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I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) that no member of the VSC community may participate or be involved in hazing. A student or employee will be subject to disciplinary action for: (1) engaging in hazing; (2) soliciting, directing, aiding or abetting, or attempting to aid or abet another person engaged in hazing; and (3) knowingly failing to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person's authority to prevent hazing. It is not a valid defense against charges of hazing that the student against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

II. DEFINITION

“Hazing” means any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the Vermont State Colleges or any member Institution thereof; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing occurs regardless of the consent or willingness of a person to participate in the activity. Hazing may occur on or off the campus of a member Institution of the Vermont State Colleges. Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extracurricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

- (1) the goals are approved by the member Institution; and
- (2) the activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the Member Institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

“Organization” means an athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at a Member Institution, and which is affiliated with the Institution.

“Pledging” means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

“Student” means any person who:

- (A) is registered in or in attendance at a Member Institution;
- (B) has been accepted for admission at a Member Institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
- (C) intends to attend a Member Institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

III. INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

This policy is to be interpreted consistent with Vermont and Federal laws.

IV. REPORTS OF HAZING; ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE; SANCTIONS

- (1) Reports of Hazing. Member Institution employees are required to report possible hazing incidents in a prompt and effective manner. Students and other members of the VSC community are strongly encouraged to report possible hazing incidents. All reports of hazing should first be directed to the Member Institution’s Dean of Students (hereinafter “Dean”), or their equivalent, or, in the absence of the Dean, to the public safety or security office. Where the public safety or security office is notified in the absence of the Dean, the office shall notify the Dean at its earliest convenience. An investigation pursuant to the applicable Code of Conduct, or applicable employee agreement, handbook or policy if employee related, shall be initiated immediately and, if the report is substantiated, the Dean shall take necessary steps to stop the hazing. If the Dean or the public safety or security office believes a crime may have been or is about to be committed, and such reporting is consistent with state and federal law regarding confidentiality of student information, a report also shall be made to state or local law enforcement agencies.
- (2) Administrative Response. If after completion of the investigation the Dean concludes a violation of this policy has occurred, the student, employee, or organization discipline process, as the case may be, shall be initiated.
- (3) Sanctions. Students may face discipline up to and including expulsion for hazing. Employees may face discipline up to and including dismissal for hazing. Organizations found to have knowingly permitted, authorized, or condoned hazing may face sanctions up to and including suspension or revocation.

V. HAZING PREVENTION AND AWARENESS PROGRAMS

- (1) Programs which include research-informed campus-wide prevention and primary prevention strategies shall be delivered by the Member Institution
- (2) Programs which include the Hazing Policy shall be delivered by the Member Institution.

VI. DISTRIBUTION OF POLICY SUMMARY

A summary of this policy shall be placed in the Student Handbook of each Member Institution that is distributed to students.

Legal Authority: 178(b); and 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)

Legal References: 16 V.S.A. §11(a)(30) ; and 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)
16 V.S.A. § 570k and 570l (Civil and Criminal Penalties)

Cross References: Collective Bargaining Agreements

Date Adopted by the Board of Trustees: June 14, 2025

Signed by:



Elizabeth K. Mauch, Chancellor

Date	Version	Revision	Approved By
6/1/06	1.0	Adopted	VSCS Board of Trustees
6/14/25	2.0	Adopted	VSCS Board of Trustees