

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 6, 2025

TO: Thomas D. Williams 
Interim President

THROUGH: Alan Sams, Ph.D. 
Provost and Executive Vice President

THROUGH: Bill Kibler, Ph.D. 
Vice President for Student Affairs

FROM: Kristen Harrell, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
Chair, Rules and Regulations Committee

RE: Student Rules on Hazing

In the Fall of 2025, Former President Mark Welsh directed Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Bill Kibler, to update the Texas A&M University student rules pertaining to hazing. Specifically, Former President Welsh directed that the hazing rule within the students rule directly imitate state law.

The student rule for hazing was most recently updated in August of 2024 upon presidential directive by Former President Welsh to closely align with state law. The current modification further aligns the student rule with state law.

The changes include alterations to rules 24, 24.1.13., and 24.4.5.1.

A red-line copy of the changes is attached.

24. Student Conduct Code

(Revised: 2025)

The General Order on Judicial Standards of Procedure and Substance in Review of Student Discipline in Tax Supported Institutions of Higher Education ([45 F.R.D. 133 \(W.D. Mo. 1968\)](#)) supports higher standards of behavior for students. Attendance at a university is not compulsory. The attendance of a student at a university is a voluntary entrance into the academic community. By such entrance, the student voluntarily assumes obligations of performance and behavior reasonably imposed by the university. These obligations are generally much higher than those imposed on all citizens by the civil and criminal law. A university may discipline students to secure compliance with these higher obligations as a teaching method or to sever the student from the academic community. The General Order further emphasizes the ability of universities to establish standards of superior ethical and moral behavior that occur either on or off campus.

24.1 Definitions. Only for purposes of this Student Conduct Code, the following terms and definitions will apply. The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee reserves the right to interpret and enforce this Code of Conduct.

24.1.1. The term “**accused student**” means any student alleged with a violation of a student *rule*.

24.1.2. The term “**chairperson**” means a *Student Conduct Administrator* who is authorized by the *Vice President for Student Affairs* or designee to take the lead role in conducting *conferences* when there is more than one person serving as a *Student Conduct Panel* and/or more than one *Student Conduct Administrator* present.

24.1.3. The term “**alleged**” means an allegation of a potential violation of the Student Rules. Allegations are issued after a Student Conduct Administrator has determined sufficient information exists to hold a *conference* to determine whether a student (or students) has violated a *rule* (or *rules*).

24.1.4. The term “**complainant**” means any person who submits information indicating that a *student may* have violated the Student Conduct Code. Information brought forth by the *complainant may* result in an *investigation*.

impacts a person's decision-making capacity, awareness of consequences, and ability to make fully informed judgments.

24.1.10. The term “**investigation**” means the follow through on a complaint to ascertain details and circumstances associated with the complaint. *Investigations may* result in *allegations*, a form of alternative dispute resolution, or dismissal of complaint. This determination is made at the sole discretion of the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee responsible for the oversight of the Student Conduct processes.

24.1.11. The term “**may**” is used in the permissive sense.

24.1.12. The term “**member of the University community**” includes any person who is a *student, faculty member, staff, University official* or any other person employed by the *University or by a company contracted to provide services for the University*.

24.1.13. The term “**organization**” means any number of people who meet any single or combination of the following criteria:

- A fraternity, sorority, association, corporation, order, society, corps, club, or student government, a band or musical group or an academic, athletic, cheerleading, or dance team, including any group or team that participates in National Collegiate Athletic Association competition, or a service, social, or similar group, whose members are primarily Texas A&M University students, and/or
 - have complied with the formal requirements for *University* recognition, and/or
 - are advised by a *University official* whose position description designates them as an advisor, and/or
 - are advised by a *University official* who has volunteered as an advisor, and/or
 - live in close proximity to, for example, residence hall floors or wings, Corps outfit, Corps unit or Corps Special Activity, and/or
 - are otherwise considered by the *University* to be an *organization*.

24.1.14. The term “**retaliation**” means any adverse action taken against a person for making a good faith report of a violation of Texas A&M System policies, university rules, student rules, and/or the law, or for participating in any proceeding related to the investigation or resolution of such report. Retaliation includes

person alone or acting with others, directed against an individual for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization; or as part of any activity of a recognized student organization, student group, Corps of Cadets, Corps outfit, Corps unit, Corps Special Activities, or Athletics that meets the criteria of: 24.4.5.1. Hazing; and/or 24.4.5.2. Organization-Related Intimidation and/or Abuse.

A student is responsible for Organization Affiliation Misconduct if the student:

- engages in Organization Affiliation Misconduct;
- solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in Organization Affiliation Misconduct;
- recklessly permits Organization Affiliation Misconduct to occur; or
- has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific Organization Affiliation Misconduct incident involving a student or has firsthand knowledge that a specific Organization Affiliation misconduct incident has occurred and knowingly fails to report that knowledge to the vice President for Student Affairs or other appropriate official off the institutions, a peace officer, or a law enforcement agency.

There are two types of Organization Affiliation Misconduct, based on the conduct and potential resulting harm:

24.4.5.1 **Hazing** is Organization Affiliation Misconduct that includes any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off the campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization if the act:

24.4.5.1.1 is any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;

24.4.5.1.2 involves sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other similar activity that subjects the individual to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the individual;

24.4.5.1.3 involves consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance, other than as described by 24.4.5.1.5., that subjects the

individual to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the individual;

24.4.5.1.4 is any activity that induces, causes, or requires the individual to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code; or

24.4.5.1.5. involves coercing, as defined below in this section, the individual to consume:

(a) a drug; or

(b) an alcoholic beverage or liquor in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the individual is intoxicated.

“Coercion” means a threat, however communicated, to commit a violation of a criminal law or university rule that implicates a criminal law; to inflict bodily injury in the future on the person threatened or another; to accuse a person of any criminal offense or violation of university rule; to expose a person to hatred, contempt, or ridicule; to harm the credit or business reputation of any person; or to take or withhold action as a public servant, or to cause a public servant to take or withhold action.

Conduct constituting Hazing may also be a violation of Texas state law (see Tex. Educ. Code §37.151 and §51.936).

24.4.5.1.6 Personal Hazing Offense. A person commits an offense if the person:

- engages in hazing;
- solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing;
- recklessly permits hazing to occur; or
- has firsthand knowledge of the planning or a specific hazing incident involving a student or has firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge to the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee responsible for oversight of the student conduct processes and/or the University Police Department.

24.4.5.1.7 Organization Hazing Offense. An organization commits an offense if the organization condones or encourages hazing or if an officer or any combination of members, pledges, or alumni of the organization commits or assists in the commission of hazing.

24.4.5.1.8 **Consent not a Defense.** It is not a defense to being held responsible for hazing that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity.

24.4.5.2. **Organization-Related Intimidation and/or Abuse** is Organization Affiliation Misconduct that does not rise to the level of Hazing and includes, but is not limited to:

24.4.5.2.1 conduct that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the individual

24.4.5.2.2. behavior that is severe and/or persistent to a degree that a reasonable person similarly situated would be prevented from accessing an educational opportunity or benefit. This behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, deceit, threats, intimidation, and unreasonable requirements for new and continued membership of an organization;

24.4.5.2.3. confining a person or exposing participants to uncomfortable elements such as environments that are too hot, cold, noisy, small, or intimidating;

24.4.5.2.4. parading individuals in public areas, transporting individuals in a motor vehicle while wearing a visual obstruction, or privately conducting visually obstructed activities that serve no constructive purpose;

24.4.5.2.5. encouraging or requiring a person to publicly carry objects or wear apparel that is abnormal, not normally in good taste, conspicuous, and/or indecent;

24.4.5.2.6. destroying or removing public or private property;

24.4.5.2.7. any activity that induces, causes, or requires the individual to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of a university rule that does not implicate a criminal law;

24.4.5.2.8. soliciting, encouraging, directing, aiding, or attempting to aid another in engaging in intimidation or harassment; or

24.4.5.2.9. assisting, directing, or in any way causing others to participate in degrading behavior and/or behavior that causes ridicule, humiliation, or embarrassment.