

Bergen Community College
Board of Trustees
Section: STU

Policy #: STU 013-001.2025
Effective Date: May 7, 2025
Responsible Official:
Vice President of Student
Affairs

College Hazing Policy

Policy Statement:

The issue of hazing on college campuses has gained considerable attention over the years due to its harmful and sometimes fatal consequences. Hazing is the practice of subjecting new (or even existing) members of a group to humiliating or dangerous rituals that have plagued educational institutions. Hazing incidents impact the safety and security of students who are subjected to such practices. Examples of where hazing can occur at two-year institutions of higher learning (IHEs) include sports teams, student clubs, honor societies, and student organizations. They are often associated with hazing rituals or practices that range from humiliation to life-threatening activities, sometimes resulting in severe injuries and even fatalities. For this reason, several states have enacted anti-hazing laws including New Jersey (Timothy J. Piazza Law), and federal regulations (Stop Campus Hazing Act) have been passed which require measures to increase transparency, accountability, and prevention of hazing across IHEs.

Reason for Policy:

To provide members of Bergen Community College (the College) community with information about its zero- tolerance position on hazing which considers and is based on the following:

- Protecting the well-being of students and the entire College community
- Educating the College community on the impact and effects of hazing activities
- Promoting a more inclusive and supportive learning environment where members feel valued, safe, and respected and not pressured to participate in harmful activities to gain acceptance
- Maintaining the institutional reputation and community perception of the College as a safe and secure learning environment
- Complying with all anti-hazing state laws and federal regulations.

Parties Impacted (Who Should Read This Policy):

All students, faculty, staff, and any person(s) affiliated with a College group or association as defined in the Policy section below.

Definitions:

Hazing as defined by New Jersey's Timothy J. Piazza Law - A person is guilty of hazing, if, in connection with initiation of applicants to or members of a student or fraternal organization, whose membership is primarily students or alumni of the organization or an institution of higher education, the person knowingly or recklessly:

1. Causes, coerces, or otherwise induces another person to commit an act that violates federal or State criminal law.
2. Causes, coerces, or otherwise induces another person to consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the person to a risk of emotional or physical harm or is otherwise deleterious to the person's health.
3. Subjects another person to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a physical nature, including, but not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, excessive calisthenics, or exposure to the elements.
4. Subjects another person to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a mental or emotional nature, including, but not limited to, activity adversely affecting the mental or emotional health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact, or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.
5. Subjects another person to abuse, mistreatment, harassment, or degradation of a sexual nature; or
6. Subjects another person to any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the person.

Hazing shall not include any reasonable and customary athletic, law enforcement, or military training; contests; competitions; or events.

Hazing as defined by the Stop Campus Hazing Act - 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 during an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, an organization (e.g., a club, athletic team, fraternity, or sorority); and
2. Causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered during participation in the IHE or the organization, of physical or psychological injury

Note: The College's [Student Code of Conduct](#) also defines hazing as, "An act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Participation or cooperation by the person(s) being hazed does not excuse the violation. Failing to intervene to prevent, failing to discourage, and/or failing to report those acts may also violate (the Code of Conduct)".

The Policy:

Bergen Community College recognizes that groups and associations including but not limited to social

and academic clubs, organizations, and intercollegiate or club sports teams are an integral part of the College, which contribute to the academic and social experience of the students and entire College community. The College is committed to creating and ensuring a secure and safe learning environment in which students can safely participate in organizations without being subject to the dangers of hazing. The College does not condone and has a zero-tolerance policy regarding any acts of hazing and will take the appropriate actions required to investigate and address all claims involving hazing incidents. All groups, organizations, associations, clubs, and teams and their members are prohibited from engaging in or encouraging others to engage in activities that are defined as hazing. Members of the College community are prohibited from participating in or knowingly permitting the hazing of another member, or prospective member, and are required to report hazing incidents. Hazing violates College policies, state laws, and federal regulations, and any organizations and/or its members involved in such hazing incidents will be charged and disciplined under the College's Code of Conduct and this policy as appropriate.

Types of Hazing

The following components are present and contribute to hazing incidents:

- **Group context** - associated with the process of joining and maintaining membership in a group
- **Abusive behavior** - involves activities that are potentially humiliating and degrading, with the potential to cause physical, psychological, and/or emotional harm.
- **Regardless of individual's willingness to participate** - the appearance of an individual's "choice" or agreement to participate may be offset by peer pressure and coercive/power dynamics that often exist in the context of gaining membership and the strong desire to be in a group. Therefore, a person's consent to a hazing activity is not a valid defense to any action pursuant to the College's Code of Conduct and this policy.

Hazing usually is characterized by one of four forms:

- **Intimidation/Humiliation** - activities with an emphasis placed on a power imbalance between individuals and other individuals/existing members of the organization, leading to activities or attitudes that breach reasonable standards of mutual respect, and place members on the receiving end of ridicule or embarrassment, including but not limited to the following examples:
 - **Sleep deprivation** - intentionally depriving individuals of sleep for an extended period
 - **Dietary restrictions** - forcing individuals to adhere to specific, unreasonable dietary restrictions or consuming spoiled food
 - **Social isolation** - isolating individuals from friends and family, restricting their contact with non-members
 - **Public humiliation** - making individuals wear embarrassing clothing, perform degrading stunts, or engage in public acts intended to humiliate them

Note: The [Student Code of Conduct](#) also defines hazing as, "An act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. Participation or

cooperation by the person(s) being hazed does not excuse the violation. Failing to intervene to prevent, failing to discourage, and/or failing to report those acts may also violate (the Code of Conduct)".

- **Harassment** - activities that have the potential to cause emotional anguish and/or physical discomfort. Such activities confuse, frustrate, and cause undue stress for individuals, including but not limited to the following examples:
 - **Verbal abuse** - yelling, name-calling, using derogatory language towards individuals, or activities that put someone in reasonable fear of bodily harm by using threatening words or conduct
 - **Personal excessive servitude** - forcing individuals to perform menial tasks for long periods such as carrying heavy items, cleaning excessively, or running errands without reasonable limits
 - **Physical confinement** - forced confinement often in a small area which may involve loud and/or repetitive music. Can also include individuals being dropped off somewhere and forced to find their way back.
- **Violence** - activities and behavior that have the potential to cause physical, emotional, and/or psychological harm, and often includes activities that tend to be the most extreme types of hazing, including but not limited to the following examples:
 - **Physical abuse** - slapping, punching, kicking, paddling, branding, or any other form of physical assault or abuse, exposure to the elements, and inducing an individual to commit sexual acts
 - **Forced consumption** - requiring individuals to consume excessive amounts of alcohol, food, or drugs; forced consumption of unknown substances; or drinking contests.
 - **Dangerous activities** - activities that can lead to physical injury, like blindfolding and forced participation in risky/dangerous stunts
- **Illegal Activity** – activities that violate federal and/or state criminal law, or causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another to violate federal and/or state criminal law

Federal and State Anti-Hazing Laws

Recent federal regulations and most states, including New Jersey, have passed laws that prohibit hazing, which Bergen Community College complies with.

In December 2024 the Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA) was signed into law which requires IHEs that participate in federal student aid programs to report hazing incidents. The act requires IHEs to disclose hazing incidents that were reported to campus security authorities or local police agencies in their annual security report. Additionally, IHEs must include in their annual security report (1) a statement of current policies relating to hazing, how to report hazing incidents, the process used to investigate hazing incidents, and information on applicable laws on hazing; and (2) a statement of policy regarding prevention and awareness programs relating to hazing that includes a description of prevention programs. IHEs must also develop a campus hazing transparency report that summarizes

findings concerning any student organization found to be in violation of the IHE's standards of conduct relating to hazing. An IHE is not required to develop or update this report unless the IHE has a finding of a hazing violation. The transparency report will be posted publicly on the College's website, along with information about the College's hazing policies and applicable laws. Additional details and information about the SCHA can be found via the following link: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-17891/pdf/COMPS-17891.pdf>.

In August 2021 New Jersey legislation passed the Timothy J. Piazza Law which requires public and non- public middle schools, high schools, and IHEs to adopt anti-hazing policies, enforcement procedures, and penalties for violations of the policies. Under this law, hazing is upgraded from a disorderly person's offense to a fourth-degree crime if it results in bodily injury, and from a fourth-degree crime to a third-degree crime if it results in serious bodily injury or death. The legislation is named after Tim Piazza, a 19-year-old Readington Township, New Jersey resident and Pennsylvania State University student who died because of hazing in February 2017. More information about this law can be found via the following link: <https://stophazing.org/policy/state-laws/new-jersey/>.

Reporting of Hazing Incidents

The College encourages anyone who believes they are involved in or asked to participate in a hazing incident, or who otherwise witnesses or has knowledge of a hazing incident to report the incident to the Public Safety Department. The Clery Act is a federal law that requires IHEs that receive federal financial aid to comply with several campus safety and security requirements. The Clery Act requires certain College positions, based on their responsibilities and involvement in campus activities, known as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs), to report various crimes/offenses including hazing incidents. Thus, individuals who are informed by the Public Safety Department that they are CSAs based on their position responsibilities are required to report any hazing incidents that they are informed about or are directly aware of.

If a hazing incident is in progress that may jeopardize the safety and well-being of the hazing initiator or others, Public Safety should be contacted or call 911 immediately. If there is not an immediate threat or concern, a report should be submitted using the online reporting form which can be accessed via the following link:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?BergenCC&layout_id=19. When reporting the hazing incident, be as detailed as possible and provide any supporting information including a description of the hazing incident, parties involved, and date, time, and location if known. Choosing not to report a known hazing incident is a violation of the College's Code of Conduct and this policy. Although hazing incidents are reported to the Public Safety Department, the Office of Student Conduct is responsible for the investigation of the incident, any resolution proceedings if required, and any disciplinary sanctions imposed. The Public Safety Department will assist in the investigation of the incident, determining if it qualifies as hazing, and contacting and working with local law enforcement if the hazing incident committed rises to the level of a criminal offense. If the hazing incident involves sexual assault or sex discrimination of any kind, Public Safety will inform the College's Title IX Coordinator, who will oversee the investigation, any required resolution proceedings, and disciplinary sanctions imposed. If it is not possible to report a hazing incident via the online reporting form, Public Safety can be directly contacted as follows:

- **Paramus Campus (24hrs):** 201-447-9200 (or ext. “6” if using an internal BCC phone) or visit the Public Safety Office on the ground floor of the L wing (Room L-154) of the Pitkin Education Center.
- **Meadowlands Campus, Lyndhurst:** 201-301-1267 (or ext. “6” if using an internal BCC phone) or visit the Public Safety Office on the ground floor Room 101.
- **Ciarco Learning Center, Hackensack:** 201-301-9700 (or ext. “6” if using an internal BCC phone) or visit the Public Safety Office on the ground floor Room 135.

Retaliation

The College prohibits retaliation of any kind against individuals who, in good faith, assert their rights to report a hazing incident, participate in a hazing incident investigation, or protest the alleged retaliation. Retaliation refers to any act of intimidation against an individual who, in good faith, asserts their right to bring a complaint or participates in an investigation. Retaliation can arise in various forms including, but not limited to, sustained abuse or violence, threats, and intimidation. Any individual or group of individuals can be liable for retaliation.

Retaliation constitutes an offense separate from the original report of a hazing incident and will be considered independently from the merits of the underlying report. Individuals who believe they have been subjected to retaliation should report the conduct to the Public Safety Department, Office of Student Affairs, or Human Resources Department.

Bystander Intervention

In addition to reporting hazing incidents that have occurred, the entire College community has a role to play in hazing prevention. Observers or those with knowledge of hazing can play a critical role in intervening and preventing hazing and offering support to hazing victims, as well as engaging constructively with those who perpetuate hazing. The entire College community is affected when hazing incidents are not timely and properly addressed which contributes to an unsafe environment. Having a supportive College community in the prevention of hazing helps to provide a safe and secure learning environment and culture. Each member of the College can make a difference by being informed, understanding what hazing is, and committing to hazing prevention. However, thoughtful intention and care must be exercised to engage in bystander intervention in ways that are safe and promote mutual respect. To assess if an actual or potential activity is hazing, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the activity part of and required to gain membership in a group?
- Could the activity potentially cause physical, psychological, or emotional harm, including feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, or degradation?
- What are some of the social, emotional, or personal consequences of the activity?
- Are individuals involved pressured or coerced to participate?
- If an individual does not want to participate in the activity, could that jeopardize their standing and/or membership in the group?
- What are the power dynamics in the group? Are there status differences or an imbalance of power among group members involved in the activity?

Bystanders can directly and/or indirectly intervene in a hazing situation by working to change attitudes, behaviors, and dynamics associated with the situation or mindset of those involved in such situations. Direct intervention can include encouraging others not to participate in hazing, discouraging others who are hazing from continuing with the hazing activity, and making it clear that participation in hazing is not an option and not in compliance with federal and state anti-hazing laws and regulations and College policy. Indirect intervention can include improving awareness of hazing policies and laws, educating others on hazing prevention and expanding awareness, and supporting individuals who have experienced hazing and others who want to prevent hazing.

Investigations and Resolution Proceedings

The Bergen Community College Student Code of Conduct and Employee Code of Conduct govern all investigation and resolution proceedings, as well as sanctions for all alleged acts of hazing. When a hazing incident is reported, the Office of Student Conduct oversees the investigation and resolution process in compliance with the applicable Codes of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct can be accessed via the following link: <https://bergen.edu/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct/>. The Employee Code of Conduct can be accessed via the following link: <https://bergen.edu/wp-content/uploads/Employee-Code-of-Professional-Conduct.pdf>. The investigation determines whether the reported behavior constitutes hazing and identifies all involved parties.

Notification and Informational Meeting

All individuals named in the reported hazing incident will receive written notification of the investigation, their rights as participants in the process, and any required resolution proceedings. This includes:

- An invitation to an informational meeting
- Collecting and reviewing all available evidence
- Identifying additional sources of information

Resolution Proceedings:

If after reviewing information obtained from the informational meeting, the Vice President of Student Affairs or designee, determines that a hazing incident may have occurred in violation of state laws, federal regulations, the Code of Conduct, or this policy, the matter proceeds through Section VIII of Student Code of Conduct: Process and Procedures. In most cases, these incidents will follow the Formal Resolution pathway in the Code of Conduct which includes a thorough investigation conducted by impartial investigators. Investigations will be thorough, impartial, reliable, and prompt, ensuring fairness for all involved parties, which involves developing an investigation plan, interviewing relevant witnesses, gathering documentary and physical evidence, and allowing the involved parties to have an advisor present for support (without interfering). If additional violations are discovered, further notices may be issued. The investigation is completed in a timely manner, findings are based on a preponderance of the evidence, and a final report is presented to the Director of Student Life and Development. Throughout the process, parties may seek procedural updates, and all conduct meetings and interviews may be recorded.

Outcome and Appeals:

Following the resolution proceedings, all individuals will receive a written Notice of Outcome, including any disciplinary sanctions imposed. Individuals may submit a written appeal request to the Office of Student Conduct within five (5) business days of receiving the outcome.

Grounds for appeal are limited to:

- Procedural irregularities that may have affected the outcome (including a provable existence of a conflict of interest or bias on the part of individuals with oversight of the investigation and/or resolution proceedings)
- New evidence not available during the initial proceedings
- Sanctions imposed falling outside the established range for the specific violation

Appeal requests will be reviewed, and denied if they do not meet the stated grounds. The denial is not subject to further appeal. If an appeal is granted, the findings and/or sanctions may be reconsidered, and any sanctions that were imposed are not enforced during the appeal process. The appeal decision is final, and further appeals will not be permitted, except in cases where a new determination is made, in which case, any new findings or sanctions can be appealed once more, based on the same grounds outlined above.

Disciplinary Sanctions

All disciplinary sanctions for hazing are governed by the Bergen Community College Student and Employee Codes of Conduct. The College may impose a range of disciplinary sanctions on individuals or student organizations found responsible for engaging in hazing. Any faculty or staff member who serves as an Advisor to a student organization and knowingly allows or fails to report hazing will be subject to disciplinary action. The severity of sanctions will depend on the nature, extent, and impact of the hazing incident. These sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Sanctions for Individuals:
 - Disciplinary warning or probation
 - Suspension or exclusion from a student organization
 - Suspension or expulsion from the
College
- Sanctions for Student Organizations:
 - Suspension or revocation of the organization's status or charter
 - Withholding of College funding
 - Other restrictions as deemed appropriate
- Sanctions for Faculty/Staff Involvement:
 - Disciplinary probation
 - Suspension
 - Termination of employment

Legal and Supportive Measures

The College may refer the incident to local law enforcement for potential legal action, including criminal charges.

Hazing victims will not be subject to disciplinary action, regardless of their level of awareness about the hazing activities. Instead, the College will provide supportive and protective measures, including but not limited to:

- Referrals to counseling, medical, and mental health services
- Legal assistance and law enforcement reporting support
- Campus safety escorts and transportation assistance
- Educational training on hazing awareness and prevention

Bergen Community College remains committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment, ensuring accountability for hazing violations while prioritizing student well-being.

Educational Awareness and Prevention Programs and Training

Bergen Community College is committed to ensuring that hazing does not exist at any of its campus locations, which includes educating the College community on hazing and its negative impact. The College offers educational training programs focused on hazing awareness and prevention. Hazing awareness programs provide information about the College's position on hazing, what to do if you are a victim or aware of a hazing incident, how to recognize hazing, the potential threats and dangers that hazing poses to the College community, how to report hazing incidents, and how to take a stand or position against hazing. Hazing prevention programs present strategies and activities which are focused on changing attitudes and behaviors toward hazing, encouraging positive attitudes and behaviors about bystander intervention, alternatives to traditional hazing practices, skills to prevent hazing, encouraging ethical leadership and group cohesion, and resources for reporting suspected hazing.

Hazing content is included in mandatory training that club officers/advisors must participate in. Educational training programs include live events held during National Hazing Prevention Week in September. Online courses are offered during the school year and during National Hazing Prevention Week as well, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- **Hazing Prevention 101 – College Edition**, offered by the Hazing Prevention Network is a one-hour course that teaches students how to recognize, prevent, and report hazing, and focuses on positive actions and alternatives to hazing practices. This course provides a baseline for understanding the complexities of hazing.
<https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/prevention-education/>. There are also training programs that build on what students learn in Hazing Prevention 101 which are focused on the following topics – You're Not Alone which is tailored to student athletes, How Hazing Impacts the Family, and Smart Steps 4 Staying Safe.

<https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/educational-resources/>.

- **The Lonely Dog**, a 15-minute short film intended to generate discussion about what constitutes hazing, why members feel so much pressure to participate, and what makes it so difficult to challenge “tradition”. <https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/short-film-the-lonely-dog/>.
- **Hazing Education training segments**, offered by the University of Virginia’s Gordie Center whose mission is to end hazing and substance misuse among college and high school students nationwide. Includes such topics as Hazing Education Basics, How to Report Hazing, Hidden Harms of Hazing, Alcohol and Hazing, The Myth of Hazing Consent, and Creating Healthy New Member Programs. <https://gordie.studenthealth.virginia.edu/learn/hazing-education>.
- **Stand Up to Hazing**, offered by StopHazing, a national authority in hazing prevention. This 20-minute course educates about the realities of hazing and how to recognize, intervene, report, and prevent it by developing leadership skills and building healthy, safe, and inclusive campus environments and groups. <https://stophazing.org/hazing-prevention-course/>

Hazing Resources

There are several internal and external resources that the College community can contact if they are a victim of a hazing incident, need to assist someone who is a victim of hazing, want to discuss or report a hazing incident or practice they are aware of, or want to educate themselves on hazing awareness and prevention:

Internal Resources:

- **Bergen County Sheriff (Paramus Campus, Room #A-114):** 201-689-7607
- **Public Safety at Paramus Campus:** 201-447-9200
- **Public Safety at the Meadowlands Campus:** 201-301-1267
- **Public Safety at the Ciarco Learning Center Hackensack:** 201-301-9700
- **Anonymous Tip Line:** 201-689-7070
- **Associate Vice President of Safety and Security:** 201-879-8921
- **Associate Director of Public Safety:** 201-879-7862
- **Vice President of Student Affairs:** 201-879-1161
- **Personal Counseling:** 201-447-9257
- **Health Services:** 201-447-9257
- **Wellness Center:** 201-612-5365
- **Student Life Conduct & Development:** 201-447-7215
- **Human Resources:** 201-447-7442

External Resources:

- **Hazing Prevention Network:** <https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/>
- **Athlete Helpline (Hazing Prevention Network):**

All policies are subject to amendment. Please refer to the College Policy website (<https://bergen.edu/about-us/college-policies/>) for the official, most recent version.

- <https://hazingpreventionnetwork.org/athlete-helpline/>
- **Stop Hazing:** <https://stophazing.org/>
- **Clery Center:** <https://www.clerycenter.org/hazing>
- **Gordie Center:** <https://gordie.studenthealth.virginia.edu/>
- **The Max Gruver Foundation:** <https://www.maxgruverfoundation.com/>
- **Anti-Hazing Coalition:** <https://www.antihazingcoalition.org/>
- **National Hazing Hotline:** 888-NOT-HAZE or 888-668-4293
- **Bergen County Health Services:** 201-634-2600
- **Paramus Police Department:** 201-262-3400
- **Hackensack Police Department:** 201-646-7777
- **Lyndhurst Police Department:** 201-939-2900
- **Bergen New Bridge Medical Center (Paramus):** 201-967-4000
- **Valley Hospital (Paramus):** 201-447-8000
- **Hackensack University Medical Center:** 551-996-2000

Related Documents/Policies:

HR 001-001.2015 Employee Code of Professional Conduct

STU 011-001.2024 Student Code of Conduct

Policy History: (adopted/amended)

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Amended: