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# Transforming the Culture of Hazing: A Research-Based Hazing Prevention Framework

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*Hazing impinges on campus safety, leadership development, and the missions of postsecondary institutions. There is limited research on hazing prevention and a need for a research-informed framework to guide prevention efforts. Based on findings from a research-to-practice initiative to develop comprehensive approaches to hazing prevention, this article describes a data-driven framework for campus hazing prevention with implications for practice.*

Hazing directly conflicts with missions of postsecondary institutions and is especially troubling because it occurs in group contexts—such as clubs, campus organizations, and athletic teams—that are living–learning laboratories for leadership development (Allan & Madden, 2008; Hoover, 1999). Therefore, efforts to eliminate hazing can support institutional missions, enhance campus safety, and promote environments conducive to the development of ethical leaders (Allan, Payne, & Kerschner, 2015). Campus leaders pledge a myriad of reforms to respond to hazing incidents including policy changes, elimination or suspension of fraternities, campus speakers addressing the dangers of hazing, and other educational programs. Yet, as evidenced by recent tragedies making national headlines (Dickerson, 2017), hazing persists.

Scholars have investigated hazing prevention (Allan, 2016; Allan et al., 2015), and Langford (2008) outlined a comprehensive approach based on prevention science. Yet, there is limited published research with evidence specific to hazing prevention and by extension, no research-based framework to guide campus hazing prevention (Allan, 2016; Langford, 2008). Without such a guide, campus leaders may invest time and resources to implement strategies with no research-base to support them.

We sought to fill this gap through the Hazing Prevention Consortium (HPC), a research-to-practice initiative designed to rigorously investigate comprehensive approaches to hazing prevention in higher education. Over three years, we gathered data from eight universities to track processes and promising practices for hazing prevention (Allan et al., 2015), which we draw upon here to present an emergent hazing prevention framework (HPF).

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## Relevant Literature

Research about hazing has expanded over the past two decades but empirical studies remain scant. A national survey of 11,482 college students across 52 different types of colleges and universities throughout the United States found that 55% of students participating in campus organizations experienced hazing, with those involved in varsity athletics (74%), fraternities and sororities (73%), club sports (64%), band and other performing arts organizations (56%) most likely to have experienced hazing. Some students experienced hazing in academic clubs, honor societies, and intramural sports, and 69% of students were aware of hazing in teams, clubs, or organizations other than their own (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012). Other examinations of hazing in postsecondary education yield similar results (e.g., Campo, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005; Hoover, 1999). Studies documented a range of hazing behaviors, including activities that cause physical and psychological harm, entail high-risk substance abuse, and involve sexual and gender violence (Allan & Madden, 2008; Finkel, 2002; Hoover, 1999), which tend to reinforce heteronormativity regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender identity (Anderson, McCormack, & Lee, 2012; Parks, Jones, Ray, Hughey, & Cox, 2015).

Despite negative outcomes, scholars noted that hazing persists. Some contend that students believe hazing creates group cohesion and cultivates committed group members (Campo et al., 2005; Cimino, 2011; Keating et al., 2005). Many students come to campus with prior experiences that may normalize hazing (Allan & Madden, 2012; Hoover & Pollard, 2000). Researchers have produced results incongruent with student beliefs, showing that hazing diminishes group cohesion and undermines relationships between peers (Johnson, 2011; Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer, 2007). Additionally, there is a documented lack of correspondence between students' experiences of hazing and their identification of those experiences as hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008). Allan (2016) considered hazing along a spectrum of behavior that is normalized and least likely to be recognized as hazing to extremely violent, readily recognizable forms of hazing that occur with less frequency. Our study differs from previous hazing research in that it provides the first data-driven framework to guide campus hazing prevention.

## Conceptual Framework

Public health frameworks that provide a lens for understanding recurring social and behavioral problems in community contexts are instructive for hazing prevention. Recognizing that human behavior is shaped by elements at multiple levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Dahlburg and Krug's (2002) social ecological model (SEM) portrays the interplay of dynamic systems at multiple levels of an organization. This model provides a mechanism for analyzing hazing and developing multi-level prevention efforts targeted to individual, group, institutional, and community levels in which hazing occurs. Langford (2008) used the SEM to inform a problem analysis to consider protective factors that reduce the likelihood of hazing and risk factors that increase the likelihood of hazing. This approach informs strategies to mitigate hazing risk factors while bolstering protective factors relative to each level of an institution's social ecology (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Langford, 2008; Langford & DeJong, 2008; Marchell, 2015; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevens, 2014). We applied the SEM to our hazing prevention initiatives to convey the complexity of forces that influence human behavior within organizational contexts like a colleges and universities.

The strategic prevention framework (SPF) (SAMHSA, 2017) is another public health approach developed for community-based substance use with implications for hazing prevention. The SPF consists of seven elements of prevention, including assessment, capacity, planning,

implementation, evaluation, cultural competence, and sustainability. The SPF provided a conceptual scaffold and practical guide for the comprehensive approach to hazing prevention developed in the HPC.

Additionally, the community readiness model (CRM) metrics for measuring “readiness” informed our work (Stanley, 2014). Designed to help communities strengthen prevention efforts related to substance abuse and HIV/AIDS, we adapted the CRM measures for community stakeholder attitudes, activities, knowledge, and resources and attention to the awareness, knowledge, climate, leadership, and resources to assess conditions for system-wide change that propel comprehensive hazing prevention. While we did not initially measure readiness, we applied tenets of the CRM to develop indicators for the HPF.

Principles of prevention science also informed our study. Nation et al. (2003) pointed to characteristics of effective prevention including use of varied teaching methods, sustained dosage of prevention efforts, theory-based programs, and programs with appropriate timing and customization to institutional characteristics and target populations. These principles may have limited application when focused myopically on fraternities with less or no attention to other groups and institutional stakeholders (Allan & Madden, 2008, 2012; Allan et al., 2015). While ample evidence supports the use of systematic and comprehensive approaches, this study responds to the need to investigate and translate those principles relative to hazing prevention.

## **Research Design and Methods**

The development of a research-based framework for hazing prevention is situated within our overall investigation designed in response to the question: What are the key components of comprehensive hazing prevention? This broad inquiry was informed by a second question: What promising practices and recurring barriers and challenges inform campus-based hazing prevention? Guided by these questions, the HPC research was designed as a nested case study where eight institutional cases were studied independently, and in aggregate, as a larger case.

### **Participants**

We recruited eight universities as participants in the HPC based on their expressed commitment to engage in comprehensive hazing prevention and data gathering. The group of universities include public, private, urban, rural, and suburban campuses located throughout the United States. Each university identified a campus professional to be a liaison to the HPC research team. HPC liaisons included staff in various professional roles (e.g., dean, director, coordinator, associate) and functional areas (e.g., Fraternity and Sorority Life, Student Affairs, Leadership Programs, Health and Wellness).

### **Data Collection**

We collected data throughout the three-year project. Interviews and group meetings conducted during the final project year (2016) comprise the primary sources of HPF data including the following:

**HPC Summit Meeting Notes and Presentation Slides.** HPC liaisons attended a two-day in-person meeting in 2015 and 2016 to share progress with implementing and evaluating hazing prevention strategies and to report on promising practices and barriers. Research assistants took notes to supplement information on slides presented by each campus, which we compiled for qualitative analysis.

**Self-Assessment Interview.** HPC liaisons completed a self-assessment rubric to measure campus growth relative to 60 indicators based on principles of prevention science, and the CRM, SEM, and SPF. Campuses participated in follow-up phone interviews (90–120 minutes) to discuss rubric scoring. We took interview notes and shared them with participants to ensure accuracy. We conducted 8 interviews with 16 campus professionals (some interviews included multiple colleagues).

## **Analysis**

Multiple researchers analyzed qualitative data from the HPC Summit meetings and rubric interviews through an iterative process using Dedoose software for qualitative data analysis. In Phase 1, the research team completed a primary deductive data coding informed by the SPF including broad topic areas such as assessment, planning, and sustainability. In Phase 2, one researcher reviewed all primary coding to ensure consistency across the data and completed a second phase of coding using an inductive approach to identify sub-themes within each primary code (e.g., promising practices, barriers) and discrepant data. The research team reviewed this second phase of coding for inter-rater reliability, and an external researcher completed an audit, reviewing Phase 1 coding and independently identifying sub-codes. The research team and external auditor made refinements based on discrepancies and identification of broader themes based on convergence of predominant codes. In Phase 3, the research team tracked emergent themes to identify and verify sources of evidence relative to each finding.

## **Credibility**

We took several steps to promote accuracy and mitigate potential bias in data analysis. We conducted inductive phases of analysis so as not to reiterate guiding principles and frameworks informing the HPC design. Detailed notes provided an audit trail, and we conducted member-checks throughout the process (e.g., sharing notes of phone consultations and interviews with participants to facilitate clarification or modification as needed). Multiple note-takers documented the HPC Summit meetings to promote accuracy and then reviewed all notes to generate a synthesis. We also used HPC liaison's Summit presentation slides as an additional source to ensure accuracy of research notes. Outside prevention experts reviewed the HPC self-assessment rubric and multiple researchers participated in the coding process to establish inter-rater reliability. Finally, an external researcher provided an analysis audit and feedback to enhance reliability in the two phases of qualitative coding and the final theme-building phase.

## **Findings**

Data analysis revealed themes related to distinct components of the HPF, including: commitment, capacity, assessment, planning, evaluation, sustainability, cultural competence, and implementation as depicted in [Figure 1](#). An overview of each component follows.

Figure 1. Hazing Prevention Framework (HPF), from Allan et al. (2018). © StopHazing & Clery Center. Reproduced by permission of StopHazing & Clery Center. Permission to reuse must be obtained from the rightsholder.



## Commitment

In this analysis, *commitment* emerged as a predominant theme. Commitment refers to dedication of resources and support structures that foster a campus climate conducive to hazing prevention. Our data indicate that campus leaders, working closely with staff, demonstrated commitment by upholding expectations and accountability for group environments to be free from humiliation and abuse (i.e., non-hazing), and thereby more inclusive and safe for student learning and development. A resounding theme in our data is that without such commitment, hazing prevention efforts may lack credibility and traction to transform campus hazing culture.

In a prominent sub-theme, participants associated the presence of commitment with the priorities and active engagement of campus senior leaders. They repeatedly noted that senior leaders need on-going information to invest in hazing prevention, as in this statement:

Being consistent with providing information about what we are doing on campus, ... letting senior staff ... listen to webinars, providing information...about what hazing is, [and] presentations about the [assessment] information we obtained ... All of those things helped demonstrate that this [hazing] isn't just happening when there's a problem but it's continuing to happen on our campus when there's not any problem. (Institution 4)

Participants reported that senior leaders with knowledge of hazing were more likely to engage and give legitimacy to hazing prevention by making public statements about the importance of the work. As one explained, "Our VP selected members of the university to serve and did a charge to the committee. It created credibility for the group and a sense of importance because it came from the VP" (Institution 4).

Participants also described the need for institutional policies and stable support structures to carry them out, and the roles that senior leaders played in this process:

Senior leaders ... make generalized statements about hazing and how as an institution we didn't condone it, zero tolerance ... Words that were important to say and hear, but was there anything behind them? I don't believe so ... Not to the degree we wanted for it to be a priority or primary issue for our student population (Institution 1).

According to participants, hazing policies are more impactful if senior leaders make them visible and establish accountability systems. The same participant explained that, “[Campus leaders view hazing [as] a student [problem] so Student Affairs is responsible for this issue. So it didn't gain traction with all leaders that this could be a really serious issue on our campus” (Institution 1). Administrators who relegate hazing to a single campus division replicate compartmentalized rather than multi-sector approaches to hazing, though evidence suggests hazing is a part of campus culture and can impact student academic performance. Through resource allocation and wide-spread accountability, senior leaders can instigate and model commitment to data-driven and comprehensive hazing prevention.

In summary, participants revealed interrelated support structures they considered vital to the commitment for campus hazing prevention. They discussed the importance of having senior leaders who are informed about campus hazing; clearly communicated institutional mandates to address hazing prevention; institution-wide hazing policies and response procedures that are aligned and targeted to all campus constituents (e.g., students *and* staff, faculty, parents and alumni); funding dedicated to hazing prevention; and transparent enforcement and accountability for hazing violations communicated widely through dedicated website pages. Though staff worked to enact these steps, data indicated the significant role that buy-in and engagement from senior leaders could play in lending credibility to hazing prevention.

## Capacity

For most HPC participants, the *capacity* to cultivate hazing prevention efforts and commitment evolved through training to expand their knowledge and skill in prevention. Capacity refers to human and structural resources to implement comprehensive campus hazing prevention. Human resources include expertise and skills possessed or acquired through training and networking, along with the motivation and willingness to be involved in prevention. Structural resources refer to campus infrastructure—including staff, time allocation, and hazing prevention coalitions—that support hazing prevention.

Participant accounts of key aspects of capacity building include: presence of one or multiple campus professionals with dedicated time for hazing prevention, a hazing prevention coalition charged by senior leaders and trained to implement campus-wide hazing prevention, and engagement in the coalition of members from across institutional divisions (e.g., athletics, fraternity/sorority life, student activities, health and wellness, student leadership, student conduct) and stakeholder groups (e.g., students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni). Data underscored how capacity intertwines with coalition building. One participant stated, “The establishment of the coalition was key in terms of unlocking consistent groups to address the topic, and strategies came out of that. The coalition is the hub for building capacity and then it reaches out to others” (Institution 2).

Participants described measures to ensure that stakeholders from across campus divisions had multiple opportunities to gain knowledge and skill in hazing prevention. For instance, one

participant explained, “The Coalition made it so folks other than Greek Life were talking about hazing prevention as an important issue” (Institution 3). While participants cited the need to train coalition members, they also described collaborative coalition work as itself a capacity building process. For one professional, the coalition’s “process of revising policies and procedures boosts awareness. We’re finding out things we should be doing ... so it increases our understanding of the problem and of prevention approaches” (Institution 4). Commenting on variables that escalate hazing prevention, another participant explained that, “If it was left up to individual offices, [hazing] would get lost, so having [designated staff] helped develop ... focus on hazing prevention on our campus” (Institution 4). The data also pointed to peer learning as important in capacity. While the HPC emphasized capacity building through prevention coaching, it simultaneously brought campus professionals together to learn from one another:

It really helped to ... hear others talk about their coalition, who should be involved, how to assess it ... I learned from being a part of the network with other schools, what worked for them and guidance about what to expect in the coalition and what we should be focusing ... on (Institution 4).

As in the SPF, the capacity component that emerged from our data connotes an on-going process of resource allocation, staffing, sustained relationship building, coalition-based partnerships, and continual education to anchor prevention in research and evidence-based practices. This investigation affirms the importance of engaging stakeholders from throughout the campus community. Highlighting the value of peer and cross-institutional learning, this study illuminated distinctive characteristics of hazing prevention capacity in campus settings.

## Assessment

While capacity drives the human resource aspect of hazing prevention, *assessment* of campus hazing culture and climate helps invested stakeholders apply principles of prevention in context. HPC members participated in qualitative and quantitative hazing assessments, the impact of which emerged as prominent theme in our data analysis.

Alluding to the purpose of assessment, a participant noted, “Until you shine a light on each of the areas that need work, you don’t know how much work there is to do” (Institution 5). The assessment process helps campus stakeholders understand the problem of hazing in their own campus context: “Before we could do any of this, we needed data. The survey was the biggest catalyst for how we create programming ... It was amazing to see in print where we were, and where we could go, based on data. That was key for sure” (Institution 1). Participants described multiple methods to capture data to identify who, what, when, and where of campus hazing. Their accounts support the assertion that since hazing is shaped by institutional culture, gathering data on the experiences and attitudes of stakeholders, improves understanding in a given context.

Data also suggested a broad scope of assessment for hazing prevention. Along with data from constituents, assessment can include data on campus incidents and responses to hazing. Participants perceived data sharing with campus constituents as a major catalyst for increasing visibility and understanding of hazing, building support, and targeting priority areas for hazing prevention. One participant explained that through assessment data, “I was able to show specific details about student behaviors and the number of students who had knowledge of what hazing is. That really changed our perception of how important it is to think about hazing prevention on our campus” (Institution 4).

Assessment processes described in the data include: surveys and qualitative data collection (e.g., focus groups, document analysis) on experiences and attitudes among students, staff, alumni,



and families; tracking of hazing incidents, investigations, sanctions, and media responses; environmental scans to determine hazing risk and protective factors; evidence-based identification of groups at higher risk for hazing; and wide dissemination of data to inform and engage stakeholders and guide strategy implementation. In sum, the HPF assessment component guides practitioners to gather information to tailor hazing prevention to their context and can be a vital tool for promoting widespread engagement.

## Planning

Participant accounts of assessment dovetailed with discussions of *planning* as a key component of effective hazing prevention. Ideally, assessment informs data-driven planning led by a hazing prevention coalition. As described by participants, planning involves use of assessment data to improve understanding of the problem and to develop strategic and targeted implementation strategies within a given context.

Many participants reported that prior to the HPC, their campus often responded to hazing in a reactive, short-term manner rather than proactive, with intentional and data-informed planning. “Now we’re using data to inform decision making and looking into different core strategies,” (Institution 2) explained a participant. After working with assessment data, another said, “Now [we] better understand there are certain [groups] more prone to hazing and we can focus our work more deliberately on those units” (Institution 6). A planning process that includes measurable goals helps campus stakeholders report on successes and opportunities to improve.

One participant described the benefits and challenges of collaborative coalition planning: “Forming a strategic planning work group can improve planning capacity. It’s best to work in a smaller group at first and then ... get feedback from a larger group. Proposing potential plans to stakeholders works best. It takes a lot longer to come to consensus than you would have thought” (Institution 7). While a planning process takes time, it also gives collective purpose to the work according to another participant: “We do problem analysis and collaborate on all prevention areas. If we’re not solving a problem why bother? And if we don’t collaborate we can’t get things done. So this [a collaborative planning process] disrupts the siloed approach” (Institution 5).

As in the SPF, the planning theme from this study included prioritization of risk and protective factors; identification of concrete goals, proposed interventions, and expected outcomes. Highlighting the interconnections between HPF components, participants perceived that both assessment and planning support informed decisions, activities designed to achieve designated goals, and tailoring of strategies to address campus conditions and dynamics. Moreover, they reported that transparent sharing of data and plans helped generate focus, attention to goals, and increased accountability and engagement in prevention. Planning processes also guided participants to consider levels of their campus ecology using the SEM to differentiate strategies for individuals, groups, the institution, and broader constituencies beyond their campus.

## Evaluation

Our analysis supports inclusion of *evaluation* as a key framework component that includes formal documentation of the process and effectiveness of prevention efforts. A majority of participants indicated that prior to the HPC, their campus did not evaluate hazing prevention strategies, suggesting this may be an area for improvement on other campuses.

According to participants, evaluation entails methods to measure characteristics, delivery, and impact of hazing prevention strategies. As one participant explained, “You have to look at

what you're doing to see if it works and that's what we're looking for here—evidence-based solutions” (Institution 2). Our data point to a range of evaluation activities, including collection and analysis of data about programs and impact along with engagement of institutional research staff and faculty to assist in evaluation design, implementation, and data analysis. Participants used evaluation data to improve effectiveness, set and refine prevention goals, report on successes and improvement, encourage constituent engagement, and increase funding for prevention programs. They perceived that widespread dissemination of data demonstrated continued institutional commitment to hazing prevention. For most HPC participants, attention to evaluation was predicated on a desire for strategies with evidence of efficacy. As one participant explained: “The driver for us was the investment to understand what was happening...and the motivation to take a problem and see what impact we could have on it” (Institution 6).

A comment by a participant that “the evaluation process is a long one,” underscored another persistent theme in the data. Evaluation is a sustained, iterative process that involves testing and continued refinement of strategies and instruments. During HPC Summit discussions, many participants noted that it might take several cycles of evaluation to arrive at a solid evidence base to support a given strategy. While aware of this long-term process, participants also recognized that regular evaluation provided immediate insights for refining strategies. Given the long-term nature of hazing evaluation, our data on evaluation and the evidence base for the HPF is necessarily emergent.

## Sustainability

HPC members also highlighted the importance of *sustainability* for hazing prevention. They described sustainability as a process of maintaining commitment and momentum through persistent cultivation of relationships, resources, and communication. “I think it was as simple as conversations,” explained one participant. “Keeping it at the forefront. Even if there were times where we felt like there wasn't a lot of action, we were still keeping it on that radar, making sure people didn't lose sight of it and the need to continue” (Institution 6).

Some participants noted that sustaining hazing prevention efforts correlated with having campus hazing data and sharing it with senior leaders. “The funding changed ... when we were able to show the ... assessment data ... At least now we have a presence so funds are easier to get than they were before” (Institution 4). Some described strong relationships with students and campus staff and professionals as vital to ensuring continuity over time:

The silver bullet is having the key staff members there to keep it moving. I see that most definitively with [unit]. This is their director's passion so it drives it even more. They are the example for hazing prevention on our campus. Not everyone wants to [be] the poster child for making progress in [hazing prevention]. But the staff there have taken a problem over the past three to four years now and turned the tides (Institution 6).

Whether they are senior leaders, student leaders, or staff colleagues, participants reported these champions play critical roles in sustainability.

Participants shared perspectives on promising strategies for sustainability. These included dedicated resources for hazing prevention (e.g., staff positions, staff time, funds), transition and training to maintain momentum and leadership amidst staff turnover, clearly articulated and highly visible anti-hazing position statements to lend credibility and keep hazing “on the radar” for all community members, sharing of assessment data to promote accurate understanding and garner engagement, and opportunities for hazing prevention collaborations with other institutions.

While some spoke about promising advances made with access to funding, staffing, adequate time devoted to hazing, or partnerships across divisions, significantly, all participants regularly emphasized persistent barriers to hazing prevention: “High visibility cases boost leadership engagement but when leaders leave and students transition out, the urgency dissipates and it can be difficult to maintain campus engagement in hazing prevention” (Institution 7). For some, lack of resources and connections hindered forward momentum: “When our HPC funding is done,” explained a participant, “There’s no funding for [hazing prevention] anymore. It’s an unfunded project. It’s not a mandate but its an unfunded expectation” (Institution 5). Further demonstrating the connection between sustainability and commitment, one participant described a paradox (“we” refers to the institution and its leaders):

Even if we had a crisis, I don’t think we’d fundraise to support hazing prevention. I don’t think they’ll funnel dollars our way. It’s indicative of the [institutional] culture and it’s a PR piece. We don’t want to admit that [hazing prevention] is something we want to fundraise to support. There are other issues we want to fundraise to support, but hazing we’ll support through our own budget. (Institution 2)

This investigation draws attention to the challenges of leveraging buy-in for hazing prevention while underscoring the importance of dedicated staff time, relationship-building, flexibility, and collaboration to sustain hazing prevention. Our data suggest that sustainability builds on the momentum generated in other areas of the HPF, though as noted previously, commitment and capacity are closely linked to sustainability.

### **Cultural Competence**

Like sustainability, *cultural competence* is an orientation with implications for all aspects of hazing prevention. In the HPF, cultural competence refers to understanding sociopolitical and other identity-based characteristics of students, student groups, and of the institutions in which they are situated. Some HPC participants noted having expertise in this area and regular staff participation in cultural competency trainings, but a majority reported that cultural competence was often overlooked relative to hazing: “I’m the only one with some understanding [of hazing cultural competence]. I don’t think the staff have a solid understanding of this” (Institution 8). As explained by another participant, “We were dealing with some serious bias related incidents to students of Color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (students), which lead to an ... investigation, and that lead to more capacity and attention to cultural competence training. But that was related to those incidents and not to hazing” (Institution 2). Overall, data from this investigation suggest that cultural competence is an area for further development on many college campuses.

Participant accounts of cultural competence include efforts to ensure cultural inclusivity in hazing prevention; acknowledgement of broader social systems, sociocultural identities, and power dynamics that shape hazing within a given context; use of an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1993) to shape hazing prevention approaches; coalitions that reflect the cultural diversity of the institution; and attention to institutional histories, traditions, and demographics when developing hazing prevention; and avoidance of “one size fits all” approaches. As in the SPF, cultural competence interfaces with all steps in the prevention process. Participants viewed fostering cultural competency in hazing prevention as an orientation that entails specific training to develop understanding about how sociocultural identity differences and power dynamics shape hazing behaviors, experiences, and outcomes.

## Implementation

Another prominent theme from the data, *implementation*, refers to a collection of specific approaches considered particularly promising for hazing prevention. Following the SPF, the HPC originally included policies, response protocols, and visible anti-hazing statements as core strategies for implementation. However, participant accounts suggested instead that these actions related to institutional commitment through active leadership to prevent hazing from occurring. For implementation, HPC participants focused instead on trainings and information sharing targeted to students, staff, faculty, parents, and alumni. As such, the HPC implementation component emphasizes activities that foster hazing prevention knowledge and skill development. Significantly, implementation often related to educating senior leaders about how to demonstrate institutional commitment and staff regarding their roles and accountability in hazing prevention.

Grounded in prevention science in other fields, core HPC implementation strategies included: trainings for basic understanding of hazing, bystander intervention, and ethical leadership development; social norms messaging; and promotion of healthy group cohesion without hazing (Berkowitz, 2010; Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011; Langford, 2008; Potter, Stapleton, & Moynihan, 2008). To supplement in-person trainings, other strategies included dissemination of newsletters, poster campaigns, products branded with anti-hazing messages, and student-designed leadership and education events.

While an extensive treatment of strategy implementation is beyond the scope of this article, our analysis highlights several key principles including: integration and alignment of strategies and effective communication about them, involvement of target audiences in strategy design to inform relevance and efficacy, implementation of multiple strategies targeted to all stakeholders (e.g., students, staff, faculty, parents, alumni) at multiple levels of the SEM, and adapting strategies to unique campus contexts while also maintaining fidelity to validated, evidence-based strategies.

Participants voiced a recurring theme that more than simply delivering an intervention, practitioners have most effect when they nest and align prevention strategies within a campus-wide prevention orientation and when implementation fortifies other components of the framework. One participant conveyed the web of implementation variables and priorities while discussing a decision to focus on staff, rather than students:

If all staff are mandatory reporters but there's no mandatory training, what's the likelihood that staff report? Without training, there's a lot that gets overlooked ... We took an approach in which we'd educate staff more than students. Based on [our assessment data], we knew hazing was ingrained and tied to campus tradition, and it seemed a better use of time and energy to educate staff ... serving as advisors and resources than to dedicate time to training students. (Institution 1)

This statement reflects the use of assessment data and planning to make intentional, strategic decisions regarding target audiences. In other words, when participants used a comprehensive approach, their strategy implementation was synergistic with other components of the hazing prevention process.

## Limitations

Though the eight institutions included in this investigation represent public and private, rural, urban, and suburban campuses throughout the United States, this study may be limited by their particular characteristics. Thus, a larger study involving a greater range of institutions is certainly warranted. Further, findings from this investigation emerge from experiential evidence and

perceptions of the participants and subject matter experts in the HPC and should be interpreted accordingly.

### Implications and Recommendations

This study delineates a framework with interconnected components, each fueling others in a non-linear progression. One implication of this research is that most aspects of the SPF (i.e., assessment, capacity, planning, evaluation, sustainability, and cultural competence) apply to hazing prevention in a campus context. However, several aspects of our HPC differ or elevate the importance of specific SPF components.

Most significantly, while commitment is important in community settings, for hazing prevention in highly structured, complex, and liability-conscious educational institutions, our findings clearly suggest it is essential. In fact, the data from this investigation indicate that commitment often anchors other components of the framework. We have made the case that hazing is an impediment to campus safety and the cultivation of future leaders and ethically minded citizens. Its potential to damage individual students and families and its drain on resources through student attrition, loss of staff time, and negative media attention make this issue critically relevant for senior leaders positioned to lay the groundwork for campus climates inhospitable to hazing. Thus, hazing prevention, according to our data, is a *leadership issue*.

This finding has immediate strategic implications for policy and practice. We recommend that campus professionals begin this work by taking steps forward based on the human and structural supports in place at the time. This might mean developing a hazing prevention coalition, refining policy and response procedures, or collaborating with colleagues to draft a hazing prevention webpage for the campus. However, in the absence of commitment demonstrated by significant senior leader engagement, these processes may not have the consistent messaging and enforcement needed to be effective in the long term.

According to this study, engaging senior leaders early in the process—by informing them about campus hazing data (or the need for such data) and resource allocation for sustainable prevention—is perceived to improve the efficacy of hazing prevention overall. For this reason, we consider commitment to be foundational to our framework. Yet, the absence of exemplary commitment should not excuse action by campus professionals seeking to prevent hazing. Rather, we recommend beginning or continuing the urgent work of hazing prevention in other areas, knowing that developing campus commitment is vital and needs on-going cultivation.

Another prominent implication of this study is that comprehensive hazing prevention relies on a campus-wide orientation. The common association of hazing prevention with fraternity and sorority life compartmentalizes a problem that touches students, staff, faculty, parents, and alumni in their many modes of engagement on campus, whether related to academic, recreational, residential, or social arenas of interaction. As with the prevention principles and models guiding our research, this study affirms that for hazing, establishing expectations, accountability, and engagement among stakeholders and campus sectors is likely a promising practice for propelling the culture change needed to prevent hazing.

An institution-wide approach can simultaneously impact alignment of hazing prevention measures with educational mission. Hazing takes place in group settings that are living-learning laboratories for individual development and leadership. This study indicates that linking hazing prevention with institutional missions to promote citizenship and ethical leadership creates opportunities for students to learn to think critically and gain valuable life skills that also support

engagement in alternatives to hazing. Moreover, hazing prevention efforts that incorporate cultural competence align with common institutional goals to promote inclusivity while ensuring relevance to campus contexts.

Lastly, findings from this investigation of the multiple components of hazing prevention underscore that this is a culture change phenomenon that unfolds through short and long-term iterative processes that require coordination, continuity, creativity, and flexibility to adapt to transitions that come with staff and student turnover. Multiple lenses focused on goals specific to risk and protective factors, identified at multiple levels of the SEM, fortify the approach. Thus, as noted, it is not enough to only focus on athletes or Greek organizations without at least a long-term plan to engage other stakeholder groups. Nor is it advisable to only focus on students without informing and building skills among staff, faculty, parents, and alumni who mentor and care for them.

## Conclusion

Our findings contribute new knowledge to the field by delineating a data-driven framework for hazing prevention to serve as a practical guide as campus professionals work to implement and track progress toward comprehensive hazing prevention. The HPF is a vital next step for building a research base for hazing prevention, and we plan to continue our line of inquiry by elaborating detailed findings for each HPF component in subsequent papers. As with the development of early knowledge in any field, further research is needed for testing and refinement. While this article reports on the HPF in a postsecondary context, we plan to test it in high school settings and expect to examine its transferability to other institutional settings as well.

By providing a research-based framework for hazing prevention, this investigation fills a gap in the literature and builds momentum for further growth in the study of hazing and its prevention. As college campuses continue to face serious consequences from hazing and grapple with the challenges of prevention, a data-driven framework can provide a credible roadmap and focus for campus professionals charting a course for hazing prevention—a path that will strengthen campus safety and contribute to developing healthy group membership and leadership experiences for college students.

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