

Greyhounds Take a Stand Against HAZING

Tradition should build people — not break them.

Campus Hazing Prevention & Awareness

Why We Are Talking About Hazing

Hazing can happen in athletic teams, clubs, organizations, residence life groups, performing groups, and informal student groups.

It can begin as a joke, tradition, initiation, “team bonding,” or a way to make new members prove themselves.

The impact can include physical injury, humiliation, fear, isolation, academic consequences, discipline, criminal charges, and damage to the entire organization.

Every student has a role in stopping a situation before it becomes dangerous.

What Is Hazing?

A useful campus-level question:

Is someone being pressured, required, humiliated, endangered, or harmed in order to join, belong, remain accepted, or prove loyalty to a group?

Hazing does not have to be called an “initiation.”

A person agreeing to participate does not automatically make the conduct safe or acceptable.

Hazing can be physical, psychological, sexual, alcohol-related, online, or based on humiliation or intimidation.

The conduct can occur on campus, off campus, during travel, at a private residence, or online.

Kansas Law: K.S.A. 21-5418

Kansas law defines hazing as recklessly coercing, demanding, or encouraging another person, as a condition of membership in a social or fraternal organization, to perform an act that could reasonably be expected to result in great bodily harm, disfigurement, or death — or that is done in a manner in which such harm could be inflicted.

Under K.S.A. 21-5418, hazing is a Class B nonperson misdemeanor.

Important: campus rules and federal reporting definitions can address hazing more broadly than the Kansas criminal statute.

Conduct may also violate other laws or college policies depending on what occurs.

Hazing Is Bigger Than One Criminal Statute

The federal Stop Campus Hazing Act added hazing-related requirements to the Clery Act for institutions of higher education.

For federal campus reporting purposes, hazing includes intentional, knowing, or reckless acts connected to initiation, affiliation, or continued membership in a student organization that create an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical injury.

The federal definition applies regardless of whether the person was willing to participate.

A student organization can include groups that are not formally recognized by the institution.

Hazing Can Exist on a Continuum

HUMILIATION

Degrading clothing • public embarrassment • insults • forced servitude

INTIMIDATION / COERCION

Threats • isolation • sleep deprivation • forced exercise • alcohol pressure

PHYSICAL DANGER

Assault • dangerous consumption • restraint • exposure • **BRANDING / BURNING**

You do not have to wait for someone to be seriously injured before speaking up.

Scenario Check: Is This Hazing?

**For each scenario,
ask:**

Is participation connected to joining, belonging, status, acceptance, or continued membership?

Is there pressure, coercion, fear of consequences, or a power imbalance?

Could the conduct cause physical or psychological injury?

Would we be comfortable explaining this activity to families, college leadership, law enforcement, or the public?

If the activity depends on secrecy, humiliation, fear, pain, or danger — stop it.

Scenario 1: “Everyone Gets Branded”

Older members tell new members that everyone who wants to be fully accepted into the group must receive a small brand or burn mark. They say it is a long-standing tradition and that previous members did it willingly.

This is a major hazing warning sign: acceptance is tied to intentional physical injury.

Branding or burning can cause severe burns, infection, permanent scarring or disfigurement.

Calling it a tradition — or having someone say “yes” — does not remove the danger or the group pressure.

Under Kansas law, conduct involving a membership condition and a risk of great bodily harm or disfigurement may fall within the criminal hazing statute depending on the facts.

There is no tradition worth permanently injuring another person.

Scenario 2: “Finish It to Be One of Us”

At an off-campus gathering, new members are told they must finish a large amount of alcohol before they can receive a team or organization item. Someone says, “You can refuse, but everyone will know you didn’t earn it.”

The pressure is connected to acceptance and status in the group.

Dangerous alcohol consumption can create a serious risk of injury or death.

“You can say no” is not meaningful when refusal carries humiliation, exclusion, retaliation, or loss of status.

Off-campus location does not make the conduct harmless.

Hazing can occur even when no one physically forces the person to participate.

Scenario 3: “It’s Just Conditioning”

New members must complete excessive exercise late at night after everyone else leaves. If someone stops, the entire group must start over. The activity is not part of a legitimate supervised practice or training plan.

Physical exercise can become hazing when it is punitive, excessive, coercive, humiliating, or tied to initiation or acceptance.

Group punishment creates additional pressure on a student to continue even when exhausted or injured.

A legitimate practice has a training purpose, appropriate supervision, reasonable safety measures, and is not used to establish social status.

Scenario 4: “Post It in the Group Chat”

New members are required to wear embarrassing clothing, perform degrading tasks, and send photos or videos to a private group chat. They are told the content cannot be shared outside the group.

Hazing does not have to cause a physical injury to be harmful or prohibited under broader campus/federal definitions.

Humiliation, intimidation, harassment, threats, and psychological harm can be serious.

Digital hazing can spread quickly and can continue long after the original event.

Secrecy is a warning sign — especially when students are told to delete messages, photos, or videos.

Scenario 5: Tradition or Hazing?

First-year members are expected to clean equipment and common spaces after an event. Upperclassmen also help, the work is related to the group's activities, it is reasonably divided, and no one is humiliated or punished.

Not every tradition, chore, workout, or team-building activity is hazing.

Ask whether the activity has a legitimate purpose.

Ask whether expectations are reasonable and applied fairly.

Ask whether someone can decline without fear, humiliation, retaliation, or loss of membership/status.

Ask whether the activity creates an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

What Should You Do?

Interrupt the activity if you can do so safely: “We’re not doing this.”

Get the person away from the situation and make sure they are safe.

Call 911 immediately for a medical emergency, serious injury, loss of consciousness, breathing problems, suspected alcohol poisoning, burns, or other urgent danger.

Report the situation to the appropriate college official or campus security.

Preserve relevant messages, photos, videos, names, dates, and locations.

Do not retaliate against someone for reporting or seeking help.

Leadership Means Stopping It

“I didn’t participate — I just watched.”

“I didn’t plan it — I just went along.”

Group culture is created by what members encourage, tolerate, laugh at, record, repeat, and refuse to stop.

Upperclassmen, captains, officers, RAs, student leaders, and respected members have added influence.

The strongest tradition you can leave behind is one where new members are welcomed without being harmed or humiliated.

Protect the person. Protect the group. Stop the hazing.

BUILD BELONGING. NOT FEAR.

Traditions should create pride, connection, and trust — never injury, humiliation, or coercion.

If you see something that may be hazing: speak up, get help, and report it.