

## **Bethany Lutheran College Anti-Hazing Policy**

### **Stop Campus Hazing Act Compliance**

The [Stop Campus Hazing Act](#) (S.2901, H.R. 5646), enacted on December 23, 2024, mandates strict measures to eradicate hazing and ensure student safety. This policy aligns with the Stop Campus Hazing Act and [Minnesota Statute 135A.155](#).

### **Policy Statement**

Bethany Lutheran College is committed to maintaining a safe, supportive, and respectful campus environment that reflects our mission and values. Hazing in any form is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated within any student organization, athletic team, co-curricular program, or other college-sponsored activity. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors participating in or associated with college activities, whether occurring on or off campus. Any individual aware of hazing must report it immediately.

### **Definition of Hazing**

In accordance with the Stop Campus Hazing Act, “hazing” is defined as:

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 -

- A. Is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and
- B. Causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including -
  - a. Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
  - b. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
  - c. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
  - d. Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
  - e. Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
  - f. Any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law; and

- g. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.

Bethany Lutheran College further explains an understanding of hazing\* as any willful act committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in a student organization done by one or more individuals, whether physical, mental, emotional, or psychological, which subjects another person voluntarily or involuntarily to anything that may abuse, mistreat, degrade, humiliate, harass, ridicule, intimidate, or endanger that person, or which may in any fashion compromise their dignity as a person. Such activities and situations include, but are not limited to:

- Physical contact or punishment, exercise, or sleep deprivation that causes excessive fatigue and/or physical and psychological shock
- Coerced or forced consumption of food, drink, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs
- Coerced or forced transportation of individuals
- Public test, humiliation, ridicule, indecent exposure, nudity
- Coercing or forcing illegal acts
- Forcing, requiring, or pressuring the participation in any activity that is unlawful, perverse, publicly indecent, or contrary to the individual's moral beliefs
- Interfering in an individual's academic, athletic, health, or personal success
- Personal servitude to others, individually or collectively
- Mental harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Tattooing or branding
- Deception or threat contrived to convince a new member that they will not be permitted to join or that their continued participation is doubtful
- Threat of social exclusion
- Any activity that involves the use of alcohol or any controlled substance in violation of the College's Drug and Alcoholic Beverages Policy or the laws of the State of Minnesota
- Any activity that is not following the College's established policies

### **Definition of Student Organization**

In accordance with the Stop Campus Hazing Act, "student organization" is defined as:

An organization at an institution of higher education (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports team, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the institution of higher education, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any individual who believes they have been the victim of hazing, or anyone who has knowledge of or observes conduct that may constitute hazing, is required to report it immediately. Hazing can be reported through any of the following methods:

- **Dean of Students Office:** Old Main 227, [rbolte@blc.edu](mailto:rbolte@blc.edu), 507-344-7330
- **Human Resources Office:** Old Main 205, [ipederson@blc.edu](mailto:ipederson@blc.edu), 507-344-7840
- **Vice President of Student Affairs:** Old Main 236, [tmanthe@blc.edu](mailto:tmanthe@blc.edu), 507-344-7745
- **Anonymous Hazing Incident Report Form:** [ADD LINK HERE](#)

### **What to Include in Your Report**

When reporting, please provide as much detail as possible, including:

- Name of the organization involved in hazing
- Date, time, and location of the event(s)
- Individuals involved and any witnesses (with contact information if available)
- How you became aware of the incident(s)
- A detailed description of the event(s)
- Any documentation, videos, or photographs, if applicable
- Your contact information (if not reporting anonymously)

If you wish to report anonymously, please include as much detail as possible. You may also request a meeting with a staff member without providing identifying information. The staff member will explain the process and, to the extent possible, record the information without including identifying details. Meetings can be conducted in person, via phone, or via email, although in-person meetings are preferred.

### **Support for Victims**

The college provides resources according to the nature and seriousness of the incident.

For confidential support, contact:

- Christian Family Solutions: 800-438-1772 or fill out the [online intake form](#)
- Mayo Clinic Express Care: Luther Hall 104 (open 7:45-9:45 on class days)
- Director of Spiritual Life: Trinity Chapel 111, [dmoldstad@blc.edu](mailto:dmoldstad@blc.edu), 507-344-7312

### **Prohibition on Retaliation**

Victims of hazing may fear retaliation from individuals or organization members for reporting incidents. The college strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a good faith report of hazing or participates in an investigation, hearing, or court proceeding related to suspected misconduct.

Retaliation against individuals who report hazing is a violation of the College's Standards of Conduct and Employee Handbook. Students and employees who retaliate will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students.

## **Investigation Process**

1. Initial Review
  - a. Assessment of Incident: Upon receiving a report, college officials assess whether the behavior constitutes hazing under college policy.
  - b. Safety and Immediate Actions: If necessary, the college may take immediate steps to ensure the safety of individuals, including the temporary suspension of individuals or organizations under investigation.
2. Investigation Process
  - a. Investigator Assignment: An investigator or team will be designated, with the possibility of an external investigator.
  - b. Evidence Gathering: Investigators collect relevant evidence, including:
    - i. Interviews with the complainant, victims, witnesses, and suspects.
    - ii. Physical evidence (e.g., videos, photos, social media content)
    - iii. Statements from community members or organizations involved.
  - c. Documentation: All evidence and interviews are documented for transparency and accuracy.
  - d. If the investigation reveals that the allegations of hazing constitute a violation of the College's Title IX Policy, the Title IX Policy and procedure will be used.
3. Determination of Policy Violation
  - a. Policy Comparison: Investigators evaluate the evidence against college policies to determine if hazing occurred.
  - b. Additional Violations: Investigators also assess if other college policies (e.g., drugs, harassment, violence) were violated.
4. Resolution and Sanctions
  - a. Decision Making: After reviewing evidence, investigators confer and submit reports as necessary to determine violations and potential disciplinary actions.
  - b. Sanctions: Individuals and organizations may receive sanctions as a result of the decision that is made. Lists of possible sanctions can be found below.
5. Appeal Procedure
  - a. Both the accused individual or organization and the complainant have the right to appeal the decision or the sanction(s) imposed. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources within five (5) business days of the pronounced decision. Grounds for an appeal include: presentation of new evidence, concerns about procedural errors and/or an unfair investigation, or concerns about the severity of the sanction(s). The individual or organization must specifically communicate how a decision may have been made differently in light of the information provided within the appeal. The appeal will only be reviewed if these conditions are satisfactorily met.

- b. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director of Human Resources will forward the appeal to a reviewer (at the vice president level) who was not involved in the original decision. The reviewer(s) may consider all records and information collected in determining the decision, as well as collect any other information determined to be beneficial.
- c. In addition, the reviewer(s) may request an advisory committee to assist in the decision-making process by contacting the Director of Human Resources who will assemble a panel of faculty and/or staff members from the campus community. After consideration of the appeal, the reviewer(s) and/or panel may decide to recommend any of the following:
  - i. Accept the original determination and/or sanction(s).
  - ii. Refer the case back to the original decision maker to consider new evidence.
  - iii. Reverse the original determination and/or sanction(s) and dismiss the case entirely.
  - iv. Accept the original determination, but reduce the sanction(s).
- d. The reviewer(s) will render a decision and notify the student in a timely manner. A copy will be sent to the Dean of Students. The appeal decision shall be final.
- e. This is the only avenue of appeal for hazing-related decisions and sanctions.

The college is expected to handle hazing incidents swiftly and fairly while ensuring that all individuals' rights are protected throughout the process. This process is crucial to balance transparency, due process, and the wellbeing of all involved students, faculty, and staff.

## **Disciplinary Sanctions**

Students found responsible for hazing will face disciplinary actions, as outlined the BLC Standards of Conduct. Sanctions may include:

- Disciplinary Warning: A written notice that a student's behavior violated the BLC Standards of Conduct, with potential for more severe sanctions upon recurrence.
- Conduct Probation: A status that may include a condition imposed for a defined period of time where the student's conduct is monitored. Violations during this time may result in increased sanctions.
- Required Compliance: A student must satisfy one or more of: College requirements, work assignments, community service, or educational assignments.
- Restitution: Payment for loss, injury, or damage.
- Restriction of Privileges: Denial, removal, or restriction of specified privileges.
- Housing Suspension or Expulsion: Separation of a student from campus housing for a defined period of time or permanently.
- Deferred Suspension/Expulsion: A set period of time where a student's conduct is being monitored and the student is not in good disciplinary standing with the College. Any misconduct or noncompliance with sanctions will result in suspension or expulsion.

- Suspension: Separation of the student from the College for a defined period of time, after which the student is eligible to apply to return to the College. May include conditions for readmission.
- Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the College.

### **Sanctions for Student Organizations**

Student organizations found responsible for hazing will face disciplinary actions. Sanctions may include:

- Suspension or revocation of recognition
- Loss of privileges, access to funding, or activity restrictions
- Probation or mandatory training or counseling
- Review of Organizational Practices
  - Involved groups may undergo a review and reform of their activities and culture to prevent recurring issues.