MUHLENBERG COLLEGE
ANTI-HAZING POLICY

On October 19, 2018, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted the Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law. Consistent with this Pennsylvania law, Muhlenberg College does not tolerate hazing. Any student or student organization found responsible for hazing, aggravated hazing or organizational hazing (each defined below) or for violating any of the Restrictions, Requirements, Obligations and Responsibilities set forth below shall be subject to disciplinary action under this Policy and Muhlenberg College’s Student Code of Conduct and may also face criminal charges under applicable law, including the Timothy J. Piazza Antihazing Law.

All allegations of hazing, aggravated hazing, organizational hazing or other violations of this Policy reported to the College will be investigated. If the investigation yields evidence of a violation of this Policy, the College will then take appropriate disciplinary action through the College conduct process against the individuals and/or student organization(s) deemed responsible for the violation. Disciplinary action for student organizations may include both punitive sanctions (e.g. loss of privileges, disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, disciplinary dissolution, and disciplinary termination) and educational sanctions (e.g. programs, workshops, etc.). Disciplinary action for individual students may include both punitive (e.g. disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion) and educational sanctions (e.g. programs, workshops, etc.).

Any disciplinary action taken by the College shall be in addition to any criminal penalties that may be levied against the individuals and/or student organization(s). In this regard, the College will support any victim of hazing if they choose to speak to the local police about the possibility of pressing criminal charges.

Jurisdiction:

This Policy applies to all Muhlenberg College students and student organizations. This Policy shall also applies to any act deemed to constitute hazing, aggravated hazing or institutional hazing whether occurring on campus, off-campus, on any property owned, controlled, used or managed by the College, or at any College sponsored activities on or off-campus, including off-campus study programs.

Definitions:

Hazing: A person commits the offense of hazing if the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a minor or student into or with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing a minor or student's membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a minor or student to do any of the following:

(1) Violate Federal or State criminal law.
(2) Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the minor or student to a risk of emotional or physical harm.

(3) Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements.

(4) Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.

(5) Endure brutality of a sexual nature.

(6) Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the minor or student.

(7) Endure any other activity that causes or could reasonably be expected to cause extreme emotional distress.

(8) Engage in practices such as raids, treasure hunts and scavenger hunts.

(9) Endure or engage in any other activity that endangers or could reasonably be expected to endanger the mental or physical health, safety, well-being or dignity of the minor or student or any other individual, or damages, destroys or removes public or private property.

Any activity described in this definition shall be presumed to be forced and/or coerced. It shall not be a defense if (i) the consent of the minor or student was sought or obtained, or (ii) the conduct was sanctioned or approved by student organization or Muhlenberg College.

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

Aggravated Hazing: A person commits the offense of aggravated hazing if the person engages in hazing (as defined above) that results in serious bodily injury or death to the minor or student and:

(1) the person acts with reckless indifference to the health and safety of the minor or student; or

(2) the person causes, coerces or forces the consumption of an alcoholic liquid or drug by the minor or student.

Organizational Hazing: A student organization that intentionally, knowingly or recklessly promotes or facilitates hazing and/or aggravated hazing commits the offense of organizational hazing.

Student: An individual who attends or has applied to attend or has been admitted to Muhlenberg College.

Student Organization: Any of the following:
(1) A fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cohort in direct conjunction with a current academic course, club or service, social or similar group, whose members are primarily minors, students or alumni of Muhlenberg College, irrespective of whether any such groups are recognized, registered, or identified as being affiliated with Muhlenberg College.

(2) A national or international organization with which a fraternity or sorority or other student organization is affiliated.

Restrictions, Requirements, Obligations and Responsibilities:

Meeting and Time Restrictions: All students at Muhlenberg College are recognized to have academic and collegiate obligations that must not be unduly restricted or constrained by any student or student organization. Examples of improperly restrictive time requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) any activity or requirement that is so time consuming as to significantly interfere with class work or study time including, but not limited to, pre-initiation and initiation periods;
(2) conducting any new member-related activity between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.;
(3) permitting less than six (6) continuous hours of sleep for new members each night between 12 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.; and
(4) conducting any non-academic new member activity within one (1) week of final examinations.

Requirements, Obligations and Responsibilities: All membership requirements or obligations of any student organization must in some way enhance the individual’s emotional, spiritual, or intellectual development. In addition, all students and student organizations shall have the following responsibilities under this Policy:

(1) Any person (prospective member, new member, active member, student organization coach/advisor, guest, alumni/ae, Muhlenberg College staff/faculty member) suffering or witnessing any incident of hazing or other violation of this Policy must promptly report the incident(s) to appropriate College officials.
(2) The appropriate student organization officer (president, new member educator, team captain, etc.) must approve all new/prospective member-related activities before they occur.
(3) Membership-related activities must be kept within the properly reserved on campus space. Such activities must not interfere with the rights and activities of others, and should always reflect the best interest of the prospective, new and active members of the student organization it represents and the Muhlenberg College community as a whole.
(4) Students and student organizations shall be held responsible for any action or situation that constitutes a violation of this Policy, whether caused or committed by current student(s), alumni/ae, or visitors.
(5) Any retaliation or threat of retaliation taken against a person for reporting a violation of this Policy shall be considered a violation of this Policy, even if the student or student organization is found not responsible for the initial alleged charge.

Muhlenberg College shall provide a copy of this Policy, including the College’s rules, penalties and program of enforcement, to each student organization and shall post this Policy on the College’s website.

Revised: 8/25/2022