

On February 2nd, 2005 college student Matthew Carrington died of water intoxication in the basement of Chi Tau fraternity house at California State University. A hazing ritual left this man dead and eight others charged with a misdemeanor hazing crime and facing expulsion from school (HazingPrevention.org). The fatal hazing incident occurred over the course of three days, and required the fraternity's pledges to drink up to five gallons of water and dump water on themselves in the frigid basement while performing calisthenics (Villalba,94). After three days of the hazing, Matthew had a seizure at four o' clock one morning; no ambulance was called until he had stopped breathing an hour later. Michael Fernandes, one of the fraternity brothers present during the ritual, said, "I have never been the same since. I have been completely traumatized and have gone into a very deep depression. However, part of me wants to live on and make sure that this never happens to anyone again." (HazingPrevention.org).

Studies show that hazing incidents are not uncommon in campuses across the nation. A national 2008 study done by associate professors in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Maine found that among college students, more than two thirds of sorority, fraternity, and varsity athletic team members experience hazing, in addition to half of students in performing arts organizations and a third of those in academic clubs (Lipka). The study gathered information from the survey responses of more than 11,000 students at 53 universities. Nearly all of those students hazed chose not to report the incident to on campus officials (Lipka). According to a national survey conducted at Alfred University, hazing does not always begin to occur at college age. 25 percent of

students who have been hazed report first being hazed before the age of thirteen (Hoover, Pollard). Additionally, the survey conducted at Alfred University also found that 48 percent of high school students reported being subjected to acts that are categorized as hazing—meaning that more than 1.5 million high school students in the United States undergo hazing each year (Hoover, Pollard). In total, half of all college students who take part in campus organizations experience hazing (Lipka).

This essay will examine hazing practices among both high school and college students across the country. First, hazing is defined and basic examples of what constitutes as hazing are given. Next, the essay begins to delve into students' perspective of hazing, and then different forms of hazing are discussed in detail. Subsequently, it will examine which students are at highest risk for hazing and in which groups hazing occurs. This is followed by a discussion of the consequences of and emotions students feel towards hazing. Next is an examination of how students respond to hazing incidents and their motivations toward getting hazed. The essay concludes with an assessment of the policies and legal factors involved with hazing.

The study conducted at the University of Maine additionally found that nine out of ten students who were hazed did not label their experiences as hazing (Lipka). The associate professors that conducted this study, Elizabeth J. Allan, Ph.D. and Mary Madden, Ph.D., classified hazing as "any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them" (Lipka). Researchers from Alfred University who conducted a national study on initiation activities defined hazing as, "any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of you to join a group, regardless of your willingness to participate." On the

contrary, many label this form a humiliation as fun or "horsing around" (Hoover, Pollard). Hazing activities commonly include forced consumption of alcohol, deprivation of sleep, and sex acts (Lipka). Most students who undergo this hazing do not label their experiences as being hazed (Hoover, Pollard). While survey reports show 15 percent of high school students said they thought they were hazed, twice that amount reported having to engage in substance abuse or having to perform dangerous acts in order to be initiated into a group (Hoover, Pollard). This means, "self-report of hazing is substantially lower than the actual behaviors reported" (Hoover, Pollard). According to the University of Maine study by Allan and Madden, such activities can potentially result in damaging physical and psychological consequences, and in the case of students like Matthew Carrington, death can occur as a result (Lipka).

A sense of belonging to a group is a basic human need; it is a struggle for students to learn how to appropriately bond form socially productive relationships while forming an identity (Hoover, Pollard). Seven percent of high school students abandon groups that they become involved in due to hazing (Hoover, Pollard). The survey done at Albert University also revealed the lengths students will go in order to be accepted as group members. 29 percent of students reported engaging in potentially illegal activities in order to join a group. A majority of students who were hazed said they took part in humiliating, dangerous, and illegal activities because the acts were "fun and exciting" (Hoover, Pollard). Among college athletes, 81 percent who encountered humiliation during hazing were also required to take part in illegal acts (Hoover, Pollard). The researchers indicate that fitting in and gaining

social acceptance is a major factor in a student's development. Initiation rituals such as hazing meet their basic needs for a sense of belonging while simultaneously fulfilling the group member's desire of having group culture and traditions (Hoover, Pollard).

Humiliation is a popular form of hazing among students. According to a national study, humiliation is defined as "socially offensive, isolating, or uncooperative behaviors". Examples of humiliating hazing include, being yelled, cursed, or sworn at, acting as a personal servant, public embarrassment, being thrown into a body of water or toilet, eating disgusting things, and depriving yourself of food, sleep, or cleanliness. 17 percent of high school students experience being yelled, cursed, or sworn at during hazing rituals (Hoover, Pollard). 86 percent of students reported feeling that humiliating hazing was wrong (Hoover, Pollard). Another occurrence in hazing activities is substance abuse, which defined as "the abuse of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs" (Hoover, Pollard). Specifically, hazed students report being engaged in having to drink alcohol, participate in drinking contests, smoke cigarettes or cigars, use illegal drugs, and drink until one passes out. In total, 23 percent of high school students are subjected to this form of hazing (Hoover, Pollard). Substance abuse hazing behaviors are more common among males than females, as 18 percent of female high school students and 24 percent of male students encounter it (Hoover, Pollard).

The research report done at Alfred University highlights certain hazing activities as dangerous. The report described "dangerous hazing" as "hurtful, aggressive, destructive, and disruptive behaviors" (Hoover, Pollard). Examples of

dangerous hazing include having to harass others, destroy or vandalize property, steal, cheat, commit a crime, beat up others, pick a fight with someone, inflict pain on ones self, brand, be tied up or exposed to extreme cold, be physically abused or beaten, and be cruel to animals. Each of these hazing activities was found to be more common in males than females. In total, 22 percent of students in high school experience hazing defined by the study as "dangerous"—this consists of 17 percent female and 27 percent male students (Hoover, Pollard). The report found that 98 percent of students thought dangerous hazing was wrong (Hoover, Pollard).

Although both males and females are at risk for hazing, males are more likely to experience hazing, and more likely to experience dangerous forms of it (Allan, Madden, 14). Additionally, students with higher GPA's are less likely to be hazed (Hoover, Pollard). Hazing rates among members of scholastic groups are shown to be very low, yet the study at Alfred University reports that when such groups do haze, the acts are categorized as dangerous activities (Hoover, Pollard). While scholastic group members are not at high risk of encountering hazing, fraternities, sororities, peer groups and gangs are the groups most likely to involve hazing (Allan, Madden, 15). 73 percent of members in fraternities and sororities (Allan, Madden, 16) and 73 percent of members of peer groups or gangs are subjected to hazing (Hoover, Pollard). Another risk factor increasing the likelihood of being hazed is knowing an adult who has been hazed (Hoover, Pollard). All students are more likely to undergo hazing if they believe that hazing is socially acceptable (Hoover, Pollard). Other organizations that haze their members include sports teams, cheerleading squads, vocational groups, church groups, music, art, or theater

groups, political groups, newspaper or yearbook, and social clubs (Allan, Madden, 16). Among high school organizations, sports teams and cheerleading squads haze the most, as 35 percent of students were hazed to join a team and 34 percent to be on the squad (Hoover, Pollard). 13 percent of high school students reported not joining an organization out of fear of being hazed (Hoover, Pollard). No high school organization is completely free from hazing, meaning all students involved in high school organizations are at risk (Hoover, Pollard). Once students reach college, the hazing rate among percent of athletes hazed to join increases from 35 percent of athletes in high school (Hoover, Pollard) to 73 percent of athletes in college (Allan, Madden, 16). Additionally, the hazing rate among performing arts students increases from 22 percent in high school (Hoover, Pollard) to 56 percent in college (Allan, Madden, 16).

Hazing can be a pattern in a student's life. 47 percent of college students have experienced hazing while in high school (Allan, Madden, 32). Research shows that 42 percent of college athletes who experienced hazing had also been hazed in high school and five percent reported having been hazed in middle school (Hoover, Pollard). While the percent of dangerous hazing activities stays about the same from high school to college aged students—23 percent in high school and 21 percent in college—substance abuse and humiliation greatly increase in college hazing (Hoover, Pollard). While 22 percent of students experience substance abuse in hazing in high school, 51 percent do in college; and while 45 percent of students undergo humiliation during hazing in high school, 65 percent do in college (Hoover, Pollard).

Three quarters of high school students who reported being hazed claimed that the activities led to one or more negative consequence (Hoover,Pollard). The most common consequences include getting into a fight, getting injured, fighting with parents, performing poorly on school work, missing obligations, hurting others, and having difficulty eating, sleeping, or concentrating (Hoover,Pollard). 24 percent reported having gotten into a fight and 23 percent reported having been injured as a result of hazing (Hoover,Pollard). High school students also reported a variety of feelings about being hazed, some positive, some negative, and some mixed. In total, 59 percent felt negative feelings towards the hazing, such as the 35 percent of students who felt anger, the 28 percent who felt embarrassment, and the 25 percent who felt confusion (Hoover,Pollard). 59 percent of the students had positive feelings towards the hazing; 43 percent said the hazing made them feel part of the group, thirty percent felt proud and 27 percent felt strong (Hoover, Pollard). 32 percent of those surveyed felt both negative and positive feelings towards their hazing experience (Hoover,Pollard). In contrast, by the time students get to college, they begin to view hazing in a more positive light. In the University of Maine study performed by associate professors, college students who were interviewed "justified hazing practices based on their perception that it promotes bond or group unity... Similarly, hazing is often rationalized by saying it promotes 'a sense of accomplishment'" (Allen, Madden, 27). 86 percent of college students had positive feelings towards the hazing they received in college (Allen, Madden, 27), a 27 percent increase from high school students' perspectives.

Studies also examine how students respond to hazing. 40 percent of high school students would not report hazing to an adult. 36 percent said they wouldn't report hazing because "There's no one to tell. Who could I tell?", 28 percent said "Its not a problem. Sometimes accidents happen", and 27 percent said, "Adults wouldn't know how to handle it" (Hoover, Pollard). While 40 percent of high school students wouldn't report hazing, 95 percent of college students claimed they would not report hazing (Allen, Madden, 28). 37 percent of these college students said they would not report the hazing so their group or team would not get in trouble. There are several main reasons that students claim they undergo hazing. 48 percent said it was fun and exciting, while 44 percent claimed it made the group closer; other reasons included students wanting to prove themselves or simply "going along with it" (Hoover, Pollard). An experiment at Stanford University found that "person's who undergo an unpleasant initiation to become members of a group increase their liking for the group" (Severity of Initiation and Liking for a Group)

Not all students are aware of anti-hazing policies and laws. 46 percent of college students are not aware of anti-hazing policies on their campuses (Allan, Madden, 32). 44 percent of high school students reported not knowing whether or not hazing was legal in their state. Not all states having anti hazing laws, and the ones that do vary in the degree of severity to which hazing is treated. In North Carolina, hazing is punishable as a class two misdemeanor (North Carolina General Assembly). According to the Delaware constitution hazing is defined as a class b misdemeanor punishable by "imposition of fines, the withholding of diplomas or transcripts pending compliance with the rules or pending payment of fines and the

imposition of probation, suspension or dismissal" (State of Delaware). In Wisconsin, hazing is classified as a class a misdemeanor (Wisconsin Government). According to the United States Government, currently, 44 states have anti hazing laws (USA.gov). The states without such laws include South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, Alaska, and Hawaii (USA.gov). Furthermore, legally, the case of Matthew Carrington did not go unacknowledged. Matt's Law became a part of the California Penal Code in 2006 (Magna's Campus Legal Monthly). According to the California constitution, Matt's Law makes "hazing punishable as a misdemeanor if no serious bodily injury results or an alternate felony-misdemeanor if great bodily injury or death result" (California Senate).

Hazing often begins at a young age, as a quarter of students have been hazed by age thirteen (Hoover, Pollard). Hazing continues to occur in high schools across the country, as 48 percent of high school students are hazed (Hoover, Pollard). The trend persists through out colleges across the country, as half of all college students who take part in on campus organizations experience hazing (Lipka). Hazing occurs among a variety of different groups, clubs, and organizations (Allan, Madden). Nearly all students hazed opt to not report the activities to authorities (Lipka), as many do not know who to tell or how authorities will handle it (Hoover, Pollard). As hazing persists among high school students across the country, they encounter what they label as negative consequences, such as getting into fights, hurting others, and neglecting schoolwork (Lipka). Students in college begin to see hazing activities in a positive light that bonds them with group members (Allan, Madden). According to the study coming out of Alfred University, hazing is often seen as fun or "horsing

around" to students (Hoover, Pollard). Yet the hazing rituals that occurred on the fatal night in 2005 at Chi Tau fraternity left one student dead and eight others charged with misdemeanors (HazingPrevention.com). As former Chi Tau member Michael Fernandes puts it, "Hazing seemed to me to be stupid and harmless, however I know now that it is serious and deadly, and I want more people to be aware of that. I feel if this could happen to us it could happen to anybody" (HazingPrevention.org).

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