August 20, 2012

President’s Decision on Athletics Hazing Incident

An alleged incident of hazing on August 4, 2012 by the Humboldt State University men’s soccer team was reported to administrators in the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs on August 6, 2012. Following careful investigation including interviews with team members, the University has concluded that an incident of hazing did occur, and that it placed the lives of two students in real jeopardy.

As the President of Humboldt State University and the person ultimately responsible for ensuring that such incidents do not occur in the future, we will take the following steps:

1. The Humboldt State University is suspending the men’s soccer team for the 2012/2013 season effective immediately. The men’s team will not participate in any California Collegiate Athletic Association games or any University-sanctioned games for the entire season. **Hazing will not be tolerated at Humboldt State University.** Those who have knowledge of hazing, observe hazing, or are the targets of hazing and do not make efforts to stop it and do not report it to the appropriate authorities are also complicit in the incident. As explained in the Student Code of Conduct, hazing includes any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization that is likely to cause physical harm, personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm. Neither the express or implied consent of a victim of hazing, nor the lack of active participation in a particular hazing incident, is a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing is not a neutral act and is also a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

2. The Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will initiate disciplinary proceedings for individuals on the men’s soccer team as would occur whenever it appears a student has violated Humboldt State University’s Student Code of Conduct.

3. The Athletic Director will report annually (in June of each year) to the President’s Office on the timing and content of programs to address hazing and other kinds of student-athlete misconduct. The Athletics Department administration will follow the procedures and annual timeline as summarized in the attached National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) document, *Building New Traditions*, pp. 14 and 15.

4. Any alleged hazing incidents or other violations of the Student Code of Conduct must be promptly reported to and investigated by the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. Coaches or athletic administrators who do not follow this directive will be subject to disciplinary or other personnel actions. The Athletics Department must collaborate fully with the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. The Athletic Director and Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs must meet regularly to review issues of concern to them both.

5. Our athletic administrators and coaches must be responsible for the culture that
exists within our athletics programs and recognize that they are the principal means of preventing hazing and student-athlete misconduct. In this context, coaches must work with their teams to develop team rules on an annual basis that are written down, reviewed by the Athletic Director, given to the student-athletes and submitted to the Athletic Director’s files. Humboldt State University coaches will follow the recommendations in the attached NCAA document, *Building New Traditions*, pp. 5-7. In the meantime, coaches will ensure that current team captains and all student-athletes discuss and understand the material on pp. 8-13 (also attached to this document) no later than September 17, 2012. In future years, student-athletes must be educated about these materials by September 1 of each year. New student-athletes to a team must also do so before they engage in any team activities.

6. The Athletic Department will institute a policy of random drug and alcohol testing of student-athletes. Each student athlete will be required to sign a Non-Hazing Agreement each year that they participate in sports.

7. The Life Skills course now taught by the Department of Kinesiology and Recreation Administration must be revised to include training on hazing in consultation with members of the Athletics Department. Responsibility for this revision rests with the Chair of Kinesiology and Recreation Administration and the Athletic Director.

Rollin C. Richmond
President
Humboldt State University
An Annual Timeline to Address the Issue of Hazing Prevention

During the Recruiting Process
• Provide your institution’s and specifically your team’s written policy to all recruits and hosts that defines hazing, consequences of participation, ways to avoid participation, and methods of reporting incidents without fear of retribution!

Before the Preseason and Throughout the Year
• Conduct a leadership workshop and regular meetings for your captains to give them the knowledge and skills necessary for being successful and effective team leaders. Include the athletics department’s and your team’s responsibilities and expectations to fulfill their role as captains.
• Provide information on hazing that student-athletes will use as a reference and reminder of what is appropriate student behavior.

At the First Team Meeting
• Discuss, develop and distribute current anti-hazing policies of the team, institution, conference and NCAA.
• Provide student-athletes with a written definition of what constitutes hazing.
• Have each student-athlete sign a Code of Conduct form that includes hazing prevention.

Early During First Week or Preseason
• Conduct an educational program on hazing through use of NCAA speakers, your own campus experts, national programs, and/or Power Point presentations. All programming should be designed to generate thought and discussion!
• Provide an orientation seminar for first-year student-athletes on this issue and be sure to include written procedures for reporting potential hazing situations and incidents, and methods to be used in avoiding a hazing environment!

Periodically Throughout the Season
• Use constant reminders of the institution’s view on anti-hazing through posters, bookmarks and handouts, and the resultant consequences for participation in these types of activities.
• Provide anti-hazing messages on team handouts, itineraries, game plans, scouting reports and other publications. (See Appendix III.)
An Annual Timeline to Address the Issue of Hazing Prevention

Before All Trips and Travel
• Before spring trips and during semester breaks when teams spend their time on campus, be sure to reiterate the policies on hazing.
• Remind all team members that hazing policies are in effect everywhere, 24 hours, seven days a week.

Start of Second Semester
• At the first team meeting, reiterate your position on team rules and re-emphasize the anti-hazing message. Start with a recent press article from some other institution, which you can find under News at www.StopHazing.org.
• Be sure any new student, transfer or mid-year admitted students are provided all written material on hazing and team rules, and that your position is heard very clearly.

End of the Year
• Conduct exit interviews with graduating and departing students for the purpose of hearing about team conduct and behaviors that are related to hazing. Ensure those you have interviewed that the information is for educational endeavors and not punishment or discipline purposes!
• Use information from the interviews in your planning process for new programs and initiatives for the coming year.
The Role of Coaches in Hazing Awareness and Prevention

Coaches:

- Your attitude and willingness to address hazing will be a major factor in its prevention on your team!

- Understand the reasons why hazing happens!

- Know the differences between what hazing really does versus what your student-athletes believe it does!

- Send an appropriate anti-hazing message that spells out the consequences for non-compliance!

- Your policies need to be communicated, distributed in writing, and enforced openly if an incident occurs!

- Your anti-hazing program must start during the recruiting process, and needs to be emphasized all year long.

- Be sure that everything you do contributes to an environment of civility, respect and dignity for everyone!

What Should Coaches be Responsible for?

- Take an emphatic position about treating everyone with total respect at all times from the moment they set foot on your campus, even during recruiting. This message needs to be heard by all team members, frequently! (See Appendix III, Anti-Hazing Messages.)
The Role of Coaches in Hazing Awareness and Prevention

• Conduct open discussions to help you understand your team’s views and activities. Alumni sources may be willing to elaborate! Confirm that any alumni you engage in programming fully understand hazing issues so that they do not perpetuate harmful traditions.

• Avoid addressing new team members using power terms such as “rookie.” This says to the new player, “You’re not the same as everyone else!” Avoid any other words or actions that create division between your veterans and new players.

• Address the issue of hazing annually and consistently, and put your team rules in writing. It is a “must” conversation for you and your team, regardless of how uncomfortable it may be. Spell out the consequences for non-compliance and what your expectations are for your team members toward each other on and off the field of play! (See the Annual Timeline in Appendix I.)

• Involve your team in discussions about this issue and dispel the myths they believe about hazing! Students believe that there is a clear and distinctive difference between someone being “forced or seriously pressured” to participate, versus someone who volunteers. They believe if there is no force, it is not hazing! They need to know that passive participation can make one a contributor! And that “consent” does not rule out hazing.

• Explain that hazing occurs when there is an expectation, whether implicit or explicit, that to be accepted or part of the group, student-athletes must participate in the activity. An expectation can subtly coerce athletes to do things they would not normally do.

• Ensure that your team is involved with establishing the policies and procedures that deal with this issue. They need to take ownership of the definitions.

• Reinforce the message that what counts most is your players’ work and dedication. The desire to be on your team renders the new athlete powerless when confronted by an upper-class teammate. New students will take the path of least resistance. They need to hear you talk about demonstrating a positive attitude, having the initiative to do what is needed, and displaying a strong work ethic. The coach is the determining factor on who makes the team and who plays, not their teammates. They need to be told to walk away from any hazing and know that you will support their actions!
The Role of Coaches in Hazing Awareness and Prevention

• Help your team develop positive traditions that are significant and meaningful and that contribute to their bonding and coming together as a group. This important strategy will help reduce the temptation to use hazing as a means of team bonding.

• Support leadership training for your captains and define your expectations for their role within the team. Be sure that you have the right person to step up to that responsibility, even if it means you make the captain an appointed position. Other than yourself, the captain will be the most significant person in the prevention of hazing within your team!

• Talk about what it is you expect from your athletes besides what you get on the field. You expect to build character — what does it mean? You expect a sense of good values — what are they? Demonstrate in your own actions that caring about one another may be the most valued characteristic you may want them to acquire. It doesn’t happen if you don’t care or talk about it!

• Accept this responsibility as part of your job. Hazing incidents that end in tragedy or a lawsuit can ruin the careers of athletes and coaches! One hour at the start of each season on hazing prevention could prevent a season of disaster. Be emphatic, be patient, but be persistent in your attempt to erase this kind of activity from athletics and all of our campuses.

• Take all of the above SERIOUSLY!

“This leadership training program helped me think about myself and my core values — what I believe and want to instill in my teammates. This is very valuable in helping me better understand my teammates, helping me lead in a positive manner, and not to be afraid to ask for help.”
The Role of Student-Athletes in Hazing Prevention

What You Should Know

Hazing
- Has caused a team’s season to be cancelled at various NCAA institutions!
- Has caused a student-athlete’s institutional eligibility to be taken away!
- Has caused student-athletes to be arrested, because it is against the law in most states!
- Has caused student-athletes to have to appear in the court system at their own expense!
- Has caused teams to be torn apart and fragmented!
- Has caused serious physical and psychological injuries, and even deaths!

Team Discussion Questions

1. What makes you feel accepted by your teammates and coach?
   Is it playing time?
   Is it being socially included at all times?
   Is it interest in you as a person from upper-class teammates, aside from being an athlete?
   Is it having your coaches give you “the time of day”?
   Do you need to have your coaches and teammates talk to you off the field or court?
   Do you feel respect from the rest of the institution, or are you looked at as a non-contributing student?

2. Why is it that you chose to participate in athletics?
   You chose to be involved with athletics to:
   a. Challenge yourself physically and emotionally.
   b. Enjoy the excitement of competition.
   c. Develop friendships and the camaraderie of teammates.
   d. Set goals and work toward accomplishment.
   e. Enhance one’s self-confidence and pride.
   f. Build on the value of community.
   g. Enjoy the experience and have fun!

3. What do you think will be the most positive outcome of your participation?
   The most positive, lasting outcomes of athletics are the relationships established through mutual respect with teammates and coaches, which last a lifetime!
4. What do you know about traditions and why do they exist?
   Traditions are time-honored acts that repeat the customs and beliefs of a culture. They are honorable and instill a sense of pride in its members!

5. What purpose does an initiation serve and what place does it have in athletics?
   Initiations are designed to instruct new members in the principles of an organization. They are ceremonial in nature and often carry a spiritual significance, and should be instructive. By joining an athletic team, one should expect to learn customs and procedures, but should never have to prove his or her right to be respected and treated with dignity at all times.

6. What do you believe that the hazing of a teammate or yourself accomplishes?
   • Hazing does not bond a team, quite the opposite it tears it apart!
   • Hazing does not instill pride in the team … it humiliates the victims and the team!
   • Hazing does not allow freedom of choice to participate; it creates an environment of expectations, leaving the victim powerless to choose!

Here is a team captain’s quote after her softball team was involved in and sanctioned for hazing!

“…The intention was to have a fun night of team bonding, not to humiliate or embarrass anyone…. We realize it didn’t benefit us, or improve our skills. It didn’t make us close as a team, in fact just the opposite occurred! Our fall season was cancelled as was our Spring Break and our team is on probation. Playing is a privilege not afforded everybody and with the privilege comes a responsibility to our team, our school and ourselves.”
**The Role of Student-Athletes in Hazing Prevention**

What you can do to prevent hazing among your teammates:

1. Review the list of questions that would clarify if activities are hazing. (See Appendix VII, The Hazing Test.)

2. Understand what constitutes hazing and insist that this is discussed with coaches and teammates. (See Appendix V, The Myths and Truths of Hazing, and Appendix VI, Examples of Hazing.)

3. Plan alternative activities for your team that will enhance team bonding and be sure that all players and coaches are involved. (See Appendix IV, Alternatives to Hazing.)

4. Make caring about one’s teammates a high priority for success and be conscious of any potential hazing incidents that may occur within your team! Talk about what it means to care!

5. Discuss among your coaches and teammates how and who you would report potential incidents that could be considered, or lead to, hazing. Any team’s problems will reflect poorly on your institution!

6. From day one, understand that acceptance by the team you are joining and your contribution to its success, will be developed through:
   - A strong work ethic;
   - A positive attitude; and
   - Your initiative.

Seek advice from your coaches, administrators, athletic trainers, professors, student affairs officers, Life Skills personnel or even your parents!
The Role of Team Captains in Hazing Prevention

What Should the Team Captain be Responsible for?

1. Your first responsibility is to meet with your coach and define the expectations of your position. With the expectations should come the identification of skills and knowledge that you need and how you will acquire the necessary information. You might request a seminar on leadership, administered by your institution, for all captains.

2. As a captain, you can be held accountable for hazing activities within your program and as such, could be legally charged in a hazing incident.

3. Be familiar with all the terms that help to understand why hazing occurs:
   - Passive participation;
   - The path of least resistance; and
   - Athletic identity.
   (See Appendix II, The Terminology of Hazing.)

4. Make sure discussions about hazing occur with your team, including the coaches! Encourage members to speak up without fear of retribution! Simply defined, hazing is:
   - Any act committed against a student who is trying to join a new group that is humiliating or demeaning, or endangers the student’s health and safety.
   - Hazing can occur regardless of CONSENT or WILLINGNESS to participate. If you chose not to take part but knew what was going on, you are part of the problem!

5. Become familiar with the myths and truths of hazing and utilize these concepts in team discussions with your coaches! (See Appendix V, The Myths and Truths of Hazing.)
The Role of Team Captains in Hazing Prevention

6. Discuss team strategies to welcome new members. Set a climate and environment that insists that everyone — from your new members to your veteran seniors — be treated with dignity and respect. How do you do that and bond together at the same time? (See Appendix IV, Alternatives to Hazing.)

7. Ensure that new members know you will support them in resisting any participation in hazing activities. Include a discussion about recruiting and hosting and the responsibility of hosts in setting a tone of respect. (See Northwestern University Prospective Student-Athlete Recruiting Policy in Appendix VIII.)

8. Create "meaningful" traditions, ones that develop pride among the team and in which everyone’s dignity is respected! (See Appendix IV.)

9. Along with your coaches, set guidelines for the team’s conduct and for the reporting of hazing incidents. Reports should ultimately be made to the director of athletics. Reports can be initiated by any of the following:
   - Team Captains
   - Coaching Staffs
   - Athletic Training and Sports Medicine
   - Sports Information
   - Athletics Administration
   - Student Affairs
   - Campus Security or Police
   - Parents
   - Faculty or Staff
   - Equipment Staff

10. Emphasize that coaches do not play an athlete due to his or her willingness to be subjected to hazing! Athletes play because they have:
    a. A Positive Attitude;
    b. A strong Work Ethic; and
    c. An Initiative to do what is needed and what is right!

11. Use the Hazing Test and Examples of Hazing in team discussions. (See Appendixes VII and VI.)
The Role of Team Captains in Hazing Prevention

12. Support educational programs on the following topics:
   - Understanding Team and Group Dynamics
   - How to Effectively Communicate with the Team
   - Recruiting/Host Policies
   - Intervention Skills
   - Listening Skills
   - Decision-making Skills
   - Health Issues (alcohol and other drugs, eating disorders, injury rehabilitation)
   - Conflict Resolution Skills
   - Codes of Ethical Conduct
   - Expectations for Sportsmanship or Acceptable Standards of Behavior
   - Rules and Regulations of the Institution and Community, and State laws

13. Recognize that you have tremendous power over the newest members of your team, but it would be wise to use your influence with them to encourage their best performance rather than exert your power status in an attempt to maintain a hierarchy!

14. Understand and accept your role as a leader and teammate and be proud that you were chosen to lead or be on this team. Take the time to reflect upon the reasons why you have ascended to this position and what it will mean to you now and forever!

One team captain's quote after participating in Captains’ Leadership Training:

“It helped me to empathize and recognize similarities between myself and others. I gained insight into the many roles and responsibilities we have as leaders in the athletics community. We can make a positive impact!”