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**Date:** August 24, 2009

**From:** Damon Sims, Vice President for Student Affairs  
Timothy Curley, Director of Athletics

**To:** All Coaches, Team Officers, Presidents, and Advisors of Recognized Student Organizations

**Re:** Hazing

Congratulations! As a member of one of Penn State's athletic teams or student organizations, you join a long and proud tradition of groups that represent the best that Penn State has to offer. Becoming a member of one of these groups brings with it certain privileges, but it brings an equal measure of responsibility, too. The activities of your group should promote a caring and inclusive community, and your leadership is critical to achieving that end.

One activity that clearly is not in keeping with the guiding principles at Penn State is hazing. The attached excerpt from the *Policies and Rules for Student Organizations* defines hazing in a formal sense, and we all must learn to recognize hazing when we encounter it. Please read through the attachment carefully at your earliest convenience.

Simply put, hazing is both a violation of University policy and contrary to criminal law. Unfortunately, in a misguided attempt to encourage group loyalty, some groups or individuals may engage in actions that demean or injure other members of the group. It is important to understand that even behavior in which others voluntarily participate may constitute hazing. Whether voluntarily engaged or not, hazing violates our community's most important standard—the safety and well-being of its members.

The University will investigate all allegations of hazing to the fullest extent possible. Any organization or individual that is found responsible for hazing will be subject to sanctions, which may include separation or disaffiliation. It also is important to remember that criminal charges may result, too.

If you are a victim of hazing, know someone who is, or need more information on the subject, please contact the Office of Student Activities. Staff members are available to speak with you or to meet with your team or organization. They can be reached by calling 863-4624, or you may visit them during office hours at 209 HUB.

We ask that you share this message with the other members of your team or organization and that you be Penn State Proud by promoting the positive aspects of membership in your group. Hazing is unacceptable in any form. Let's work together to prevent it.

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Excerpt from *2009-2010 Policies and Rules for Student Organizations*,  
Section I.-Recognition of Student Organizations, A.-Conditions for Recognition of all Student  
Organizations, Section 7:

7. Recognized student organizations may not engage in **HAZING ACTIVITIES**. Hazing is defined as any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student or that willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in any recognized student organization. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity that would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity that could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. Any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in a recognized student organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be “forced” activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding. Any recognized student organization that commits hazing is subject to disciplinary action by the governing councils and/or the Office of Student Activities.

To view the complete *2009-2010 Policies and Rules for Recognized Student Organizations*  
please go to:

<http://www.sa.psu.edu/OrganizationRules>