Sigma Alpha Mu disbanded, pending appeal

By Elizabeth Callahan

Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity was disbanded at a university hearing Monday night after being charged with hazing.

The fraternity has a week to appeal. If the disciplinary appeals committee grants the appeal, the fraternity will have another hearing in the next several weeks said John Smeaton, vice provost for student affairs.

Under the current sanction, the chapter will be dissolved for the next four years after which the fraternity will be eligible to apply for reinstatement, Smeaton said.

The news comes out less than a week after the Lehigh charter of Beta Theta Pi fraternity was disbanded by their nationals and the chapter suspended for drinking incidents during their pledging.

The fraternity was charged with multiple violations of the code of conduct after an event in February. Charges included hazing, endangering the welfare of others, unauthorized or illegal consumption of alcohol and several social policy violations.

Smeaton said the decision was reached because of the severity of the incident, the large number of violations and because the fraternity was already on probation after two violations of policy in the fall.

Smeaton said at the hearing the members of the fraternity accepted full responsibility for the sanctions. He said the disillusionment of the chapter could have gone up to ten years, but they were given the lesser punishment of four years since they took responsibility for their actions.

Although the decision is not final since the fraternity can still appeal, if the decision stands members will be allowed to remain in the house of the remainder of the semester.

Smeaton said decisions to close chapters are very difficult, but a healthy Greek system is dependent on the university holding chapters accountable for their actions.

"We believe that a strong and healthy Greek system is a true asset to the university," Smeaton said, "but it has to be based on standards of excellence … if we were to not hold groups accountable for their actions the whole system would fall apart."

Joe Rosen, president of the fraternity, said he could not comment at this time.

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