

## Hazing

Policy Number: Hazing Policy 6.5.0

Responsible Department: Dean of Student Success

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### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Virginia Community College System (VCCS) students enrolled at Southwest Virginia Community College (hereinafter “the College”) are not subjected to hazing in any form. Hazing is inconsistent with the College’s commitment to fostering an environment of learning, respect, and personal dignity. In addition to being prohibited in accordance with this policy, hazing is also a crime in the Commonwealth of Virginia as set forth in Code of Virginia § 18.2-56.

This policy applies to all individuals and groups associated with the College, including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, administrators, coaches, advisors, athletic teams, clubs, bands, fraternities, sororities, and other student organizations, consistent with the definitions herein.

### II. Definitions

**Hazing:** Consistent with the Code of Virginia § 18.2-56 and federal law under the Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA), hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, committed by a person or persons against another person or persons, regardless of the willingness of such person or persons to participate that:

- Occurs on or off College property;
- Is committed in connection with initiation into, affiliation with, or continued maintenance of membership in any Student Organization, or Student Organization with New Members; and
- That causes or creates a risk of physical bodily injury or psychological injury, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the College or organization. Examples of physical or psychological injury include, but are not limited to, mental or physical harassment, bodily harm, humiliation, fatigue, degradation, ridicule, shock, or abuse.

**Advisor:** An individual employed by the College, whether directly or by contract, who acts in an official capacity as a sponsor to, advisor to, coach of, or supervisor of a student organization.

**Student:** Individuals enrolled in at least one course during the current semester for credit or non-credit (workforce) or enrolled for at least one course in the upcoming semester at the college.

**Student Organization:** As defined in the SCHA, an organization at the college (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports team, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the college, whether or not the organization is officially established or recognized by the institution.

**Student Organization with New Members:** As defined in the Code of Virginia § 23.1-819, this is a student organization officially recognized by an institution of higher education structured in such a way that upon invitation for membership, individuals do not automatically become members of such organization and have a period of time between invitation for membership and being initiated into membership. "Student Organization with New Members" does not include any varsity intercollegiate or club athletic team.

### **III. Prohibited Activities**

Hazing includes, but is not limited to:

- Paddling, whipping, beating, striking, or similar physical abuse;
- Kidnapping;
- All forms of physical activity which are used to harass, punish, or harm an individual, including pushups, calisthenics, running, or similar exercises
- Forced excursions or road trips;
- Confinement;
- Spraying, painting, or pelting with any substance;
- Burying in any substance;
- Nudity with the intent to cause embarrassment;
- Acting as a personal servant
- Sensory deprivation or exposure to uncomfortable elements, including putting irritating substances on body parts;
- Verbal abuse;
- Wearing of apparel that is conspicuous and/or indecent;
- Coerced consumption of alcohol or any other substance, legal or illegal;
- Being forced or coerced to engage in any kind of sexual activity; including forced nudity.
- Depriving students of sufficient sleep (six consecutive hours per day is normally considered to be a minimum);
- Coerced burning, branding, or tattooing any part of the body;
- Psychological hazing, defined as any act which is likely to:
  - Compromise an individual's dignity;
  - Cause an individual embarrassment or shame;
  - Cause an individual to be the object of malicious amusement or ridicule; or
  - Cause an individual emotional distress;
- Interrogating an individual in an intimidating or threatening manner;
- Misleading prospective members in an effort to convince them that they will not

become members unless they engage in hazing activities;

- Misleading prospective members into believing that they will be hurt during induction or initiation;
- Carrying any items (shields, paddles, bricks, hammers, etc.) that serve no constructive purpose or that are designed to punish or embarrass the carrier;
- Blindfolding and parading individuals in public areas for amusement or embarrassment, blindfolding and transporting in a motor vehicle, or privately conducting blindfolding activities, that serve no constructive purpose;
- Binding or restricting an individual in a way that would prohibit them from moving on their own;
- Requiring or suggesting that an individual obtain or possess items or complete tasks in an unlawful manner (e.g., stealing signs for a scavenger hunt); and
- Prohibiting an individual from social contact or from associating with other individuals or groups.
- Other actions that are likely to negatively impact academic performance or mental health.
- Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts.

#### **IV. Jurisdiction**

This policy applies to hazing activities occurring on both college-owned and non-college-owned properties. An act of hazing by an individual or student organization will be viewed by the college as a violation of the college's hazing policy, regardless of where the act of hazing took place.

#### **V. Consent**

An individual may not consent to being hazed. A person's willingness to participate in the hazing activity does not excuse or justify hazing. Consent cannot be used as a defense for violating the college's hazing policy.

#### **VI. Reporting and Disciplinary Procedures**

Acts of suspected hazing will be adjudicated through the student Code of Conduct. The disciplinary procedures, including the reporting process, adjudication, and potential sanctions for violators can be found in the student code of conduct here: [Student Code of Conduct - Southwest Virginia Community College](#).

As pursuant to Adam's Law (Code of Virginia, § 23.1-820); "the institution's disciplinary process is not to be considered a substitute for the criminal legal process." Incidents of hazing should therefore also be reported to local or college law enforcement officials.

In cases where hazing involves sexual harassment or assault, the matter will also be referred for investigation under the College's Title IX policy [Policy on Sexual Harassment](#) .

### **Immunity for Reporting Provision**

A bystander not involved in the hazing acts, who makes a good faith report of an act of hazing in advance of or during an incident of hazing that causes injury or is likely to cause injury to a person will receive disciplinary immunity for personal consumption of drugs or alcohol related to the incident.

### **Retaliation**

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, harass, discriminate, or take any other adverse action against any other person for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege, or because the person has made a report or filed a formal complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, live hearing, or any other process described in this or the related conduct policy. Action is generally deemed adverse if it would deter a reasonable person in the same circumstances from opposing practices prohibited by this policy. Retaliation may result in disciplinary or other action independent of the sanctions or interim measures imposed in response to the underlying allegations of violations of this policy.

### **Disclosure and Required Reporting**

Starting December 23, 2025, the institution will publicly report actual findings of violations of the institution's code of conduct or of federal or state laws pertaining to hazing that are reported to campus authorities or local law enforcement in accordance with Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA; H.R.5646) and the Code of Virginia (§ 23.1-822).

#### *Required Elements of the Report*

For each incident involving a student organization for which a finding of responsibility is issued relating to a hazing violation, the Hazing Transparency Report must include but is not limited to:

- 1) The name of such student or local organization;
- 2) A general description of the violation that resulted in a finding of responsibility, including:
  - a) whether the violation involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs,
  - b) the findings of the institution, and
  - c) any sanctions placed on the student organization by the institution, as applicable; and
- 3) The dates on which:
  - a) The incident was alleged to have occurred
  - b) The investigation into the incident was initiated by the institution or local law enforcement
  - c) The investigation ended with a finding that a hazing violation occurred by the institution or local law enforcement, and

- d) The institution provided notice to the student organization that the incident resulted in a hazing violation.
- 4) Any reports made pursuant to this policy shall not include personally identifiable information of any students involved in the hazing misconduct and shall be subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g).

#### *Annual Security Report*

Hazing incidents will also be included in the Annual Security Report (ASR; H.R.5646) when reported by campus security authorities or to local police agencies, the incident occurred within Clery Act geography; and the incident meets the Clery Act definition of hazing.

#### *Disclosure Timeline Requirements*

The Hazing Transparency Report will be released at least 10 calendar days before the start of fall and spring academic semesters. Reports will be available for a minimum of ten years on the college's website and student organizations/clubs page (or equivalent).

Current reports can be found on the [Hazing Transparency Report page](#).

### **VII. Education and Prevention**

The college will provide at least one research-informed, hazing prevention and awareness program designed to reach students, staff, and faculty annually.

Prevention efforts may include:

- Orientation programs
- Leadership workshops
- Bystander intervention training
- Awareness campaigns

Additionally, in compliance with Virginia's Adam's Law (§ 23.1-820), "each current member, new member, and potential new member of each Student Organization with a New Member process must attend hazing prevention training that includes extensive, current, and in-person education about hazing, the dangers of hazing, including alcohol intoxication, and hazing laws and institution policies and information explaining that the institution's disciplinary process is not to be considered a substitute for the criminal legal process. If a Student Organization with New Members has an advisor, such advisor shall attend such hazing prevention training."

### **VIII. Policy Distribution**

This hazing policy will be made available on the college website. The college may also distribute this policy through other outlets, including but not limited to, the student handbook, student organization materials, or college catalog.