

# Hazing Policy

## Statement of Purpose

Hazing is a violation of Wellesley College policy and Massachusetts law. Wellesley College is committed to providing an environment of well-being, learning, and accountability for its members. To this end, the Wellesley College Hazing Policy is grounded in three community standards derived from the Honor Code that applies to both individuals and groups.

- (1) Compliance with governing law and College policies;
- (2) Respect for this community, through the prevention/ zero tolerance of hazing;
- (3) Accountability for reporting

This policy informs students of their individual and community responsibilities regarding hazing, the college's response to Hazing Policy violations, and the resources available for addressing concerns related to hazing or suspected hazing. Wellesley Campus Police and the Division of Student Life have primary responsibility for enforcement of this policy. The Dean of Students and/or her designee will impose or modify sanctions for violations of this policy, as they deem appropriate in their sole discretion. This policy applies to all Wellesley students whether they are on or off the Wellesley campus.

## Community Standards:

The community standards establish the basis for what constitutes a violation of the Hazing Policy.

### **1) Compliance with Governing Law and College Policies**

Students are expected to comply with all governing laws, including, but not limited to the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law (Mass. Gen. Laws. Chapter 269, §§ 17, 18, 19) and College policies.

Under the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law, hazing includes any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Violations of Mass. Gen. Laws, Chapter 269, § 17 are punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. A person's consent to a hazing activity does not serve as a defense to the prohibited conduct.

Wellesley College expects that its students and community members will not engage in conduct that is defined as hazing under the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law and as otherwise determined by the College.

**2) Respect for this Community, through the Prevention/Zero Tolerance of Hazing**

The College evaluates an incident of suspected or reported activities in the context of a continuum. At one end of the continuum are group activities that, if designed and carried out properly, can serve the intended purpose of positive group building and do not constitute hazing activities. At the other end of the continuum, are severe forms of activities that may result in severe psychological trauma or injury, or death, and do constitute prohibited hazing. Along this continuum there are a range of activities that present varying degrees of severity and risk of physical or emotional harm.<sup>1</sup>

Where a given activity falls on the continuum (as determined by the College) is not simply a function of what the act looks like to an observer because hazing impacts people differently. Therefore, the College does not evaluate for hazing just by looking at the activity, but also by the impact on the recipient. An act that one person might experience as mildly humiliating may be experienced by another person as severely humiliating. In other words, evaluation of activities to determine if hazing occurs involves objective and subjective realities, both of which are taken into consideration by the College.

Below are some questions you may ask yourself to help determine if an activity is hazing. If the answer to any of the following questions is yes, the activity, particularly in the context of group membership or affiliation, is likely to be deemed hazing or otherwise inappropriate by the College:

- Would you have reservations about describing the activity to a college official?
- Would you have reservations about describing the activity to your parents?
- Does the activity involve alcohol and/or other drugs?
- Does the activity involve mental distress, such as humiliation or intimidation?
- Does the activity involve physical abuse (including, but not limited to, sleep deprivation or forced exercise)?
- Is there a question of safety involved with the activity or a significant risk of injury?
- Would you be worried if the activity appeared in the evening news or in the newspaper?<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to list all possible hazing activities. The Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law contains some examples of activities that constitute hazing. The list below, which is not exhaustive, provides other examples of activities that Wellesley views to constitute hazing.

Behaviors that emphasize a power imbalance between new initiates/members or prospective members and other members of a group or team. These behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from [www.hazing.cornell.edu](http://www.hazing.cornell.edu)

<sup>2</sup> Adapted with permission from [www.hazing.cornell.edu](http://www.hazing.cornell.edu)

- Encouraging or facilitating stunts, including but not limited to, acts of reckless behavior, and the wearing of apparel that is degrading or demeaning.
- Activities involving interrogation or verbal abuse.

Behaviors that cause emotional anguish or physical discomfort in order to feel like a part of the group. These behaviors may include, but not limited to:

- Creating any situation that is uncomfortable due to temperature, noise, air quality, or other threatening conditions.
- Encouraging or expecting an individual to carry items that have no immediate personal utility.
- Activities that cause psychological stress, including, but not limited to, any deception designed to convince a student that he/she will not be initiated, will be removed from the group, or will be injured during any activity.

Behaviors that have the potential to cause physical and/or emotional, or psychological harm. These behaviors may include, but not limited to:

- Activities or events that facilitate rapid drinking, drinking games, intoxication or impairment.
- Actions taken or situations created which may foreseeably cause pain, injury, undue physical stress, or fatigue, including, but is not limited to, paddling, hitting, slapping, pushing, shoving, burning, shocking, tackling, and excessive physical activity.
- Activities including any type of confinement, restraint, kidnapping, blindfolding, or transportation and abandonment.

### **3) Accountability for Reporting**

Students are responsible for reporting incidents of hazing and suspected hazing. Failure to report an incident of hazing will be viewed by the College as compliance (through passive participation) in the hazing activity and is a violation of the Hazing Policy. Failure to report an incident of hazing may also constitute a violation of state law. Students should report hazing or suspected hazing to:

- PERA Coaches, or student organization advisors
- Office of Student Involvement
- Office of Residential Life
- Campus Police (students are expected to contact campus police immediately if someone is at risk of physical harm)

If you would like to seek guidance regarding positive team or community building activities, please contact:

- PERA Coaches, or student organization advisors

- Office of Student Involvement
- Office of Residential Life
- Office of Religious and Spiritual Life

If you have questions regarding hazing or this policy, please contact:

- Melinda Mangels, Associate Athletic Director, PERA
- Megan Jordan, Associate Director, Office of Student Involvement
- Kristine Niendorf, Assistant Dean and Director, Office of Residential Life

## Self-Care

The College encourages students to engage in self-care and informed decision-making. To reduce the likelihood of being in dangerous situations, students should be aware of their rights and available resources. It is important for students to understand what constitutes hazing and be familiar with the College's hazing policy and Massachusetts law.

A copy of the applicable sections of the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law are appended to this policy in Appendix A.

The text of the law is also available online at:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter269>

## Follow Up and Sanctions

The College may charge an individual or a group with a violation of this Hazing Policy via the Honor Code Charge Procedures.

See: <http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/aboutus/honor/procedures>

Sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the severity of the violation and will be determined by the Honor Code Council. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Restorative action, which may include restitution for damages, community service, or an educational assignment.
- Student Organization/team probation, which may result in the loss of privileges such as hosting events and SOFC support.
- Residential Probation, the duration of which will be determined on a case by case basis. During this period of time, any further violation of a College policy will jeopardize the student's housing privileges.
- Modification, suspension, or loss of College privileges.
- Suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the College.

When the College determines that organizations that fall under national governing boards, including, but not limited to, the National Collegiate Athletic Association ("NCAA"), have engaged in hazing activities, the advisor for the student group will be informed of the violation and may be required to report the

activities to the national governing board, which may take further action consistent with the organization’s policies and bylaws. The advisor for the Wellesley organization is expected to consult with the Honor Code Council to ensure all national regulations are enforced.

Violators of this policy may range from an individual student to a group of students, and their actions may impact an entire Wellesley organization and other members of the Wellesley community. Notification of any sanctions imposed by the Honor Code Council will be sent to the violator student via email and in writing. Any violator who fails to comply with any requirements or sanctions may be charged with an additional Honor Code violation. In addition, the College may notify impacted student organizations and the community of imposed sanctions as it determines is appropriate.

## Appeals

Sanctions and decisions may be appealed to the Honor Code Hearing Review Panel in accordance to the Honor Code Procedures. See <http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/aboutus/honor/procedures> for the appeals process.

## Records & Documentation

Hazing Policy violations will be maintained in College records according to the Honor Code Procedures. Hazing Policy violations will be disclosed according to the guidelines set forth in the Honor Code Procedures. See <http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/aboutus/honor/procedures>

## Resources

The College strongly encourages students to use the resources and supports available for addressing concerns regarding hazing or suspected hazing. Students seeking assistance through Health or Counseling Services will receive confidential services to the extent permissible in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. College resources include:

Contact	Emergency	Non-Emergency	Schedule
Campus Police	781-283-5555	781-283-2121	24/7/365
Counseling Services	781-283-2839	781-283-2839	M-F business hours; counselor on call 24/7/365
Dean of Students	781-283-2322		M-F 8:30am – 4:30pm
Health Service	781-283-2810	781-283-2810	M-F business hours; clinician on call after hours 24/7 (academic term)
Office of Religious and Spiritual Life	781-283-2685		M-F 8:30am – 4:30pm
Office of Student Involvement	---	781-283-2672	M-F Business hours are 8:30am – 10:00pm
Physical education, Recreation & Athletics	---	781-283-2027	M-F business hours from mid-August to Mid-June

(PERA)			
Residential Life Professional Staff	781-283-2121	781-283-2679	Staff in residence and on call 24/7/365

For more information regarding hazing education at Wellesley College, please visit:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/campus/involvement/hazing-education>

In addition, there are many outside resources available to students including:

<http://www.hazingprevention.org/>

<http://www.stophazing.org/>

<http://www.insidehazing.com>

The following links provide additional information concerning teambuilding alternatives to hazing:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/studentlife/campus/involvement/hazing-education>

<http://www.businessballs.com/teambuilding.htm>

<http://teambuildersplus.com/>

Appendix A: Massachusetts General Law

**M.G.L. Ch. 269, § 17 - 19**

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which wilfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with this section’s requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution’s recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.