Fraternity kicked off campus for hazing

By Sara Amato

IU announced Wednesday that the Beta Iota chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity will be closed for two years after the University discovered the fraternity violated a hazing policy.

Dean of Students Dick McKaig announced the fraternity’s expulsion from campus, which cannot be appealed, after consulting the national headquarters of Alpha Epsilon Pi, alumni and student officers from the group. McKaig said he spoke to several undergraduate members of the fraternity, who admitted to hazing but claimed the individuals involved have since moved out of the house.

“They believed the chapter would be allowed to continue if these activities never happened again,” McKaig said.

The Campus Student Organization Ethics Board conducted a hearing in November and made a recommendation to McKaig, according to an IU press release. The board found the chapter in violation of the Student Organization Code which prohibits hazing. The code defines hazing as “any conduct that subjects another person, whether physically, mentally, emotionally or psychologically, to anything that may endanger, abuse, degrade or intimidate the person as a condition of association with a group or organization, regardless of the person’s consent or lack of consent.”

McKaig said some of Alpha Epsilon Pi’s hazing consisted of sleep deprivation, late night activities, “fighting fear” by intentionally scaring pledges and leading members to remote areas and making them walk back to campus. McKaig said because hazing is “an underground illegal activity,” it’s difficult to know what is going on and where it’s happening.

Max Newman, Judaic chair of Alpha Epsilon Pi, said because his four brothers went to IU and were brothers in Alpha Epsilon Pi, that’s all he’s known.

"Now I’m a brother and it has been taken away from me,” he said. "It’s something I’ve looked forward to since I was 3 years old."

When asked if the hazing allegations were true, Newman replied, “What is hazing?” Newman explained that because the definition of hazing is broad, it’s hard to know exactly what it encompasses.

Newman said there was a period of time at Alpha Epsilon Pi when things were bad in terms of hazing, and now the University is punishing members who had nothing to do with it.

“There’s a big gray area with hazing and it’s been used against us,” he said.

According to a written statement by Alpha Epsilon Pi, the University brought these allegations to the attention of the fraternity in October 2007, including incidents dating back several years. The fraternity’s student executives instituted a new judicial board with the purpose of establishing procedures to address and enforce chapter rules related to these infractions.
After discussing possible solutions with the Alpha Epsilon Pi National Organization and Beta Iota chapter alumni, they decided to implement new guidelines to ensure future compliance with all University standards.

As a result of the infractions against the fraternity, the Beta Iota chapter suspended 29 members who were involved.

With the negative spotlight on Alpha Epsilon Pi, the fraternity members said they hope they can continue to strengthen the organization’s infrastructure, and they look forward to the fraternity becoming a valuable member of the IU campus, according to the fraternity’s statement.

“I look forward to working with Dean McKaig in the future with regards to Greek cases such as these,” said Maxwell Greengrass, president of the Beta Iota chapter. Greengrass declined to comment further.

The members of the fraternity, located at 1412 N. Jordan Ave., will be allowed to stay on campus until the end of the academic year, provided no reports of violence or negative activity are brought to the University’s attention, McKaig said.

The expulsion takes effect immediately, and the University no longer recognizes the chapter as a campus organization, McKaig said in a press release. The members will not be permitted to participate in University-sponsored activities, such as Little 500, under the name Alpha Epsilon Pi.

The chapter will remain closed until 2010.