POLICY

LAW

ETHICS

EFFECTIVENESS

POTENTIAL
HARM

RISE

PROBLEMATIC

WHERE'S THE LINE?

THE SET OF SITUATIONS DEFINED AS HAZING ARE CODIFIED IN LAWS, which are different in each state. Hazing also includes a broader set of situations defined by university and organization **POLICIES.**

Organization leaders are also responsible for addressing a variety of other potentially **PROBLEMATIC** situations not explicitly listed in policy or law. These situations may be **UNETHICAL, INEFFECTIVE, POTENTIALLY HARMFUL** to those involved, or in conflict with community principles.

Campus and organization officials have a responsibility to guide leaders in resolving these concerns, even if they do not constitute a violation of law or policy.

Hazing is a complex social phenomenon. Laws and policies mostly address hazing as observable behavior, but this fails to acknowledge situational context and overlooks the full scope of the problem. To address the true interpersonal and contextual nature of hazing, reconsider it as a situation rather than a behavior.

SHIFT YOUR THINKING

HAZING AS A BEHAVIOR

A list of easily observable actions deemed unacceptable by established rules or authority figures.

BEHAVIORS DEFINED AS HAZING TEND TO INCLUDE:

- Physical violence
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Pranks or public stunts
- Illegal or harmful activities
- Inappropriate apparel

THOUGH IMPORTANT, THIS APPROACH CREATES CHALLENGES:

- Limited scope of what can be addressed
- False positives: situations that may not constitute hazing are treated as if they are (e.g. scavenger hunts, road trips, planning events)
- False negatives: situations that are hazing are overlooked (e.g. isolating others from contact, intentional deceit).

HAZING AS A SITUATION

Complex patterns of interpersonal interactions within a group that could be considered problematic.

PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS OFTEN INVOLVE:

- Information imbalances
- Inconsistent treatment
- Restricted choice
- Social manipulation
- Irrelevant or ineffective activities

THOUGH CHALLENGING, THIS APPROACH CREATES OPPORTUNITY:

- Addresses a broader scope of issues
- More accurately explains why behaviors are problematic
- Addresses problems earlier and more easily through training and advising
- Better aligns with the complex situational nature of the phenomenon

THE PATH FORWARD

It is easier to identify and address hazing as a behavior through normal accountability systems, and this should continue. To build upon this towards a more productive approach to hazing:

RE-EXAMINE behaviors defined in your policy by asking, "What is it about this behavior that makes it problematic? What conditions might make it acceptable? Under what conditions is it problematic?"

ENGAGE students and stakeholders in collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking using a situational interpretation.

INCORPORATE situational factors in policy, monitoring, enforcement, investigation, training, advising, and accountability systems.

RISE

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