Hazing Policy

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General Description

Policy Summary:

In December 2024, President Joe Biden signed the **Stop Campus Hazing Act**into law, establishing new federal requirements for colleges and universities. The Act mandates that institutions develop and maintain comprehensive hazing prevention policies and procedures, and requires the tracking and public reporting of hazing incidents reported to campus security authorities or local law enforcement. In response, Trinity University has strengthened its commitment to hazing prevention by aligning institutional policy with these federal standards.

Trinity University (“Trinity” or “University”) is committed to fostering a campus environment where all members, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors, are treated with dignity and respect. As part of this commitment, and per federal and state laws, Trinity does not permit any form of hazing, whether physical, psychological, or emotional. Hazing is a harmful and prohibited practice that undermines the well-being, safety, and dignity of individuals and the collective integrity of our community.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to clearly communicate Trinity’s responsibilities to ensure that all members of the institution understand that hazing in any form will not be tolerated. Hazing violates the values of inclusivity, respect, and community that we hold at the core of our institutional mission. We are dedicated to:

1. **Preventing Hazing**: Proactively educating students, faculty, and staff about the harmful effects of hazing, the legal consequences of hazing behavior, and the institution’s commitment to a safe, supportive environment. Programs, workshops, and training are provided regularly to raise awareness and reinforce the importance of a hazing-free campus.

2. **Providing Support**: Ensuring that all students and members of the community are empowered to report any incidents of hazing without fear of retaliation. The institution provides confidential resources, counseling services, and support for

anyone who is a victim of hazing or witnesses such behavior.

3. **Enforcing Accountability**: Strictly enforcing policies and taking appropriate disciplinary actions against individuals and organizations found to be involved in hazing activities. Violations of this policy will result in consequences that may include suspension, expulsion, or termination, in addition to legal action, where applicable.

4. **Promoting Positive Traditions**: Encouraging positive and constructive activities that foster inclusivity, respect, and trust. We aim to provide opportunities for students to develop meaningful and healthy relationships, both inside and outside of the classroom, that are aligned with our values.

By upholding this policy, Trinity is committed to fostering a positive and supportive environment for all members of the community free from hazing. We strive to empower students and faculty to build a culture of mutual respect and understanding, where the safety and well-being of every individual are prioritized.

Scope:

Prevention of hazing is the responsibility of every member of the University community. Each organization, as well as each individual, must accept the personal obligation to uphold the basic community values of being just, civil, and respectful of the rights of others. This Policy applies to all current students, employees, and third parties participating in official programs and activities.

Exceptions:

None.

Policy Content

INTRODUCTION

Trinity University prohibits hazing as defined by the Texas Education Code and the Clery Act. The University's definition of hazing is inclusive of, and extends beyond, the standards set forth in the Texas Education Code and Clery Act, and applies to students and employees at the University.

DEFINITIONS

Trinity University defines hazing as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, whether presented as optional or required, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against someone for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution. Acceptance of or

consent to an activity on the part of a new member or individual does not justify an individual, organization, or group's engagement in the activity.

Examples of situations and actions that may constitute hazing prohibited by Trinity University include, but are not limited to:

- Any physical abuse expected of or inflicted upon another, including paddling, tattooing, or branding in any form;
- Any strenuous physical activity expected of or inflicted upon another, including calisthenics;
- Creation of excessive fatigue, sleep deprivation, or interference with scholastic activities, including late night work sessions, meetings, or sleepovers;
- Physical and psychological shocks, including lineups, berating, verbal abuse, threats, and name calling;
- Sexual violations or other required, encouraged, or expected sexual activity, whether actual or simulated;
- Prolonged exposure to severe or inclement weather;
- Periods of silence or social isolation;
- Kidnapping, road trips, abandonment, scavenger hunts, or any other involuntary excursions;
- Wearing of uniforms or apparel that is conspicuous and not normally in good taste;
- Engaging in degrading or humiliating games, activities, or stunts; including requiring, encouraging, or expecting individuals to carry, possess, or maintain objects or items;
- Requiring or compelling the consumption of liquid (including alcohol), food, drinks, or other substances;
- Servitude or placing another in a position of servitude, including requiring, encouraging, or expecting a new member to do the tasks of, or to do tasks for, an experienced member, or to address members with honorary or formal titles;
- Taking, withholding, or interfering with an individual’s personal property;
- Falsely leading an individual or individuals to believe that they will be inducted or initiated by participating in particular activities;
- Depriving an individual of any privileges of membership or affiliation to which they are entitled;
- Removing, stealing, taking, or damaging public or private property; and
- Requiring, encouraging, or expecting individuals to participate in activities that are illegal or unlawful or are not consistent with the group’s mission or values or the policies of the University.

Hazing is also prohibited by Texas law. Section 37.151 of the Texas Education Code defines hazing as:

Any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the

purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization if the act:

- is any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
- involves sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other similar activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- involves consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- is any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Texas Penal Code; **or**
- involves coercing (as defined by Section 1.07 of the Texas Penal Code) the student to consume: **(i)** a drug; **or (ii)** an alcoholic beverage or liquor in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student is intoxicated, as defined by Section 49.01 of the Texas Penal Code.

Under Texas law, both individuals and organizations may commit hazing. It is not a defense that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

A person also violates the law if the person engages in, solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing activity; if the person recklessly permits hazing to occur; or the person has firsthand knowledge of the planning of hazing or the past occurrence of a hazing incident and fails to report that knowledge in writing to an appropriate university official. It is a Class B misdemeanor to (a) fail to make this report, or (b) to otherwise commit a hazing offense that causes minor bodily injury. The severity of a hazing offense that causes serious bodily injury is raised to a Class A misdemeanor. The seriousness of a hazing violation that causes the death of another is elevated to a state jail felony.

Note, the Clery Act uses a different definition of hazing, which the University takes into account when calculating statistics for inclusion in its Annual Security Report. Individuals can access the University's Annual Safety and Security Reportonline.

Term	*Definition*
Student Organization	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.
Activity	Any event, program, or function that is organized, sponsored, sanctioned, funded, or otherwise supported by Trinity University, whether it occurs on or off campus, in-person or virtually.

PREVENTION APPROACH: HAZING PREVENTION FRAMEWORK (HPF)

Trinity University's hazing prevention strategy is based on the **Hazing Prevention Framework™ (HPF)**, a comprehensive, systems-level approach to hazing prevention in higher education. The HPF focuses on building capacity, commitment, and consistency in prevention efforts across five key areas:

1. **Developing a Shared Framework**
   The University promotes a shared understanding of hazing, its impact, and its prevention through clear policies, inclusive language, and community education. Students, faculty, and staff receive annual training that reflects this framework. The framework also includes providing alternatives to hazing such as offering fun, inclusive, and engaging activities that promote camaraderie and group bonding without the need for hazing; using bystander intervention techniques such as training individuals to recognize and intervene in hazing situations; and encouraging open communication by creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable reporting hazing incidents or concerns.

2. **Engaging in Strategic Planning**
   A cross-functional Hazing Prevention Team coordinates hazing prevention efforts using data-informed strategies and assessment tools. The Hazing Prevention Team is a subgroup of the Alcohol and Drug Free Schools in Communities Act Task Force which meets on a semesterly basis. The Prevention team is tasked with completing and publishing the Hazing Transparency Report twice a year.

3. **Implementing Research-Based Prevention Practices**
   Trinity integrates effective prevention strategies into new student orientation, student leader training, athletics team development, student organization advisor trainings, and employee development. These include skill-building for bystander intervention, substance prevention, and organizational/risk management.

4. **Building Strong Partnerships**
   The University partners with national hazing prevention organizations, alumni,

families, campus stakeholders, and local law enforcement, to reinforce prevention messaging and respond to concerns collaboratively. Through these partnerships, the University fosters a culture of respect and inclusion that promotes positive group dynamics that prioritize safety and well-being. Their partnerships also empower leaders to take action through leadership training to recognize, address, and report hazing behaviors and to create a supportive environment for all members, which promotes open communication and transparency that creates a safe and supportive environment where members feel comfortable sharing their concerns about hazing.

5. **Using Data for Improvement**
   Trinity regularly assesses hazing-related risks, incidents, and prevention outcomes using climate surveys, student focus groups, and evaluation tools. These data inform policy updates and educational priorities. The University's Hazing policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Hazing Prevention Team continually assessing the effectiveness of the University's hazing prevention efforts.

PUBLIC REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In compliance with the **Stop Campus Hazing Act**, Trinity University is committed to transparency and accountability in reporting hazing incidents and prevention efforts. The University maintains accurate and timely records as follows:

1. **Annual Safety and Security Report (ASR)**The University includes all reported hazing incidents in its federally mandated **Annual Safety and Security Report (ASR)**, published each year in accordance with the Clery Act. This section includes:

- The number of hazing reports received.
- How to report incidents of hazing.
- The process used to investigate incidents of hazing.
- Information on applicable local, State, and Tribal laws on hazing.
- Primary prevention strategies intended to stop hazing before hazing occurs.
- Support measures offered to affected individuals.

This ensures that the campus community, prospective students, and their families have access to clear, up-to-date information on the scope of hazing at Trinity.

2. **Campus Hazing Transparency Report**
   Twice a year, Trinity University publishes a **Campus Hazing Transparency Report** to be posted on the University's website and submitted to relevant oversight bodies. This report includes:

- A comprehensive summary of hazing prevention activities conducted over the two-year period (e.g., training sessions, awareness campaigns, strategic partnerships).
- An overview of hazing education provided to students, faculty, staff, and organization advisors.

- Aggregate statistics of hazing reports received, outcomes of those reports, and actions taken.
- Notable changes or improvements to policy, practice, or partnerships based on assessment or evaluation efforts.
- Future goals and areas of focus for hazing prevention work.
- Each incident involving a student organization for which a finding of responsibility is issued relating to a hazing violation, including:
    - The name of such student organization
    - A general description of the violation that resulted in a finding of responsibility, including:
        - whether the violation involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs,
        - the findings of the institution, and
        - any sanctions placed on the student organization by the institution

This report is developed collaboratively by the University's Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Committee with input from faculty, staff, and student leaders.

3. **Annual Campus Hazing Notification**

In May 2019, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill No. 38, amending the Texas Education Code to revise reporting requirements related to hazing. These changes apply to incidents occurring on or after **September 1, 2019**.

- Hazing incidents involving organizations that were disciplined or convicted **before September 1, 2019** must be reported in accordance with the prior legal requirements, as outlined in Chapter 37 and Chapter 51 of the Texas Education Code.
- Hazing incidents occurring **on or after September 1, 2019** must follow the updated reporting standards described below.

Under Section 51.936 of the Texas Education Code, Trinity University is required to publish and distribute, no later than the 14th day before the first class day of each fall and spring semester:

- A summary of the Texas Hazing Law (Subchapter F, Chapter 37), and
- A list of any student organizations disciplined or convicted for hazing occurring on or off campus within the previous three years.

To comply with this law, Trinity University provides:

- A summary of the Texas Hazing Law within its Hazing Policy, and
- A record of any organizational hazing violations, updated as required.

The full text of the Texas Hazing Law can be accessed through theTexas Legislature Online. Relevant statutes include Chapter 37, Sections 37.151–37.158 and Chapter 51, Section 51.936.

Information regarding hazing at Trinity University in the previous three years can be found here. For questions or more information, please contact the Dean of Students Office.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to report any suspected hazing behavior. Under the Stop Campus Hazing Act, Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) are required to promptly report any known or suspected incidents of hazing involving students or student organizations, regardless of whether the incident occurred on or off campus.

- Reports can be submitted confidentially through the University's Online Hazing Report Form, or individuals can report directly to the Dean of Students Office, Student Conduct, Student Engagement and Development, Supervisor or Department Chair, or the Trinity University Police Department (TUPD).
- All reports are reviewed and investigated in accordance with University procedures.

Support for Impacted Individuals

- Individuals who have experienced or witnessed hazing at Trinity University are offered access to counseling, academic accommodations, and other forms of support through campus and employee resources.

HAZING INVESTIGATIONS AND ADJUDICATION PROCESS

Hazing investigations involving student organizations, departments, and/or individuals may be conducted as a combined investigation by the Dean of Students, Human Resources, and/or other trained investigators. Alleged violations of this policy will result in campus judicial and employee action and may be subject to criminal prosecution based on Texas law. Retaliation against any person who reports, is a witness to, or is involved with or cooperates with the adjudication of hazing is strictly prohibited.

The Dean of Students Office will investigate a student complaint in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, the Discrimination Policy, the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, or the disciplinary process outlined in the Student Organization Handbook depending on the nature of the behavior. Sanctions, if appropriate, will be imposed in accordance with the appropriate policy mentioned above.

Violations of this policy by employees and university departments are subject to discipline in accordance with the University policies and procedures governing employee misconduct, more specifically, the Conduct and Job Performance Guidelines Policy (HMRS-0015) and Employee Discipline and Concerns Policy (HMRS-0014).

Any violation involving a crime, an emergency, or an imminent threat to the health or safety

of any person should be reported immediately by dialing 9-1-1 to reach local law enforcement officials and/or Trinity University Police Department at 210-999-7000.

Performance Evaluation

Consequences of Policy Violation:

If a university employee fails to report an alleged hazing incident, Human Resources will lead a formal review to determine whether university policy and mandatory reporting obligations were violated. Outcomes may include disciplinary action such as a written warning, required retraining, suspension, or termination, depending on the severity of the violation. This process is separate from any legal consequences under Texas state law.

Under the Texas Education Code - EDUC § 37.151-37.154, failure to report hazing is also a criminal offense and immunity may be granted only to those who voluntarily report hazing before an investigation begins and who cooperate fully. The offense of failing to report is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed $1,000, confinement in county jail for not more than 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

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