

Hazing Prevention: It's Everyone's Responsibility across the state of Florida

By Germaine Graham, Ph.D.



In 2014, nine of the state universities in the State of Florida implemented the online course "Hazing Prevention: It's Everyone's Responsibility." There was a commitment by the officials in Student Affairs to administer this educational tool to students across the state in a variety of settings.

Several schools targeted populations such as fraternities, sororities, marching bands, registered student organizations and sports clubs. A few of the universities, made the module a necessary component for all incoming freshmen and transfer students. One university made the commitment to target their entire student population. Overall, across the state, many students have been exposed to valuable information and resources about hazing and hazing prevention.

The efforts to get students to complete the module have been very diverse across campuses. Here are some of the methods that are being used to get students to complete the online course:

Mandatory Orientation and Registration

Requirement- Freshmen and transfer students are required to take online educational modules during orientation or before attending classes. Most campuses require courses on alcohol, academic integrity and sexual assault. Hazing prevention has been added to this list of requirements. The completion of this module is linked to registration holds. This method at least ensures that students are exposed to the definition of hazing, campus policies, state laws and available resources.

New Member Education Tool- Potential and new members of fraternities and sororities gain information about hazing before the pledging process begins. The module teaches this group of students what behaviors constitute hazing as well as the related consequences of participating.

Orientation for Executive Officers in Registered Clubs and Organizations- Students who have been selected or elected as officers in clubs and organizations on campus receive an orientation before the academic year starts. This orientation includes information on student policies, use of facilities, student government funding, conduct regulations and hazing prevention. Leaders are required to complete the module as a part of this orientation. Reserving campus facilities and using resources are connected to completion of the module.

Classroom requirements- Instructors in leadership, civic engagement and service-related classes require students to complete the online module during the first week of classes as an engagement assignment. This assignment complements the curriculum developed using the social change model of leadership. Students learn leadership theory through the lenses of individual, group and community values.

National Hazing Prevention Week- Campus groups, organizations, faculty and staff partner during this nationally recognized week to develop creative programs that involve students taking the online module. When the module is complete, students show their commitment to hazing prevention by signing the online pledge and campus banners.

Completion Certificates- Campus vendors provide incentives to students in exchange for proof of completion of modules

Targeted groups- Advisors encourage targeted student groups such as band members, sports clubs and ROTC to take the module. Completion is due largely to the influence and guidance of advisors.

So far on campuses in Florida, over 40,000 students have completed the module and initial data shows that this educational tools has made some impact on

students' perception of hazing and willingness to participate or intervene.

- Approximately **91%** of the students who have taken the module indicate their knowledge and awareness about hazing has changed as a result of taking this online course.
- Close to **80%** of students reported that they feel more inclined to prevent hazing on their campuses.
- Before taking the module, **62%** of students who have taken the module indicated that would report hazing if they witnessed it. After taking the module **87%** of the students stated that they would report it.

These are some of the results that show that not only freshmen but more experienced students on campuses can increase their knowledge of hazing prevention. This supports the strategy of hazing prevention education and training. When students are provided knowledge of the behaviors of hazing, definitions, statutes, policies and consequences, they are able to make informed decisions when faced with the dilemmas and pressures of hazing culture. When exposed to resources, students become empowered and may feel better equip to recognize, report and confront hazing.

There is much more work to be done in hazing prevention. The online module gives students a good introduction to hazing prevention on campus and is certainly not the only method used. The state of Florida schools are committed to developing strategies that continue to equip students in addressing hazing. Among those are re-administration of the module at later times in students' development and maturation, resources in leadership and ethical decision making and bystander training.

Hazing Prevention is truly everyone's responsibility and our institutions have certainly answered the call and is committed to the work.

About the Author

Germaine Graham is the Associate Director of The LEAD Scholars Academy at the University of Central Florida, the 2nd largest university in the nation. LEAD Scholars is a program dedicated to helping students develop their leadership abilities through course-work, service learning and campus engagement.

Graham came to UCF in 2001 as a staff psychologist at Counseling and Psychological Services. Although working at the Counseling Center allowed her to work with students one on one, she found herself wanting to work with students on a larger scale. Now, as Associate Director of the LEAD Scholars Academy, one of the largest programs at UCF, she is able to do so. Graham helped develop a new curriculum that includes service learning opportunities and a more comprehensive program focusing on leadership education. As a result of these changes, LEAD continues to grow; approximately 600 students apply to the program every year. She was also proactive in hiring faculty members for LEAD and creating a leadership studies minor and certificate program at UCF.

She has received many awards from registered student organizations including the Black History Month Legacy Award, Maya Angelou Award, and the Multi-cultural Student Center Faculty Woman of the Year Award. Graham has also received several awards from her department, Student Development and Enrollment Services, but she believes mentoring students has been her biggest accomplishment.

Graham has focused her efforts on hazing prevention and education in the past 3 years of her work at UCF. She serves as the chairperson of the UCF Hazing Prevention and Education Committee and campus liaison for the National Hazing Prevention Research Consortium. As a member of the consortium, she has worked with consultants of StopHazing.org in developing and analyzing core prevention strategies for college students. She also serves as the campus leader for the SUS online hazing prevention education program "Hazing Prevention: It's Everyone's Responsibility." She has worked for 3 years with AliveTek and HazingPrevention.Org in the university implementation and administration of this module to over 40,000 students in the state of Florida.