

Alpha Phi suspended for hazing, alcohol violations
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By Madeline Garber and Giovanni Russonello

Tufts' Alpha Phi sorority has been suspended and placed on social probation for violating hazing and alcohol policies during its new-member process, the Fraternity and Sorority Life Judiciary announced yesterday.

The sorority will be barred until next year's spring semester from enlisting or recruiting new members or participating in organized social events, although it will retain its house on Sawyer Avenue.

The sorority will also be required to seek special approval from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs for any other type of event it wishes to hold - including charity gatherings - and must arrange to bring a speaker to campus to lead an anti-hazing event.

The issue of misconduct came to the judiciary's attention after a freshman participating in the sorority's new-member, or pledging, activities brought allegations of harassment, alcohol abuse and hazing to Director of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs Patrick Romero-Aldaz.

University authorities have refused to release specific information about Alpha Phi's misconduct and have prohibited those involved from doing so.

Romero-Aldaz said the punishment was a serious one and that he hopes it will give Alpha Phi a better understanding of the environment that a sorority should foster.

"The chapter's day to day activities will be indeed impacted as suspension and social probation do include a significant loss of privileges enjoyed by other chapters," he said in an e-mail. "It will not be 'business as usual' for ... Alpha Phi, but the panel, and our office, hopes they can use this time to reflect, learn, and grow stronger as a sisterhood steeped in the values of the international organization."

Alpha Phi may appeal the punishment, sorority President Harmony Teitsworth said. "There's still time for [an] appeal. As a house, we're looking in to that," she said. "It's a definite option we're considering."

Alpha Phi would have to file an appeal within the next 10 days, according to a statement from the judiciary.

The Tufts chapter violated national Alpha Phi rules, according to a source close to the situation, who requested anonymity because the judiciary had prohibited speaking on the record about the issue. There are "booklets that classify hazing under Alpha Phi national policies, and at Tufts you have to follow all of these national policies. If you don't, you're considered hazing on campus,"

the source said.

Immediately after the freshman brought the case to Romero-Aldaz, Tufts presented Alpha Phi with a cease-and-desist order on Feb. 5. This measure, which came in the middle of the new-member process, prohibited the sorority from contacting its new members and effectively put a stop to the process.

A judicial meeting involving administrators and sorority heads was held on March 5. The committee reconvened on Monday, when it decided to put the sorority on probation.

As part of its suspension, Alpha Phi cannot initiate this year's new members until spring 2009. The women who went through this year's new-member process will have to wait until next spring to join the sorority, and they will have to go through the recruitment process again.

Teitsworth said most of this year's new members were disappointed that they will have to wait a year to join the sorority and will have to go through the recruitment process again. "They were very upset. It's a very stressful situation for everyone," she said.

Alpha Phi's suspension will conclude at the end of the 2008 fall semester. The sorority will remain on social probation through the 2009 spring semester.

Alpha Phi's national executive director, Susan Zabriskie, said that the national organization was working to help the sorority rebuild after the decision. "Alpha Phi International Fraternity is working very hard with our chapter at Tufts University to make sure they complete the terms of their probation successfully," she said.