

Hazing Policy

As a Christian community, we want to honor Jesus Christ in our relationships with one another. Each member of the College community, who acts in a covenant bond with others, should consciously strive to maintain relationships which support, encourage, and help others. Hazing is a perversion of Christian community and may be a crime under Illinois law.¹ Wheaton College will not tolerate hazing. Participation or failure to intervene in hazing activities may lead to appropriate disciplinary action with individuals or organizations.

Hazing Definition

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons, regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that (1) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and (2) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the College or organization, of physical or psychological injury.

For the purposes of this policy, a student organization means any organization at Wheaton College in which two or more members who are students enrolled at Wheaton College, regardless of whether the organization is officially recognized or established by Wheaton College. Examples include but are not limited to clubs, societies, athletic teams (varsity, club, or intramural), music groups, organizations or living areas (halls, floors, etc.). The College's Hazing Policy applies to all members of the Wheaton College community, including without limitation all students, faculty, staff, applicants for admission and employment, and third parties affiliated with College student organizations or educational programs or activities, including but not limited to coaches, advisors, volunteers, alumni, visitors, contractors and guests.

Examples of Hazing Behavior

A complete list of activities that would constitute hazing would not be possible, but the College prohibits hazing that ranges from subtle to severe. A non-exhaustive list of examples of behaviors that constitute hazing includes:

- Psychological Hazing
 - o Assigning degrading, humiliating, or crass names or name-calling.
 - o Socially isolating prospective or new members or setting rules for members' social interactions.
 - o Degrading, embarrassing, or humiliating games or activities.
 - o Verbal abuse, embarrassment, humiliation, or ridicule.
 - o Deception or fear of the unknown.
- Physical Hazing
 - o Altering body appearance (e.g., shaving of the head or any other part of the body).
 - o Unwanted restraint.
 - o Branding, tattooing, or piercing.

- o Coercive blindfolding.
- o Forcible kidnapping.
- o Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing harmful substances on someone's body, or similar activity.
- o Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity.
- o Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances.
- Activity-Based Hazing
 - o Requiring prospective or new members to perform or view undesirable activities or duties not assigned to other members.
 - o Personal servitude of others.
 - o Deprivation of privileges granted to other members.
 - o Expecting certain items to always be in the prospective or new members' possession.
 - o Wearing embarrassing or humiliating attire.
 - o Stunts or skits with humiliating or degrading acts.
 - o Being expected to harass others.
 - o Mob activity that intimidates others.
 - o Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct.
 - o Any activity that requires a violation of the Wheaton College Student Handbook.
 - o Any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, or Federal law.
 - o Any activity that induces, causes or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, or Federal law.
 - o Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts, including public nudity.

Given the explicit or implicit pressure to participate in an activity, an individual's consent does not constitute permission to engage in hazing activities or behaviors. Perceived, implied, or expressed consent of any person to whom an act of hazing is directed will not be an excuse to an allegation of hazing.

Hazing Prevention

The College provides campus-wide hazing prevention and awareness programs that

- are research informed;
- are designed to reach students, staff, and faculty; and
- include primary prevention strategies intended to stop hazing before hazing occurs (e.g., skill building for bystander intervention, information about ethical leadership, the promotion of strategies for building group cohesion without hazing).

Student organizations should organize positive and affirming activities that are consistent with Wheaton's Christ-centered expectations of its community. In planning activities, the following questions should be considered:

- What purpose does the activity serve?
- How does the activity contribute to Wheaton's mission to educate whole people to serve Christ, church, and society as well as benefit the participating students?
- Is there a risk of physical harm or emotional distress?
- Has anyone ever been injured by this activity or a similar activity?
- Will the activity affect anyone outside of the organization, including on social media?
- How could the activity be interpreted by individuals outside the organization?
- If rituals and/ or symbols are used in the activity, how could they be interpreted by individuals outside the organization?

Consultation Process for Activities

Recognizing that some traditions can be positive and affirming, but also that others have the potential for perverting Christian community by crossing the line into activities that emphasize a power imbalance or cause discomfort or even harm to organization members, Wheaton has established a consultation process for student organizations to ensure that student-initiated traditions or other activities do not constitute hazing.

Student Development and the faculty or staff leader for each student organization have a joint responsibility to communicate the expectations of and the instructions for completing the consultation process outlined below.

In order to engage consultation, a student organization leader must submit a request in writing, at least one month prior to the date of the proposed activity, and include the following information:

- The student/ organization making the request
- The date and time of the proposed activity
- Who will participate in the activity (e.g., only freshmen, all members of the organization, or other subgroups)
- An explanation of all activities that will take place and how the event will be executed, including the role (s) of current members or nonmembers

Requests may be submitted to reslife@wheaton.edu.

A three-member Consulting Panel (the "Panel") including the Dean of Residence Life and two additional employees (one from outside and one from within the department making the request) will serve as the consulting resources. The Panel will not include any employees who directly supervise or advise the student organizations requesting consultation.

The Panel will review the written requests and will contact the request-maker with any questions and/or a request for resubmission with modification if the initial request is not supported. The

Panel will examine the nature of the activity, its purpose, its potential impact, and whether it is consistent with Wheaton's Christ-centered expectations of the Wheaton community. The Panel's feedback is expected to be followed.

The Panel's guidance applies only to the activities as described in the request and does not constitute support for any modification of, deviation from, or addition to the activities included in the request. Consultation will only need to be requested and received once, as long as future implementation does not deviate from the scope of the original request.

Reporting Hazing Incidents

If a member of the Wheaton College community is aware that a person is being hazed, is planning or directed to haze someone, witnesses an act of hazing, or is made aware of hazing at or within the Wheaton College community, they are required to report it to the College.

If the hazing is life-threatening, dangerous, violent, or otherwise requires immediate attention, contact Wheaton College Public Safety at 630-752-5911, or call 911 if off campus. The reporter should follow with non-emergency notification to the College through one of the following channels.

Hazing incidents or occurrences may be reported to any of the following:

- **Wheaton College Public Safety:**
Chase Service Center – Public Safety Office
630-752-5911
public.safety@wheaton.edu
- **Dean of Residence Life:**
Student Services Building – Student Development Office Suite
630-752-5427
reslife@wheaton.edu
- **Director of Equity & Title IX Coordinator:**
Student Services Building – Student Development Office Suite
630-752-7885
equityandtitleix@wheaton.edu
- **Chief Human Resources Officer:**
Blanchard Hall – Human Resources Office
630-752-5060
hr@wheaton.edu
- **Local Police Department: 9-1-1**
- **Online:**
 - www.wheaton.edu/ethicscomplaints (click “Make an online report”).
 - The Equity & Title IX Office at
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WheatonCollegeIL&layout_id=5

While reports may be made anonymously, it is important to include, at a minimum, the name of the organization and the exact activity being reported as hazing to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation.

Mitigation for Self-Reporting Hazing

The College encourages the reporting of violations of this Policy and seeks to remove any barriers to individuals and student organizations making a report. Given this concern and the College's desire to provide for the safety of all community members, any Student Conduct proceedings or negative conduct records will be mitigated (and possibly avoided) for students or student organizations who self-report violations of this Policy in good faith, even if the individual or organization's own conduct violated the Hazing Policy. The College will take into consideration the individual or student organization's self-report, honesty, and contrition when determining the proper course of action. However, even if no other adverse consequences are initiated, the College may require the individual or student organization to engage in educational or restorative action.

Wheaton College also offers amnesty for a student who seeks professional emergency assistance for him/herself or for another student experiencing a medical emergency. For more information, see the [Medical Amnesty Policy](#).

Questions about mitigation from the Hazing Policy may be directed to the Dean of Residence Life.

Investigation and Conduct Resolution Process

Reported complaints of hazing involving students will be investigated and resolved promptly as described in the [Student Conduct Policy](#). Hazing incidents involving employees will be investigated and resolved promptly, involving the Provost or designee as needed for faculty members. The investigation will include interviews with any complainants and witnesses and will provide an opportunity for the accused to share relevant information and evidence.

Wheaton requires that members of the Wheaton College community comply with a spirit of cooperation, honesty, and integrity when asked to participate in investigations and conduct meetings about alleged violations of College policy. Students found to have lied, deceived, or obstructed the truth in an investigation or conduct meeting will be considered in violation of the [Noncompliance Policy](#) and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Wheaton strictly prohibits retaliation against any person who in good faith reports a hazing incident or in good faith participates in a hazing investigation or report resolution process. Encouraging or assisting others to engage in retaliation also violates this policy. Retaliatory acts may include, but are not limited to: acts or comments that are intended to discourage a person from engaging in activity protected under this policy (e.g., self-reporting) or that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in activity protected under this policy; adverse changes in employment status or opportunities; adverse academic action; adverse changes to academic, educational, and co-curricular opportunities; harassment; intimidation; acts or comments intended to embarrass the individual; and seeking to influence the participation or statements of parties or witnesses. Retaliatory conduct is prohibited regardless of whether it occurs on or off campus, in person, or through social media, email, or other form of communication, or whether it is committed by parties to the investigation, their friends, their representatives, or any other person. Retaliation may be present against a person even when the person's allegations of hazing are not substantiated. Any concerns of student retaliation should be reported to the Dean of Residence Life. Any concerns of employee retaliation should be reported to the Chief Human Resource Officer. An individual that engages in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

Following the completion of the conduct review process as described in the Student Conduct Policy, individual students and/or student organizations found to be organizers of or participants in hazing will be subject to disciplinary action. The Dean of Residence Life, the Vice President for Student Development, or a Hearing Panel for a “sensitive matter” has authority to impose sanctions, which are described in the Student Conduct Policy section VI on Sanctions in Response to Student Misconduct. Following the outcome of the conduct review process, students may appeal the decision and any sanctions as described in the Student Conduct Policy. In addition, employees who are found in violation of the hazing policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Incidents of hazing that involve possible criminal conduct will be referred to appropriate law enforcement agencies.

In determining the appropriate discipline for an individual or student organization, Wheaton will consider the following factors:

The seriousness of the alleged offense;

The individual’s or student organization’s response when confronted; and

The individual’s or student organization’s conduct history.

Although not outcome determinative, Wheaton will also consider the impact of the incident on the participating students as well as on the larger community.

ⁱ 720 ILCS 5/12c-50 states:

- (a) A person commits hazing when he or she knowingly requires the performance of any act by a student or other person in a school, college, university, or other educational institution of this State, for purpose of induction or admission into any group, organization, or society associated or connected with that institution, if:
 - (1) the act is not sanctioned or authorized by the educational institution; and
 - (2) the act results in bodily harm to any person.
- (b) Sentence. Hazing is a Class A misdemeanor, except that hazing that results in death or great bodily harm is a Class 4 felony.