

## **Elms College Hazing Prevention Policy**

In compliance with the Federal Stop Campus Hazing Act and the Massachusetts Hazing Law, Elms College strictly prohibits any acts of hazing.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth Elms College's approach to preventing, reporting, and responding to Hazing and to ensure compliance with applicable laws, with the goal of creating a campus community that is safer and intolerant of Hazing.

### **Covered Parties**

The Policy applies to all students and all student groups, whether a recognized or unrecognized student organization.

### **Defined Terms**

#### **Hazing under the Federal Stop Campus Hazing Act:**

“Any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that (I) is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and (II) causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury.”

Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to: Physical abuse (e.g., beating, striking, branding, or exposure to harmful substances), forced consumption of any substance (e.g., food, alcohol, drugs), sleep deprivation, forced isolation, or extreme calisthenics, sexual acts or lewd behavior; activities causing mental stress, fear of bodily harm, or public humiliation

Note: A person cannot legally consent to being hazed under Massachusetts and federal law.

### **Hazing Violation**

A responsible finding that a person (s) or student organization has engaged in hazing.

## **Student Organization**

Student Organizations are groups consisting of two or more Elms College students, regardless of whether the group is officially recognized. This includes but is not limited to clubs, athletic teams (varsity or club), student government.

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## **College Policy**

Elms College is committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment where all members can socialize, build community, and enjoy shared experiences free from hazing.

### **I. Hazing**

Elms College strictly prohibits all forms of hazing. Hazing is also prohibited by Massachusetts and federal law. No Covered Parties shall engage in or participate in hazing.

### **II. Notice Requirements**

#### **A. Student Organizations**

Elms College offices, such as Student Activities, Engagement, or Athletics, and Dean of Students have established the following procedures:

At the time of registration or annually, students will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the Massachusetts Hazing Law,
- Distribute it to all members, candidates, or applicants,
- Confirm understanding and agreement to comply.

The acknowledgment will be retained in the organization's permanent file.

### **III. Reporting Requirements**

Any community member who knows, witnesses, or is informed about hazing must report the incident to Elms College.

Under Massachusetts law, if a person is present at the scene of a hazing crime, they must report it to law enforcement as soon as reasonably practicable, unless doing so would endanger themselves or others. Failure to report may result in a fine of up to \$1,000.

#### **A. Process for Reporting Hazing**

##### **1. Emergency Reporting**

If the hazing is life-threatening, violent, or presents immediate danger:

- Call 911 or local law enforcement and Elms College Public Safety at 413-265-2278
- Then, report the incident using the confidential online form: [Incident Report Form](#)

##### **2. Non-Emergency Reporting**

If the situation is not an emergency, submit a report using the online form:

[Incident Report Form](#)

### **IV. Investigations**

Responsibility for investigating hazing depends on the individuals involved.

#### **A. Hazing Involving Students**

Handled by the Office of the Dean of Students under the procedures of the Code of Student Conduct found in the Elms College Student Handbook.

If criminal behavior is involved, local law enforcement may also investigate.

Covered Parties and Student Organizations found in violation may face disciplinary action.

## **V. Disciplinary Process**

### **i. Students**

Adjudicated through the Office of the Dean of Students or designee under the Student Code of Conduct.

### **ii. Organizations**

Handled by the overseeing department (e.g., Athletics, Student Activities) in consultation with the Dean of Students. Possible consequences include loss of college recognition, college affiliation removal, or other sanctions.

### **iii. Others and Non-Affiliates**

Incidents involving individuals not affiliated with Elms College may be referred to law enforcement or otherwise addressed as deemed appropriate by the College. This includes alumni or any external advisors to student organizations.

## **VII. Recordkeeping**

Records related to hazing compliance and violations must be maintained for **five (5) calendar years**.

Copies of the law will be reissued as necessary to ensure compliance.

## **VIII. Publishing Incidents of Hazing**

### **A. Campus Hazing Transparency Report**

**Elms College** will publish a report of hazing violations committed by recognized student organizations starting December 23, 2025, covering incidents since July 1, 2025. It will be updated biannually and available on an official college website.

#### **Contents of the Report:**

- Name of the organization
- Date(s) of violation
- Description of the violation

No Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be included, in compliance with FERPA.

### **B. Clery Annual Security Report**

Starting October 1, 2026, hazing statistics will be included in Elms College's Clery Annual Security Report overseen by the Director of Public Safety.

## **C. Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education**

Elms College must annually certify that it:

- Informs all students and student organizations about the Massachusetts Hazing Laws (§§17–18),
- Has a disciplinary policy for addressing hazing.

The Dean of Students is responsible for filing this certification to the state of Massachusetts.

### **Ways to Foster Positive Organization Experiences**

At Elms College, we believe in fostering inclusive, respectful, and empowering environments within all student organizations. It is important to create meaningful and challenging experiences for new members that build trust, unity, and leadership without harm.

Hazing endangers students physically, emotionally, and legally, and it directly conflicts with the Core Values of Elms College; Faith, Community, Justice, and Excellence.

Below are some ways to prevent hazing and promote a positive experience:

#### **1. Fostering Unity**

*Example Activities:*

- Organize a group community service project to give back to the Chicopee or surrounding area.
- Visit a ropes course or participate in team-building workshops to enhance communication and trust.
- Collaborate on a team or organization joint social event with another student organization or team.

#### **2. Developing Problem-Solving Skills**

*Example Activities:*

- Facilitate discussions among new and current members about the organization's challenges (e.g., recruitment, engagement, academics), and brainstorm practical solutions together.

#### **3. Building Leadership**

*Example Activities:*

- Encourage members to participate in campus-wide leadership opportunities and Student Life programs.
- Involve new members in planning events or joining committees.

- Establish a peer mentorship system to guide and inspire future leaders.
- Invite Elms alumni or community leaders to share their leadership journeys.

#### **4. Instilling a Sense of Belonging**

*Example Activities:*

- Host bonding events like group outings to local plays, sporting events, or service opportunities.
- Organize a “membership reflection night” or candlelight ceremony where members share what the organization means to them.

#### **5. Supporting Academic Success**

*Example Activities:*

- Promote use of Elms College academic support services, tutoring, and advising.
- Establish regular group study hours.
- Invite faculty or guest speakers to lead sessions on study skills, time management, and exam preparation.

#### **6. Honoring Organizational History**

*Example Activities:*

- Invite alumni or founding members to speak about the group’s history, traditions, and achievements.
- Create a digital archive or timeline of the organization’s milestones.

#### **7. Supporting Career Development**

*Example Activities:*

- Partner with the Elms College Career Center to host resume-writing workshops and mock interviews.
- Organize career panels or networking events with professionals and alumni.

#### **8. Engaging with the Community**

*Example Activities:*

- Participate in service projects, food drives, or campus clean-up efforts.
  - Plan a fundraiser to support a local charity or Elms College initiative.
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Effective June 23, 2025

If you need support or have questions about ways to positively engage your organization, please reach out to the Office of Student Engagement or the Dean of Students for guidance, resources, and training opportunities.