

Summary of Hazing & Harassment Stories:

FAMU President stops students from joining clubs

Florida A&M University's president said Tuesday that he's cancelling a summer band camp and temporarily blocking students from joining clubs while the university reviews how the groups operate. President James Ammons announced the move during a campus safety forum held in response to the death of drum major Robert Champion and the arrests of several FAMU students on charges of hazing other students. The ban prevents clubs and organizations from recruiting, enrolling and initiating any new members during the spring and summer semesters. Any organization that violates the ban will be suspended from campus. Ammons said the ban will be in place while the university convenes a panel to come up with recommendations on the operation of student organizations.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/01/31/2617686/famu-president-stops-students.html>

Four Florida college students expelled over hazing

Four members of the Florida A&M University marching band were expelled on Monday for hazing, the latest in a series of actions following the death of drum major Robert Champion in November. At a special meeting, the college board of Trustees dismissed four students who were arrested last week on misdemeanor charges for hazing incidents involving five other students. The incidents were unrelated to Champion's death, according to police reports.

<http://news.yahoo.com/four-florida-college-students-expelled-over-hazing-021216078.html>

Sexual-Harassment Reports at Military Academies Jump 59%

Reported allegations of sexual assault and harassment at the nation's military academies [soared](#) from 41 during the 2010 academic year to 65 in the school year that ended in May. The increase has triggered a policy change permitting those complaining publicly to request an expedited transfer to a new duty station. Pentagon officials have long acknowledged that those reporting such assaults – up to and including rape – represent only the tip of the iceberg. This is plainly a moving target; such allegations jumped from 25 in 2009 to 41 last year. “The Department does not have the ability to conclusively identify the reasons for this increase in reporting behavior,” the congressional-mandated study said. “However, in prior years’ assessments, the Department identified steps the academies could take to encourage more victims to report.”

<http://battleland.blogs.time.com/2011/12/27/sexual-harassment-reports-at-military-academies-jump-59/>

Drum Major's Death Ruled Hazing Homicide

The death of a Florida A&M University drum major last month was a homicide caused by hazing, a Florida medical examiner said Friday. The drum major, Robert Champion, died of “hemorrhagic shock due to soft tissue hemorrhage, due to blunt force trauma,” the Orange County Medical Examiner concluded. So far, no suspects have been publicly identified in the hazing episode, and no charges have been announced. In the wake of Mr. Champion's death, on Nov. 19, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement began a criminal investigation. The death has also led to soul searching regarding the band's unsanctioned tradition of hazing, a practice

that is not uncommon in some marching bands, and at historically black colleges like Florida A&M. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/17/us/drum-major-robert-champions-death-ruled-hazing-homicide.html>

Florida A&M Declines to Suspend President in Student Death

Rebuffing the governor, Florida A&M's board of trustees on Monday decided not to suspend the university's president and asserted that it would "stand firm against outside influences, no matter how well intended." Solomon Badger, the chairman of the board, said the trustees would wait to decide whether to suspend the president, James H. Ammons, until the end of criminal investigations into the Nov. 19 death of a marching band member, possibly from a hazing ritual, and potential fraud by university employees. As the board contemplated its decision, it was also advised by the Southern Association of Colleges and the Schools Commission on Colleges that a hasty decision, taken at the governor's behest, could affect the university's accreditation by threatening its independence. On Friday, nearly a month after the death of Robert Champion, 26, a drum major, the Orlando medical examiner ruled his death a homicide that resulted from "blunt-force trauma." Mr. Champion also had bruises on his torso and arms, the coroner found. Performances by the band, known as the Marching 100, have been suspended while the investigators look into Mr. Champion's death. But alumni have been quick to point out that hazing is a problem nationwide, not just at Florida A&M or other historically black colleges. The university's alumni group, which has been criticized for failing to take a stronger stance against hazing, said it would campaign to end the practice.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/20/us/spurning-governor-scott-florida-am-declines-to-suspend-ammons.html>

Hazing Beyond the Frat House

The hazing death of a Florida A&M University drum major last month has exposed an open secret: hazing often happens outside fraternities, and its consequences are no less dire. Although hazing occurs in organizations from intramural sports to honor societies, the vast majority of people -- even on campuses -- still associate the activity first and foremost (and in many cases, exclusively) with students pledging into fraternities and sororities. But the death of Florida A&M's Robert Champion has revealed the reach of hazing in a jarring way. "There is really a great deal of ignorance about the extent to which hazing occurs and the fact that it affects students in many different kinds of settings, not just fraternity and sorority life," says Elizabeth Allan, a University of Maine associate professor of higher education leadership, who co-wrote the [National Study of Student Hazing](#). "When you have a limited understanding of something and you have a limited understanding of the scope of it, then you're less likely to see it." That goes not only for those who might reprimand the behavior, but also for those who are victims of it, Allan says. Nine out of 10 students who are hazed in college don't consider themselves to have been hazed, according to Allan's research -- and students whose experience doesn't fit the "Animal House" image could be even less likely to report an incident or believe it's hazing at all. "I think it goes back to that limited image," Allan says. "When something falls outside that image, it's often dismissed. It's more likely that a student would say, 'That wasn't hazing -- it wasn't in a fraternity.'" According to Allan's survey of more than 11,000 students and interviews with hundreds more, 55 percent of students involved in different clubs, teams and

campus organizations experience hazing. And while 73 percent of students in social fraternities or sororities reported being hazed, they didn't even top the list -- that was students on varsity athletics teams, 74 percent of whom said they'd been hazed. Students in club sports were next, at 64 percent, followed by those in performing arts organizations (such as marching band), at 56 percent. The group with the least hazing is honor society, but even there, one in five students said they had been hazed. "This would speak to the need for colleges and universities to recognize that this is broader than a Greek issue," says Daniel Swinton, president of the Association for Student Conduct Administration and assistant dean and director of Vanderbilt University's Office of Student Conduct and Integrity. "Oftentimes we're aware of the hazing that goes on elsewhere, but so much is focused on the Greek realm that we neglect, I think, some of these other ones where it's often not as high-profile." Kim Novak, a consultant in campus safety and student risk management and namesake of the [Kimberly Novak Hazing Prevention Institute](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/23/florida-am-death-illuminates-prevalence-non-greek-hazing), says a limited perspective has led colleges to direct their hazing policies and prevention efforts primarily toward fraternities and sororities. She and others believe colleges should approach hazing as a public health issue – educating the entire campus, not just individual sectors, on things like what hazing is and what to do when it happens. (The bystander intervention model, for example, which trains students to step in when they see something awry, is a popular method for preventing sexual assault, bullying and alcohol abuse that could be applied to hazing.) Some colleges have begun approaching the issue in a more holistic way, Novak said, and experts generally agree that Champion's death will encourage others to move in that direction. The Novak Institute, for instance, brings together students, faculty and staff from different campus groups, administrators and law enforcement to discuss and map out this prevention approach. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/23/florida-am-death-illuminates-prevalence-non-greek-hazing>

Three students charged in FAMU hazing

Three Florida A&M band members were charged Monday in the beating of a woman during hazing rituals that became so severe that her thigh was broken, police said. The beatings came about three weeks before drum major Robert Champion was killed during a band trip to Orlando. Police say hazing also was involved. Tallahassee police said that on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, Bria Shante Hunter was beaten with fists and a metal ruler to initiate her into the "Red Dawg Order" - a band clique for students who come from Georgia. Hunter told police that days later the pain became so unbearable that she went to the hospital. Besides her broken thigh bone, she had had blood clots in her legs. Sean Hobson, 23, and Aaron Golson, 19, were charged Monday with hazing and battery, and James Harris, 22, was charged with hazing. http://espn.go.com/college-football/story/_/id/7347459/tallahassee-police-charge-3-florida-rattlers-band-hazing

FAMU students protest governor's call for president to resign

Florida Gov. Rick Scott met late Thursday with a group of several hundred Florida A&M students upset over his recommendation that trustees suspend the school's president in the wake of alleged hazing and "financial irregularities." Earlier, Scott had told the chairman of FAMU's board of trustees, Solomon L. Badger III, that he felt the board should take further action against university President James Ammons when it meets Monday, the statement said. The governor

also "placed a call" to Ammons to notify him of these conversations. Badger also released a statement in which he acknowledged "a communication with the governor." He said he hadn't talked with other trustees, promising that "we will make a decision about how we move forward Monday." The band's director, Julian White, has been placed on administrative leave. One trustee, Rufus Montgomery, advocated a week ago that the university president should likewise be suspended -- but, instead, the board voted then to reprimand him. The school president had pledged Wednesday to "root out this culture of hazing," though he declined to offer details about what specifically might change. Band drum major Robert Champion Jr., 26, died after a November 19 football game following a suspected hazing incident. "We're sending all these kids off to school. ... We expect them to come back with an education and alive," Scott said Thursday. The university's troubles go beyond the hazing reports. Jerry Bailey, commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, said Wednesday that authorities looking into Champion's death had found evidence of "financial irregularities having to do with the band and several other components of the university." The state commissioner said it is premature to conclude that the irregularities are "systemic," adding that it is too soon to tell how much money may be involved. But, he added, "it's not just isolated" to the band program. Champions' parents did not reference Ammons specifically during an interview, which was conducted with HLN's Dr. Drew Pinsky before Scott made his recommendation. Yet the young man's father did state that it was important that there's accountability -- for both Champion's death and hazing in general. "I think the school should be held accountable, I think that each organization should be held accountable," Robert Champion Sr. said Thursday. "We have to get down to the root of the problem, so that everyone can be responsible." His wife, Pam Champion, said their family will champion anti-hazing education efforts and look into setting up a hotline through which people can anonymously call in reports of hazing. She said that everyone at FAMU -- from administrators, to students, to alumni -- and other schools need to work together to stop hazing, which she called endemic to a larger cultural issue. "If you're not going to be part of the solution, then you are part of the problem," Pam Champion said. "The idea is to (get) rid of the whole culture, the whole mind-set of it."

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/16/justice/florida-am-investigation/index.html>

Georgia school district suspends marching bands after university scandal

An Atlanta-area school district is suspending all marching band activities over concerns of "inappropriate physical activity" between students. The district began investigating after Robert Champion, a former band member at one of the district's schools, died last month in what is believed to be hazing at Florida A&M University. Champion attended Southwest DeKalb High, whose band is suspended, along with another Florida A&M student who says she was beaten so severely she could barely walk. Walter Woods, spokesman for the DeKalb County school district, said Wednesday officials were looking at every high school after two incidents during band activities over the summer. He declined to say whether the incidents involved hazing. "Our interest is in protecting students, the safety of the students," Woods said. "We have notified schools to be vigilant of our existing policy, which is zero tolerance for harassment of any kind."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-famu-20111215,0,10445.story>

Student's Death Turns Spotlight on Hazing

Before they even arrive at Florida A&M University here, the freshmen who are hand-picked for the famous marching band know all about the hazing, an unsanctioned tradition that goes back decades. In the ultracompetitive atmosphere of the Marching 100, as the band is called, the verbal, emotional and physical pain that is doled out is viewed as an extra source of pride and strength among the relatively small number of band members who participate in hazing, former members say. Punching, paddling, slapping and forcing band members to eat certain things, do certain favors and endure verbal abuse for mistakes is part of the code, carried out by subgroups within each section: “The Clones” in the clarinet cluster, for example, and “The Soulful Saxes” in the saxophone section. Drinking is seldom involved, former members say, and much of the hazing is voluntary. But those decades of tradition — a longtime concern of the university administration — are now the focal point of an investigation into the death of a drum major 10 days ago, and the reaction so far has been significant. The death of the drum major, Robert Champion, 26, also raises a perplexing question: Why was a drum major — a campus celebrity whose position reflects outstanding leadership skills and talent — being hazed, if that is what in fact contributed to his death? No cause of death has yet been determined but the Orange County Sheriff’s Office in Orlando, where Mr. Champion died, said it suspected that hazing was involved. Hazing is not uncommon among marching bands around the country and has been a longtime practice at historically black colleges like Florida A&M. The university, whose enrollment is roughly 13,000, has had its share of serious hazing incidents. Two students were beaten or paddled so forcefully they suffered acute injury, one in 1998 and the other in 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/01/us/florida-am-university-students-death-turns-spotlight-on-hazing.html>

High school hazing worries educators

The principal of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School said she tried for years to rein in hazing during homecoming week. One day each fall, older students would shower ninth-graders with paint, pelt them with ketchup, yell “Go back to Westland!” — the local middle school — and occasionally rough them up. Karen Lockard banned spray paint on campus. She brought in an anti-bullying expert for an assembly. She encouraged classroom discussions about values. None of that stopped this year’s Color Day spirit event from becoming, once again, “freshman beat-down day.” One student went to a hospital after being assaulted, and many wound up plastered in paint. It got so out of hand that Lockard canceled next year’s Color Day. “It’s hard to change tradition,” she said. Officials said they have made progress. But parents and alumni wonder how hazing survives at all. Hazing amplifies the embedded high school pecking order. Seniors rule, and freshmen — at least those on television — get slammed into lockers. Each triumph or trial is perceived as a badge of growing up. Such traditions pose challenges for administrators, because students are often willing or enthusiastic participants. A national survey of college freshmen in 2008 found that nearly half reported participating in high school activities such as being asked to sing or chant in front of a group, being deprived of sleep, or being yelled at as a new member of a group. But most respondents did not associate the behavior with hazing. “At least on the surface, it’s all about being included,” said Elizabeth Allan of the University of Maine, a lead researcher on the study. But even seemingly harmless antics, she said, “can set the stage for other forms of hazing or abuse.” Nationwide, lawsuits and complaints related to high school hazing rose from 33 in 2000 to 277 last year, said Lee Green, a sports law expert at Baker University in Kansas. He said that more victims are stepping forward.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/6-common-myths-about-hazing/2011/11/15/gIQAnM06SN_blog.html

6 common myths about hazing

Here are [some myths and facts](http://www.stophazing.org/) about hazing, reproduced with permission from the website <http://www.stophazing.org/>. There's a lot more information at that site too. "Hazing," the website says, "refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate."

- Myth #1: Hazing is a problem for fraternities and sororities primarily. Fact: Hazing is a societal problem. Hazing incidents have been frequently documented in the military, athletic teams, marching bands, religious cults, professional schools and other types of clubs and/or, organizations. Reports of hazing activities in high schools are on the rise.
- Myth #2: Hazing is no more than foolish pranks that sometimes go awry. Fact: Hazing is an act of power and control over others --- it is victimization. Hazing is pre-meditated and NOT accidental. Hazing is abusive, degrading and often life-threatening.
- Myth #3: As long as there's no malicious intent, a little hazing should be O.K. Fact: Even if there's no malicious "intent" safety may still be a factor in traditional hazing activities that are considered to be "all in good fun." For example, serious accidents have occurred during scavenger hunts and kidnapping trips. Besides, what purpose do such activities serve in promoting the growth and development of group team members?
- Myth #4: Hazing is an effective way to teach respect and develop discipline. Fact: First of all, respect must be EARNED--not taught. Victims of hazing rarely report having respect for those who have hazed them. Just like other forms of victimization, hazing breeds mistrust, apathy and alienation.
- Myth #5: If someone agrees to participate in an activity, it can't be considered hazing. Fact: In states that have laws against hazing consent of the victim can't be used as a defense in a civil suit. This is because even if someone agrees to participate in a potentially hazardous action it may not be true consent when considering the peer pressure and desire to belong to the group.
- Myth #6: It's difficult to determine whether or not a certain activity is hazing — it's such a gray area sometimes. Fact: It's not difficult to decide if an activity is hazing if you use common sense and ask yourself the following questions:

Make the following inquiries of each activity to determine whether or not it is hazing.

- Is alcohol involved?
- Will active/current members of the group refuse to participate with the new members and do exactly what they're being asked to do?
- Does the activity risk emotional or physical abuse?
- Is there risk of injury or a question of safety?
- Do you have any reservation describing the activity to your parents, to a professor or University official?
- Would you object to the activity being photographed for the school newspaper or filmed by the local TV news crew?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the activity is probably hazing. Adapted from Death By Hazing Sigma Alpha Epsilon. 1988.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/6-common-myths-about-hazing/2011/11/15/gIQAnM06SN_blog.html
