walking across campus, what do they say? "There is a person who..." In other words, how are we perceived? How do others characterize us?

### **In preparation:**

- Look up the university and state hazing policies. Put them on the What is Hazing? handout for participants to keep.
- State hazing policies can be found on [www.stophazing.org](http://www.stophazing.org).
- Do not print/read the entire law – summarize it to create a more clear understanding.

### **Note to the Facilitator:**

- The goal is to help the participants formulate their image on campus to help build individual fraternal pride which will eventually lead to a discussion about fraternal values.



- What makes us different from other organizations?
- What makes us different from other sororities?
- Which of these adjectives are values and which are characteristics?
- What is the difference between a value and a characteristic?
- What values did our founders build the organization on?
- Again, what makes us different from other organizations?

*Give them the answer.* A long history, based on ritual which is founded in values. We are a values-based organization. These values have carried us through WWI and II, the Depression, the 60s, Vietnam, Watergate, etc. These values remain untouched since the very beginning. It is the one thing that unites us as members.

- Why did our founders come together to create our organization?
- Where are the words ‘earning your membership’ ‘withholding privileges’ ‘unreasonable and inhuman requirements’? Pause.

*Give them the answer after pausing.* These words and concepts did not exist. Chapters over the years have added the extra requirements. Why? *Don’t answer, leave as an open ended question.*

**Note to the Facilitator:**

- Have someone review the history of the origination of our organization. After you have gleaned a good recitation of the reason for the founding, pull out/focus on words they have used and repeat them. You should hear ‘friendship,’ ‘support,’ ‘common bond’.

**Note to the Facilitator:**

- Distribute index cards.
- Conduct a visual exercise with the chapter. Ask them to close their eyes and relax enough so that they only see a blank screen in front of them. Give them a word (on right) and ask what image immediately appears, keeping their eyes closed.
- Pause between each word. They may answer out loud for the first six words.
- For the last two words, “new member” and “initiated member,” ask them to write on the index card the words or image that came to them. Use one side of the index card per concept.
- Make two columns (New Member and Initiated Member) on the flip chart. Ask them to give you the words corresponding to them. Write their responses. Draw a line to separate the lists.



**INITIATED MEMBER VS. NEW MEMBER (15 minutes)**

*Use the following words in the exercise described to the left.*

- Hot
- July 4th
- September
- Internet
- Sisterhood
- Initiation
- New member
- Initiated member

Let’s look at the adjectives we use to describe a new member. *Read list.* Let’s look at the other list. *Read list.*

*It is common to use words for new member like ‘innocent, timid, young, and vulnerable...’ It is common to use words like ‘mature, empowered, self-confident, informed, and knowledgeable’ for initiated members.*

How long does it take to get initiated? About \_\_\_\_ minutes? So, in \_\_\_\_ minutes, a member miraculously changes from...innocent, timid, youthful, vulnerable, to empowered, self-confident? *Read the comparative words so they see apparent disconnect between the two statuses.*

The new member period is for women to determine if our organization is for them, not to prove themselves or earn their membership or be singled out to test their toughness or make them feel unworthy or whatever we think it is. It is to unveil, slowly, the values, history, tradition and standards we uphold so that they can determine if the organization is a commitment they are willing to live by during their time in college and for life. We should be selling this great opportunity while being honest about the expectations that WE of course are abiding by.

Remember what your bid said? “Zeta Tau Alpha invites you to become a member.” It doesn’t say, “Invites you to become a member after you’ve proven yourself” or “invites you to become a *new* member”...it says “member.” Let me explain in greater detail.

The only difference is that new members haven’t been initiated. The new member period is to learn about the history and traditions to allow them to assess whether this life-time commitment is something they would like to pursue, not whether they are able to prove themselves through requirements instituted outside of the national organization.



- What are the initiation requirements? *List all answers then go back and star the ones that are correct and add any that are missing.*
- Why does the national organization have requirements? *Pause.*

We must have requirements but these are our only requirements.

- What do the requirements focus on? *Pause.*

They focus on approved methods of teaching the organization’s history and traditions and in introduction to what fraternity/sorority life is all about; going to meetings, being involved in activities, becoming acquainted with the standards of conduct.

**Note to the Facilitator:**

- Be sure to review the Initiation Requirements in the New Member Education program prior to this workshop.



- What is Initiation Week?
- How did you feel about your activities the week before Initiation in relation to the intent of Initiation Week?
- Why do we tend to add activities? *Pause then give them the answer.*

Because we disagree with the national organization and we don’t think it’s sufficient. To make us feel better about ourselves. To “pull rank” so to speak while making others feel inferior. To have others earn their membership, even when we know that it is wrong.

You might disagree with this statement. You might believe that making new members earn their membership makes them better members. It makes them more proud. It makes them more committed. You might believe that they want to do things like *(insert examples from the*

*chapter you are from or practices common on that campus*). You wanted to do these things. It's fun, it's all a part of sorority life.

- Can anyone tell me why this thinking is inconsistent with what the organization stands for? *Revisit values previously discussed.*
- What did your bid card say? *Pause then answer.* "ZTA invites you to become a member." It doesn't say "we invite you to prove yourself to become a member."
- Again, why do we think that we have to add extra requirements? *Don't answer, leave as an open ended question.*

### **WHAT IS HAZING (5 minutes)**



#### **Note to the Facilitator:**

- Distribute the Hazing Handout.
- Ask participants to complete it.
- Affirm by choosing a few examples that may be done on their campus and have them explain why it is hazing.

You are part of a very large national organization. This organization is responsible to you and for you. Your new member activities, depending on what you do, could jeopardize our reputation, our history and our future.

We are not trying to take away your fun. We are merely taking this time to educate and work with you to bring awareness and to teach you how to replace these activities, which are considered hazing.

The \_\_\_\_\_ (*University/College*) and our organization will not tolerate hazing, whether we want to be hazed or not. It's not really your choice. And as a national organization, ZTA is not willing to sacrifice an entire chapter, including alumnae who want to have their chapter here, for the decision of a few or of the whole. So, the choice is yours.

### **WHAT DO WE NEED? (15 minutes)**



- What does a new member need? *These answers should come from the group. If they don't, add them: To be accepted; to be informed; to be supported; to learn about the fraternity; to be respected; to participate and be involved.*



- What does an initiated member need? *These answers should come from the group. If they don't, add them: To be accepted; to be informed; to be supported; to learn about the fraternity; to be respected; to participate and be involved.*

## **SOMETIMES I FELT ... (10 minutes)**

### **Note to the Facilitator:**

- Divide the group into smaller groups using birth months, assigning certain sections of the room to each month. You may have to combine months with fewer people.
- Distribute and ask them to complete the worksheets which focus on Needs of a New Member and Needs of an Initiated Member.
- The members should take each need and define how they meet it. This will allow them to begin evaluating their programs and how hazing activities are not necessary and do not meet any needs.
- Upon completion, ask each group to report back to large group. Record their answers.
- Distribute the Suggestions to Improve New Member Programming handout.
- Ask groups to reconvene and address the needs with new ideas and activities. If the chapter is struggling with Initiation Week issues, give each group a day to design the activities for it. If it is an issue of sisterhood-building with the new members, have each group come up with two activities which can be added to an already existing program/activity which would meet the need.
- Upon completion, ask each group to report back to large group. Summarize the needs of a new member and what could be done to help replace hazing activities.
- Have everyone get into a circle. Distribute the blank paper.



On your paper, answer this question: As a new member, sometimes I felt...



When you're finished, wad the paper into a ball and toss it in the middle of the circle. *When everyone has thrown in their paper, now everyone pick up someone else's ball of paper and sit back in the circle. Each person should read their paper out loud.*

*Without any comment, ask each member to complete the statement: As a result of today, I...*

### **Note to the Facilitator:**

- Results should indicate members did feel uncomfortable. If the group is still at the point where they are not acknowledging that their behavior was hazing, further discussion will have to continue. If answers reflect comments like "I liked being hazed..." or "...I loved everything about my new member time..." a more direct reality check, revisit of the previous information will have to begin again.

## **CLOSING (5 minutes)**

Are there any questions from today's conversations?

You have now been informed. If we believe in this organization then how can we continue or support hazing behaviors? It is inconsistent with who we want to be. The choice is yours. You hold the future of the chapter in your hands.

We began with a look into examining hazing activities. These behaviors may be a part of

what you learned, and we understand that. We are here to create awareness. Our society, the administration and the organization are no longer tolerant of these types of behaviors because students are dying, being sued, experiencing life-long consequences and not living in the best environment they deserve to live in.

Does being a member of the sorority/fraternity community at this college help or hurt a student? Only you can answer that question. It is our responsibility to provide the most supportive and nurturing environment possible. As sorority women, it's our responsibility to support and live our fraternal values and follow the policies of the organization.

So, where do we go from here? We have two options:

1. Not do anything and prepare for the consequences, hoping nothing will happen.
2. Take action.

Where do we begin? What will make you different from the leaders of 1983, 1994, 2006? What impact are the women of our chapter going to make within this sorority/fraternity community? What road will you pave for the future members of your chapter?

## The Heart of the Matter: Hazing Checklist

**Hazing Checklist:** The following are examples of hazing by category. It is impossible to list all hazing activities, so this list is **NOT** intended to be all inclusive. Measure each new member activity against the definition for each category.

Put a check by the activity that you think does not constitute hazing.

**Subtle Hazing:** An activity or attitude or an act which ridicules, humiliates or embarrasses.

- Purposely alienating the new members.
- Referring to new members in a demeaning manner "pledge".
- Silence periods.
- Any form of demerits.
- Initiates writing progress reports on new members.
- Requiring new members to address initiated members in a different manner.
- Scavenger hunts for meaningless objects.
- Phone duty or house duties, if only assigned to new members.
- Requiring new members to carry paddles, special objects that initiated members don't carry.
- Deprivation of privileges.
- Withholding the date of initiation or big sister revealing.
- Not allowing new members to wear Greek letters.
- Requiring members to complete signature books.

**Harassment Hazing:** Anything that causes mental anguish or physical discomfort which confuses, frustrates or causes undue stress.

- Drawing any unnecessary attention to new members through a form of critique or criticism.
- Scaring new members with what might happen at initiation.
- Dark room interrogations.
- Any form of questioning under pressure or in an uncomfortable atmosphere.
- Verbal abuse.
- Personal servitude.
- Moving into the house/suite/residence hall for inspiration week and sleeping on the floor.
- Requiring new members only to wear ridiculous costumes or special clothing.
- Requiring new members to perform ridiculous activities.
- Requiring new members to enter through the back door or not allow them to enter to see certain parts of the house/suite/residence hall.
- New member skit nights with demeaning and crude skits and poems.
- Holding any type of mock pre-initiation with new members.
- Refusing to allow time for good grooming.
- Withholding grooming and personal hygiene.
- Requiring new members to memorize irrelevant information about initiated members.
- Yelling at new members.



## The Heart of the Matter: Hazing Checklist

**Dangerous Hazing:** Anything which may endanger the life or health or safety or may cause potential bodily injury or permanent physical or psychological damage.

- Suggesting or requiring new members to 'acquire' paraphernalia from another chapter.
- Leaving campus secretly.
- Requiring new members to do any physical exercise for the sake of membership.
- Withholding food or sleep.
- Placing new members in the trunk of a car for any reason.
- Creation of excessive fatigue.
- Late work sessions which interfere with scholastic responsibility.
- Transporting people against their will.
- Requiring new members to take items from places or deface property.
- Restricting bodily movement in any way including tying feet or hands.
- Blindfolding.
- Requiring walking, standing, sitting or lying in any unpleasant substance or uncomfortable position.
- Requiring new members to jump from an object or over an object.
- Hitting.
- Tuck-ins.
- Requiring outdoor activities in unfavorable weather.
- Kidnaps.
- Requiring new members to drink or eat anything at any time or place, i.e., alcohol, food.
- Marking or branding.

### Why is it hazing?

Potential for mental anguish and body injury. The new members are subject to unrealistic conditions.

This type of harassment adds nothing to the growth of a woman in your chapter. Each new member should know the schedule and be able to plan for the event. (What if she missed it—was out of town or had a big test the next morning).

This is a form of mental hazing. This activity does not foster trust. The purpose of belonging to a sisterhood and having a big sister is so that you can build trusting relationships.

This activity serves to purpose other than to embarrass the new members. It also serves as a negative, visible sign to the anti-Greek community.

This activity is intimidating. Initiated members are testing new members on information they don't remember or are required to remember.

The potential for individual hazing is the main concern. This activity is extremely time consuming for new members and initiated members.

It is against the law. Both mental anguish and physical danger can result from these activities. "We didn't make them do it..." is not a defense.

Initiated members are not required to participate in the same activities.

It could be dangerous and this activity appears childish to outsiders. It is meaningless.

## The Heart of the Matter: Needs of a New Member

How does our chapter, either locally or nationally meet the needs of a New Member  
by what we provide during membership?

Needs:

- To be accepted
- To be informed
- To be supported
- To learn about the Fraternity
- To be respected
- To participate and be involved

What do we provide?

What could we provide?

## The Heart of the Matter: Needs of an Initiated Member

How does our chapter, either locally or nationally, meet the needs of an Initiated Member  
by what we provide during membership?

Needs:

- To be accepted
- To be informed
- To be supported
- To learn about the Fraternity
- To be respected
- To participate and be involved

What do we provide?

What could we provide?

## The Heart of the Matter: Suggestions to Improve New Member Programming

1. Plan a weekend or overnight retreat for all members spending time getting to know each other and having fun.
2. Involve members in planning their own activities.
3. Plan a barbecue with another Greek chapter or ZTA chapter.
4. Plan a gathering with local alumnae.
5. Attend a campus event together.
6. Sponsor a blood drive.
7. Plan a philanthropy gathering.
8. Focus on fraternal components and plan interactive educational sessions with new members. (flower, jewel, history, Founders). Consult the resources for the sisterhood Chairman for ideas.
9. Visit a day care or nursing home
10. Invite a speaker to talk about a pertinent chapter issue.
11. Invite an alumna to talk about her favorite chapter memories.
12. Adopt a faculty member and host a faculty reception.
13. Host an appreciation party for chapter advisors and corporation board members.
14. Hold a "movie night" with the chapter.
15. Go roller skating or bowling together.
16. Request resource information from your national organization.
17. Host a sisterhood circle by passing the gavel to share your feelings about each other.
18. Host a theme dinner in costume.
19. Divide into groups and write chapter chants and songs relating to the sorority.
20. Conduct a food drive for the needy.