

**Date Updated and Published: June 2026****Revision History:****Review: Annually****Last Date Reviewed:** July 2025**PURPOSE**

Bethel University is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of hazing involving its students, staff, faculty, and visitors. All acts of hazing are violations of Bethel University policy as well as Tennessee law and may result in disciplinary sanctions, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion, termination of employment, as well as civil and/or criminal action.

Our mission encompasses the goal of offering the opportunity to each individual to develop to the highest potential intellectually, spiritually, and socially in an environment that fosters Christian ideals of reverent spirituality with respect and inclusion of all members of the community. To further support that commitment, Bethel University has adopted and implemented the following policy concerning hazing.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, recognized student organizations and other established groups, as well as third parties on or off-campus (including online), including visitors, alumni, guests, and the agents, representatives, and employees of suppliers and vendors at Bethel University. Any staff and faculty members alleged to be engaged in a hazing act against students will be referred to Human Resources for disciplinary sanctions in accordance with University policies.

Bethel University's prohibition on hazing extends to all aspects of its educational programs and activities, including, but not limited to, admissions, employment, academics, athletics, and student life.

This policy was written to follow the requirements of all applicable federal and state laws. If this policy is inconsistent with those laws, or the laws change before it has been updated, state and federal law supersede this policy.

If any provision of this policy is found to be invalid, illegal, unconstitutional, or unenforceable, that finding shall not affect or undermine the validity of any other provision.

### **RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY**

The Office of Student Life, Title IX and Prevention Services, Student Engagement, and the Department of Safety and Security will be the responsible authorities for this policy. Obligations in this policy assigned to a particular title may be designated as appropriate by Bethel University, including to external professionals.

### **WHAT IS PROHIBITED**

An individual or individuals commits hazing by intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing, coercing, encouraging, or forcing another individual or individuals to engage in or endure any of the following acts for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in a student organization, including, but not limited to:

1. **Physical Abuse** – beating, whipping, striking, exposure to the elements, confinement, sleep deprivation, extreme calisthenics, or branding;
2. **Psychological Abuse** – threats, intimidation, extreme humiliation, or forced nudity;
3. **Sexual Assault** – sexual acts, inappropriate touching, sexual exploitation;
4. **Criminal Acts** – underage drinking, vandalism, theft, or other illegal behaviors;
5. **Forced Consumption** – consuming drugs, alcohol, or excessive amounts of food or liquids.

## How to Report

Bethel University provides several methods to report hazing or allegations. All individuals are encouraged to submit a report as soon as they become aware of or experience the alleged behavior.

All staff and faculty, including student employees, volunteers, parents, and other community members who have a reasonable cause to believe that an act of hazing has occurred, including having witnessed hazing, or received a credible report alleging hazing or potential hazing activity, should report it to the appropriate campus officials immediately.

If a situation requires assistance for you or someone else and does not involve an emergency, please contact Bethel University Campus Security's 24/7 cell number at 731-415-7599. For all emergencies, dial 911 for police and medical services and then call Bethel University Campus Security.

To report hazing that does not require immediate assistance or involve an emergency, please provide specific information about the hazing incident to any of the following resources:

- Campus Security - 731-415-7599
- Tina Hodges – Dean of Students – 731-352-4032
- Nikki Klopfenstein – Title IX and Prevention Services Coordinator – 731-352-4246
- Sophia Wright – Director of Student Engagement – 731-352-6744
- Bethel University's Hazing Report Form
  - <https://www.bethelu.edu/end-hazing>

Reports made using the Hazing Report Form may be submitted anonymously. The disclosing person does not have to be the harmed person and/or a Complainant.

All disclosures will be reviewed by Bethel University to identify if the conduct falls within this policy or other related policies.

Civil or criminal proceedings for hazing are separate and distinct from internal University proceedings. As such, Bethel University encourages individuals to report hazing incidents to law enforcement, if they so choose. Individuals have the option

to be assisted by campus authorities in notifying law enforcement, if requested. Prompt reporting of an incident to law enforcement is especially critical as the collection and preservation of evidence is often essential for criminal investigations and prosecutions.

Bethel University will cooperate with law enforcement agencies if a Complainant decides to pursue the criminal process, to the extent permitted by law; however, this policy may differ in significant respects from criminal law. A Complainant may seek resolution through the University's procedures outlined in this policy as well as pursue criminal action. Neither the decision to prosecute nor the outcome of any criminal or civil case is determinative of whether an act of hazing occurred in violation of this policy.

The University may defer to law enforcement until a criminal investigation or proceeding is concluded before conducting its own investigation; however, the procedures under this policy may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following civil or criminal proceedings, and appropriate action taken based on a preponderance of the evidence standard. Although the University may need to temporarily delay the fact-finding portion of its investigation while law enforcement is gathering evidence, the University will provide supportive measures as available and needed to assist the Complainant during such delay.

#### **CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES DISCLOSURE OPTIONS**

##### **Dean of the Chapel, Rev. Dr. Anne Hames**

- Phone: 731-352-4066
- Email: hamesa@bethelu.edu

##### **Chaplain Rev. Garrett Burns**

- Phone: 731-352-6449
- Email: burnsg@bethelu.edu

##### **Hometown Student Health Clinic**

- Phone: 731-352-4027

## **Mobile Crisis Services**

- Phone: 855-274-7471

## **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

- Phone: 988

Note: Confidential Resources may be required to disclose information where there is an imminent threat of a person harming themselves or others and in cases involving elder abuse or abuse of a minor.

Additional resources that may also be needed or involved in a report of hazing include, but are not limited to, the Offices of Title IX and Prevention Services, Title VI compliance, and Human Resources.

## **ANONYMOUS REPORTING**

Bethel University is committed to reviewing all reports of hazing. Anonymous reports are accepted; however, the ability to obtain additional information may be compromised and the ability to investigate anonymous reports may be limited.

## **FALSE REPORTS**

Bethel University will not tolerate intentional false reporting of incidents. It is a violation of University policies to make an intentionally false report of any policy violation, and it may also violate state law as well as civil defamation laws. Individuals who have been found to have made a false accusation of hazing, or who are otherwise uncooperative or engage in deceptive conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment.

## **INTERIM MEASURES AND ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS**

If the Dean of Students, or designee, determines that the operations of the student organization and/or the presence of the Respondents creates a clear and substantial risk to persons or property at Bethel University, they may issue an interim suspension or activity restriction at any point in the process from when a complaint is

filed to when the case is resolved. Ordinarily, a case involving an interim suspension will be expedited to resolution as quickly as possible.

The Dean of Students, or designee, may also restrict or modify the activities (i.e.: access to buildings, participation in activities) of the Respondent at any point from when a report is received to when the matter is resolved. Activity restrictions also may be kept in place after an outcome is determined.

Interim suspensions and activity restrictions are operative immediately upon receipt of the notice by the Respondent.

A Complainant always has the right to seek a no-contact directive from the University or a protective order from local police. Bethel University will enforce University-issued no-contact directives and protective orders regardless of who issues them. Enforcement of these orders will begin upon notification and receipt of documentation of their existence. Should either party wish to cooperate with local law enforcement in a criminal investigation, they may do so under the guidance of the appropriate legal authority without fear of penalty by Bethel University for violating any no-contact directives issued by the University.

#### **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS WITH A PARALLEL PROCESS**

Bethel University recognizes that some student organizations may have parallel accountability processes within their student organization. Any student organizations that become aware of a behavior that may also require Bethel University responses, must act in collaboration with the University to address the behavior.

Student organizations may not investigate complaints without support and guidance from their sponsoring regional, national, or international organization and Bethel University staff when an incident requires investigations to be conducted by staff that are trained to manage complaints of a sensitive nature (e.g.: discrimination, academic misconduct, behavior grounded in mental health issues, illegal drug use, sexual assault, minor violations of the law).

Student organizations can/should address minor incidents within chapter processes (e.g.: not meeting membership obligations such as meetings, dues/fees, participation, attitude, grades, etc.; conflicts between members; irresponsible or

unbecoming behavior; integrity issues, etc.), but only after reporting any hazing incidents to the appropriate Bethel University office and receiving permission to initiate chapter processes.

Student Organizations may not impede University investigations, including by withholding information.

### **VIOLATIONS OF OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

In certain cases, conduct by an individual or student organization may violate other policies. In those cases, the Office of Student Life will determine which office, or individual, has primary responsibility over a matter and how that individual will engage with other responsible offices. Examples include a hazing incident that also includes sexual violence or harassment, which may involve Title IX, Student Code policies, and/or Residence Life policies. Matters may be consolidated and investigated/adjudicated together at the discretion of Bethel University.

### **INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION PROCESS**

Bethel University has adopted the following guidelines to process, investigate, and adjudicate reported hazing violations.

#### **1. Report Received**

*Upon receiving a hazing complaint from a reporting individual:*

- a. Campus Security will respond to and address any hazing incidents or safety concerns that may be actively occurring on campus at the time of the report.
- b. Campus Security will document the hazing complaint and notify the Dean of Students, who may request an additional interview with the reporting party.
- c. A determination will be made if there is sufficient information to proceed with an investigation.

#### **2. Interviews with Impacted Individuals**

*If sufficient information has been received to proceed:*

- a. The leadership of the student organization will be notified of the investigation, as well as the department heads and the advisor for the

student organization.

- b. Requests for interviews will be sent to all known victims and witnesses.
- c. A determination will be made if there is sufficient information to proceed with the investigation for a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **3. Interviews with Student Organization Leadership and Members**

*If sufficient information has been received to proceed:*

- a. Notice of alleged violations will be sent to the leadership of the student organization, as well as the department heads and the advisor for the student organization.
- b. Requests for interviews will be sent to the leadership and all involved members of the student organization. Additional witnesses may be interviewed and all interviewees are subject to follow-up interviews as needed.
- c. The Dean of Students will determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred.

### **SANCTIONS FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Student organizations that are found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, a formal reprimand, activity and event restrictions or other educational opportunities, probation, suspension of the student organization, as well as termination of the student organization and permanent loss of recognition.

### **SANCTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS**

In addition to any potential criminal charges or civil liability that may occur, individuals who have been found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including a formal reprimand, educational courses on hazing and prevention, probation, suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment.

Third parties, including alumni, volunteers, vendors, and other individuals who have been found responsible for hazing will be subject to removal from the campus as

well as being permanently barred from all University-owned or controlled property and campus activities.

This is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of potential disciplinary sanctions for violating this policy. Each situation is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

Each student and student organization is provided the opportunity to appeal any disciplinary sanctions issued for violation of this policy. The appeal is not meant to re-hear or reargue the same case and is limited to the standards below.

Written appeals must meet at least one of the following standards:

1. A procedural (or substantive) error occurred that significantly impacted the outcome of the Inquiry (e.g. a material deviation from established procedures);
2. To consider new evidence unavailable during the original Inquiry or investigation, that could impact the original finding or outcome. A summary of this new evidence and its potential impact must be included.
3. The investigator(s) or decision maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.
4. Outcomes imposed are grossly disproportionate to the violation(s) committed.

Parties may not appeal under the following circumstances:

5. Non-attendance at any meetings or interviews;
6. Dissatisfaction with a decision and/or outcome.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Provost in accordance with the Rules of Appeals of Disciplinary Decisions procedures outlined in The Log, the Student Guide.

All sanctions imposed by the Dean of Students will be in effect during an appeal. A request may be made to the Provost, or designee, to delay implementation of the outcomes until the appeal is decided, but the presumptive stance of the institution is that the sanctions will go into effect immediately.

Graduation, study abroad, internships, etc. do not in and of themselves constitute

exigent circumstances, and the Respondent may not be able to participate in those activities during their appeal. In cases where the appeal results in reinstatement to Bethel University or resumption of privileges, all reasonable attempts will be made to restore the Respondent to their prior status, recognizing that some opportunities lost may be irreparable in the short term.

#### **RESULTS OF OUTSIDE CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PROCEEDINGS**

Violations of this policy may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement, as well as to regional, national, and/or international affiliated offices of student organizations, for additional action and/or prosecution. Bethel University has the right to act regardless of the actions of a governing body or law enforcement. If an individual or student organization is found responsible for violating this policy, and a subsequent criminal or civil proceeding relating to the conduct arrives at an alternative conclusion, the University's findings and sanctions will not be subject to change.

#### **RETALIATION**

Individuals who cause or attempt to dissuade or prevent an individual from reporting potential or actual hazing or otherwise take an adverse action against an individual in retaliation for a report of hazing will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment. This provision also applies when individuals are retaliated against due to cooperation in the investigation and adjudication processes.

#### **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH OUTCOMES**

Individuals that fail to comply and/or complete the assigned outcomes may be charged and an additional Inquiry will be held. A conduct hold may be placed on the individual's record and/or billing account until the incomplete sanction and/or failure to comply case is resolved. Conduct holds may impact, among other things, the ability to view grades, receive transcripts, register for classes, or graduate.

In circumstances where a student organization fails to comply with outcomes, the student organization may be charged and an additional Inquiry will be held. A conduct hold may be placed on the student organizational record until the

incomplete sanction and/or failure to comply case is resolved. A conduct hold may impact, among other things, the student organization's ability to receive funding, housing status, or participation in University-recognized events.

## **FEDERAL AND STATE HAZING DEFINITIONS**

### **Hazing (Federal Law)**

Under the Stop Campus Hazing Act located at 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A),

The term 'hazing', for purposes of reporting statistics on hazing incidents means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person or persons to participate, that—

1. is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization; and
2. causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the student organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including—
  - a. whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
  - b. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
  - c. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
  - d. causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
  - e. any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
  - f. any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law; and
  - g. any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform

a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, State, Tribal, or Federal law.

### **Hazing (State Law)**

Per Tennessee law, specifically § 49-7-123,

“Hazing” means any intentional or reckless act in this state on or off the property of any higher education institution by one student acting alone or with others that is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student or that induces or coerces a student to endanger the student's mental or physical health or safety.

Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any student organization; and...

Each higher education institution shall adopt a written policy prohibiting hazing by any student or student organization operating under the sanction of the institution. The policy shall be distributed or made available to each student at the beginning of each school year. Time shall be set aside during orientation to specifically discuss the policy and its ramifications as a criminal offense and the institutional penalties that may be imposed by the higher education institution.

### **CAMPUS HAZING TRANSPARENCY REPORT**

Bethel University is required to publish a Campus Hazing Transparency Report, separate from the Clery Act's Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, to help enhance public awareness of hazing and encourage accountability. This report includes information about student organizations found responsible for hazing violations as well as the sanctions issued. The transparency report does not contain personally identifiable information for students in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Beginning July 1, 2025, Bethel University is required to collect statistics on hazing. The transparency report only contains information for recognized student organizations

that were found responsible for hazing, and must be published on the institution's website and updated twice a year, by June 30th and December 23rd, to reflect any new incidents.

The content of the transparency report includes:

- a. The name of the student organization involved;
- b. Description of the violation, including whether drugs or alcohol were involved;
- c. Findings of the institution and any sanctions issued to the student organization; and
- d. Dates of when the alleged incident occurred, when the investigation started and concluded, and when the University notified the student organization of its findings.

The transparency report will be publicly available on the Bethel University webpage at <https://www.bethelu.edu/end-hazing>

#### **CLERY ACT AND THE ANNUAL SECURITY AND FIRE SAFETY REPORT**

The Clery Act is a federal crime and incident disclosure law. It requires, among other things, that Bethel University report the number of incidents of certain crimes that occur within particular geographic locations (Clery Geography). Beginning with the 2026 Annual Security Report, Bethel University must also include hazing incidents reported to have occurred within its Clery Geography. The first calendar year that will include hazing statistics is 2025. The Clery Act also requires Bethel University to issue a warning to the community in certain circumstances, such as during an active emergency occurring on campus or when a crime poses a serious or ongoing threat to the campus community.

In the statistical disclosures and warnings to the community, Bethel University will ensure that a Complainant's name and other identifying information is not disclosed.

The Office of Student Life will refer information to the Department of Safety and Security, when appropriate, for a determination about Clery-related actions, such as disclosing crime statistics or sending campus warning notifications.

## **CAMPUS SECURITY AUTHORITIES**

A Campus Security Authority (CSA) is a Clery Act-specific term meant to identify members of our campus community who have an obligation under federal law to report certain crimes that occur on University property and around our campus. Campus Security Authorities are a vital resource at our University and help ensure that our campus community is informed and that individuals have access to important resources and information.

Campus Security Authorities do not investigate crimes that are reported to them, or report crimes that they overhear students talking about in the hallway; that a student mentions during an in-class discussion; that a victim mentions during a speech; or that a CSA learns about in an indirect manner. It is also not the responsibility of a CSA to try and convince the victim of a crime to report to law enforcement if the victim chooses not to. A CSA may not promise to keep a report confidential or private. It must be reported to Campus Security. However, a CSA may submit a report leaving the victim's information anonymous if the victim asks to not be identified.

Individuals who have been designated as Campus Security Authorities are provided training on an annual basis, and may refer to the CSA policy at <https://www.bethelu.edu/current-students/safety-and-security/campus-security-authorities> for additional information, or may contact Campus Security.

## **TRAINING AND PREVENTION**

In alignment with the prevention and awareness program requirements of the Stop Campus Hazing Act, Bethel University maintains a commitment to not only address incidents of hazing that occur, but also to educate our campus community about hazing and healthy alternatives to prevent this type of harm.

Bethel provides various programs that address hazing, as well as the related topics of drug and alcohol misuse and bystander intervention. Bethel's programs have included various public awareness events, such as seminars, in-person trainings, and online educational modules. In addition to the required hazing prevention education for all incoming students and employees, several Bethel University departments and individual student organizations provide regular and ongoing

programming on these important issues. During these training sessions, students are educated on ethical leadership and trained on how to recognize and identify what is hazing, how to report it, as well as how to take action to stop it.

Training is provided by the Title IX and Prevention Services Office and the Student Engagement Office. To learn more or schedule a training, please contact [titleix@bethelu.edu](mailto:titleix@bethelu.edu).

Bethel University will provide ongoing education campaigns, including workshops, speaker events, and social media campaigns throughout the academic year to reinforce anti-hazing policies and encourage a culture of safety.

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

### **Office of Student Life**

Tina Hodges, Dean of Students

- Phone: 731-352-4032
- Email: [hodgest@bethelu.edu](mailto:hodgest@bethelu.edu)

### **Campus Security**

- Phone: 731-352-4222
- 24/7 Cell: 731-415-7599
- Email: [busecurity@bethelu.edu](mailto:busecurity@bethelu.edu)

### **Title IX and Prevention Services**

Nikki Klophenstein, Title IX Coordinator

- Phone: 731-352-4246
- Email: [klophensteinn@bethelu.edu](mailto:klophensteinn@bethelu.edu)

### **Office of Student Engagement**

Sophia Wright, Director

- Phone: 731-352-6744
- Email: [wrights@bethelu.edu](mailto:wrights@bethelu.edu)

## **Department of Athletics**

Derek Horne, Vice President of Athletics

- Phone: 731-352-6432
- Email: [horned@bethelu.edu](mailto:horned@bethelu.edu)

## **Renaissance**

Dr. Scott Shepherd, Interim Executive Director

- Phone: 731-352-6983
- Email: [shepherds@bethelu.edu](mailto:shepherds@bethelu.edu)

## **Hometown Student Health Clinic**

Debbie Hubble, PCMH Care Coordinator

- Phone: 731-352-4027
- Email: [dhubble@hometownclinics.com](mailto:dhubble@hometownclinics.com)

## **Local Law Enforcement**

- McKenzie Police – 731-352-2264
- Carroll County Sheriff – 731-986-8947
- Paris Police – 731-642-2424
- Henry County Sheriff – 731-642-1672

## **MAINTENANCE OF FILES AND RECORDS**

The files of individuals (or any student organization) found responsible for violation of Bethel University's Anti-Hazing Policy will normally be retained as a conduct record in the Office of Student Life and Department of Safety and Security . Records maintained to comply with the Clery Act (including the Stop Campus Hazing Act) will be retained for at least seven years, the time period consistent with Clery Act retention requirements.

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Department of Safety and Security and

Office of Title IX and Prevention Services to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and University standards.

**DISCLAIMER**

This policy was largely developed with permission using the Grand Rivers Solutions model plan, as well as portions borrowed and developed from the University of Alabama and the University of Washington's anti-hazing policies, to be in compliance with the Stop Campus Hazing Act and the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act.