



CAMPUS COMMITMENT TO HAZING PREVENTION: **Action Guide**

Hazing is a threat to student and campus safety and undercuts the missions of postsecondary institutions. As a form of interpersonal violence, hazing is particularly troubling because it occurs in group contexts—such as clubs, campus organizations, and athletic teams—that are considered living-learning laboratories for student belonging and leadership development.

Hazing prevention efforts must be a tailored approach that includes **Commitment**, one of eight components of the Hazing Prevention Framework. This Action Guide provides evidence-informed resources for those seeking to develop comprehensive prevention and response efforts, build leadership commitment for those efforts, and strengthen student belonging and safety.



Background and Context

In 2018, StopHazing and Clery Center released the Hazing Prevention Toolkit for Campus Professionals, which describes a data-driven Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF)© based on key principles of prevention science and findings from a research-to-practice project, the Hazing Prevention Consortium (HPC) led by StopHazing™ and researchers at the University of Maine.



The graphic above depicts the eight components of the HPF—including Commitment, Capacity, Assessment, Planning, Evaluation, Cultural Competence, Sustainability, and Implementation—to be carried out in conjunction with one another to create a campus environment where hazing is less likely to occur.

The *Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention: Action Guide* (Action Guide) provides practical resources focused on one of the eight HPF components — **commitment** — to engage campus leaders and the broader campus community in transforming campus hazing culture and ultimately, building group environments that support healthy belonging and well-being for all students.

CAMPUS COMMITMENT TO
HAZING PREVENTION: ACTION GUIDE

Sample Letter from Campus Leadership



Sample Letter from Campus Leadership

Campus communication about hazing response and prevention can influence student, employee, and external stakeholder perceptions of hazing. This includes institutional messaging in relation to campus hazing incidents and how the institution promotes hazing policies and educational efforts on an ongoing basis. Regular and consistent communication from campus leaders demonstrating knowledge and concern about campus hazing, with an emphasis on institutional resources for prevention, reporting, and campus response, indicates that institutional leaders prioritize the safety and well-being of students and employees and recognize the significant impact of hazing.

Below is a sample communication that may be shared at the start of a new semester. While campus communications should be tailored based on the needs and culture of your own institution, we share it as a model of a hazing-specific campus communication. We encourage you to connect these themes with your own institution's values, policies, and programs.

Dear Campus Community,

The start of a new semester is an opportunity to reflect on our shared values. As a part of this community, each one of us has the opportunity to work towards the kind of world in which we want to live.

As I walk around our campus, I see the ways we support one another - in the classroom, on the field, in small and big ways every single day. Those everyday actions are what create our campus climate; they are what set our campus apart.

Over the past months and years, there has been a national conversation about campus hazing and its impact on individuals, families, members of organizations, and people in the surrounding community. Hazing is a community issue with ripple effects beyond the immediate groups or setting where it occurs. Hazing is a type of abuse that can interfere with the ability of community members to thrive as learners and as leaders, whether they are part of a campus community, or in a workplace, in the military, or a part of any other type of group or organization.

As a community issue with far-reaching effects, each of us has a responsibility to make a difference by being informed about hazing and committing to hazing prevention. Hazing is not isolated to a certain student organization - national studies of hazing show that hazing can occur across student organizations, such as athletics, Fraternity and Sorority Life, club sports, performing arts, and academic clubs, to name a few. And a national study about hazing found that 47% of students reported experiencing hazing in high school, so many individuals enter our communities having already experienced or participated in hazing.

Too often, individuals excuse hazing in the name of "tradition" or "bonding", whereas hazing behaviors do not build positive relationships, group unity, belonging, or trust, but rather undermine our institutional mission and can lead to outcomes including damaged relationships, anger, resentment, mistrust, physical harm, and even death.

With that in mind, here are some steps we all can take to prevent and address hazing within our own campus community:

- **Visit our hazing prevention website to learn more about hazing, hazing prevention, and our institution's hazing policies.** Our policies prohibit hazing, defined as "any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them,

regardless of a person's willingness to participate." Our campus hazing website provides you with campus policies related to hazing, examples of hazing, and resources to prevent it, as well on information on hazing violations that have occurred within our community. Organizations and individuals found responsible for hazing will be held accountable under these policies.

- **Participate in upcoming campus programs.** We offer programs and trainings throughout the year to help our students and employees better understand hazing, learn how to successfully intervene if they witness hazing or become aware of its occurrence, and implement effective healthy group bonding and cohesion strategies without hazing. Please join us for one of our upcoming programs! [Insert list of programs here.] Interested in facilitating a hazing prevention conversation yourself? You can access Clery Center's award-winning documentary *We Don't Haze* and companion discussion guides here.
- **Report incidents of hazing on campus.** If you know or suspect that hazing has occurred, you can report to the institution using this reporting form [link to reporting form] or by contacting: [Insert list of reporting contacts.]. Please note you can report anonymously if you prefer. It is important to us that we can offer individuals who may be victims of hazing, resources and options to address the physical, emotional, or psychological impact(s) hazing can have. Holding individuals and groups responsible for hazing behaviors and its consequences may also help to prevent future instances of harm.
- **Be a leader.** Inclusive, healthy, and strong groups and teams are vital to our community. Cultivating positive environments in our groups is a shared responsibility. Leadership is not simply a title or role but a practice of demonstrating care for peers and colleagues while moving toward a shared vision. The [insert name of office/leadership programs] offers workshops, trainings, and resources about group dynamics and leadership. You can also find specific suggestions here.

Thank you for all you do to keep our institution a safe and welcoming place to live, learn, and work.

Sincerely,

If you have any questions about this resource, reach out to Clery Center at info@clerycenter.org or StopHazing at info@stophazing.org.

Use of Materials

Use in part or whole is permitted with attribution to StopHazing and Clery Center as follows:

StopHazing & Clery Center. (2021). Sample letter from campus leadership. In *Campus commitment to hazing prevention: Action guide*.

Get the full Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention: Action Guide!

The *Campus Commitment to Hazing Prevention: Action Guide* is designed to give you some practical examples of these Commitment activities:

- **Campus Commitment Information-Gathering Tool:** Assess what actions you're already taking within this framework.
- **PowerPoint Template: Making the Case for Hazing Prevention Support:** Make the case to campus leaders for strengthening structural support for hazing prevention.
- **Planning Resource:** Build combined, integrated processes for procedural planning, enhancing structural efforts on campus.
- **Strategies for Engaging Students and their Families:** Address student and family perceptions and their roles in hazing and its prevention as described in the symbolic frame.
- **Sample Letter from Campus Leadership:** Endorse hazing prevention initiatives and institutional transparency relative to hazing accountability, noted within the political frame.

You can download the rest of the Action Guide a la carte or as a whole at clerycenter.org/hazing or stophazing.org/action-guide.

We Don't Haze

We Don't Haze is a short documentary film created by Clery Center and StopHazing, which helps identify hazing behaviors and offers organization leaders alternative traditions that promote a safer, more positive team-building experience. Learn more about the film and get the supplemental resources at clerycenter.org/initiatives/hazing-project.

Contributing Authors

Conceptual design, interpretation, and drafting of this project was completed by Abigail Boyer, M.S., Associate Executive Director for Clery Center and Meredith Stewart, M.Ed., Program & Outreach Coordinator for StopHazing; critical revision and adaptation of the project were completed by Elizabeth J. Allan, Ph.D., Professor of Higher Education at the University of Maine and Principal of StopHazing. All authors contributed to the final revisions.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Jessica Mertz and David Kerschner, Ph.D., for contributing content expertise and feedback. Thank you to Michelle Gayne for research assistance and Kimberly Stewart for research assistance and resource review. We also acknowledge the University of Maine, home to the StopHazing Research Lab, for its longstanding support of research related to hazing and its prevention.

Use of Materials

StopHazing and Clery Center strive to make many of its resources free of cost and available to the public. If you would like to use or share any of these resources, please use the citations to properly credit our work and please read Clery Center's [Usage Guidelines](#).



clerycenter.org



stophazing.org/consortium