Off-campus frat accused of hazing
Investigations follow student's hospital stay

By Julia Love

The Duke University Police Department and the Durham Police Department are investigating allegations of hazing by off-campus fraternity Alpha Delta Phi after a student was hospitalized following a Spring fraternity event.

Sophomore Daniel Klufas was hospitalized in April, and his family has hired private investigator Vito Colucci of Colucci Investigations to take a closer look into the incident. No charges have been filed, and Colucci said a timetable for legal action has not yet been set.

Members of the fraternity, formerly chartered as Sigma Alpha Epsilon, allegedly forced Klufas to remove his clothing while they doused him in cold water, said Stephan Seeger, the student's attorney. Seeger said that when Klufas began to shiver, one of the fraternity brothers attempted to help him by following the cold water with hot water, a combination that sent Klufas into "uncontrollable shivering and shock."

Following the incident, Klufas was hospitalized for hypothermic shock and a seizure, Seeger said, although medical reports are pending.

"We consider this to be a very serious issue because life-threatening injuries were involved," he said.

Klufas did not finish pledging and has not decided whether he will come back to Duke in the Fall, Seeger said.

Hazing is a misdemeanor in North Carolina. According to a state statute, anyone who engages in hazing can be charged, but a law passed in 2003 says indictments cannot be based on self-incriminating testimony.

When Klufas initially tried to report the incident to DPD, however, officers informed him that he could be arrested as well, Seeger said. "Regardless of what the statute says, my client did not haze himself. There was a line that was crossed," Seeger said.

Kammie Michael, public information officer and public relations coordinator for DPD, declined to comment on the likelihood that Klufas could be charged and said she could not remember the last time DPD had investigated allegations of hazing at Duke.

Vice President for Student Affairs Larry Moneta declined to comment on the case, saying the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prevents him from doing so.
The Greek Judicial Board has heard 14 cases of hazing since the board was reinstated in January 2003, according the Student Affairs Web site, but it does not oversee off-campus fraternities like Alpha Delt.

"We receive very few calls to [Duke's Hazing Hotline]," said Director of Judicial Affairs Stephen Bryan. "I would say that on average we get a handful, or less, of cases each year."

Although no other pledges were hospitalized, Seeger said he doubts his client is the only student who was allegedly treated inappropriately the night Klufas was hospitalized.

"It's our information that there were more than Klufas who were hazed on the night he was injured," he said.

Bryan explained that fear of retribution and a desire to be accepted can keep students from reporting abuse. He noted that most incidents of hazing are reported by third-party individuals.

"It's rare for someone internal to the group to say, 'Hey, there's hazing going on,"' Bryan said. "There's a lot pressure to overlook anything that may be construed as inappropriate... And [these charges] are difficult to prove because it's hard to get independent verification, and usually the students who are victims say they were willing to participate."

Sophomore Ben Masselink, a member of Alpha Delt who pledged with Klufas, said he does not remember the night in which Klufas was allegedly hazed, but said the fraternity treated him with respect throughout the pledging process.

Asked if he was hazed, Masselink responded, "No, absolutely not. I was never treated inappropriately."

Alpha Delt President Michael Shaughnessy, a senior, declined to comment on the investigation.

Seeger said he is "looking forward" to a meeting with national Alpha Delt officials that is in the works. Alpha Delta Phi—which was formerly charted Sigma Alpha Epsilon—was expelled from the national SAE fraternity in 2002 after violations of risk management, including hazing. The expulsion automatically disaffiliated it from the University. The group affiliated with Alpha Delta Phi nationals in 2006.

"We're going to proceed with caution investigating this case," Seeger said. "It's not our intention to prematurely point fingers at anyone, but it is our intention to get to the bottom of this issue as quickly as possible to bring some closure."

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