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Univ. Police begin fraternity hazing inquiry

By Kevin Robillard

University Police launched a criminal investigation of Delta Tau Delta fraternity members yesterday as details of alleged hazing incidents emerged in an Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life document, officials said.

The document, a copy of which was obtained by The Diamondback, details a six-week hazing program involving the forced consumption of alcohol and a vomit-inducing mix of liquids and mandated exercise, ending with multiple days in a closet called the "Cave."

University Police Spokesman Paul Dillon said the department began its investigation after the university completed its own, which was jointly conducted by the Office of Student Conduct and OFSL, said Linda Clement, vice president for student affairs.

Dillon declined to comment on the ongoing investigation.

"I'm not going to discuss what steps we've taken," Dillon said. He added that it's "way too premature to discuss any charges."

Hazing, which the university has repeatedly called "a fundamental violation of human dignity," is illegal in the state of Maryland and is punishable by up to six months in jail, a \$500 fine, or both.

Clement said punishment from the university is "still a possibility," but added the university will wait for the conclusion of the criminal investigation before moving forward with any penalties

The university's investigation began on Feb. 28, when OFSL received an anonymous tip alleging hazing by the fraternity. Delta Tau Delta's national office soon revoked the local chapter's charter and the fraternity was disbanded by the university two weeks later.

When reached last night, Will Cole, the president of the local chapter of Delta Tau Delta before it was disbanded, declined to comment.

The allegations against Delta Tau Delta, if true, would be the second hazing incident at the university this academic year. A university investigation found Zeta Beta Tau guilty of hazing last semester after a pledge was injured.

The last time criminal charges of hazing were filed against fraternity members at Maryland was in 1993. Omega Psi Phi members were found to have beaten seven pledges, who were also drizzled with hot wax, forced to eat vomit and drink from toilets.

In 2006, Beta Theta Pi was removed from the university for a variety of offenses, including the DUI arrest of a pledge who was driving home from a fraternity event. In 2002, the family of Daniel Reardon sued the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity for \$15 million, alleging the fraternity had forced Reardon to drink malt liquor and bourbon and then waited several hours to call 911 after

he had passed out, leading to his death.

Hazing on the campus is not limited to Greek life, either. In 2000, an investigation determined that members of the university's athletics teams had engaged in activities that "fit the broadcast definition of hazing, although the health of student-athletes was not in jeopardy," according to a Washington Post article from the time.

Details of systematic abuse emerge in investigative documents

By Kevin Robillard

The Delta Tau Delta pledges would stay in the "Cave" for roughly two days. They wouldn't be allowed to leave except to do chores and go to class. They wouldn't be allowed to sleep. They would have water and ice thrown at them.

A document released this week by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life provides a unique look into a university fraternity's hazing practices that officials say date back at least three years. Detailing the six-week initiation into the Delta Tau Delta fraternity - including descriptions of the cave - the document provides a clear glimpse of a practice typically shrouded in secrecy.

After an anonymous tipster led officials to uncover these practices two months ago, Delta Tau Delta has been kicked off the campus and disbanded. The university's investigation revealed stories of mandatory exercise, heavy drinking and days without sleep. The OSFL document says the hazing culminated every semester in a storage closet in the basement of Delta Tau Delta's house at No. 3 Fraternity Row called the Cave.

During "Hell Week," which ended the fraternity's six-week initiation process, fraternity members forced pledges to stay in the Cave for stretches that, during some years, lasted as long as two and half days, according to the document, which was based on several interviews with former fraternity members and obtained by The Diamondback through a Maryland Public Information Act request.

Pledges were expected to wear diapers while in the cave and had their cell phones and wallets taken away before entering it. Throughout the hazing process, pledges were not given a lot of time to eat during the process and frequently lost weight. "On rare occasions," the report said, "pledges have been pushed or hit in the past."

"The actions by Delta Tau Delta were truly shocking and inappropriate," Interfraternity Council President Marty Bock said. Bock said the IFC will implement new anti-hazing measures next semester and plans "to keep a closer eye on our fraternities."

"We're confident this isn't happening in our chapters," said Matt Bowen, the IFC's vice president for risk management. "But if it is, we want to stop it."

Will Cole, who was the president of Delta Tau Delta when it was disbanded, declined to comment when reached last night. Jim Russell, an executive vice president of the fraternity's international office said the fraternity was "embarrassed, saddened and really stunned."

Matt Supple, assistant director for fraternity and sorority life, said the university doesn't plan on

launching any new campaigns against hazing, but that the incident could serve as a wake-up call to eliminate the practice.

"The fact that we've had two egregious incidents – [Delta Tau Delta] being more egregious than ZBT - shows us this is still a prevalent problem in our community," Supple said.

However, Vice President for Student Affairs Linda Clement maintained her position that hazing is uncommon on the campus.

The document clearly shows a schedule of hazing at Delta Tau Delta.

It started with the induction ceremony. Pledges were forced to drink warm beer until they threw up, as senior members of the fraternity chanted and cheered. During the first week, pledges were obligated to come to the house any time a fraternity called, regardless of the time of day or night.

In the third week, the rituals intensified. Pledges had to drink a combination of hot sauce, salt and water, called the "Kirwan special," that frequently caused them to vomit or have diarrhea.

Another activity was apparently called the anchorman. Pledges were lined up and made to drink a container with a specific unsavory liquid, including a mix of salad dressings, soy sauce, hot sauce and sometimes alcohol. The container was passed from pledge to pledge until it was empty.

In the fourth week, the fraternity traveled to Shenandoah Valley State Park in Virginia, arriving there after dark. The group would make a difficult night hike to the top, where the pledges were sometimes not permitted to eat dinner. The next day, more hikes followed, during which pledges were forced to chew tobacco.

With the fifth week came the "chad," a question-and-answer ritual. Senior members of the fraternity asked pledges questions. If answered correctly, they'd funnel two beers and a shot. If wrong, they funneled "two beers, shot, and something else (dip spit)" the report stated. Dip spit is the remains of used chewing tobacco.

For the sixth week, called "Band in the Sand week" in the document, the pledges would haul sand in and out of the house. Then came Hell Week.

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