DISSERTATION

"*HOW DO YOU DO THE RIGHT THING AND NOT GET FIRED OR RUIN YOUR CAREER*?": HAZING IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS – THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS IN PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

"*HOW DO YOU DO THE RIGHT THING AND NOT GET FIRED OR RUIN YOUR CAREER*?": HAZING IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS – THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS IN PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Hazing continues to be a pervasive issue on college campuses, posing significant risks to student health, safety, and well-being while undermining institutional efforts to create inclusive and supportive environments. One notable gap in the existing literature is the role of administrators involved in hazing prevention, education, and policy development at their respective institutions. This mixed-methods study explores hazing prevention and education by examining the mechanisms of prevention and education that administrators draw on, their perspectives and experiences, as well as the challenges faced by college administrators tasked with addressing this critical issue. Drawing on the perspective of organizational decline (Levine, 1978;1980), I argue that institutional, structural, and cultural differences significantly influence these barriers and shape how administrators navigate and overcome them.

Through a combination of qualitative interviews with college administrators and quantitative surveys assessing campus hazing prevention and education efforts, this study aims to identify key obstacles to effective work in this arena and propose actionable strategies for advancing these efforts in higher education. The qualitative interviews explore administrators' experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to hazing prevention, with a particular focus on the challenges they face in balancing competing institutional priorities, gaining support from

students and families, as well as the influence of donors and alumni. Based on these findings, I offer recommendations for strengthening hazing prevention initiatives.

This research contributes to the literature on hazing and higher education by centering the experiences and perspectives of administrators, who play a pivotal but often overlooked role in prevention efforts. It also bridges the gap between theory and practice by integrating sociological insights with actionable recommendations, offering a roadmap for advancing anti-hazing initiatives that are both effective and sustainable. In doing so, this study seeks to empower administrators, students, families, and institutional leaders to collaborate toward the shared goal of eliminating hazing and fostering a culture of care and accountability on college campuses.

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"Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day-in, day-out. Not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years. And working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint." -- Angela Duckworth

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents, Donna and Jerry Warren and Dorthy and Carl Alexander who passed away during or before this project and were unable to see its completion. Though they are no longer with me in body, their unwavering encouragement, wisdom, and love are woven into this dissertation project. We did it.

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"I mean, that's probably been the hardest thing -- figuring out how do you do the right thing and not get fired or ruin your career? And I feel like I've been faced with that decision in a bunch of other ways so many times. Still to this day, I don't know why I'm doing this job."
– Vice President of Student Affairs at a Small Public University

Hazing is a persistent social problem colleges and universities have contended with around the world for several centuries. Hazing is commonly defined by researchers and educational organizations as "behavior expected of someone joining or maintaining membership in a group that humiliates, degrades, or endangers, regardless of a person's willingness to participate" (Hoover & Pollard, 1999). This definition has been widely adopted in studies on hazing in higher education and highlights the potential risks such behavior poses. As this definition suggests, hazing can severely impact the health and safety of students on college campuses, contributing to physical, emotional, and psychological harm (Allan & Madden, 2012).

University hazing occurs across a variety of student organizations and can manifest as a spectrum of behaviors, such as forcing members to socialize with some and exclude others, forcing others to drink alcohol or engage in drinking games; depriving members of sleep, food, or water; as well as physical forms of hazing such as paddling, whipping, or branding, just to name a few (Allan & Madden 2012; Campo, Poulos, & Sipple 2005; Hoover & Pollard 1999). Paradoxically, although hazing is often considered to be covert or secretive, it is also widespread with an estimated 47 percent of college students experiencing these behaviors in high school, and around 55 percent of college students on teams or in student organizations suggesting they experienced these behaviors (Allan & Madden 2008; StopHazing.org).

Over the past 20 years, “campus crime”, including hazing behaviors on college and university campuses, has evolved into a large-scale social problem academics, policymakers, criminologists, and social scientists have examined using several research methods and techniques (Sloan & Fisher 2011). More pointedly, as I elaborate later in this chapter, research largely overlooks the perspectives of university administrators. Despite the duty of care higher education institutions owe to students and their families, referring to the reasonable measures they must take to ensure safety and well-being, relatively few studies examine the role of administrators in addressing social problems like hazing (Bickel & Lake 1999). Even less attention is given to the barriers they encounter in hazing prevention efforts. What obstacles, if any, do administrators face in this work? How do they navigate and contend with workplace challenges? Further, do all administrators actively engage in prevention efforts, or is hazing minimized, ignored, or unrecognized within institutional settings? An important aim of this dissertation is to fill these knowledge gaps. Specifically, in this project I draw on a mixed-methods approach using surveys and qualitative interviews to understand the forms of hazing prevention university administrators use, their daily work and experiences, the struggles they face, and how they navigate workplace issues. Specifically, I focus on answering these research questions:

1. What are the primary mechanisms of hazing prevention used at institutions of higher education?

    1A. What organizational characteristics influence hazing prevention practices and structures at institutions of higher education?

2. What barriers or challenges do administrators face as they work on hazing prevention?

3. How do administrators navigate daily workplace challenges regarding hazing prevention and education at institutions of higher education?

In this chapter, I provide the necessary context to address these research questions by reviewing major research on college hazing in the United States. I first examine the scope of hazing on campuses, emphasizing the pervasive nature of these behaviors and students' perceptions of them, as well as the risks associated. I also explore how these activities intersect with students' gender, race, and sexuality. Because in this research I am especially interested in highlighting the experiences and perspectives of administrators charged with creating and carrying out hazing policy, I also provide a historical analysis of hazing on college campuses, with particular attention to university administrative responses and their responsibilities in prevention efforts. I also discuss the broader role of upper-level administrators in addressing other complex social issues, such as binge drinking and sexual violence, highlighting parallels and lessons that inform hazing prevention strategies. Finally, this literature review situates my study within the broader context of administrative approaches to hazing prevention and education, setting the stage for a more detailed discussion in subsequent chapters.

Hazing Prevalence, Risks, & Trends

Journalists and news reporters have documented several instances of high-risk hazing behaviors on college campuses, many of which are dangerous, abusive, and often illegal (Allan & Madden 2012; Campo, Poulos, & Sipple 2005; Finkel 2002; Gerschel et al., 2003; Hoover & Pollard 1999). These behaviors often take place within student organizations such as fraternities, sororities, athletic teams, and other campus groups. Over the past few decades, these actions have resulted in severe injuries and, in some cases, deaths among college students (Brackenridge,

Lindsay, & Telfer, 2009; Ellsworth, 2004; Nuwer, 2000; 2004). Such incidents highlight the ongoing risks associated with hazing practices in higher education and the critical need for prevention and intervention efforts.

Studies suggest hazing can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, as well as eating disorders and future suicide attempts for some college students (Brackenridge, Lindsay, & Telfer 2009; Jeckell, Copenhaver, & Diamond 2018). In addition, social scientists have linked peer victimization to poorer academic outcomes (Crosnoe 2011; Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, & Chauhan 2004), and negative mental health outcomes (Brackenridge, Lindsay, & Telfer 2009; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; Vaillancourt, McDougall, Hymel, & Sunderani 2010). Further, some have identified a link between peer victimization (primarily bullying) and later criminal offending (Sourander, Jensen, Rönning, Eloheimo, et al., 2007), although this relationship is mixed with others suggesting that survivors of peer victimization had less involvement with criminal offenses as adults (Bijleveld, Van der Geest, & Hendriks, 2011; Olweus, 1993).

Hazing is also a global phenomenon that exists among college and grade school settings across cultures. Notable recent hazing investigations have come to light around the world, including events in Scotland (Butcher 2021; Reid 2021), Spain (Mahtani 2019), Nigeria (Olaoluwa 2021), the Philippines (South China Morning Post 2023) and India (Khayambashi 2019; Varadpande 2023). For example, Scotland's Rural College in Edinburgh banned a men's intramural rugby team following an investigation into hours-long initiation rituals involving disturbing behaviors such as rubbing hot sauce on their genitals, pouring vomit over their heads, eating cat food, excessive alcohol consumption, and being forced to strip naked before entering a river. This situation came to light after a fellow passenger found a student in a panicked and

disheveled state on a train between Edinburgh and a bordering city and reported the incident to officials (Butcher 2021).

In some regions like India and South Asia, these behaviors are closely related to "ragging" (Desai 2009; Khayambashi 2019), which are similar initiation rituals and behaviors. Ragging can involve obedience to senior peers, exclusion of others, or requiring permission for basic activities such as speaking, eating, drinking, or sleeping, as well as physical assaults and acts of violence (Varadpande 2023; Waghamode, Kalyan, & Angadi 2014). However, scholars point out that there are often fundamental differences between Western hazing and similar behaviors in other geographic contexts (Wickramainghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022). Western hazing is often associated with initiation into a group (although exceptions exist, see Alexander 2018), while religious discrimination is believed to be a major factor in Indian ragging, with Muslims and Sikhs facing psychological and verbal harassment during their educational journeys (Hays & Singh 2012). Similarly, some researchers suggest that ragging can be perceived as an expression of power, social dominance, and as a way to express dissatisfaction towards broader social inequalities in society, especially in societies with deep racial and ethnic stratification (Wickramainghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022). It is important to note that these behaviors generally occur at the very beginning of a student's college years and typically drops off after this period.

For example, consider a 2022 study conducted by Wickramainghe and colleagues which evaluated the role of administrators and other officials towards ragging behaviors at a university in Sri Lanka. Across focus group discussions with students from varying ethnic and religious backgrounds, "Students revealed hierarchies of socioeconomic classes, caste, ethnicity and gender which has led to a clash of attitudes, differences in privileges, and perceived unjust

divisions of power," (Wickramainghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022:13). These divisions often played out through older students dominating younger students via initiation practices while apathetic administrators and university officials did little to address these issues, according to their focus group data (Wickramainghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022:13).

While the social context and reasons behind these behaviors may differ, this discussion suggests that these kinds of ideas, behaviors, and beliefs are pervasive across different societies and cultures. This work also highlights how administrators and university officials can perpetuate ragging or similar hazing behaviors (Wickramainghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022). While some have focused on these behaviors in an international context, this dissertation is oriented towards U.S. university hazing on college campuses, official responses, as well as administrators' role on hazing prevention and education efforts.

Two national studies form the foundation for documenting the nature and extent of hazing in U.S. postsecondary institutions, including Hoover and Pollard's (1999) study of hazing among student-athletes at National Collegiate Athletic Association institutions, and Allan and Madden's (2008) survey of over 11,000 students across 53 college campuses. The first study, conducted by Hoover and Pollard in 1999, focused on hazing among student-athletes at NCAA institutions. Their research revealed that nearly 80 percent of the student-athletes in their study had engaged in behaviors that met the definition of hazing. Moreover, a significant portion of these hazing experiences were severe, with two-thirds involving abusive or humiliating acts, and 50 percent involving high-risk drinking activities, such as consuming large amounts of alcohol within a short time. In addition, one in five participants experienced dangerous and potentially illegal behaviors, including being kidnapped or forced to damage others' property (Hoover & Pollard 1999).

The second study, conducted by Allan and Madden in 2008, expanded on Hoover and Pollard's (1999) research by examining hazing across a broader range of campus groups, teams, and organizations. Their extensive survey study found that over 55 percent of students involved in campus organizations had encountered behaviors that met the definition of hazing during their time at university. Interestingly this study helped establish that hazing is not confined solely to fraternity or sorority life, as is often believed or portrayed in media representations. Instead, these behaviors were prevalent across many types of groups and organizations on campus. For instance, activities that constitute hazing were identified by 74 percent of students in varsity athletics, 73 percent of fraternity and sorority members, 64 percent of club sports team members, 56 percent of performing arts organization members, and 50 percent of service organization members (Allan & Madden 2008). Allan, Kerschner, and Payne (2019) found that more than one-quarter (26%) of students at higher education institutions participating in the Hazing Prevention Consortium reported experiencing hazing.

A crucial finding from Allan and Madden's (2008) study was that the vast majority (90 percent) of students who experienced hazing did not recognize it as such. Campo and colleagues (2005) indicated that a possible explanation for this gap is that students subscribe to a narrow definition of hazing that emphasizes extreme forms, including being beaten, whipped, or paddled. Other researchers have identified a similar gap regarding sexual assault and harassment—these behaviors are often misunderstood by group members, such as student-athletes, and many college students struggle to clearly define or recognize them (Carey et al., 2022; Rahimi & Liston, 2009).

Further, nearly all those who identified the experiences as hazing chose not to report them to campus officials (95%) (Allan & Madden 2008). This suggests a reluctance to report

hazing incidents within the campus community, or an unwillingness to use campus resources to encourage the identification and reporting of instances of hazing. Notably, sexual assault and harassment are also significantly underreported to campus administrators, mirroring patterns seen in hazing incidents.

Regardless of whether students can recognize or define these behaviors, high-profile hazing incidents continue to gain public attention year after year. For example, in the spring of 2023, reports of hazing surfaced at New Mexico State University involving their nationally ranked basketball program (Pells, 2023). Similarly, in the summer of 2023, Northwestern University faced allegations of hazing within its football program (Markus, Brown, Reynolds, & Bhardwaj, 2023). In New Mexico State's case, the team abruptly canceled the remainder of their 2022-2023 season after a freshman guard brought sexual assault and hazing allegations to their campus police, resulting in other players also coming forward (Pells 2023). The assault survivors eventually settled with all defendants, including other players, coaches, and the New Mexico Board of Regents for a sum of $8 million (Pells 2023).

For Northwestern, investigations are still unfolding, and Former Coach Pat Fitzgerald was suspended and later fired amid allegations of sexual assault and egregious hazing in his football program (Markus, Brown, Reynolds, & Bhardwaj 2023) which involved physical punishment as well as ritualized coerced sexual acts. These issues were widespread as forty individual football players allege they experienced hazing during their time at Northwestern (Myerberg & Scrotenboer 2024). As a note, the team was 1-11 in the 2022 season, lost all six home games, and faced an 11-game losing streak during that season. According to the fired coach, "I don't think we need to flip a culture, I think the culture's strong… We need to flip winning and [do] what winners do," (Riker 2022). This suggests that despite r hazing allegations

and a notable string of losses on the field, their coach was still committed to the same values, culture, and ideals that created conditions for these behaviors in the first place. In October 2023, former Coach Fitzgerald filed a lawsuit against the University and its President for wrongful termination seeking damages of $130 million. Northwestern has stated that Fitzgerald was, "responsible for the conduct of the program," and ultimately, "had the responsibility to know that hazing was occurring and to stop it," (Masterson 2024). Fitzgerald's lawsuit is expected to go to trial in November 2025 but could be settled before that date.

Unfortunately, other members of Northwestern's sports programs have come forward with hazing allegations, as a former volleyball player filed a recent lawsuit claiming the school and athletic department were negligent in responding to her own hazing experience in the Spring of 2021. She alleges she endured hazing as a punishment for contracting COVID-19 in February 2021, to the point of injury and medical attention, and eventually medically retired from the sport in December of 2022. Taken together, these instances suggest a deeply rooted culture of such practices at this particular university which are not limited to any one sport, coach, gender, or team (Associated Press 2023).

Examining this social issue is important for a variety of reasons, including the prevalence of hazing among colleges and universities and students' inability or unwillingness to label problematic behaviors as such. In addition, similar to other "wicked problems" on college campuses like sexual assault or binge drinking, hazing is a persistent issue that occurs on campuses each year around the world. Despite its covert nature, students and staff engage in these behaviors at prominent universities, in recognized sports programs across time and space. Further, hazing is widespread across a variety of different organizations, groups, and teams, and is not limited to those stereotypically associated with hazing (such as men's fraternities or sports

teams in the United States). However, this research also reveals a gap between how college students experience hazing compared to how they label and define the behaviors. This confusion surrounding what hazing *is* can problematize reporting of harmful activities, and can be a barrier for administrators and their prevention efforts.

This gap is relevant for administrators to consider and integrate into their own prevention work, as I highlight throughout my dissertation findings. Considering that these activities can show up in a variety of groups, manifest in a spectrum of behaviors, and can have serious legal implications for faculty, staff, coaches, and upper-level administration, how does one engage in education and prevention on a college campus? How does the history, culture, and structure of a college campus impact these efforts? How do administrators feel about their daily work and potential risks associated with hazing behaviors occurring on their campus?

I argue that by applying a sociological lens to the experiences, practices, and struggles of administrators, we can develop more effective approaches to hazing prevention on college campuses. Similar to other "wicked problems" in higher education, such as binge drinking and sexual assault, addressing hazing requires sociological analyses that focus on the human dimension of these issues—namely, the lived experiences and struggles of upper-level administrators (Rittel & Webber 1973). This focus is critical given the prevalence of student groups, teams, and organizations on college campuses, as well as to enhance student success and safety in these spaces. For instance, some universities host over 500 student organizations, and approximately 530,000 college students currently compete as NCAA athletes in the U.S., a number that has steadily increased in recent years (NCAA 2024). In the next section, I explore how hazing behaviors intersect with students' gender, race, and sexuality in unique ways, often recreating dominant narratives and stereotypical notions.

Intersections with Gender, Race, & Sexuality

Research shows that gender, race, and sexuality significantly shape hazing behaviors among college students (Allan & Madden 2008; Campo et al. 2005; Ellsworth 2006; Lodewijkx et al. 2005; McCready 2020; Pershing 2006; Schiffer et al. 2022). Scholars note that hazing among men often reinforces dominance, toughness, and heteronormative power dynamics, contributing to the sexual objectification of women and creating conditions for same-gender sexual harassment and assault (Allan & DeAngelis 2004; Allan & Madden 2008; Allan et al. 2019; Anderson, McCormack, & Lee 2012). Veliz-Calderon and Allan's (2017) qualitative research further illustrates how hazing reflects stereotypical gender norms: men often associate hazing with a loss of power and agency, while women link it to the objectification of their bodies (Veliz-Calderon & Allan 2017).

Hazing also intersects with racial identities and backgrounds. Scholars studying historically Black Greek-letter fraternities have found that rituals in these organizations often emphasize physical duress, stress, and abuse as core components (Jones, 2015; Kimbrough, 2007; Parks et al., 2015; Parks, 2012; Stone 2012). Jones (2015) argues that such practices contribute to the construction of individual and collective Black male identities, while Parks and colleagues (2015) observe that hazing in Black fraternities tends to involve greater physical violence compared to historically white fraternities. This racialized perspective underscores how hazing practices perpetuate complex dynamics of identity, power, and belonging.

Sexuality, though less frequently studied, provides another important lens for understanding hazing. Anderson and colleagues (2012) observed that increased flexibility in gender norms among male athletes corresponded with reduced homophobia and a decline in sexual hazing behaviors. Similarly, Tran and Chang (2013) connect severe hazing rituals in

Asian American fraternities to collective performances of masculinity shaped by broader social pressures and expectations. These studies underscore how hazing is deeply embedded in intersecting systems of identity and power, perpetuating social hierarchies and cultural norms.

Despite extensive research on hazing through the lenses of gender, race, and sexuality, there is a notable gap in understanding how these identity-driven dynamics intersect with administrative efforts to prevent and address hazing. Exploring how administrators navigate these complex intersections and respond to hazing rooted in systemic power imbalances remains a critical area for investigation. Such insights are vital for developing inclusive and effective anti-hazing policies that account for and address these demographic complexities.

Current Hazing Legislation in the United States

Historically, hazing prevention and education in the United States were largely managed on a state-by-state basis, resulting in a patchwork of laws with varying definitions, penalties, and enforcement mechanisms across the country. Although 44 states had some form of hazing-related legislation, the inconsistency among these laws created confusion and left gaps in enforcement. In some states, such as California, hazing is classified as a felony with severe penalties, while in others, it may be treated as a misdemeanor or not criminalized at all, reflecting the fragmented nature of hazing laws (StopHazing, 2024). This lack of uniformity posed significant challenges for higher education institutions trying to develop standardized policies to combat hazing.

However, the passage of the Stop Campus Hazing Act in December 2024 marks a pivotal moment in the fight against hazing in U.S. colleges and universities. As the first federal law specifically targeting hazing, the Stop Campus Hazing Act introduces a comprehensive

framework designed to streamline and standardize the prevention, reporting, and response to hazing incidents across the nation. Prior to this law, states were largely responsible for creating their own hazing legislation, which resulted in disparate approaches. The federal law addresses this issue by establishing clear and consistent requirements for colleges and universities.

In addition to defining hazing, the Stop Campus Hazing Act mandates that all institutions of higher education report hazing incidents in their Annual Security Reports. This provision mirrors the Clery Act requirements for reporting other campus crimes and increases transparency by making hazing-related incidents part of the public record. Starting in January 2025, colleges and universities will be required to begin including hazing in their annual reports, with public disclosures of hazing violations to follow by July 1, 2025. This provision not only creates a uniform standard for hazing reporting but also encourages institutions to take a more proactive role in addressing the problem by making their responses publicly accessible.

The law also establishes specific guidelines for the development and implementation of hazing prevention programs. Institutions will be required to create comprehensive hazing prevention plans that are based on best practices and proven strategies. These plans must be regularly updated and evaluated to ensure they are effective. By setting these requirements, the Stop Campus Hazing Act aims to move beyond simply addressing hazing after it occurs and shift the focus toward proactive prevention strategies. Finally, the legislation directs the Department of Education to establish a national hazing prevention resource center to assist schools in developing and improving their hazing prevention programs. This central resource will provide schools with guidance, training, and tools to help reduce the incidence of hazing and promote safer campus environments.

While state-level initiatives continue to play an important role, such as Indiana's recent law requiring universities to disclose hazing incidents (Fradette, 2024), the Stop Campus Hazing Act represents a critical step toward a more cohesive and coordinated national approach to hazing prevention. This law supplements existing state-level statutes, creating a unified framework that helps ensure that no institution is left behind in the effort to combat hazing.

Supporters of federal hazing legislation, including advocacy groups like StopHazing, argue that the Stop Campus Hazing Act will significantly improve the ability of colleges and universities to address hazing by creating consistency in definitions, reporting, and prevention efforts (Stewart & Allan, 2021). As Stewart and Allan note, "The state in which a student chooses to attend college should not dictate the safety of students who may be at risk of experiencing hazing" (Stewart & Allan, 2021). The act seeks to level the playing field, ensuring that all students across the country are afforded the same protections from hazing, regardless of their institution's location.

The passage of this law represents a landmark achievement for hazing prevention in higher education, building on the successes of other pivotal federal laws such as Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While the law's long-term impact on campus cultures remains to be seen, it sets a powerful precedent for federal involvement in addressing hazing at the national level, making it a more integral part of the ongoing conversation about campus safety and student well-being.

Several previous attempts at federal hazing legislation, such as the REACH Act, failed to gain traction. However, the Stop Campus Hazing Act garnered significant support, particularly after endorsements from major Greek life organizations, including the National Panhellenic Conference and the North American Interfraternity Conference, as well as higher education

advocacy groups such as the Clery Center, StopHazing, and the American College Health Association (ACHA). This bipartisan support helped propel the bill through both the House and Senate, culminating in its signing by President Joe Biden in December 2024. Under the Stop Campus Hazing Act, institutions will be required to report hazing data for the 2026 Annual Security Reports, with public disclosures of hazing violations to begin by July 2025. While state laws will continue to play a role, this federal law marks a significant step toward a more unified and coordinated effort to combat hazing, potentially ushering in a new era of transparency, accountability, and prevention in U.S. higher education.

Theoretical Explanations for Hazing

As previously mentioned, despite the significant risks associated with hazing, it remains widespread, occurring annually across diverse student organizations on college campuses throughout the United States. Scholars have used various theoretical frameworks to analyze hazing behaviors, drawing from disciplines such as sociology (e.g., Alexander 2018; 2020; Keating et al. 2005; Kiesling 2005; Montague et al. 2008), psychology (e.g., Parks, Shayne, & Hughey 2013; Parks & Southerland 2013), criminology (e.g., Alexander & Opsal 2021; Parks, Jones, & Hughey 2015), anthropology (e.g. Sweet 2004; Cimino 2011), as well as education and public health (e.g., Allan & Kerschner 2020; Goodwin 2020; Langford 2004, 2008; Marchell, Santacrose, Laurita, & Allan 2022), among others.

A recurring theme in hazing research involves the perceived positive outcomes often associated with these practices, such as reinforcing group hierarchy, cultivating commitment, and fostering group cohesion (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2019; Campo et al., 2005; Cimino, 2011; Keating et al., 2005; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002). Recent literature sheds light on student

perceptions of hazing on college campuses. For example, in Allan, Kerschner, and Payne's (2019) survey of college students around the U.S., students frequently reported positive associations with their hazing experiences, including feeling more integrated as a team or group member (63%), a sense of accomplishment (54%), and an overall sense of strength (36%) (44). Similarly, other studies highlight that students perceive hazing as enhancing relationships among members, preserving traditions, and solidifying group commitment (Feuer, 2019; Salinas Jr. & Boettcher, 2018; Sweet, 2004).

Sweet's (2004) symbolic interactionist study provides additional insights by linking hazing behaviors to students' social and emotional needs, such as belonging and connection. According to Sweet, during the initiation process, students construct a "new" self that prioritizes group allegiance over individual identity, fostering a deep sense of belonging with their peers. As a result, students often interpret hazing or abusive behaviors as tests of commitment and loyalty to the group (Feuer 2019; Sweet 2004). Expanding on these findings, Salinas Jr. and Boettcher (2018) found that themes of membership, belonging, and loyalty often blur the boundaries around hazing. They observed that organizational secrecy becomes a point of pride among members, further entrenching loyalty and discouraging transparency, which can perpetuate harmful practices and make formally addressing these actions challenging for administrators. While these studies underscore the perceived benefits of hazing, such as fostering cohesion and loyalty, other research contradicts these claims, showing that hazing can erode trust, damage relationships, and weaken group cohesion (Johnson 2011; Van Raalte, Cornelius, Linder, & Brewer 2007). These contrasting findings suggest that the benefits of hazing are neither universal nor guaranteed.

Generational persistence is central to understanding why hazing remains so ingrained in certain campus cultures. Hazing is a cyclical phenomenon, perpetuated as each new cohort of students inherits and reproduces these harmful practices. Hamilton and colleagues (2016) examine hazing through the lens of social cognitive theory, emphasizing how both personal and environmental factors contribute to its persistence. Personal factors like gender, moral disengagement, and prior victimization interact with environmental elements like team size and type. Their study highlights that "past experience with hazing" is one of the strongest predictors of engaging in hazing behaviors, illustrating how those who have experienced hazing often go on to perpetrate it themselves (Hamilton et al., 2016). This cycle makes hazing particularly difficult to eradicate, as it becomes normalized and even expected within some student groups. As traditions are passed down, each generation of students may justify their participation as a rite of passage, reinforcing the culture of hazing and making it a "sticky" problem that resists change. Breaking this cycle requires targeted prevention efforts that address both individual motivations and the broader cultural factors that sustain hazing.

This body of literature highlights key theoretical frameworks that help explain hazing behaviors across university settings. A recurring theme is the persistence of hazing, driven partly by perceived benefits (whether real or not). Theories suggest that hazing endures because it reinforces group hierarchy and commitment while also being self-perpetuating. Those who experience hazing frequently justify and repeat the behavior, framing it as a rite of passage or an essential aspect of group bonding.

Despite the diverse forms hazing takes across different groups and the ways students classify these behaviors, one constant is its enduring presence on college campuses. This persistence, coupled with the ongoing challenges universities face in addressing hazing,

highlights the cyclical nature of the problem. For university administrators, this cycle is a major challenge as entrenched beliefs about hazing's benefits can hinder prevention efforts. Moreover, the rapid turnover of student populations further complicates the implementation of long-term strategies, making it difficult to sustain meaningful progress in eradicating behaviors.

While theoretical frameworks shed light on the psychological and sociological drivers of hazing, there is still a significant gap in understanding how these dynamics—such as perceived benefits and cyclical patterns—shape administrative responses. University administrators often face complex barriers, including balancing student perceptions of hazing as a valued tradition with the documented risks and harms. Limited resources, fear of backlash, and difficulties in changing deeply embedded campus cultures further complicate prevention efforts. Addressing these challenges is crucial for developing interventions that confront hazing behaviors and promote safer, more inclusive campus communities.

Administrators play a crucial role in shaping hazing prevention, education, and policy enforcement. Yet, research on how organizational factors—such as institutional resources, leadership commitment, and campus culture—affect the effectiveness of anti-hazing initiatives remains limited. This gap is critical because administrators are often responsible for ensuring safe and supportive campus environments. Gaining a deeper understanding of their perspectives is essential for identifying effective prevention strategies and uncovering institutional barriers that may hinder progress.

By shifting the focus toward administrative roles and examining hazing prevention within the broader organizational context, universities can more effectively address the persistent and cyclical nature of hazing. Such an approach underscores the importance of institutional

accountability and promotes the need for proactive, collaborative efforts to build safer campus communities.

Historical Context & Significance of Higher Education Administration

Understanding the historical context of higher education administration is crucial for examining how universities have approached complex campus issues like hazing. This section explores how shifts in university governance—from the *in loco parentis* model to the modern facilitator approach—have shaped administrators' responsibilities in promoting student safety. It also highlights how historical reluctance, limited training, and evolving campus cultures have complicated administrators' efforts to combat hazing effectively. By situating these challenges within broader social and legal changes, this discussion underscores the need for targeted research on how higher education leaders can more effectively address hazing and foster safer campus environments. Noting this gap is important because of the role of university-level administrators and the environments they perpetuate, as stated by Nuwer (emphasis mine) (1990):

> Hazers… are nothing more or less than addicts in an addictive system. For hazing to continue to survive within the education system, as it has for thousands of years, requires dependence and tolerance – the two common characteristics of addiction… on the parts not only of hazers and the hazed but also **of those who supervise them** (pp. 114-115).

Importantly, research suggests when administrators normalize hazing as part of the campus culture, other abuses are more likely to be tolerated as well, such as binge drinking and sexual violence (Allan & Madden 2012; Boyle & Walker 2016; Johnson & Holman 2004). In addition, hazing can be harmful physically and psychologically for students who experience these actions as well as those who perpetuate those behaviors (Allan & Madden 2008, 2012; HazingPrevention.org 2015; Nuwer 2018). In the U.S. where student mental health is

increasingly prioritized by university administration (Evans et al. 2018; Hughes and Spanner 2019), an estimated one-third of college students experience mental health difficulties (Lipson, Lattie, & Eisenberg 2019; Liu, Stevens, Wong, Yasul, & Chen 2019), and these feelings can be exacerbated by enduring hazing behaviors on campus. In addition, these activities can also aggravate students' previous experiences relating to military service, sexual assault, abuse, alcohol or drug addictions, or prior hazing and/or bullying (Apgar 2013).

Beyond the potential harm to students, hazing can also affect witnesses and those tasked with intervention, such as resident assistants, student advocates, advisors, and hazing task force members. Researchers like Pezza and Bellotti (1995) have noted that these individuals can experience secondary traumatic stress, manifesting as feelings of shock, confusion, and guilt (Fisher & Dzikus, 2010; Lynch, 2017). Consequently, the ripple effects of hazing likely extend across the campus community, including on administrators and officials who are responsible for preventing such behaviors. Despite these concerns, limited research has examined the crucial role university administrators play in hazing prevention or the specific challenges they face in addressing this pervasive issue.

Given the risks associated with hazing, particularly in campus settings, numerous stakeholders across various levels of university life are involved in reporting, investigating, and preventing these behaviors. Hazing prevention officials often collaborate with campus units focused on related issues, such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual assault, and interpersonal relationships (Langford, 2008). Many universities draw on a needs-assessment approach, which emphasizes prevention through data-driven tactics. This often begins with an assessment to identify the scope and nature of the problem, followed by evidence-based interventions aimed at reducing risk, and outcome evaluations to assess the effectiveness of those interventions.

Interdisciplinary collaboration among psychology, sociology, criminal justice, education, and health sciences helps comprehensively address these complex social issues. Although universities have applied this approach to address problems like binge drinking and sexual violence, hazing prevention has been slower to adopt and utilize these strategies (Langford, 2008; Marchell et al., 2024).

One reason for this slow uptake is the historical reluctance of universities and student affairs officials to confront hazing as a serious problem (Richmond, 1987). Scholars suggest that hazing has grown more prevalent in the U.S. as the concept of *in loco parentis*—where colleges acted as parental supervisors to students—eroded in the 1960s and 1970s (Boucher, 2003; Edwards, 1994; Hennessy & Huson, 1998). Before this shift, university administrators were responsible for safeguarding students' morals, safety, and welfare. However, landmark legal rulings (e.g., *Bradshaw v. Rawlings*, 1979) and the student rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s diminished administrators' ability to regulate student conduct in the same ways. Social upheavals during this era, such as the Civil Rights Movement and protests against the Vietnam War, further strained relationships between administrators and students, as universities became focal points for activism and demands for reform.

This tension occasionally escalated into violence. For example, in 1972, two Southern University students were killed when deputies opened fire during a protest over inadequate campus services (Scott, 2018). Similarly, in 1968, students at San Fernando Valley State College held their university president and other administrators hostage during a demonstration for increased access and equity for students of color (Smith, 1989). Amid these broader social changes, public perceptions of campus violence and victimization began to shift during the 1980s and 1990s. Media coverage increasingly highlighted safety threats to college students, including

sexual assault, gun violence, and, in some cases, hazing-related deaths, particularly within men's fraternities (Sloan & Fisher 2011). For instance, the 1990 death of Nicholas Haben, a freshman lacrosse player who died during an alcohol-fueled hazing initiation, brought national attention to the dangers of binge drinking and hazing. His blood alcohol content was 0.34—over four times the legal limit to operate a vehicle—underscoring the lethal risks of such practices.

In response to similar tragedies, universities began revisiting their hazing prevention policies during the 1990s. Legal rulings, such as *Furek v. University of Delaware* (1990), reinforced the obligation of universities to protect students from hazing when they had reasonable knowledge of such activities (Hollman, 2002). These rulings underscored that hazing posed significant threats to student safety and institutional missions (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2019). Consequently, the "facilitator model" emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, emphasizing a university role that provides rules and consequences for student behavior while allowing students the freedom to succeed or fail within these boundaries (Bickel & Lake, 1999).

Despite this evolution from *in loco parentis* to the facilitator model, little is known about how administrators prevent and address hazing on college campuses today. While scholars have examined administrators' roles in addressing other campus issues (Carey et al., 2022; Levine 2018; Wechsler et al. 2000; Wickramasinghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm 2022), hazing remains understudied (but see Arnold Jr. 2005; Eastlin 2018; Feuer 2019). This gap is important because administrators have unique opportunities to influence campus culture and drive top-down change on issues like hazing prevention. However, some argue that university officials are often underprepared or inadequately trained to address hazing effectively (Arnold, 2005). For example, one of the few studies on campus administrators and hazing, conducted at historically Black colleges and universities in Tennessee, found that student affairs professionals were aware

hazing occurred but lacked the experience or skills to recognize clear signs of hazing, which limited their ability to intervene (Arnold, 2005). Similarly, many administrators also report receiving limited leadership preparation for their roles (Morris & Liapple 2015).

Understanding the historical and organizational contexts of administrators' roles highlights the need for targeted research on how they can effectively prevent hazing. Such research could identify best practices, address training gaps, and promote systemic changes to support safer campus environments. In the following section, I explore the role of administrators in addressing other complex social problems on college campuses. These frameworks are essential for understanding the broader context where administrators develop and implement prevention strategies. Exploring how administrators' leadership styles, training backgrounds, and perceptions of campus culture shape their approaches to hazing prevention could yield valuable insights for fostering meaningful and lasting change.

What Do We Know About College Staff & Administrators? Roles, Challenges, and Prevention Strategies

Research on hazing highlights administrators' critical role in shaping campus responses, but few studies focus specifically on their involvement in hazing prevention and intervention. The existing research reveals notable gaps in administrators' training, preparedness, and perceptions of hazing incidents (Arnold 2005; Eastlin 2018; Feuer 2019). Arnold's (2005) study demonstrates that while student affairs professionals were aware hazing occurred, many lacked the experience and training to recognize its indicators, limiting their capacity to intervene effectively. This gap underscores the need for comprehensive training programs to equip administrators with the skills required for hazing prevention.

Feuer (2019) expands on this by applying Bolman and Deal's (2013) Four-Frame Model to explore how administrators conceptualize hazing. The study finds that administrators adopt varying interpretive frameworks—some prioritize rule enforcement, while others focus on student well-being or preserving campus traditions—highlighting the complexity of addressing hazing comprehensively.

Eastlin's (2018) research on hazing in Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs) reveals additional layers of complexity. Administrators expressed concerns about safety and legal liability while recognizing the cultural significance of these organizations' traditions. These tensions illustrate the nuanced challenges administrators face in balancing tradition with student safety. Despite these insightful studies, more research is needed to understand administrators' roles in hazing prevention and how institutional policies and practices can be improved.

Addressing Similar Social Problems on Campus

Hazing is just one of many social problems university administrators must navigate. The literature on other campus issues—such as sexual violence, binge drinking, and drug use—provides valuable context for understanding the broader challenges administrators face in their roles. Carey and colleagues (2022) explored sexual violence prevention efforts among university athletics departments. Their findings suggest that a top-down decision-making approach often creates a disconnect between policy and practice, resulting in limited success. Instead, they advocate for collaborative approaches that integrate student leaders and encourage cross-departmental partnerships to create meaningful change. Similarly, Levine (2018) examined university-community partnerships in sexual violence prevention and identified major barriers such as resource constraints and competing institutional priorities. Building trust and reframing

prevention strategies were critical for overcoming these challenges, according to this study (Levine 2018).

Wechsler and colleagues (2000) studied university administrators' responses to student alcohol abuse and found a strong correlation between administrators' perceptions of alcohol as a significant campus issue and the comprehensiveness of their prevention programs. Administrators who acknowledged the severity of alcohol-related problems were considerably more likely to implement robust educational and outreach initiatives. These findings suggest that administrators' recognition of a problem plays a crucial role in driving institutional action.

Career-Related Challenges for Higher Education Administrators

Beyond responding to specific social problems, administrators face numerous workplace challenges that affect their ability to effectively lead. Research documents significant stressors and barriers, such as effort-reward imbalances, over-commitment, and burnout (Ammons 2010; Buller 2012; Johnson 2015). Attrition is a major issue, with 50 to 60 percent of student affairs professionals leaving the field within the first five years due to job dissatisfaction, poor work environments, and lack of professional development opportunities (Lorden 1998; Tull 2006; Renn & Jessup-Anger 2008).

Coll and colleagues (2019) highlight additional challenges stemming from long-tenured faculty conflicts, internal campus climate issues, and low empathy for the difficulties administrators face. These factors contribute to high turnover, with one in five university administrators leaving their position annually, often citing stress and limited perceived rewards (Morris & Laipple 2015). Emotional labor also plays a significant role in administrators' experiences. Imbody's (2024) study on faculty responding to sexual assault disclosures finds that

many higher education professionals experience feelings of stress, helplessness, and frustration due to inadequate institutional support. Similar emotional and psychological challenges likely exist in the context of hazing prevention, yet no studies have explored this specific aspect of administrators' work.

Title IX practitioners face related barriers, including fear of lawsuits, job insecurity, and pressure to prioritize institutional reputation over student protection (Cruz 2021; Smith & Freyd 2014). These high-stakes decisions and emotional challenges are also present in hazing prevention, emphasizing the need for research on how administrators navigate these complex dynamics while maintaining their well-being and professional integrity, a major gap this dissertation seeks to fill.

Theoretical Framework: Organizational Perspective & Organizational Decline

Levine's (1978) theory of organizational decline offers a valuable framework for understanding how institutions respond to internal and external pressures, particularly during periods of financial strain, demographic shifts, and political turbulence. Broadly, Levine's theory aims to explain why organizations fail to adapt effectively to changing environments and how specific types of decline can destabilize them. His work identifies four key causes of decline—environmental entropy, organizational atrophy, political vulnerability, and problem depletion—each of which highlights distinct challenges organizations face. This framework is especially relevant for analyzing higher education institutions, where systemic issues like declining enrollment, reduced public funding, and the growing influence of external actors (e.g., private firms, think tanks, and online education platforms) have reshaped the academic landscape.

In this context, administrators charged with addressing complex social issues like hazing prevention often face significant obstacles due to resource constraints, institutional restructuring, and competing priorities. Understanding how these structural challenges align with Levine's causes of decline can illuminate the broader organizational context in which hazing prevention work is carried out. This section explains Levine's theory in detail and connects it to administrators' experiences, showing how organizational decline impacts both their capacity to act and the outcomes of their initiatives.

Environmental entropy refers to external disruptions—such as economic downturns, demographic changes, and regulatory shifts—that reduce an organization's capacity to operate effectively. In higher education, declining state funding and shrinking pools of college applicants are key entropic forces. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these pressures, leaving many institutions struggling to sustain operations. For example, state funding for higher education declined by an average of 6% across 37 states between 2020 and 2021, with some states experiencing even steeper cuts (NEA 2022). Further, data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reveals a 5 percent drop in enrollment among 18-year-old freshmen in the fall of 2024 compared to the previous year (Salam 2024). In response, many institutions raised tuition, reduced services, and/or adopted short-term survival strategies that often compromises long-term stability. For administrators focused on hazing prevention, environmental entropy may present serious challenges. Budget cuts can lead to reduced staff, limited programming, and fewer resources for education and intervention efforts. This instability makes it difficult for institutions to maintain consistent policies or build the sustained cultural change needed to prevent hazing.

Organizational atrophy describes the internal erosion of efficiency and effectiveness due to outdated practices, resistance to change, and limited innovation. In higher education, atrophy often manifests in the failure to modernize curricula, adopt new technologies, or respond to evolving student needs. Smaller institutions with constrained budgets are particularly vulnerable, as they lack the resources to invest in necessary updates (Bess & Dee 2012). In the context of hazing prevention, atrophy may appear as outdated training programs, inconsistent enforcement of policies, or limited collaboration between campus units. These issues can stifle innovation and prevent administrators from implementing comprehensive, evidence-based approaches to hazing prevention.

Political vulnerability reflects an organization's susceptibility to external political forces that influence its funding and operations. Universities that rely heavily on government funding are particularly exposed to changes in political priorities. For instance, recent efforts federally as well as in some states to reduce funding for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives or limit tenure protections illustrate the precarious nature of public funding (Hellmann 2024). For hazing prevention administrators, political vulnerability can translate into inconsistent support from institutional leaders, who may be wary of addressing controversial issues. This can lead to abrupt changes in priorities, limited autonomy, and challenges in maintaining long-term initiatives.

Problem depletion occurs when demand for an organization's services declines. In higher education, the looming "enrollment cliff" reflects this trend, with projections suggesting a significant decline in college-age students between 2025 and 2029 (Churchill & Chard 2021). The rise of alternative credentials, such as micro-credentials and coding bootcamps, has further disrupted traditional higher education by offering cost-effective, targeted pathways to

employment. Hazing prevention efforts can be deprioritized as institutions shift their focus to attracting and retaining students in response to these external pressures. Administrators may face reduced visibility and funding for their work as institutions struggle to balance competing priorities.

Levine's (1978) framework on organizational decline provides a valuable lens for understanding the persistent challenges administrators face in hazing prevention. While higher education institutions may not be in a wholesale state of decline, they often experience periods of resource constraints, shifting priorities, and external pressures that mirror the dynamics Levine describes. Hazing prevention efforts, in particular, are susceptible to organizational inertia, leadership turnover, and competing institutional demands, making this framework especially useful for analyzing the barriers to sustained progress in this area.

Each of Levine's four mechanisms of decline offers insight into why hazing prevention remains an ongoing challenge despite periodic policy advancements, and why administrators might experience a variety of challenges doing this work. Environmental entropy, for example, highlights how external pressures such as budgetary constraints, shifting student demographics, or public crises (e.g., COVID-19) can disrupt the stability needed for long-term programming. Organizational atrophy explains how institutions, over time, may deprioritize hazing prevention, either due to complacency or a lack of sustained investment in training and staffing. Political vulnerability underscores how prevention efforts are often subject to administrative turnover, stakeholder conflicts, or external political pressures that can weaken institutional commitment. Finally, problem depletion may be particularly relevant in hazing prevention, as shifting institutional priorities can lead to decreased attention and resource allocation once hazing incidents fade from public scrutiny.

By applying Levine's framework, this study highlights how hazing prevention efforts are not just shaped by individual decision-makers or isolated policy changes but are also embedded within broader organizational dynamics. Recognizing these patterns can help administrators and policymakers design more resilient and adaptive prevention strategies that account for institutional constraints and competing priorities.

The role of university administrators in hazing prevention has grown increasingly important amid rising accountability for student well-being. However, they face significant challenges, including the lasting impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing debates about the role of higher education in society, and the looming enrollment cliff. These pressures complicate decisions about resource allocation, financial and human,—even for critical social issues like sexual assault, binge drinking, and substance use. Within this context, how do administrators navigate the complexities of hazing prevention and education? What hurdles do they encounter, and how do they navigate or contend with them?

The following chapters explore these questions in detail, describing the methods used to investigate how administrators engage in hazing prevention, the obstacles they face, and the strategies they develop in response. This analysis also examines how student body characteristics and campus history or culture intersect with prevention and education efforts. The final chapter offers insight into how administrators navigate the daily challenges of their work. Although little research has specifically focused on hazing prevention from this perspective, this project fills that gap, offering important insights for educators, researchers, policymakers, and community stakeholders committed to addressing hazing and its broader impact in higher education. First, I will describe the methods used to achieve these goals.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a holistic account of the methods and the analytical strategies that guided this research. I also identify the primary research questions I answer with the data I collected via a web-based Qualtrics survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews. I articulate the mixed-methods research design I use to explore these research questions regarding how university administrators engage in hazing prevention and navigate challenges they face on their campuses. I also describe the quantitative and qualitative methods used in this research design to compile survey and interview data from university administrators around the United States. Finally, I will discuss methodological challenges and limitations encountered during this process, in addition to my positionality as a researcher approaching this project. Through these specific data collection methods and analytical strategies, I address my research questions and shed light on the role of university administrators as they work on hazing education and prevention at their respective schools. I begin by describing the broad mixed methods research approach used as a framework to guide this project.

Mixed Methods Research Approach

Mixed methods research involves the simultaneous use of qualitative and quantitative methods to explore a research question, phenomenon, or social problem, especially when existing knowledge is limited (Creswell & Creswell 2017). Mixed methods enable a holistic understanding of a research problem by combining the breadth of quantitative data with the depth that qualitative insights can provide (Creswell & Creswell 2017). This research approach enables social scientists to define and interpret ambiguities while providing deeper meaning and

insight into understudied phenomena, such as hazing from the administrative perspective, which is largely absent in the current literature (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). Mixed methods allow researchers to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data, enhancing the accuracy and richness of their findings. Triangulating data validates results and reveals complex layers of the social problem that would remain hidden through a single method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). In particular, mixed methods offer a way to capture the contextual complexity of hazing, facilitating a detailed, nuanced analysis informed by the unique situational dynamics and perspectives of administrators (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This approach is especially valuable for exploring the "why" behind administrative decisions and behaviors, shedding light on their motivations and constraints in addressing hazing incidents. I used this broad framework to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the primary mechanisms of hazing prevention used at institutions of higher education?

    1A. What organizational characteristics influence hazing prevention practices and structures at institutions of higher education?

2. What barriers or challenges do administrators face as they work on hazing prevention?

3. How do administrators navigate workplace challenges regarding hazing prevention and education at institutions of higher education?

Method: Survey Data Collection

To answer these research questions, I drew on two methods which include an electronically distributed survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews. I will first describe the survey data collection process and then my interview data collection. To begin, I constructed a survey to distribute to administrators at public or private four-year universities in the United

States with enrollments greater than 500 undergraduate students (with publicly available contact information). I conducted a survey to explore and highlight key themes related to hazing prevention, including the types of prevention efforts implemented on university campuses and the challenges administrators face in carrying out this work. Specifically, survey topics included: (1) their knowledge regarding hazing policies at their universities, (2) the types of hazing prevention programming their universities engage in, and (3) their perceptions of hazing and its prevalence at their universities (see Appendix A for more survey details). Data were collected between January 2023 and February 2024.

I chose to use surveying as a method for a variety of reasons. Surveys are valuable tools in sociological research due to their ability to collect standardized data from a larger sample size. Surveys provide a systematic and efficient means of gathering data on attitudes, behaviors, and demographics (Babbie 2016). In addition, surveys provide greater flexibility and lower costs compared to other alternative research methods (Fowler 1984; Groves et al. 2009), and for these reasons, web-based self-report surveys are a prominent method of data collection in social sciences (Meterko et al. 2015).

I edited and refined my survey and response options with a close colleague who works as a university administrator to clarify language and to ensure that survey options accurately reflected and corresponded with the research questions for this project. As I developed this research plan, the Institutional Review Board at my university evaluated the project materials from November 2022 through February 2023. During this time, I made requested changes to my survey and interview guide based on the IRB's requests and comments. Through the informed consent declaration (Appendix B – IRB Protocol Approval and Informed Consent Declaration) sent with the electronic survey, it was explained to potential respondents that the questionnaire

was an anonymous survey, and no personally identifiable information would be collected or stored outside of interview recruitment for interested participants. Potential participants were also informed that data would be destroyed in accordance with my university's IRB protocols, and skipping questions was permissible for survey respondents.

I designed my sampling frame along with inclusion and exclusion criteria based on my research background on hazing prevention and education research. My inclusion criteria included public and private universities and colleges within the United States. My exclusion criteria included for-profit universities and colleges and schools with undergraduate enrollments of 500 students or less ("very small schools"), as well as community colleges and vocational institutions. I used the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and UniRank classification of colleges and universities to compile a comprehensive list of public or private four-year universities that fit these criteria and omitted for-profit universities, community colleges, vocational schools, as well as those that are 'very small' or smaller than 500 undergraduate students (IPEDS n.d.).

I chose to exclude 'very small' universities because many schools of this size have highly specialized curricula, are commuter colleges without housing availability, or cater to specific demographics or categories of students (e.g., religious affiliation or professional focus), which likely do not align with the broader experiences central to this study (Lindsay 2021). Given my focus on understanding how university administrators engage in hazing prevention within more traditional campus communities, it was essential to limit the sample to institutions where student life and residential experiences are more robust and representative of this context. Community colleges, vocational schools, and special-focus institutions were also omitted, as students

enrolled in these schools generally have lower levels of participation in student organizations, which are key sites for hazing activities (Chang 2002).

Similarly, for-profit universities and colleges were excluded because they operate as businesses to earn profit and differ significantly from public or private non-profit universities in several relevant ways, such as student life, campus engagement, and community structure. For-profit institutions typically have lower graduation rates compared to their non-profit counterparts, with just 26 percent of students at for-profit schools completing a four-year degree within six years, compared to 62 percent at public colleges and 68 percent at private non-profit institutions (Kirkham 2022). These differences likely influence the student experiences and campus communities most associated with hazing and prevention efforts, which is why I excluded these universities from the study. From my original sampling frame (n=1,599), I removed (n=526) colleges that fell below this size threshold or were classified as for-profit institutions, technical colleges, and vocational schools, resulting in a more targeted sample that aligns with the focus and aims of this study.

From this list of universities that fit the criteria (n=1073), I then compiled publicly available administrator contact information (or similarly titled roles) and distributed an electronic survey to assess administrators' perspectives on hazing and prevention on their campuses. To compile this list of administrators, I conducted Google searches using the name of the university along with various search terms to identify relevant upper-level campus administrators, including terms such as "dean of students", "student affairs", "dean of student life", "dean of student conduct", keeping in mind that language used for these positions may vary across universities. I distributed my survey instrument via Qualtrics web-based software and sent two follow-up reminders to complete the survey. Data were compiled from 143 submitted surveys with a

response rate of 13.3 percent. I used Microsoft Excel and STATA software to evaluate relationships and provide descriptive statistics from this survey data.

It is important to note that this is a relatively low response rate (Meterko et al. 2015). Some potential reasons for this response rate include issues such as survey fatigue, perceived lack of relevance or value of the topic at hand, as well as logistical constraints to complete the survey. Survey fatigue may stem from various factors for those in administrative roles, but may include the frequency of survey requests, the perceived length and complexity of survey instruments, or the repeated exposure to survey requests that can create feelings of disinterest or apathy (Barclay et al. 2002).

Logistical constraints may also influence this response rate, particularly among busy professionals such as administrators at institutions of higher education. With demanding schedules and limited downtime, these individuals may have little energy or time to participate in survey or interviews for research, even if the topic is compelling. Further, the organizational structure and culture of colleges and universities may create barriers to participating in survey or interview research. Institutional policies and norms may discourage or limit employees' involvement in external research activities that may be perceived as extraneous to primary roles and responsibilities on a daily basis.

Another potential factor for non-response includes concerns regarding job security, institutional reputation, or issues about privacy regarding the data collection, write-up, and publication of these findings. In many cases, university administrators are important, front-facing individuals on their campuses, and some individuals may have concerns their participation in this survey or interview process may impact their job security and safety.

Regardless of the reasons for this low response rate, "Survey results should be considered on their merits even if based on relatively 'low' response rates," according to Meterko and colleagues (Meterko et al. 2015:143). Given limited research on this particular population, the data are still useful and point to insightful themes regarding hazing prevention and education on college campuses from the perspective of university administrators. Although findings from this survey may not be easily generalizable to the entire population, these data still provide valuable insight into the experiences and perspectives of university administrators who have historically been underrepresented in hazing research. In addition, by complementing this survey with qualitative interviews, I am able to draw out themes and relationships more clearly and provide depth to the survey findings. Even when projects are not necessarily generalizable, they still offer valuable opportunities for theory application, development, and refinement. I accomplish this by connecting existing organizational theory and perspectives to university administrators' work on hazing prevention. Specifically, I provide recommendations and suggestions for more efficient and effective practices based on data collected from surveys and interviews with these individuals.

Method: Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviewing

To complement the survey data, I also engaged in qualitative semi-structured interviewing. I chose to use qualitative semi-structured interviews to understand more deeply than what the survey instrument could provide, the roles of administrators, their experiences and understandings of hazing prevention, and importantly, the barriers they face in their daily work relating to this issue. Qualitative research, such as semi-structured interviewing, allows researchers to collect "the richest possible data," (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland

2006:15). According to qualitative researcher Robert Weiss, "Interviewing gives us access to the observations of others… Through interviewing we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived," (1994:1). Thus, semi-structured qualitative interviewing can yield rich data that are empirically rooted in the respondents' answers and not based on a researcher's preconceived notion of what answers might be, potential categories to choose from, etc., and may not align with the reality of participants' daily experiences.

As a recruitment technique for the interviews, I solicited survey participants who were interested in further discussing their work on hazing prevention to provide their contact information for a follow-up interview. After survey completion, email messages were sent to survey respondents who provided contact information for a follow-up interview. I corresponded with these individuals and scheduled informational interviews (see Appendix C – University Administrator Interview Guide) via electronic means, primarily via Google Meets. This process is defined as convenience sampling as it originates potential interviewees from the list of survey participants from the first part of this project. Christensen & Johnson (2020) wrote that, "Researchers use convenience sampling when they include in their sample people who are available… to participate in the study," (253).

My primary aim in interviewing administrators was to triangulate the survey findings, as well as, consistent with mixed methods, collect contextual and nuanced data on this topic (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2007). This form of convenience sampling for interviewing can provide insight into interesting themes and mechanisms and provide depth to survey data (Weiss 1994:27-28). For instance, interviewing a convenience sample of administrators in similar roles but at varying schools can highlight the dynamics and constraints of their positions as they work towards a

common goal: hazing education and prevention. As illuminated later in this dissertation in the Findings chapters, this form of qualitative interviewing corroborated and provided depth to my survey findings (Weiss 1994:28). The quantitative portion of my study provides a broader picture of how administrators go about hazing prevention and education work, while the use of qualitative methods allowed me to collect narratives of the experiences of university administrators and the real struggles they face in the execution of these goals (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2007).

There are several distinct advantages to using a semi-structured interview guide—as opposed to a structured interview schedule-- for this component of the research, beginning with the adaptability it provides to the research process. A semi-structured interview guide provides a framework for interviewing that includes a set of predetermined questions while also allowing for the incorporation of follow-up probes and open-ended queries during the interview process. According to Patton (2002), this research approach allows for a degree of standardization in data collection, while also fostering adaptability to the unique context and structure of each interview (Rubin & Rubin 2005). In this way, semi-structured interview guides combine structure and flexibility and provide for a nuanced exploration of research topics (Creswell 2013). This adaptability also fosters in-depth evaluation through follow-up questions and probes, which can provide deeper insight into participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes (Gubrium & Holstein 2002).

A semi-structured interview guide also fosters rapport and comfort between the researcher and the participant. Unlike surveys, which are typically closed-ended, and highly structured, semi-structured interviews are more flexible and can feel more like conversations. This style encourages more organic interaction, helping participants share their experiences more

openly (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). Semi-structured guides also allow researchers to tailor questions and probes based on the participant's background and expertise, resulting in a richer, more meaningful exchange during the data collection process. As Flavin (2001) notes, semi-structured qualitative interviews provide participants with the opportunity to "articulate or conceptualize their experiences more completely and in their own terms" (278).

In addition, interviews empower participants by giving them a distinct and direct voice in the research process. By not adhering to a strict interview schedule, this semi-structured approach can foster a more natural conversation, provide for spontaneous dialogue, and allows for the participant to explore topics that are relevant to them throughout the interview process (Flick 2009). Compared to surveys which often rely on predetermined response options, interviews are adaptable and allow participants to articulate their experiences and perspectives in their own words and vocabulary (Babbie 2016). This fosters authenticity and richness of the data overall (Babbie 2016). This flexibility is crucial to capture and explore emergent patterns and themes which may be surprising and unanticipated when beginning the research process (Maxwell 2013).

My sample for the qualitative interviews included 19 participants. Participant demographic information can be found in Table 1. The interview guide directed the conversation and allowed for in-depth discussion of the respondent's experiences and beliefs (Babbie 2010). The semi-structured interview guide included 11 open-ended questions about hazing and hazing prevention on administrators' campuses and their experiences and understandings regarding these behaviors (see Appendix C).

I used three primary question types in my interviewing process: main questions, follow-up questions, and probes. Main questions were crafted to explore the core of the research

problem, while follow-up questions helped pursue depth, extract details, and lead to richer, more nuanced findings. Depth refers to, "Asking about distinct points of view while learning enough of the history or context," or constructing a broader picture of what is observed in a meaningful way (Rubin & Rubin 2005:130). Richness, "allows a depth interviewer to unravel the complexity of other people's world," (Rubin & Rubin 2005:134). Lastly, nuance suggests the presence of various shades of grey in interviews, emphasizing the importance of moving beyond simplistic responses and highlighting subtleties in meaning (Rubin & Rubin 2005). Interviews lasted an average length of 48 minutes, ranging from 28 minutes to one hour and sixteen minutes.

With permission, I audio-recorded most interviews (excluding three participants who opted out) and transcribed them into Microsoft Word processing software. I managed data collection by ensuring informed consent was obtained for all participants and providing the option to decline audio recording, which a small number of participants requested (n=4, 21%). Audio recording offers several advantages, such as allowing the researcher to remain 'present' with the respondent, rather than being distracted by taking extensive notes throughout the interview (Bucher, Fritz, & Quarantelli 1956; Lofland et al. 2006). This is particularly important for interview schedules that are flexible and open-ended, as in this project. Notably, the decision by three participants to opt out of audio recording may reflect the sensitivity of the topic, further aligning with my earlier observations regarding the low survey response rate. This reluctance highlights how deeply personal or potentially stigmatizing experiences might lead participants to seek additional privacy and control over how their narratives are documented. For participants who did not consent to audio recordings, I took detailed notes throughout the interview process and also engaged in rigorous memo-ing directly after to produce notes and data that accurately captured information and themes conveyed through the interview discussion.

Risks associated with the research study were minimal, however it was made clear to interview participants that they did not have to answer any questions if they felt uncomfortable or did not want to discuss a particular subject. No respondent opted out of any questions during the course of the interview, although as highlighted earlier, three participants did not consent to audio-recording. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word and transcripts were redacted to remove identifying information, including university names, participant names, and other similar potentially identifying information. Given the sensitive nature of the content of the interviews, randomly-generated pseudonyms were assigned to participants, and any identifying information was removed from the final transcripts and write-up of findings. All IRB research requirements were met at each stage of this project.

Respondent Characteristics: Qualtrics Survey Data

See Table 3 for survey sample statistics (n=143). As identified there, in terms of gender, there was a fairly even distribution between participants who identified as men (n=53, 50.5%) and those who identified as women (n=49, 46.7%). Two respondents identified as non-binary (n=2, 1.9%) while another identified as gender-nonconforming (n=1, <1%).

The survey respondents included participants from a variety of racial backgrounds, with around 80 percent of survey respondents identifying as white (n=84), and about 10 percent of survey respondents identifying as Black (n=10). Around five percent identified as Hispanic/Latinx (n=5). Four percent identified as multi-racial (n=4), while one individual identified as Asian or Pacific Islander (n=1, <1%).

Survey respondents varied greatly in length of time in their current role. For instance, half (n=64, 50%) had been in their current roles between 1 and 5 years, and about 16 percent had been working in their current capacity for less than 1 year (n=20, 15.6%). Eighteen percent

reported being in their role between 6 and 10 years (n=23, 18%). Ten respondents reported serving in their role for 11 to 15 years, with 11 individuals working more than 15 years (8.6%). Strikingly, most (n=84, 65.6%) had been in their positions for a relatively brief period of time (less than a year to 1-5 years). This suggests that the majority of survey respondents potentially have not served a cohort of students to graduation (for a full four years) in their current roles.

Survey respondents worked at institutions across many geographic regions in the U.S. For instance, many respondents worked at universities and colleges in the South (n=33, 31.4%), Midwest (n=32, 30.5%), and Northeast (n=16, 15.2%). Other respondents worked at universities in the Mid-Atlantic (n=10, 9.5%), Southwest (n=6, 5.7%), and West (n=5, 4.8%) regions. Two respondents worked in the Pacific Northwest (2%). In terms of public/private status, a slim majority of administrators served public institutions (n=61, 58.1%), while n=43 (41%) participants served private institutions. One individual worked at a Hispanic Serving Institute (n=1, <1%).

While all respondents worked on hazing prevention and education at their universities, participants varied widely in terms of engagement with students on campus. To illustrate this variety, consider the following responses regarding this topic from the survey:

> *"Student Conduct reports to me. I usually hear cases. Also, Student of Concern reports come to my office. I also supervise Counseling Services, Health Services, and New Student and Family Programs."*
>
> *"I work with the Dean of Students to oversee the conduct office, which sees all students and student organizational cases (except Title IX). I also chair our Students of Concern Team."*
>
> *I engage with students every day. I oversee Greek life, housing, residence life, student media (radio, print), student organizations, attorney for students, student rights and responsibilities including academic misconduct, center for Black culture, wellness, student health center, counseling, collegiate recovery, campus recreation, outdoor adventure, student union, arts/entertainment/programming, behavioral intervention team/student advocacy."*

"The Department of Community Standards and Center for Student Engagement (which manages our Fraternity & Sorority Life Program) both report to me."

"I oversee the university's student conduct process. I am a member of the Care Team, Behavioral Intervention Team, Threat Assessment Group, and other duties as assigned."

As demonstrated via these responses, most survey participants were heavily involved in overseeing student conduct and discipline at their respective universities. Many respondents relayed that they were responsible for managing cases related to student behavior, ensuring that university policies and codes of conduct were upheld, and overall maintaining a safe campus community. For many survey respondents, this involved hearing cases, making disciplinary decisions, and working with specific teams and organizations to address behavioral issues. These survey responses also suggest while these administrators largely serve in similar roles at their respective universities, their work and daily experiences with students is anything but homogenous. There is a high level of variety to the organization, responsibilities, and roles for each individual administrator as demonstrated by these responses.

Respondent Characteristics: Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews

In terms of gender across interview respondents, the majority of participants interviewed identified as men (n=13, 68.4%), with a smaller portion identifying as women (n=5, 26.3%). One respondent identified as non-binary (n=1, 5.3%). My interview respondents demonstrated less racial diversity compared to survey respondents, with the majority identifying as white (n=14, 73.7%), and a few identifying as Black (n=4, 21.1%). One respondent did not provide their racial identification.

Interview respondents also served institutions across many regions in the United States. For example, while many were employed at institutions of higher education in the South (n=9, 47.4%), participants also worked at colleges and universities in the Northeast (n=4, 21.1%), Midwest (n=2, 10.5%), Northwest (n=2, 10.5%), and West (n=2, 10.5%). A slim majority of interview respondents served public institutions (n=10, 52.6%), with a smaller portion serving private institutions (n=9, 47.4%). See Table 3 for more details regarding my interview respondent sample.

Data Analysis: Qualitative Interviews

To address my research questions, I employed a reflexive coding process using NVIVO software (Saldaña, 2016). This multi-stage process began with general, descriptive codes and progressed toward more refined, analytical coding schemes. NVIVO facilitated this work by managing data and providing rapid access to both theoretical insights and the context from which the data emerged (Bazeley, 2007). Reflexive coding enabled me to uncover nuanced patterns and develop a deeper understanding of the complexities in my data (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Reflexivity, a cornerstone of qualitative research, involves critically examining one's own interpretations and remaining attentive to the social, political, and cultural contexts that shape both the researcher's perspective and the data (Morgan, 2022; Patton, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized reflexivity as key to ensuring research trustworthiness, alongside credibility and dependability. Reflexivity was especially crucial in this project due to the complexities of studying hazing prevention within varied organizational contexts, including differences in funding, regional characteristics, and public/private distinctions.

Throughout the coding process, I used several strategies to maintain reflexivity. I began with an inductive, open-coding approach, identifying broad patterns and recurring themes in both survey and interview data (Saldaña, 2016). Initial codes were documented through memos, which helped me track emerging ideas and test preliminary conceptualizations (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Memos served as tools for reflecting on emergent patterns and connecting quantitative survey data with qualitative interview findings.

During the first round of coding, I identified broad, descriptive codes such as:

- Barriers to Prevention
- Organizational Characteristics
- Policy Implementation Challenges
- Student Body Characteristics

For example, under "Barriers to Prevention," administrators frequently mentioned funding limitations, administrative resistance, and restricted access to training resources. These broad categories allowed me to capture a wide range of issues and experiences. In subsequent rounds of coding, I refined and expanded these broad codes into more specific, relational subcodes. This process allowed me to capture variations in experiences across different regions and institutional types (public vs. private). I also merged or eliminated less analytically useful codes to ensure a cohesive final coding structure aligned with my research questions. The focused coding phase helped me identify key themes and patterns across data sources. For example, while survey responses revealed administrators in underfunded institutions often cited "lack of community support" as a barrier, qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into cultural dynamics, such as the influence of beliefs systems around hazing on their prevention efforts. During the final stages of coding, I prioritized significant codes and combined related ones to develop a stable

coding scheme. Once new themes ceased to emerge, I turned to analysis and writing. The final coding structure included seven primary nodes and 15 nested subcodes, such as Prevention Tactics under Hazing Policies-Responses.

Primary codes included:

- Hazing Policies-Responses
- Hazing at University
- Job Barriers
- Job Responsibilities
- Personal Struggles
- Student Body Characteristics

Memos were instrumental in connecting these themes and refining my conceptual framework. For example, while writing about how public versus private funding shaped hazing prevention efforts, I identified connections between organizational priorities, resource availability, and administrators' challenges. Reflexivity enabled me to link structural factors—such as funding streams and state-level policies—to the barriers faced by administrators, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational contexts influence hazing prevention.

Data Analysis: Surveys

I began the data analysis process by first cleaning and organizing my data. This included examining raw data, and determining errors, missing values, or inconsistencies that might impede the analysis process. I then used descriptive statistics to generalize and visualize patterns that emerged from my survey responses (Gall et al. 2007). Much of my quantitative data focuses

on administrative perceptions and experiences and provided largely categorical data (Gall et al. 2007).

Since much of my data was categorical, I used chi-square tests of independence to assess differences in perceived barriers and experiences between administrators at varying categories of universities, including public and private universities, as well as to assess potential differences across geographic locations in the United States. Chi-square tests are methods to determine if there is a significant association between categorical variables and assess whether the observed distribution of data across different groups deviates from what would be expected by chance. While my sample size is relatively small for these tests and more robust statistical testing, these results still provide broad insight into this set of respondents and their experiences regarding hazing prevention.

Methodological Challenges & Limitations

Earlier in this discussion, I described several benefits to mixed-methods studies that use surveys and interviews to collect data. However, there are also a few primary challenges involved in this kind of study, including challenges integrating varying data sources together, relying on publicly available contact information for participants, as well as potential researcher bias to influence the findings. I describe these challenges across this section and explore how I worked to mitigate these factors throughout my research. To begin, a key challenge with a mixed-methods approach is integrating diverse data sources and maintaining methodological rigor, particularly when working with fundamentally different types of data—numerical (quantitative) and textual (qualitative). The process of reconciling these differences and ensuring meaningful alignment between data types is often time-consuming and requires careful planning

to avoid overgeneralization or loss of detail. This complexity was a significant challenge in this research project.

For example, analyzing survey data and qualitative interviews together required bridging the gap between statistical patterns and the context-dependent insights derived from interviews. To manage this, I intentionally structured the research process so that the qualitative data expanded on themes identified through quantitative analysis. The survey data provided a broad understanding of patterns and trends, which served as the foundation for designing semi-structured interview questions. This allowed the interviews to explore these patterns in greater depth, revealing underlying complexities that might not be visible in the quantitative data alone. In many ways, this became a key strength to this project.

Another limitation of this study is that it relied on publicly available contact information to recruit university administrators. This restricted my access to administrators at institutions with password-protected directories and those who did not post their contact information elsewhere. Despite this, I was able to recruit an assorted set of administrators from around the United States. Relatedly, survey respondents and interview participants were self-selected, which may introduce bias. Administrators already involved or concerned with hazing prevention may have been more likely to respond to my recruitment emails, potentially limiting the range of perspectives represented. Further, this study does not use a random sample design and cannot be generalized to all university administrators. Nonetheless, the findings offer valuable insight into the lived experiences and challenges faced by those actively engaged in hazing prevention and education.

Throughout this project, I worked reflexively to mitigate potential biases in data collection and analysis. For instance, I collaborated with colleagues in the survey design process

to ensure that the questions and answer options reflected the potential daily experiences of university administrators and avoided biased or misleading language (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness 2018). This process of investigator triangulation (Flick 2009; Morse 2015) helped identify ambiguities or gaps and ensured the research instruments aligned with the study's objectives.

In addition, I drew on my interview guide and engaged in memo-writing after each interview throughout the analysis process. These strategies helped maintain reflexivity and reduced bias as much as possible. While Fields and Kafai (2009) remind us that researcher and participant biases are present in all social research, these practices help strengthen the validity of this study and contribute to the richness of the data. Despite these limitations, this study offers a unique contribution by focusing on university administrators responsible for hazing prevention on college campuses. It sheds light on their challenges and how they work to overcome barriers to prevention.

In this chapter, I outlined the research methods, including survey data collection and semi-structured qualitative interviews, and described the coding and data analysis process. I also acknowledged the limitations and challenges associated with these methods. Despite these challenges, the findings are valuable, offering insights into a historically understudied topic. In the following chapters, I present my research findings and, in the final chapter, offer conclusions and recommendations for administrators, researchers, and other social scientists engaged in hazing prevention.

Table 1. Survey & Interview Respondent Data

Participant Information	Survey Sample (n=, %)	Interview Sample (n=, %)	National Estimated Demographics (estimated % only)
In terms of my gender, I identify as:	n=105, 100%	n=19, 100%	
Man	n=53, (50.5%)	n=13, (68.4%)	45.2% of total U.S administrators (CUPA-HR Survey 2025)
Woman	n=49, (46.7%)	n=5, (26.3%)	54.8%
Non-binary	n=2, (1.9%)	n=1, (5.3%)	NA
Other gender identity not listed	n=1, (<1%)	n=0, (0%)	NA
In terms of my race, I identify as: (Please select the option with which you most identify)	n=105	n=19, 100%	
White/Caucasian	n=84, (80%)	n=15, (79%)	80.4%
Black/African American	n=10, (9.5%)	n=3 (15.8%)	9.8%
Hispanic/Latinx	n=5, (4.8%)	n=1, (5.3%)	4.2%
Multi-racial	n=4, (3.8%)	n=0, (0%)	1.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	n=1, (<1%)	n=0, (0%)	3.8%
Other	n=1, (<1%)	n=0, (0%)	NA
How long have you held this title?	n=128, (100%)		
Less than 1 year	n= 20, (15.6%)		
1-5 years	n=64, (50%)		
6-10 years	n= 23, (18.0%)		
11-15 years	n= 10, (7.8%)		
More than 15 years	n= 11, (8.6%)		
The estimated undergraduate enrollment of my college or university is:	n=105, (100%)	n=19, 100%	
0-500 students	n=0, (0.00%)	n=0, (0%)	
501-1,000 students	n=4, (3.8%)	n=0, (0%)	
1,001-5,000 students	n=38, (36.2%)	n=4, (21.1%)	
5001-10,000 students	n=24, (22.9%)	n=11, (57.9%)	
10,001-15,000 students	n=13, (12.4%)	n=1, (5.3%)	
15,001-20,000 students	n=8, (7.6%)	n=1, (5.3%)	
20,001-25,000 students	n=3, (2.9%)	n=0, (0%)	
25,001-30,000 students	n=5, (4.8%)	n=1, (5.3%)	

Greater than 30,001 students	n=10, (9.5%)	n=1, (5.3%)	
My college or university is:	n=105, 100%	n=19, 100%	
Public	n=61, (58.1%)	n=10, (52.6%)	
Private	n=43, (41.0%)	n=9, (47.4%)	
Other: Hispanic Serving Institution	n=1, (<1%)	n=0, (0%)	
Which geographic region is your university located in?	n=105	n=19, 100%	
Northeast	n=16, (15.2%)	n=4, (21.1%)	
Mid-Atlantic	n=10, (9.5%)	n=0, (0%)	
South	n=33, (31.4%)	n=9, (47.4%)	
Southwest	n=6, (5.7%)	n=0, (0%)	
Midwest	n=32, (30.5%)	n=2, (10.5%)	
West	n=5, (4.8%)	n=2, (10.5%)	
Other (Please specify): Pacific Northwest, Northwest	n=3, (2.9%)	n=2, (10.5%)	
Does your campus have a hazing prevention policy currently?	n=103, 100%	n=19, 100%	
Yes	n=95, (92.23%)	n=17 (89.5%)	
No	n=5, (4.85%)	n=2, (10.5%)	
Unsure	n=3, (2.91%)	n=0, (0%)	
Does your campus have a hazing prevention workgroup/task force or similar group currently?	n=106, 100%	n=19, 100%	
Yes	n=33, (31.1%)	n=4, (21.1%)	
No	n=65, (61.1%)	n=14 (73.7%)	
Unsure / Other	n=8, (7.5%)	n=1, (5.3%)	
What forms of hazing prevention does your institution current draw on: (Respondents may select more than one option)	n=105		
Education	n=85, (81%)		
Presentations/Guest Speakers, etc.	n=59, (56.2%)		
Trainings/Leadership Summits, etc.	n=62, (59.0%)		
Videos, Posters, Signage, etc.	n=41, (39.0%)		
Social Media Campaigns	n=31, (29.5%)		
Other	n=8, (7.6%)		
Hazing prevention can include hazing education, presentations, trainings, social	n=105		

media campaigns, videos, as well as other events related to preventing hazing on campus. Do you have an estimate of how much your college or university spends on hazing prevention annually across the entire institution?			
Yes	n=45, (42.9%)		
No	n=44, (41.9%)		
Unsure	n=16, (15.2%)		
If yes to Question #11, how much do you estimate your university spends on hazing prevention annually?	n=50, 100%		
Yes, less than $500	n=14, (28%)		
Yes, between $500 and $1500	n=9, (18%)		
Yes, between $1501 and $5000	n=15, (30%)		
Yes, between $5001 and $10,000	n=6, (12%)		
Yes, between $10,001 and $20,000	n=4, (8%)		
Yes, more than $20,000	n=2, (4%)		
Lots of barriers may exist when it comes to hazing prevention on a college campus. What kinds of barriers impede your work on hazing prevention? (Note: Respondents could choose more than one option).	n=104		
Time constraints	n=48, (46.1%)		
Budgetary constraints	n=47 (45.2%)		
Buy-in from above / buy-in from below	n=30, (28.8%)		
Public relations/communication	n=12, (11.5%)		
Other (Please specify) Staffing, staff knowledge, prioritization of other issues	n=12, (11.5%)		
No barriers impede my work on hazing prevention	n=30, (28.8%)		

Table 2 Interview Respondent Demographics

Interview Respondent Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Race**	**Region**	**Undergraduate Enrollment Size**	**Public / Private**	**Interview Length**
1.Vincent	Man	White	Northeast	1,001-5,000 students	Private	0:57:52
2. Ralph	Man	Black	South	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:53:26
3. Bianca	Woman	White	South	10,001-15,000 students	Public	0:51:00
4. Candace	Woman	White	Midwest	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:48:17
5. Andrew	Man	White	Northeast	15,001-20,000 students	Private	0:36:04
6. Rustin	Man	White	West	5001-10,000 students	Private	01:08:18
7. Nolan	Man	Black	South	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:33:23
8. Uther	Man	White	Northeast	5001-10,000 students	Private	01:15:46
9. Royce	Man	White	South	5001-10,000 students	Private	01:08:18
10. Yvette	Woman	White	South	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:33:23
11. Charles	Man	White	Northeast	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:40:19
12. Richard	Man	White	West	5001-10,000 students	Private	0:28:20
13. Dakota	Nonbinary	White	Northwest	+30,0000 students	Private	0:36:39
14. Stephen	Man	White	Midwest	5001-10,000 students	Private	0:44:49
15. Reginald	Man	Black	South	25,001-30,000 students	Public	0:54:23
16. Rosemary	Woman	Unknown	Northwest	1,001-5,000 students	Private	0:44:27
17. Rebecca	Woman	White	South	5001-10,000 students	Public	0:26:00
18. Spencer	Man	White	South	1,001-5,000 students	Public	0:57:19
19. Derrick	Man	Black	South	1,001-5,000 students	Public	0:52:48

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS PART 1 - HOW DO ADMINISTRATORS ENGAGE IN HAZING PREVENTION & EDUCATION?

One purpose of this mixed-methods research project is to examine the primary mechanisms employed by campus administrators to prevent hazing, as well as the challenges and barriers they encounter in this important work. My findings in this chapter highlight the key mechanisms and processes that administrators use in their efforts to ensure campus safety and address hazing. These include policy development, educational programming, and enforcement strategies. I also explore the daily challenges and barriers faced by administrators, illustrating how they navigate or cope with these obstacles in their hazing prevention efforts.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of these findings, I employed a mixed-methods approach, as described in the methods chapter. The quantitative component involved a survey with both open-ended and closed-ended questions to capture the perceptions of university administrators. The qualitative portion consisted of hour-long semi-structured interviews, allowing for a deeper exploration of the themes identified in the survey and addressing research questions that could not be answered through quantitative data alone.

From an organizational perspective, particularly through the lens of Levine's (1978) framework, this chapter also explores how administrators manage resources and implement hazing prevention strategies under constraints. I demonstrate how administrators make strategic decisions to maintain essential functions and services despite limited resources. Levine's theoretical framework is crucial for understanding how administrative responses to hazing prevention are shaped by budget cuts and resource limitations.

This chapter also explores how administrators prioritize and allocate limited resources—such as money, time, and human capital—to maximize the effectiveness of hazing prevention initiatives. Despite financial and resource constraints, my findings suggest that administrators employ innovative strategies to sustain the integrity of their prevention efforts. These strategies include reallocating resources, seeking external funding, and leveraging community partnerships. To orient this discussion, I first list my research questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the primary mechanisms of hazing prevention used at institutions of higher education?

    1A. What organizational characteristics influence hazing prevention practices and structures at institutions of higher education?

In the first section of this chapter, I examine some of the prominent forms of hazing prevention on which university administrators draw. From an organizational perspective, Levine's (1978; 1980) framework helps explain why the most common hazing prevention efforts align with certain organizational features, especially in the context of limited resources and external pressures. Levine's framework highlights key organizational factors—such as resource constraints, regulatory environments, and the need for cost-effective solutions—that shape how universities allocate resources for hazing prevention. These factors help explain why universities, particularly in times of financial limitation and decline, primarily rely on educational programs, policy enforcement, and collaborative initiatives as their main strategies for addressing hazing. As described earlier in Chapter 1, Levine (1978) categorizes the causes of organizational decline into four primary types: environmental entropy, organizational atrophy, problem depletion, and

political vulnerability. Each of these factors plays a critical role in shaping specifically how organizations respond to external pressures and ultimately attempt to manage their resources. Since these are critical analytical concepts in this chapter, I list and describe them in the table below (See Table 5).

Table 5. Causes of Organizational Decline

Causes of Organizational Decline (Levine 1978; 1980)	Definition	Examples
Environmental Entropy	Refers to external disruptions, such as economic instability, demographic shifts, and regulatory changes, that challenge an institution's capacity to operate effectively.	Economic downturns, global pandemics, declining enrollments.
Organizational Atrophy	Describes the gradual erosion of efficiency and effectiveness due to internal weaknesses, such as outdated processes, resistance to change, and limited innovation.	Failure to modernize curricula, adopt new technologies, respond to evolving marketing demands
Political Vulnerability	Reflects an organization's susceptibility to external political forces that influence its funding, operations, and stability.	Gov't funding shifts, policies affecting subsidies, grants, state appropriations
Problem Depletion	Occurs when demand for an organization's services declines.	Enrollment cliff, alternative credential programs, targeted employment pathways

Before exploring how these concepts intersect with the work that university administrators engage in, I first describe the primary mechanisms and techniques of hazing prevention and education, as well as illustrate some of the primary ways these mechanisms are drawn on in hazing prevention efforts by the universities in my sample. These mechanisms include educational programming, policy enforcement, and collaborative initiatives with various on- and off-campus stakeholders. By examining these strategies through the lens of organizational

perspective and exploring the orienting concepts above that influence decline, I aim to understand how universities effectively manage their resources and navigate the complex landscape of college hazing prevention.

Mechanisms and processes of hazing prevention

To better understand how university administrators engage in hazing prevention, I first examine the mechanisms and processes they use in their daily practices. To gain a comprehensive understanding, my web-based survey included questions designed to reveal the specific strategies employed by administrators responsible for student conduct and safety in higher education institutions. I draw on Levine's (1978) organizational perspective framework to theorize why these mechanisms are used and, importantly, how they help accomplish successful hazing prevention. The most prominent mechanism of hazing prevention was the presence of a campus policy on campus regarding these behaviors. My survey results indicate that nearly all (n=135, 93%) survey respondents in this sample had hazing prevention policies on their campus, indicating a widespread response to this particular problem across college campuses. From an organizational perspective, particularly through the lens of Levine (1978), the implementation of hazing prevention policies can be seen as a strategic response to external pressures and resource constraints. Universities, facing budgetary limitations and the need to maintain a safe and inclusive environment, adopt low-cost and efficient policies to mitigate risks and comply with legal and social expectations. This finding aligns with Levine's notion that organizations often streamline operations and prioritize essential functions during periods of financial austerity.

Beyond prevention policies, other strategies and tactics were also important according to survey participants. Educational courses and modules were another prominent cornerstone of

hazing prevention efforts for many institutions according to my participants. As illustrated in Table 4, my survey data revealed that colleges and universities rely heavily on education as a hazing prevention tactic, with 81 percent of respondents (n=86) identifying educational courses and modules as a form of prevention used on their campus. Trainings and leadership summits (n=63, 59%) and presentations by guest speakers (n=59, 56%) were also commonly cited strategies. Other prevention efforts included videos, posters, signage (n=41, 39%), and social media campaigns (n=31, 30%). A small percentage (n=8, 8%) indicated the use of other tactics, including deterrence through judicial intervention and online education communities.

Not only are these courses cost-effective, but they can also be scaled to reach large audiences. Survey respondents emphasized the flexibility of these modules, as they can be tailored to address specific campus needs or populations, such as Greek life members, athletes, or first-year students. Further, institutions frequently integrate these modules into orientation programs, ensuring that students are exposed to anti-hazing messaging early in their academic journey.

Table 6. Primary Mechanisms of Hazing Prevention

What forms of hazing prevention does your institution use the most: (Respondents may select more than one option)	n=106
Education	n=86, (81%)
Trainings/Leadership Summits, etc.	n=63, (59.0%)
Presentations/Guest Speakers, etc.	n=59, (56.2%)
Videos, Posters, Signage, etc.	n=41, (39.0%)
Social Media Campaigns	n=31, (29.5%)
Other	n=8, (7.6%)

In the context of cutback management, the reliance on educational initiatives and other cost-effective strategies reflects a pragmatic approach to resource allocation. Educational courses and modules, which 81 percent of respondents identified as key preventative measures, are not

only effective but also relatively low-cost compared to more intensive interventions like data-driven research initiatives or partnerships with major hazing organizations. This finding aligns with existing literature and data on hazing prevention, such as the 2016 report by the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, which highlighted the prominence of educational training and modules in hazing prevention efforts (Dills et al. 2016).

Trainings and leadership summits were another major mechanism of hazing prevention and education according to my survey data. Trainings often include interactive workshops, scenario-based learning, and group discussions, allowing participants to actively engage with the material. Leadership summits, on the other hand, create opportunities for collaboration among various campus stakeholders, fostering a unified approach to hazing prevention. These events can also serve as platforms for sharing best practices and showcasing successful initiatives from other institutions, further strengthening their impact. Over half of survey respondents (n=63, 59%) reported using these tactics. These trainings and summits, which typically involve student leaders, university representatives, and campus authorities, are common, and important, for hazing prevention and education. They provide valuable information and enhance the legitimacy, credibility, and buy-in of anti-hazing efforts.

Interview respondents also highlighted the role of trainings and leadership summits. For instance, Nolan emphasized the role of trainings for student leadership as he stated:

> *Every year they call a training meeting around presidents and treasurers. So, if you're a president or a treasurer of any registered student organization, you're required to attend this orientation and training. So, a portion of that orientation and training is I get the floor and I do a hazing prevention and hazing awareness education program.*

Similarly, Bianca described the importance of leadership summits for staff, especially organization advisors. She recounted:

> *One change we made over the last few semesters is advisor trainings, like advisors with IFC and student orgs. We include basics and definitions, what to look for, and what I think was most important which was what to do with reports, like who to take reports to, which office and what that step looks like.*

From an organizational perspective, these initiatives can be seen as investments in human capital, fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility that supports the institution's broader goals. In these ways, survey and interview respondents highlight the importance of these types of trainings for campus leadership and student representatives, as well.

Guest speaker presentations were another common approach to hazing prevention. Alongside other traditional methods, 56 percent of survey respondents (n=59) identified guest speakers as a key strategy for hazing prevention on their campuses. Qualitative survey comments further emphasized the impact of these speakers, with several participants highlighting specific individuals who have become central to their prevention efforts. For instance, one respondent noted, "We bring in a speaker each year, usually a sports person, but one speaker to talk about hazing and some of the real-world effects."

Several respondents (39%, n=41) also highlighted the use of marketing materials, such as videos, posters, and signs, as effective tools for hazing prevention. These materials often include short-form videos, flyers, or digital displays strategically placed across campus. Administrators reported leveraging these resources to increase the visibility and impact of their hazing prevention messaging, ensuring it reaches a wide audience within their campus communities.

Finally, just under one-third of survey respondents (n=31, 29%) indicated the use of social media campaigns and takeovers as mechanisms of hazing prevention in their campus community. This strategy reflects a modern adaptation of cutback management principles,

utilizing efficient, cost-effective digital platforms to engage and educate the campus community (Levine 1978).

Levine's (1978) organizational perspective provides a valuable framework for understanding the most commonly reported mechanisms of hazing prevention employed by universities according to the administrators in the survey sample. By focusing on fiscally responsible "cut-back" measures, universities strategically allocate their limited resources to maintain essential functions and address the social problem of hazing. The reliance on cost-effective educational initiatives, trainings, leadership summits, guest speaker presentations, marketing materials, and social media campaigns seems to reflect this pragmatic approach to resource allocation that Levine describes. By drawing on Levine's framework, this analysis highlights the importance of strategic resource management in achieving successful hazing prevention in higher education institutions.

Levine's concept of cutback management is particularly useful in understanding why universities opt for educational programming and other low-cost initiatives. Organizations often streamline operations during periods of financial constraint, focusing on core functions that are both legally necessary and cost-effective, during periods of decline (Levine 1980).

Levine's idea of organizational atrophy—the gradual decline in efficiency and innovation due to outdated processes—also offers insights into the types of prevention used by administrators. Organizations may draw on traditional methods of hazing prevention and education, such as educational programming and policy enforcement, because these are less disruptive to existing systems and processes. As Levine (1978) notes, organizational resistance to change is a key factor that can prevent the adoption of innovative practices, particularly in universities where resources for change are constrained.

Further, problem depletion—the decline in demand for an organization's services—also relates to administrators' focus on educational and outreach initiatives. Hazing prevention programs that rely on educational materials, guest speakers, and social media campaigns are not only cost-effective but also scalable. Given the broad scope of the hazing issue across diverse student groups, these initiatives help universities meet the challenge of reaching a wide audience without extensive financial investment. As Levine (1978) suggests, organizations facing resource depletion will often focus on strategies that maximize reach without significant additional cost.

These dynamics—financial constraints, resistance to innovation, political pressures, and the need for cost-effective solutions—align with the predominant hazing prevention strategies identified in the data. Educational modules, policy enforcement, and collaborative efforts with campus stakeholders reflect how universities, particularly those with limited resources, employ strategic approaches to address hazing while adhering to organizational realities. By using Levine's framework, we can see that the most common efforts identified in the survey data are unsurprising, as they represent a pragmatic response to the resource limitations and external pressures faced by higher education institutions.

Collaborative Efforts (On and Off Campus)

In addition to pragmatic forms of hazing prevention and education that the survey findings indicated were common, several interview participants highlighted the importance of other strategies including developing strong partnerships with campus stakeholders through leadership summits and connecting on-campus resources. The majority of the interview participants (n=14, 74%) described these additional kinds of efforts not measured by the survey. Levine (1978) emphasizes that cutback management is not only about reducing expenditures but

involves strategic decision-making to maintain essential functions and services despite limited resources. In the context of cutback management, coalition-building and collaboration—according to interview participants--become crucial strategies. Levine highlights the importance of forming alliances both within and outside the organization to pool resources, share expertise, and enhance the capacity to deliver services (1978; 1980). These coalitions can include partnerships with other universities, private sector entities, and broader community organizations.

By engaging in collaborative partnerships, organizations can mitigate the impact of resource constraints and continue to deliver essential services. This approach enhances the institution's resilience and ensures critical functions and services continue to operate efficiently (Levine 1978). For instance, one interview participant, serving as Assistant Director for Student Leadership and Engagement at a medium private university, highlighted a recent collaboration between his office and their Title IX Director. He positively described this new relationship by stating:

> *For me in particular, I've collaborated with our Title IX Director of Compliance Area, to talk about hazing prevention workshops, things of that nature…It's been pretty easy, I think, between our Title IX and the area that I work in, we work very closely together. And I think it also helps that we have individuals in the office that have very similar mindsets that want to talk about risk management that are not afraid to, you know, address the situations that are happening on campus, off campus, or happening nationally, globally. So, I think that partnership has been really working out well. And we've definitely created a better, stronger relationship, because we all want to support the student at the end of the day.*

Other interviewees also spoke of on-campus collaborative efforts, such as working with athletics, coaches, and sports directors to support hazing prevention programming and policies. For example, Vincent described the value and respect that his campus community has towards athletics and coaching staff, and how his office has worked to leverage this sentiment. He stated:

> *Anything that we can do is proactive, it catches someone's attention, it's worth doing it… Coaches are really good at doing that kind of stuff. So that helps, you know, they have that mentorship mindset with them. When a coach speaks, it's golden, [students] listen. So long story short, it's really the people who have been there who can talk from experience.*

In this discussion, Vincent describes how athletic coaches are able to capture students' attention and engage them in difficult conversations, proving to be valuable assets in hazing prevention and education efforts. This is one way his campus office strives towards their specific goals on hazing work. Through these collaborations, respondents can build alliances across the community to reduce potential political vulnerability and increase support for their goals (Levine 1978).

In addition to on-campus collaborative efforts, administrators also highlighted the role of private hazing prevention organizations and companies which were drawn on in a variety of ways (education for staff, faculty, or students; presentations/guest lectures/speeches, etc.). One survey respondent wrote, "*We've also partnered where we are, our Community Standards area, to use, I think, Third Millennia to provide education online, for hazing prevention, and so forth*." However, this was a less prevalent theme overall with less than half of interview participants reporting ventures with off-campus organizations or private companies for hazing prevention (n=6, 32%). One interview respondent did highlight their partnership with StopHazing.Org, a national organization devoted to hazing education and prevention. Uther, an administrator at a medium institution in the Northeast described, *"I feel like we've had partnerships or worked with the StopHazing.Org group, like at a national level… I don't remember the details. But that's the one that jumps out to me right away."*

Several interview respondents who highlighted the importance of on-campus collaborative efforts also emphasized ways they partnered with organizations, corporate partners,

etc. off-campus, as well (80% of respondents who mentioned on-campus prevention efforts also mentioned bringing in off-campus hazing prevention consultants or companies (n=4 of 6, 66.67%). This suggests that universities that reach out to corporate prevention partners are often also engaged in collaborative efforts with other units on-campus, already. For example, consider the discission I had with Rosemary, an administrator at a private university in the Northwest, as she described the ongoing relationships she's cultivated not only with other departments and offices on campus, and with private hazing prevention companies. She detailed:

> *It's a good mix. It's a collaborative effort, not a conglomerate, a collaborative effort between myself, Student Rights and Responsibilities, which is our conduct office, risk, our Risk Management Office, and Campus Safety. And so, you know, depending on who it is will depend on how much they have going on and how much is available. The ones that really lead that are myself and Student Rights and Responsibilities kind of portrayed, sort of being the lead of kind of all of that. Usually what happens when we're developing curriculum or when we're looking at either changing or rolling something out or just doing the educational piece, we're pulling in people from other places [on campus], like, "Hey, we need you to look at this," "Hey, we need you to look at that." If and when the office gives something about hazing, it's myself, either talking about it or finding a corporate partner. So, like, I'm thinking like, Anti-Hazing Coalition, those kinds of things, right, where we bring in a speaker from Campus Speak, or something like that. Most of the collaboration happens within the curriculum development.*

Rosemary describes a broad collaborative effort involving various campus offices such as Student Rights and Responsibilities, Risk Management, and Campus Safety and the involvement of private hazing prevention organizations, as well. As mentioned, Rosemary emphasizes this collaboration is a cooperative initiative which primarily works towards curriculum development and educational initiatives related to hazing. Their collaborative model involves partnerships with external organizations like the Anti-Hazing Coalition and Campus Speak to foster their campus-wide goals. By forming alliances with external organizations, Rosemary's university can pool resources, share expertise, and enhance their capacity to deliver services (Levine 1978).

Relatedly, Stephen, an administrator at a medium, private university in the Midwest, spoke highly of strong coalitions and partnerships, this time referring to the national headquarters for their Greek-letter organizations and how their campus leverages their support on this work. Stephen provided the following account of their coalition-building with national headquarters for Greek-letter organizations:

> *We've also done a very good job here of developing good partnerships…. Those partnerships have been really, really important for it, what we do with national headquarters, to really be able to address these issues. And so, you know, how we partner with them to investigate, partner with programming, about two years ago, we created a Health and Safety position within our Office of Sorority Life, she created, you know, some Health and Safety Summit…So the partnerships with those national organizations, though, has been really, really helpful for sharing of information. You know, we don't tend to receive something here and then sit with it until we think that we got everything that we need, or we turn it over to a national fraternity or sorority, usually right away, we're contacting them and letting them know, 'This is what we received. Let's figure out how to make sure that our processes are working together at the same time.' And then let's figure out you know, how we'll investigate and engage in a process here. And you know, what requires an interim suspension versus when it requires just a standard process. So that is also been really, really good. We have not always had that type of relationship with national organizations. But it has allowed for, I think, quicker attention to issues. Present it and then also determining is this us that needs to engage in this or do we just simply let the national organization address it and take care of it? Or how do we sequence it? You know, do we let them go first, and then we go second? So that has also been really helpful.*

As Stephen highlights in this excerpt, coalition-building and maintaining strong partnerships between university administration and the national headquarters of Greek-letter organizations is a primary way of engaging in more successful hazing prevention and education. Through maintaining robust partnerships, their university can more effectively share information and work collaboratively on prevention and education practices. According to Stephen, this resulted in improved response times and faster resolution of potential hazing incidents in his campus context. These efforts are consistent with Levine's framework in that these respondents manage

political vulnerability via coalition-building to secure support for one's cause or to further organizational goals and create partnerships across interest areas (Levine 1978).

While many collaborative efforts involve partnerships across campus units or with external organizations, some campuses formalized these partnerships through dedicated task forces or workgroups. These task forces represent a more structured and sustained form of collaboration, often emerging in response to heightened concern about hazing prevention. Task forces stand out as a unique form of collaborative effort in hazing prevention, offering a more structured and sustained approach to partnership-building. Interviews with administrators indicated that one key organizational feature shaping hazing prevention efforts on their campus was the presence of standing task forces or workgroups dedicated to hazing prevention, with 37 percent (n=7) of interview respondents emphasizing this tactic. While traditional collaborations often focused on programming or policy development, task forces formalized these partnerships into ongoing working groups with representatives from multiple offices, student organizations, and external partners.

One notable example came from an administrator whose institution had established a task force in response to a tragic hazing incident, involving a death caused by excessive alcohol consumption, that captured national media attention. This incident underscored the urgent need for structured and proactive measures to combat hazing on college campuses. This administrator, Royce, described:

> *I am the lead for response prevention, it's a bit more of a broad concerted effort that involves our campus or campus-wide partners. That includes student activities, clubs, organizations, club sports, as well as fraternities and sororities, myself as the Director of Student Conduct, and our athletics area. And so, when the state passed the series of statutes in 2018, was shortly before COVID. So, I think they went into effect for the 2018-2019 academic year, it included several requirements in which we're required to do some preventative education for any student that is new to PRIVATE-MEDIUM-SOUTHERN University. And so, I wrote that course, with a few, a few stakeholders that consulted, and*

> *so we created this online course, that any student that is near to PRIVATE-MEDIUM-SOUTHERN University has to take to comply with that statute, no matter what budgets or other issues like a pandemic look like…. Also, another change is a statute that has bystander requirements, meaning that if you are aware and don't report or intervene, you are now criminally liable as well… the state statute changed in response to the student's death, it was absolutely in response to the student death at [other university]..*

As described by Royce above, his campus community created a hazing prevention task force in response to a student death and shifts in state statutes for universities. In addition, he coordinated the creation of an online course for all new students relating to hazing prevention, also to align with student safety and new legal mandates within his state, in tandem with other stakeholders on this prevention group.

In this narrative, Royce emphasizes how his campus hazing prevention strategies were influenced by legislative change at the state level, including laws that mandated hazing education for all students after the death of a college student in their state. Like mentioned above, this task force was created in a reactionary way after a campus tragedy in his state.

He also noted the timing further complicated the implementation of these policies, particularly due to the height of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Royce explained the policies were introduced during the academic year immediately preceding the pandemic, which disrupted both the hierarchy and chain of command related to hazing prevention efforts. Additionally, the pandemic response reshaped budgetary priorities, further limiting the resources allocated to these initiatives (Levine 1979; Weitzel & Jonsson 1989).

Similarly, Charles, an administrator at a medium public university in the Northeast, also highlighted the role of a task force for hazing prevention at his institution. He described their arrangement by stating:

> *The taskforce is a group. So, it is Student Affairs professionals. Our Conduct Office, of course, has representation. And then also a lot of our labor student advisors, student organization advisors that don't work on our campus. Because ultimately, I think that this*

> *really affected the most outside of students was those people who now had this additional responsibility. So, we brought them on as well. And then we also do have student representation on that committee. We meet as needed. We did help revise our Alcohol and Drug policy on campus recently.*

In this excerpt, Charles provides description of the kinds of individuals involved in their task force work, including Student Affairs professionals, conduct office officials, as well as student and organizational advisors. In addition, Charles suggests student representatives are important members of their task force. Further, Charles provides insight into the type of work this task force engages in, such as reviewing and providing insight to university policies that impact students' campus experiences and outcomes.

From an organizational perspective, particularly in the context of cutback management as discussed by Levine (1978), task forces represent collaborative partnerships and institutionalized alliances that maximize limited resources. While ad hoc collaborations may address immediate needs, task forces sustain these efforts over time, ensuring continuity in prevention work and more coordinated responses to hazing incidents.

Interestingly, a majority of survey respondents indicated their campus community did not have a hazing prevention workgroup or task force (n=66, 62%) (See Table 6). Around one-third of survey respondents indicated they had a task force or prevention workgroup (n=33, 31%), while a few respondents were unsure about the presence of a hazing prevention workgroup (n=8, 7%). While Levine's (1978) framework suggests task forces as a strategic, cost-effective response to resource constraints, the findings complicate this notion due their absence at a majority of institutions. This gap may reflect the fact that task forces often emerge reactively, typically after a high-profile hazing incident (Nuwer 2023), rather than as a proactive prevention measure. Additionally, while task forces do not require significant financial investment, they do demand time, coordination, and institutional commitment, which can be

challenging in already stretched environments. Thus, while task forces align with Levine's notion of resource optimization, their limited adoption suggests that cost-effectiveness alone may not drive organizational decision-making in hazing prevention.

Table 7. Survey Results Task Force Y/N

Survey Results: Does your campus have a hazing prevention workgroup/task force or similar group currently?	n, (%)
Yes	n=33, (31%)
No	n=66, (62%)
Unsure	n=8, (7%)
Total	n=107, (100%)

Organizational Factors: Public vs. Private & Geographic Region

Beyond the mechanisms of prevention alone, this study also aims to understand how university features, student body characteristics, and campus culture intersect with hazing prevention efforts on college campuses. To understand these intersections, I examined whether several different variables, according to my survey results, correlated with specific prevention and education efforts, including public/private status and U.S. geographic region. In addition, other factors proved important in my interview data (student body characteristics, community culture) which I also discuss in this section. To begin, I explore public versus private university status in its relationship to these themes.

Public Versus Private Universities

Levine's (1978) framework, which explores how organizational structures and environmental factors shape institutional behavior, guided my analysis of how university type (public vs. private) may influence hazing prevention mechanisms. While multiple organizational features were examined, the distinction between public and private universities emerged as

particularly significant during preliminary analyses, prompting a closer investigation. This distinction is theoretically relevant because public universities often operate under greater public scrutiny, face more stringent reporting requirements, and navigate different funding structures compared to private institutions—factors that can shape administrative responses to campus issues, including hazing prevention.

According to this data and in opposition to what I expected to find, there were no significant differences in the presence of a hazing prevention policy based on the public/private status of the university. The chi-square for this set of data was X^2 (df=1, N=106) =0.84, p = <0.05, CV=+3.841 (see Table 7). As mentioned earlier, hazing prevention policies are very popular among universities as a basic intervention, so these findings are expected based on this information. It should be noted, however, that due to the relatively small number of 'no' responses, there are statistical concerns related to the robustness of these findings. When expected counts are too low (typically < 5 in any cell), the test results may not be reliable. This suggests that the presence of a prevention policy is prominent across universities regardless of their public/private status. This trend will likely continue as the federal Stop Campus Hazing Act will take effect in 2025.

Table 8 Chi-Square Table Prevention Policy Public/Private

Public/Private Status	**HPP_Yes Observed Frequency (Expected Frequency)**	**HPP_No Observed Frequency (Expected Frequency)**	**Chi-Square Value, p-value (0.05)**
Public	57(58.2)	6(4.75)	0.32, p = 0.351
Private	41(39.75)	2(3.25)	0.52, p = .471

Beyond the presence of a policy, I also explored whether public/private status corresponded with other mechanisms, such as hazing task forces as a key tactic of formal prevention. The results revealed statistically significant differences by institutional type. A chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between university type and the presence of hazing prevention task forces (X^2 (df =1, N=88) = 5.62, $p < 0.05$, CV = 3.841) (see Table 8). These findings suggest that administrators at public universities are significantly more likely to report on the existence of task forces compared to their counterparts at private institutions. This pattern may reflect the heightened accountability and resource allocation strategies typical of public institutions, as they often respond to external pressures by forming coalitions to address pressing issues without substantial financial investment (Levine 1978).

Table 9 Chi-Square Table Task Force Public/Private

Public/Private Status	Observed Frequency of Task Forces_Yes **(Expected Frequency)**	Observed Frequency of Task Forces_No **(Expected Frequency)**	**Chi-Square Value, p-value (0.05)**
Public	24(18.18)	30(35.82)	2.18, p=0.14
Private	9(14.82)	35(29.18)	3.44, p = 0.041*

At the same time, this finding complicates Levine's framework. While task forces represent a cost-effective approach to hazing prevention, the fact that only a minority of campuses reported having such workgroups (31%) suggests that universities may not always adopt theoretically efficient strategies, even when resources are constrained. This gap highlights how institutional priorities, leadership buy-in, and organizational inertia can mediate the adoption of seemingly practical solutions.

This disparity can be understood through Levine's framework (1978) which underscores the relationships between external regulatory pressures, resource dependencies, and internal organizational priorities. One explanation for this finding may be the structural differences between public and private universities, as the former are subject to stricter accountability and compliance standards. These standards often include mandates for institutional policies and practices, such as task forces, to address issues like hazing. These task forces not only fulfill regulatory requirements but also can function as symbols of institutional legitimacy, signaling to stakeholders that public universities are actively engaged in safeguarding student welfare.

In contrast, private universities, which can often operate with greater levels of autonomy, may have fewer external pressures or requirements to implement such mechanisms. Decisions regarding hazing prevention are more likely to be influenced by internal governance structures, resource availability, and strategic priorities. Levine's (1978) framework suggests this relative autonomy allows private institutions to prioritize other organizational goals, potentially leading to a relative underinvestment in hazing prevention infrastructure. This difference highlights inequalities in institutional capacity to address hazing comprehensively. these findings suggest that public universities, driven by external regulations and oversight, may structurally be better equipped to implement formalized hazing prevention measures, such as task forces. Conversely, the relatively fewer task forces in private institutions could signal a potential gap in accountability and transparent prevention mechanisms, raising questions about how effectively hazing is being addressed in these contexts. This divergence between private and public universities underscores the importance of considering institutional type as a determinant of organizational behavior and the broader implications of such differences for student safety and institutional accountability.

U.S. Geographic Region

I also used chi-square testing to determine whether there were significant differences based on regional location of the university. As illustrated below, among survey respondents who provided regional location and the presence of a task force, there were statistically significant differences in the presence of a task force across regions. The chi-square for this set of data was X^2 (df=3, N=115) =18.97, p = <0.05, CV=+7.81. As evidenced by the distribution of data, the greatest amount of 'difference' driving these values comes from the "South" category.

As posited above it may be the case that universities are more likely to create task forces in response to significant or severe hazing incidents, which may explain this finding as historical fraternities and sororities in the South have experienced several of these events come to national attention in recent years (Associated Press 2021; Jacabo 2019; WBRC 2024).

Table 10. Chi-Square Table Task Force Region

Regional Location	**TF_Yes Observed Frequency (Expected Frequency)**	**TF_No Observed Frequency (Expected Frequency)**	**Chi-Square Value, p-value (0.05)**
North/Mid-Atlantic	5(9.91)	25(20.09)	3.63, p = 0.057
Midwest	6(11.23)	28(22.77)	3.64, p = 0.057
South	22(12.23)	15(24.77)	11.66, p=0.001*
West/Southwest	5(4.63)	9(9.37)	.044, p = 0.834

Intersecting Factors: Campus Characteristics, Student Behavior, Community Culture

My interview data also reveal several intersecting factors shape universities' approaches to hazing prevention. Administrators emphasized the importance of unique campus characteristics, including student body composition, campus behavior trends, and community culture—such as historical events associated with the university—that influenced their hazing prevention and campus safety efforts. For example, four administrators (21%) identified community norms

around alcohol consumption as a significant barrier to addressing alcohol-related hazing. They explained that campuses located in communities with higher levels of alcohol consumption faced greater challenges in implementing effective prevention strategies. To illustrate this connection, Nolan stated:

> *We survey students every year, and, you know, 75 percent, right in that area, typically say that they drank in the last year, and, and most of those are underage students. And so yeah, it plays a role. It plays a role in what they and we do.*

Similarly, Vincent, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at his university, also emphasized how the broader campus culture around alcohol consumption directly shaped his prevention efforts. He articulated:

> *The other thing that's a big characteristic is they drink a lot of alcohol. In the CIRP survey, which is a comparative survey, that first-year students around the country often take, and it goes back to how were you in high school? How much did you drink? How much did you smoke? How much did you study? All those things. We were always higher than the national norms in terms of alcohol consumption, you know, I can only assume that that has something to do with the cultures of these communities. It wasn't like they were having big keg parties, it wasn't out of control, it was just their normal lifestyle included alcohol… So, it became a factor that impacted other social issues like violence, more vandalism, more hazing, more of, kind of, all the kinds of things that go along with altered states.*

These perspectives highlight how cultural context and student body characteristics inform prevention and education planning. Administrators noted that student body surveys revealed the prevalence of alcohol consumption on their campuses, which they linked to several potentially dangerous behaviors, including binge drinking (Johnson & Holman, 2009), hazing (Allan & Madden, 2012), and acts of violence and vandalism (Boyle & Walker, 2016). This understanding led administrators to tailor their hazing prevention strategies, developing targeted interventions to address alcohol-related risks specific to their campus communities.

These tailored approaches reflect strategic adaptations to resource constraints and external pressures (Levine, 1978). Universities, recognizing the unique challenges posed by their

student populations and cultural contexts, allocated limited resources to develop targeted interventions. This aligns with Levine's notion that organizations must prioritize and streamline their efforts to maintain essential functions during periods of financial austerity.

In addition to alcohol-related challenges, one administrator (6%) described how the history of natural disasters in her local community shaped her hazing prevention efforts. Yvette, from a Southern public university, explained:

> *You know, [our city] is a resilient place. You don't just get here without putting up with hardship. And I think that also my students are resilient, as well. I love working with them. It's a challenge. But I think the good thing about working with this population is I get to see the fruits of what happens when they persevere.*

Yvette specifically referenced how her students' experiences with natural disasters influenced their resilience, which, in turn, shaped her approach to hazing prevention and education. This perspective intersects with existing hazing research, which suggests that hazing often aims to foster loyalty, establish hierarchy, and demonstrate one's ability to endure hardship (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2018; Keating et al., 2005; Sahai-Siddiqui, 2024). While resilience and hardship are often cited as justifications for hazing, Yvette leveraged these same characteristics to inform her prevention efforts, a novel finding not previously documented in hazing research.

From the perspective of cutback management, leveraging community resilience represents a strategic advantage. Universities can build upon existing strengths to foster a culture of prevention and support, even with limited resources. This approach aligns with Levine's (1978) framework, where organizations capitalize on community characteristics to sustain essential functions and achieve institutional goals.

Intersecting Factors: Housing and Commuter Student Populations

My interviews also revealed that housing issues and the prevalence of commuter students further complicated universities' hazing prevention efforts. Several administrators noted that off-campus living arrangements often diminished their perceived authority and hindered their ability to monitor and address hazing incidents. Rustin, an administrator at a medium-sized private university in the West, highlighted this challenge:

> *I think specifically for commuter characteristic in particular, you know…how far public safety can reach? So, we don't have any Fraternity and Sorority Life housing, a lot of our organizations don't gather on campus when it comes to New Member Education. So, these things could happen off-campus at their apartment that they have, you know, four members, let's say, have an apartment together, they can have New Member Education together in an apartment and something that happened in that apartment, but then the question is always, 'Okay, where's the reach out? Like, how far can we go with that?' Because it's not [the] institution's apartment. So, it's a private residence in that case. So, it's, I think like that commuter aspect is really unique when it comes to hazing prevention experiences…. I started six months ago, but from those six months, I can kind of say just from what I've seen between two semesters of New Member Education is that the experience, a lot of the experiences do happen off-campus, I think a lot of our Panhellenic organizations typically stay on campus. But a lot of our IFC campus, organizations, and professional organizations fall off-campus. So that's where like, the concern is, especially that, you know, some of these organizations are registering new member classes, and they're, you know, two blocks away in the city, and something could happen.*

Rustin's observation underscores how housing density and availability influence hazing prevention strategies. With more students living off-campus, universities lose direct oversight, making it harder to identify and address hazing behaviors. Richard, another administrator, described how housing shortages pushed students off campus, complicating prevention efforts and shifting responsibility to local authorities. He explained:

> *We have our students off campus, rent houses, which neighbors hate, as they rent houses, and they'll have their chapter, unofficial chapter parties there. So, we have a half a dozen or so unofficial… fraternity houses that have parties that are frustrating for the neighbors, frustrating for us, because they're not official chapter houses, we can't say they're chapter parties because some of the people live there aren't even in the chapter. It does complicate, it's a private property. So, we have no authority whatsoever to go there*

> *and intervene. We have a good relationship with the police, and we partner with them. But police are interested in stopping the party, they have little care whether it's a fraternity house, an athlete house, they're stopping the party and moving on is their motivation. And so, it doesn't give us a lot of the information we need to be able to make a great assessment of the hazing variables involved…. And so, just the pressures when it comes to housing and housing availability that cause you know, students, there aren't those kinds of chapter houses, so you have kind of like private residences that get used in this way. And so that that complicates you know, and in some ways, you know, kind of bars off your reach of a university. And so then becomes a police issue, a potential police issue, but they're not necessarily trying to get into the minutia of what it is, just that they just want to try to clear up their behavior, whatever it is, they're wanting to stop the disruption. If we're trying to investigate whether there's a chapter, unofficial, official chapter event, is there hazing going on, because it's private property off-campus, by private, I mean rented by a private individual. Our access to it is limited. And so, when we do our investigations, it's difficult to get the information we need to be able to make a full assessment.*

These administrators framed housing issues and commuter student populations as forms of environmental entropy that complicated their hazing prevention work (Levine, 1978). External factors, such as housing density and off-campus living, undermined institutional authority, making it difficult for universities to enforce prevention policies. As one survey respondent noted:

> *I do believe hazing is occurring within our campus groups but none of them have official housing. So, a lot of things occur off campus and local police probably do not recognize signs of hazing in the same way campus police department would. Also, we are in a large metro area instead of a college town so consensual acts of hazing will not pique the interest of city police. So, the reporting is entirely dependent of a student self-reporting to a friend or directly to the school.*

This respondent acknowledged that while hazing likely occurs in off-campus organizations, the university's limited jurisdiction complicates oversight and intervention. Moreover, they highlighted how local law enforcement, particularly in metropolitan areas, may be less attuned to recognizing hazing behaviors compared to campus police. As a result, hazing prevention and reporting often rely on student self-reporting, which is widely recognized as an unreliable method of intervention (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2018; Allan & Madden, 2008).

Finally, another survey respondent emphasized how off-campus student behavior often falls outside the scope of university policies. While universities can encourage responsible decision-making, their ability to enforce prevention measures is limited. This administrator explained:

> *Behavior is up to the individual - our institutional rules are written so that the role of the university staff is about relationships and influence. A student or an organization's behavior off-campus is of their own making. We attempt to reach as many with prevention messages and trainings to support making the right choices, but ultimately, they have to choose to do that right thing.*

This respondent's perspective highlights a fundamental challenge: while universities strive to extend their prevention efforts beyond campus boundaries, their capacity to do so remains constrained by external environmental factors. As Levine's (1978) framework suggests, organizations must adapt to these challenges by developing flexible, context-specific approaches. For universities, this might involve enhancing partnerships with local law enforcement, community organizations, and off-campus housing providers to extend the reach and effectiveness of their prevention efforts.

This section underscores the importance of understanding cultural context, student body characteristics, and environmental constraints when developing effective hazing prevention strategies. Tailoring prevention efforts to these factors ensures that interventions are both relevant and impactful. In addition, my survey findings confirm that Levine's (1978) organizational perspective offers a valuable framework for examining how universities navigate hazing prevention in the context of limited resources. By focusing on cost-effective "cutback" measures, universities can strategically allocate resources to maintain essential functions while addressing hazing as a social problem.

Cost-effective strategies—such as educational initiatives, leadership summits, guest speaker presentations, marketing materials, and social media campaigns—reflect a pragmatic approach to resource management. These efforts enhance the visibility of hazing prevention and promote a culture of awareness and shared responsibility across campus. Ultimately, strategic resource management, as informed by Levine's framework, is essential for sustaining effective hazing prevention in higher education institutions. In the next chapter, I examine the primary barriers administrators face in their daily work toward achieving these goals.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS PART 2: WHAT BARRIERS DO ADMINISTRATORS FACE IN HAZING PREVENTION & EDUCATION?

A primary goal of this research is to understand the specific challenges administrators face in preventing hazing on college campuses and how they navigate workplace obstacles on a daily basis. This chapter addresses the first part of that goal by examining the key barriers administrators encounter as they manage this complex social problem. Using Levine's (1978) framework of organizational decline—particularly the concepts of organizational atrophy, environmental entropy, problem depletion, and political vulnerability—I analyze how structural and cultural constraints influence hazing prevention efforts. This chapter begins by describing some of the broad barriers indicated in the survey, and then more specifically exploring the structural barriers administrators face, followed by an analysis of the cultural factors that further complicate their efforts in hazing prevention, based on both survey and interview data.

According to my survey data and as illustrated in Table 10, the most frequently cited barriers were time constraints (n=48, 46%) and budgetary constraints/fiscal distress (n=47, 45%). Further, 29% of respondents (n=30) mentioned the need for buy-in from both senior administrators ("buy-in from above") and/or subordinates within their organizational hierarchy ("buy-in from below"). Public relations and communication challenges were reported by 11% of respondents (n=12). Notably, nearly one-third of respondents (n=30, 29%) indicated that they did not perceive any challenges to their hazing prevention efforts.

Table 11. Survey Results: Perceived Barriers

Survey Results: Perceived Barriers to Hazing Prevention and Education Efforts	n, (%)
Time Constraints	n=48, 46%
Budgetary Constraints	n=47, 45%
Buy-in from above/ buy-in from below	n=30, 29%
Public relations/communication	n=12, 11%
No barriers impede my work on hazing prevention	n=30, 29%
Other	n=13, 12%

Structural Constraints

This section explores the structural barriers administrators face in hazing prevention, with a particular focus on how fiscal constraints shape their ability to implement and sustain effective programs. As illustrated in Table 10, fiscal barriers were identified as the most significant obstacle, with nearly half of the survey respondents (n=69, 55%) highlighting them as key challenges to their work. This aligns with broader literature on organizational decline and cutback management (Levine 1978). A striking finding from the survey was that the majority of administrators were unaware of their allocated budgets for hazing prevention (n=69, 55%), which is discussed more fully below. Those who did report knowing their budgets often cited amounts below $5,000 (n=44, 78.6%), further highlighting the severe resource limitations many institutions face.

Table 32. Survey Results: Estimated Hazing Prevention Budget, Annual

Survey Results: Estimated Hazing Prevention & Education Budgets	N=125 (100%)
NA, I do not have an estimate of spending	n=69, 55%
Less than $500	n=20, 16%
Between $500 and $1500	n=9, 7%
Between $1501 and $5000	n=15, 12%
Between $5001 and $10,000	n=6, 5%
Between $10,001 and $20,000	n=4, 3%
More than $20,000	n=2, 2%

Given that administrators frequently identified fiscal constraints as a central challenge, these limited budgets highlight a broader issue of resource scarcity, which is a key characteristic of organizational decline (Levine 1978). This scarcity also reflects a lack of awareness about hazing as a significant social problem on campuses, leading to insufficient allocation of time and resources for effective prevention. For context, in 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice awarded $21.72 million to universities and colleges to support sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence prevention, particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges—institutions with historically underfunded programs (Office of Public Affairs 2022). Notably, none of this funding was allocated for hazing prevention or educational efforts.

In interviews, administrators managing smaller budgets frequently referenced other dimensions of organizational decline, such as reduced or uncertain funding futures, and other expressions of resource scarcity on their campuses. For instance, consider the following from Stephen, an administrator at a medium private university in the Midwest, who recounted begging for additional funding for hazing education. In this discussion, Stephen emphasized that funding

for hazing would be worth its weight in preventing both bad behaviors and bad press on his campus. Speaking with exasperation, Stephen complained:

> *I mean, you know, you're familiar with higher ed. So, you know that budgets are really tight all the time. And I know that they're not going to open up the budget for hazing…. And if something big would happen in our home, our campus around hazing, that's going to sink us like, that's going to not only sink our progress, I think sink us as an institution. Whatever resources cost is going to be pennies to what it would cost us if something bad were to happen. And so that's why I'm like, "Well, look, if I could figure out some sort of education that we could give, let me just do it with athletics." You know, that might be a little valuable.*

Stephen's concerns highlight how organizational atrophy in his institution and office has prevented spending for hazing education to this point. In his perspective, his office has failed to keep hazing prevention and education efforts at successful levels, due to the perception that it is not worth the funding *("I know that they're not going to open up the budget for hazing,").* This atrophied spending and budget allocation, according to Stephen, is a major barrier to his work of creating a safe and healthy campus environment.

Similarly, Bianca, an administrator at a large public university in the South, also emphasized a lack of financial resources as a primary barrier to her successful work on hazing education and prevention. When discussing her university's current efforts, she illustrated:

> *Even if the little "H" hazing doesn't always stop, we're at least keeping it from escalating too far. So, we are kind of like a dam holding back the water, if you will. You know, at some point, we would like to become more proactive, but because of, you know, between myself, being the only person in this office, low funding, no staff in other places as well, that could potentially provide this curriculum, like we just don't, we're just not able to do so just yet. So, we're trying to get creative on how we kind of glom support and resources together. I think that's kind of becoming the higher ed way of a little bit here, a little bit there, pulls it together, may not be pretty [laughs], but it works.*

Bianca's comments reflect the broader issue of environmental entropy, where the organization must constantly adapt to external pressures and resource limitations. Her description of "*holding back the water*" illustrates the ongoing struggle to manage limited resources while attempting to

prevent hazing incidents. This scenario illustrates that there is limited funding to support these efforts, and administrators often have a hard time working effectively in these types of environments.

In terms of projected budget expectations from my survey data, most respondents (n=79, 75%) anticipated their college or university's budget for hazing prevention programming would remain relatively stable. Approximately one-fifth (n=20, 19%) expected moderate budget increases, while only 4% (n=4) foresaw decreases, and 2% predicted substantial shifts in their budgets (n=2). Respondents provided various reasons for their budget expectations. Some anticipated increases due to a growing interest in hazing prevention among staff and the need for proactive education. Others cited a multi-pronged approach involving outreach, training, and marketing. Conversely, some administrators believed their budgets would remain unchanged due to a lack of prioritization and leadership on hazing prevention issues at their institutions. Importantly, since the majority of respondents (75%) did not anticipate budget shifts, administrators likely will need to continue efforts to be creative with these dollars in the future.

Table 13. Survey Results: Budget Forecasting

Survey Results: In the next 2 to 5 years, do you anticipate your college or university's budget for hazing prevention programming will:	N=105, (100%)
Increase substantially	n=1, 1%
Increase moderately	n=20, 19%
Roughly stay the same	n=79, 75%
Decrease moderately	n=4, 4%
Decrease substantially	n=1, 1%

An additional structural barrier that emerged during the study is the significant gap in financial knowledge among administrators, particularly concerning their campuses' allocation of resources

for hazing prevention. My survey data suggest the majority of university administrator respondents who report being responsible for hazing prevention on their campuses were either unsure or unable to estimate how much their university financially allocates to these efforts annually (n=59, 57%). This gap in knowledge is a unique challenge, as it can lead to underutilization or misallocation of available resources, further exacerbating the problem of limited funding. This lack of awareness is a barrier to effective planning and speaks to the need for greater transparency and communication between financial departments and those responsible for hazing prevention.

Structural Constraints: Time Limitations & Staffing Shortages

A second structural constraint involved staffing and a lack of time to dedicate to hazing education and prevention. Many survey (n=48, 46%) and interview participants (n=6, 32%) identified a lack of time and staffing resources as significant barriers to hazing prevention. For example, one administrator emphasized the limited capacity in terms of time and human capital to effectively deliver hazing prevention curriculum at a small, private university in the West. Vincent explained:

> *The delivery challenge that I mentioned earlier is just capacity, meaning one person, or just not enough funds to bring in as many presenters as we would like. So that's a challenge for us because we are not appropriately staffed to do some of these things. So, we do what we can, but it's not always the best delivery… and then financial resources, you know, we would love to partner with either Hazing Coalition or, you know, The Piazza Center, but we just don't have the financial capacity to do some of those things right now, either.*

This idea was echoed by others, such as a respondent from a private university in the West, who described the inconsistent allocation of time and human capital to hazing prevention throughout the semester. Rustin, the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life stated:

> *The spaces that I have to navigate or get to navigate. You know, one is, of course, just time and attention, right? I think I speak for me and my colleagues when I say we feel like, often in this role, or a lot of roles that we're, you know, we're responding to crises constantly and kind of having to react to different issues that might be impacting our campus, or that are the interest of our bosses, or our university or our trustees or anything like that. And it sometimes pulls us away from being able to be strategic and proactive on some of the issues that we know are perpetual on our campuses. And that's certainly the case for me, I feel quite torn in terms of my time management and my ability to track on all the things that I want to track on and keep energy behind it and given time…*

Similarly, Uther, who had only been in his current position for about six months, lamented his inability to dedicate consistent time and resources to hazing prevention and education. He highlighted staff turnover and transitions as barriers to successful prevention and education on his campus and within his office. He described this barrier:

> *I talked about my own attention span, but the breadth of things that I have to, you know, pay attention to in a given moment. And with a large team, you know, when you have staff transitions and turnover, you bring in people that have different passions, different expertise, and you want to support those, while also making sure that we're supporting the institutional agenda at the same time. There's not always a perfect alignment in terms of some of the things that need to happen… The state we are in has pretty strong policies on hazing as we have had several hazing-related deaths in the past 10 years. It is often difficult to get buy-in from other departments that hazing can happen anywhere, not just in FSL and athletics.*

Uther, who had recently taken on his role, discussed the impact of staff turnover and transitions on hazing prevention efforts. He noted the challenge of aligning new staff members' passions and expertise with the institutional agenda, further complicating the delivery of effective hazing prevention programs.

Limited staffing, which can hinder program delivery, is a clear example of an organizational constraint. Challenges like staff turnover also contribute to this issue. Levine (1978) explains that budget cuts often lead to workforce reductions, resulting in heavier workloads for remaining staff. This can negatively affect service quality, as shown in the passage above. The inability to focus on long-term solutions highlights the concept of problem depletion,

where constant reactive measures prevent the organization from developing lasting, effective interventions against hazing. In addition, financial constraints that limit the ability to bring in outside presenters exacerbate the problem, illustrating organizational atrophy.

Structural Constraints: Hazing Prevention Policies

In addition to these structural constraints, my analysis also revealed several challenges faced by administrators related to policy and practice. Specifically, four interviewees (n=4, 21.1%), all from public universities identified state policy processes as a major barrier to effective hazing prevention and education. These administrators described the cumbersome process of obtaining state legislature approval for major university policy changes, noting that it is often slow and inflexible.

For example, Reginald explains how his office deals with policy changes within this seemingly restrictive framework. He described:

> *Typically, we'll start with our student conduct officer, because of the things that they're seeing that they're having to address, right? If there is a violation or potential violation of a hazing policy, it's going to be our Office of Student Conduct, Standards, that's going to be the first out of the gate to work that issue, to fully investigate, and to determine if there's a violation. Now, managing those policies and determining whether or not they are the right fit or not returned to them, they kind of let us know what's happening. And then that information generally would be best for me, it's my chance to sit with it and eventually, it makes it to our Board of Trustees to determine is this it, are we doing it the right way? Or are we missing the mark? Has there been litigation? What do we need to then change or shift that there's been federal legislation that maybe has changed or state law to change hazing? We have a very interesting system in our state that our code of conduct actually has to be approved by the state legislature. So, if we have to ultimately change it, it does have to go all the way through this Assembly, the General Assembly for the state, to be able to decide "Is this okay to make this shift?" So, again, that's kind of the process, but it generally starts with we look at our student conduct office often to be the keepers of the code of conduct things, examine our policy, and then work with different departments potentially if they think well, you know, the Code of Conduct, it may not necessarily allow for this add-on to policy, but certainly Fraternity Life, Rec-Sports or ROTC, you can, you know, if you wanted to create additional policy, you certainly could do that. But they typically are informal add-ons.*

Structural constraints such as the slow-moving state policy approval process present significant challenges to hazing prevention efforts at public universities. As Reginald's account highlights, administrators must navigate complex layers of bureaucracy, involving multiple departments and culminating in state legislature approval for policy changes. While this process is intended to ensure thorough review and accountability, it can also delay necessary updates to hazing policies, hindering timely interventions. These structural and procedural hurdles reflect broader institutional limitations that complicate administrators' efforts to address hazing effectively.

Other interviewees also highlighted major transitions due to shifts in recent legislation or policies at the state level regarding hazing prevention or education as a source of challenge for their work. For example, two respondents suggested changes at the state level regarding hazing prevention created significant barriers to their prevention work by imposing new requirements without allocating additional funds or resources to meet these changes. Yvette highlighted recent legislative shifts at the state level that changed the requirements of her office, many of which were unfunded (or underfunded) mandates. She stated:

> *All the training falls on our office. That switch was made in 2019, my state passed a lot of hazing prevention laws…They put a lot of responsibility on advisors in particular. The university was like, 'Oh, no, someone needs to be telling people this. So that's going to be enrollment leadership,' which is through my office…before I would say we did very little hazing education...The basic things that people do. But these laws required that we provide a one-hour training to every potential member of a student organization, which is, of course, any student…That also means that it was a challenge. It was a completely unfunded mandate from the state. So of course, while there are people that offer hazing, orientations, trainings, we didn't have any money for that, and it just didn't make sense. So, we built a task force. And we went to work kind of developing the curriculum, what we thought would resonate with our student body, and then also hit all of the requirements…. The law was just a sweeping act, a student passed away at another university…suddenly that became everyone's immediate problem. Not that it wasn't important, but it just, they slipped it in midterm elections and includes choices that I don't really agree with. For example, one thing in the law is that if the advisor 'should have known' that hazing was happening, they can be criminally liable for it. And who knows how that, I don't think that will hold up in court. But it did put just a wild burden*

> *on us very quickly…It was it was very much top heavy from the legislature that was just like… I'm very thankful for the laws, I think they, in many ways, help keep students safe. I just don't think they consulted a single higher ed professional in writing them. That creates a problem for us.*

This legislative act mandated a one-hour training for all potential student organization members (which meant all students), impacted the role of advisors, and assigned the responsibility of hazing training to a new unit at the university all at once. While Yvette highlights many positives of the new law (educational requirements, developing an educational curriculum), this unfunded shift in requirements also created specific challenges for her office, including determining how to achieve these new goals with their current budget model. This legislative response was largely written in reaction to a student death at another university and was created without broad input from higher education professionals within the state. This situation exemplifies political vulnerability, where political decisions impose significant challenges on organizational operations, creating a structural constraint relating to policymaking (Levine 1978). As Yvette illustrates, decisions made by the state legislature without input from higher education professionals created greater pressures on their administration's hazing prevention work.

Using Levine's framework of organizational decline, the analysis highlights how financial constraints, staffing shortages, and institutional bureaucratic processes complicate hazing prevention efforts. Survey data revealed that time and budgetary constraints were the most commonly reported obstacles, with a significant number of administrators unaware of their institution's allocated budget for hazing prevention. This lack of financial awareness and the inability to secure adequate funding reflect broader issues of organizational atrophy and environmental entropy, which hinder the effectiveness of hazing prevention initiatives.

Structural constraints such as time limitations and staffing shortages were also identified as significant barriers by interview participants, with many administrators managing multiple

responsibilities and limited personnel. These constraints often lead to a reactive approach, preventing the development of long-term solutions to hazing. Further, state-level policy processes, particularly in public universities, pose additional challenges, as changes to hazing policies require slow and bureaucratic approval from state legislatures. Administrators often struggle to navigate these processes, which can delay necessary policy updates and hinder timely interventions. These challenges, combined with financial and staffing limitations, create an environment where hazing prevention efforts are often inadequate, highlighting the need for greater resource allocation, improved awareness, and structural changes to better address hazing on campuses.

Cultural Constraints

Cultural Constraints: Hazing Beliefs, Expectations, and Justifications

To begin, deeply ingrained beliefs, expectations, and justifications surrounding hazing behaviors act can act as formidable barriers to prevention efforts. While not measured by the survey, my interview data shed light on how these beliefs constrain the work of administrative professionals working on hazing prevention. Importantly, these perspectives, often held by students, alumni, donors, and advisors, have the power to shape campus cultures and policies, and can perpetuate hazing behaviors.

For instance, Vincent's narrative about hazing within a sports team exemplifies how members of an organization use internal logics to rationalize their behaviors. He explains how student-athletes framed hazing as integral to fostering team cohesion and camaraderie, reflecting what Levine (1978) describes as a group's internal value system. According to Vincent:

> *So, it wasn't like they were compromising their values. They were standing up for their values, the value was just different. And so, I think about that, in regard to these chapters*

> *and orgs when they do hazing, their value is us as a team and bonding. And when the outside world says is it isn't acceptable, that's not relevant. What's relevant is the truth that they have. And I understand intellectually that argument, and that, and especially when in many cases, everybody participates voluntarily, how can that be wrong? If they're all saying, "I still want to be a part of this organization," "I'm willing to do these humiliating things," or whatever. As a part of that rite of passage. In my dissertation, I did read a lot of anthropology and there was a lot of rites of passage stuff. So, I get the draw to that. And I even get the value of that. But the point is, at a university, in a certain state, it comes with certain expectations that you don't get to select.*

Vincent's account underscores the dissonance between organizational values and institutional mandates. Within this framework, hazing behaviors persist as students prioritize internal solidarity over external accountability, further entrenching these practices within their group's culture. These expectations and beliefs were echoed by Reginald, an administrator at a large public university in the South. He explained that hazing behaviors persist at his university due to the beliefs and expectations around hazing and the identity associated with these behaviors. Specifically, he suggested that his campus culture itself is associated with hazing behaviors. He illustrated:

> *I think, the barrier is that culturally, there's this idea of what it means to be in an organization. And people attach identity to it. So, when I go back to a number of students that are watching Tik-Tok videos, and they watch something about rushing a fraternity or joining a sports club, team, whatever, and they see how a part of that experience is doing these things, right. So, if I'm in the South, on a Saturday, I'm in a suit and tie, right? If I'm a fraternity man, or pledge, and I'm at these football games, and my students say, "Wow, that looks great. And I look cute," and all that like, that's just, "Oh, that's what you do." So, there's a transition and orientation to the experience that says, that's what I'm supposed to be, right? That's the culture that we're in. And so that's a very big problem when people are coming in with an expectation that we are going to haze, be hazed. We also know that hazing is occurring at much more increased rates in the high school level, in my experience. And so, it was happening there. And if [a student] was okay with being on the lacrosse team and having to carry people's bags and having to shave my head and having to do all the other things I was fully expected to do. That's what I'm going to do. So, I think there's an expectation for [hazing] that becomes a barrier for us. Because if that's what we're bringing in, it's hard then to be able to get back to the first part, which is how do we equip you to dismantle this culture [of hazing], because you're actually wanting that culture to begin with.*

Reginald's insights reflect the multilayered nature of these barriers: hazing is reinforced not only through the subcultures within specific groups and organizations but also through broader regional and societal narratives that idealize these practices. The influence of alumni and advisors further complicates efforts to dismantle these resistant beliefs. Yvette, an administrator at another institution, described how the entrenched ideas of advisors and alumni perpetuate these behaviors. She noted:

> *One of our biggest barriers has been buy-in from advisors that have just always done it that way. Particularly, I think about our fraternities, we have some old guys that have just been around a long time. And they're like, added this, this is what this is, as well as in like our Divine Nine organizations that have so much input from graduate chapters outside of the university, that are just like, hey, this is what it is, this is what we do. You know, because they're soft. And so, I have that conversation all the time. Whenever somebody calls, we want to have this event, I'm like, hey, I think that's gonna work. And I want my go-to and responses. What does this say about your organization? How does this show your values as an organization? What are you communicating with other people? And the number of advisors that still think, well, I'm proving that we're tough? That answer is concerning. So, I think that is a big barrier, just getting their buy in.*

Yvette highlights the role of alumni and group advisors in creating a culture and expectation of behaviors, as well as how their presence influences her work as a university administrator. As she states, several group advisors and alumni ("*old guys that have just been around a long time*") have expressed the sentiment that hazing behaviors are an opportunity to prove one's worth and how 'tough' their members are, a common explanation and justification for these types of activities on college campuses (Alexander & Opsal 2021; Sweet 2004). This suggests this perceived benefit ('toughness') held by university advisors and alumni is yet another barrier to administrators who work to prevent these behaviors.

Similarly, Ralph, an administrator at a medium-sized Southern university, described the frustration of navigating the damaging effects of advisor complicity in hazing cultures:

> *I was like, "We needed to fire that person a long time ago," because then they do all this irreparable damage, because they came in with these stupid ideals about what should or*

> *shouldn't be happening in an org, and they cover it up for it for people. And that's beyond frustrating to me, because it's like, you just, really? Everything we've done for the last five years, you know? It's like, "Thanks a lot."*

Ralph and Yvette's experiences underscore the systemic and entrenched nature of hazing beliefs, where alumni and advisors often act as gatekeepers of organizational traditions. These external actors function as conduits for the transmission of values and practices that conflict with institutional priorities, ultimately reinforcing resistance to change creating clear and challenging barriers to administrators' prevention efforts.

One particularly striking narrative came from Ralph, a Black administrator at a medium-sized public university in the South, who described a concerning dynamic between law enforcement and hazing culture on his campus. He recounted instances where police officers actively resisted investigating hazing activities, citing their own experiences and attitudes toward similar organizational traditions. Ralph expressed frustration and dismay:

> *And the reality of it was, is, which is still super sad to me is that all these people know that [students] do these things. And they turn a blind eye to it. I can't imagine. I can't tell you how many times I heard from the[municipal] police. I heard from people in law enforcement positions, who said, "I'm not going to do anything because we do worse in our organizations," ... This kind of stuff, it rips me up.*

Ralph's account underscores a significant institutional barrier: the complicity of law enforcement, whose own norms and beliefs about hazing may undermine administrators' efforts to address these behaviors. These narratives illustrate how hazing is deeply embedded within the organizational fabric of campus life, perpetuated through cultural scripts, alumni influence, and internalized value systems. Even law enforcement—expected allies in prevention efforts—can reflect and reinforce these ideologies, posing additional challenges for administrators.

These narratives reveal how hazing behaviors are embedded within the organizational fabric of campus life, reinforced by cultural scripts, alumni influence, and internal value systems.

Administrators seeking to disrupt hazing traditions must contend with powerful ideological frameworks that not only normalize but also valorize such behaviors. Effective prevention, therefore, hinges on transforming these embedded values and fostering alignment between institutional goals and organizational culture.

Other administrators highlighted the role of group advisors and student leaders as barriers to successful hazing prevention. For instance, Derrick, a Black administrator representing a small public university in the South emphasized the critical role of advisor training. He noted that the presence of well-trained mentors and adults can influence the success of student organizations, and explained that effective training helps mentors guide students to seek help when needed:

> *And so to me, really good advisor training has always been really helpful, because I know that the difference between a really, really good student organization and a not-so-good organization, particularly when thinking about growth is going to be the presence of a mentor and adults in the room who are able to say, "That's not a good idea," or, "You just told me a couple of weeks ago that you didn't really like the idea that you spent all weekend worried, worried about a Chapter President, worried about the thing that's going to happen?" So, if that's the case, why would you, didn't you want to get help? Why would you be okay with this other experience being created right in your New Member Education? So, the advisor work, I think, has been really, really important for me. And then leadership education, I think is always, you know, again, a way forward. So even when we're not responding, behaving, let's do the type of leadership education, that helps our organizations that our student leaders reconnect back to the purpose of the organization in hopes that we do some proactive upstream work, right? To be able to help them recognize "How do I shift a big culture?" not in response to an incident, but because I know that that will help us not encounter hazing.*

Building on the observation of limited buy-in from advisors and student mentors, one administrator also highlighted the challenges posed by parents—particularly mothers—and families of students in hazing prevention and education efforts. For example, some parents minimize hazing behaviors as harmless traditions, while others prioritize their child's integration into prestigious organizations, even if it involves hazing. Administrators noted that this lack of

alignment with anti-hazing efforts complicates educational outreach and undermines institutional policies designed to foster safer campus environments. Richard explained:

> *You have students and their families, the chapter, who were saying, you know, "You're rushing to judgment," "You're not treating us fairly," this you know, and "You're just anti us," and so and people take it very personally. And these parents are talking, we're talking about both, the person who was allegedly hazed, and the one who was allegedly hazing, they're both our students, and so we still have to treat them fairly, with respect and things like that. And so that gets challenging and it's disappointing when I've, you know, had some parents do campaigns, like, you know, the Dean and others are really being unfair to the chapter, especially moms, I don't know what it is about moms and fraternities. They can get really tough. Luckily, I'm at a place where no one's going to get, the President's never going to ask you to do something I'm uncomfortable doing. But I also can read between the lines like, "Geez, I wish [RICHARD] would do this," or "I wish [RICHARD] would do that," and even though I know it's really probably not the right step, it sure would make things easier. So, in some ways, it's harder when no one will tell you what to do. But yeah, especially, you know, when we're going to suspend a chapter, all those kinds of things. It affects my mind. I was not Greek myself, but, but this is as an academic, I think people put too much worry and thought into this to begin with, you know, it should be the supplemental thing. It shouldn't be so central to your identity on campus, but for some it is, and, and that comes with a lot of heat.*

Richard describes instances where parents, particularly mothers, organized campaigns opposing university decisions, which complicated administrators' efforts to prevent hazing and added pressure to align with parental expectations while upholding ethical standards. This resistance—or, in some cases, indifference—mirrors broader societal attitudes toward hazing and highlights the importance of adopting a multi-faceted approach that actively involves families as partners in prevention. According to interview respondents, gaining support from students' families presents a significant challenge, especially when families perceive university actions as unfair or biased against their child's organization.

In line with this discussion, several respondents emphasized the critical role of student attitudes and buy-in towards hazing prevention efforts (n=4, 21%). One administrator identified student mindsets as the most significant barrier, stating, "*Students' mindsets have to change in order for the behavior to change*." This response highlights the necessity of shifting students'

perspectives on group and organizational life as a prerequisite for altering hazing behaviors. It underscores the profound influence of student attitudes and organizational cultures on administrators' education and prevention efforts.

Similarly, others pointed to a lack of student buy-in for hazing policies as a significant obstacle. Rebecca, a white, female administrator from a large public university in the South, serves as a compelling example of this challenge. Her experiences illustrate the difficulties administrators face when attempting to implement prevention strategies in the absence of widespread student support. This further reinforces the need for targeted interventions that address student attitudes and foster collective accountability for creating safer campus environments. When discussing barriers to her work, she referenced student attitudes toward hazing policies. She explained:

> *We've also seen the shift with Gen Z, current students that we do have, those are the students that are in our Greek organizations and are like heavily involved students, those students, if it's not in the policy [shakes her head], they want black and white, they're gonna be like, "Oh, that's not there." And we're running into a lot of that. So how can we make this more holistic, more all-encompassing? Yeah, that's our big policy struggle.*

Rebecca and Stephen's experiences also highlight significant challenges in hazing prevention efforts, particularly when engaging with current students and addressing their perceptions of hazing policies. Rebecca argues that many students adopt a literal, black-and-white interpretation of hazing policies. Specifically, they believe that if a behavior is not explicitly defined as hazing, it is permissible and does not violate institutional guidelines. This rigid orientation toward policy creates a barrier to effective education and prevention.

Stephen echoes this sentiment through his experience delivering a recent hazing education presentation. During the question-and-answer session, students responded defensively and critically, raising hypotheticals to challenge the concept of hazing:

We get a lot of questions. Like I did get a lot of questions that mainly that were like, okay, you all were listening. But a lot of the questions were really defensive. Like, "How can you say this was hazing? Everyone had a choice to not participate?" "What about if this happens?" "What if that happens?" And then they would go back to practice and then they would talk back to their coach because the coach asked them to do something. They'd say, "No, that's hazing." Well, that's a bunch of BS. Okay? Like it just, I'm not convinced that it works... I think all of us grownups can stand at the front of the room and say that until we're blue in the face, because we do. But if we're not engaging our students in that, then I don't see why we would expect them to apply that message? Because clearly, they're not applying the message. They're not. I mean, we can talk to them like this last time, I talked to them about what happened in Northwestern...But when they don't believe because they don't believe what they did was hazing… I played the media clip of the quarterback talking about what happened. Okay, because I thought, "Okay, well, he's a college student. He didn't want this as part of the culture. He's talking about how he experienced the hazing. How he felt going through that." Gotta believe that there's more than one person in the room who also would feel that way, if something happened and who felt that way when their hazing incident happened, … But when they don't believe this video of the quarterback's press conference, because they don't believe what they did was hazing. And that people had a choice, that's frustrating. There's got to be a way to get that message through. And to me, it's like the person who needs to get that message through has to have some sort of authority. When it comes to our athletes, authority over their playing time. When it comes to student organizations, whether or not they can participate or to what capacity they can participate. Or whether or not they're even in an organization or whether or not they even get to be a team, The person who has that authority needs to be at the front of the room. I don't mind being in the front of the room supporting that message, because I feel like positionally where my job is that's sort of where I fit the best. But if nobody else wants to take that other role on, I'm happy to do it. But I need some kind of support and education and training on that.

This rigid, black-and-white approach to hazing policy reflects a broader challenge rooted in environmental entropy, where shifting societal norms and expectations—particularly among Gen Z students—create new complexities for university administrators (Levine 1978). As Rebecca notes, students today increasingly demand clear, unambiguous policies, a reaction that aligns with Levine's assertion that individuals within organizations seek stability amid uncertainty (Levine 1978). Stephen and Rebecca's perspectives suggest that this demand emerges as a coping mechanism in response to the ambiguity and unpredictability they perceive in their institutional environment (Levine 1978). Further, Rebecca's university's failure to adapt its hazing policies to meet the evolving needs of students exemplifies organizational atrophy, a

condition in which institutions struggle to maintain policies and practices that adequately address contemporary challenges (Levine 1978). In this case, the university's inability to evolve weakens its effectiveness and underscores the risks of stagnation in dynamic organizational landscapes.

Stephen also identifies authority—or a lack thereof—as a critical barrier to effectively communicating and enforcing anti-hazing messages. He argues that students are more likely to internalize the message when it comes from individuals with explicit authority over their participation and status. This includes athletic coaches, organizational leaders, or university officials who can impose consequences, such as limits on playing time or organizational privileges. Stephen emphasizes the importance of collaboration in this effort, suggesting that while he can support the message as an administrator, individuals with greater authority must take a central role.

Interestingly, another administrator noted that different categories of students create varying levels of challenges in their work on hazing prevention. Specifically, one administrator suggested that they tend to have greater levels of success with student-athletes in hazing prevention efforts as these students often have greater buy-in due to their higher stakes compared to the average student, including scholarships, sponsorships, NIL deals, etc.:

> *Probably the biggest barrier was trying to do anything proactively with everybody else. You know, I mentioned athletics, but to the others, they don't have as much to lose, like the athletes do. The athletes spend tremendous amounts of time with their coaches, and the risk of not being able to participate is bigger than being a student for many of them. But in other areas, they don't really stop and think about what they have to lose because, to them, they're students, and they're going to remain students.*

This narrative underscores the tension between students' demands for clarity in policies and administrators' efforts to communicate the broader moral and cultural harms of hazing. From an organizational perspective, these challenges can be understood as examples of environmental entropy and organizational atrophy (Levine, 1978). The evolving expectations and beliefs of Gen

Z students—who often seek clear, unambiguous guidelines—create uncertainty for administrators, reflecting environmental entropy. Simultaneously, institutions that fail to adapt their policies and practices to address this demand demonstrate organizational atrophy, wherein existing structures no longer adequately respond to current challenges. Addressing these issues requires a strategic shift in how authority is leveraged in hazing prevention efforts. Administrators, coaches, and organizational leaders must collaborate to deliver unified, authoritative messages that not only clarify policies but also address the cultural norms that sustain hazing practices. Without this coordinated approach, administrators like Rebecca and Stephen will continue to face barriers in fostering meaningful change.

Cultural Constraints: Students' Histories of Hazing

According to my interview participants, a similar barrier to hazing prevention and education efforts are students' prior experiences with hazing or bullying which can influence their buy-in on this issue (n=3, 16%). According to these interview participants, students who come into college with hazing experiences or expectations can interfere with their successful work on hazing prevention. This intersects with the reality many college students experienced hazing previously in high school (47% of students on groups, teams, or in clubs having experienced hazing in high school) (Allan & Madden 2008). Further, experiences with similar problematic behaviors like bullying or domestic violence can also intersect with their work on hazing prevention. For example, consider Candace's following account of how these prior experiences influenced her hazing prevention work. Candace, an administrator from a medium-sized private university in the Midwest provided the following:

> *Yeah, one of the things that I like to share with our students is that you don't know what people are coming to us with. And so, when I think about, you know, particularly our*

> *marginalized students, that, you know, they are more likely than not coming to us with some baggage and some trauma. So, when you add, so when you say, okay, join an organization, we are your chosen family, we're going to take care of you. And then you do these things. Think about the distance, the distance that that's creating at minimum, but also, you're adding to the trauma and baggage that's already happened, right? So, I think about from my own perspective, you know, having been bullied in high school, for what they assumed was being queer identified. I mean, they were right [laughs], but they shouldn't have bullied me. You get what I'm saying, right? And so like, whether it's true or not, people having been bullied, and then you come here, and then you believe in again, we're going to bully you for a short time for a good outcome. That's not how that works, you're going to hurt them in that process. And so, when we talk through those things, with them, I'm very honest with them and say, "I was bullied in high school for these things, had my sorority hazed me it would have had very negative outcomes for me," because I was already in that mindset, that very negative mindset, right? And that very, what I call a scary mindset, and so when we talk about it, you know, we say, you don't know, and it doesn't just have to be someone who's marginalized, it could be anybody could be coming with baggage or trauma or any of those things, and then you start throwing around words like family, you got to be ready to live up to that, that isn't laying your hands on them or making them do things that are going to embarrass them or make them feel something other than fully accepted right away.*

In this passage, Candace highlights how students' and administrators' experiences and backgrounds can impact the work they do daily. The diverse and potentially traumatic backgrounds of students add layers of complexity to hazing prevention efforts, making it challenging to create effective and inclusive policies across student contexts. As she relayed to me in this interview, being queer in high school led to bullying from her peers, and her trauma from bullying could have been exacerbated or worsened if she had experienced hazing in college. By drawing on her own identity and experiences, she suggests that students' backgrounds can add additional complexity to hazing prevention, especially if they come from marginalized populations or have existing PTSD or similar trauma.

Similarly, Andrew, an administrator at a very large private university in the Northeast also suggested that prior experiences and hazing behaviors influence his work on hazing prevention, especially traditions that predate coming into his position. He illustrated for me:

> *Well, you know, when I first came here, there was a, there was a big culture in the baseball program that some mornings they would all be running laps in their underwear. And this was accepted. And, and you know, they're just, the whole boys being boys thing, you know. And so, the year before I came, I think somebody said, "No, this is not acceptable." Didn't have any to do with me. It happened right before. Again, this is not acceptable. "We're not we're not doing this anymore." And so, then it was a little undercover. So, they tried to do it undercover. And then, you know, I think finally, you know, as far as I know, they don't do that anymore. But they tried to keep doing the thing we told them not to do.*

In this discussion, Andrew highlights that engaging in hazing behaviors previously, in this case a men's baseball team running laps in their underwear, deepens his struggles to end these behaviors daily. He states that the culture regarding hazing created an expectation of these behaviors, which problematizes successful behavior prevention. In this scenario, Andrew and his staff struggled to overcome organizational atrophy, where the organization's ability to adapt and respond to changes diminishes over time (1978). The persistence of outdated and harmful practices, despite efforts to eliminate them, indicates a decline in organizational vitality and adaptability.

Andrew provided further insight into the importance of buy-in from students and how he earns legitimacy within the student community to facilitate successful hazing education and prevention. He described the lack of buy-in he often experiences due to his role in the Student Conduct Process, using colorful language to illustrate his point:

> *I've heard people say, 'I hate fraternities and sororities,' because of that stance, and I'm just like, 'No, I just think you shouldn't do stupid things.' I have very close friends in almost all fraternities and sororities across campus. They know they can trust me. They know that I don't like some of the stupid things they do, but I value what they bring to our campus community. Those that know me well think I'm fantastic and respect that standpoint. Those that don't know me at all probably wish they could run me over if they saw me walking across the street. They only know what they've been told or think they know about me. For the most part, anyone who knows me and talks to me understands how much I'm fighting for them and believes in what we're doing.*

Andrew's approach to gaining legitimacy through intentional conversations and facetime with students highlights the dynamic and emotionally charged nature of his work.

This section highlights the powerful cultural barriers that hinder hazing prevention, stemming from deeply ingrained beliefs, expectations, and justifications held by students, alumni, and advisors. These cultural norms, often defended as integral to group identity, create resistance to change by fostering an environment where hazing is rationalized and normalized. For example, student-athletes and members of organizations frequently perceive hazing as essential for team bonding, reinforcing internal solidarity at the expense of external accountability. This normalization of hazing behaviors makes it difficult to implement and enforce prevention efforts, as those within the culture may view interventions as a threat to tradition rather than a necessary step toward harm reduction. Administrators, as seen in narratives from Vincent and Reginald for instance, face significant challenges in dismantling these entrenched practices due to the resistance from these internalized beliefs, which are further reinforced by societal and regional cultural narratives. In addition, alumni and advisors, who act as gatekeepers of organizational traditions, often complicate prevention efforts, with some viewing hazing as a rite of passage that proves toughness.

The resistance to change is further complicated by the lack of buy-in from both students and parents, making hazing prevention a complex, multi-faceted issue. Students often approach hazing policies with a rigid, black-and-white perspective, failing to recognize certain behaviors as hazing unless explicitly defined, while some parents view hazing as an acceptable part of their child's organizational experience. Further, administrators like Derrick point out the significant barriers posed by the complicity of law enforcement and group advisors in perpetuating hazing cultures. Finally, Ralph's story illustrates, even those in authority positions, including law

enforcement and advisors, may undermine prevention efforts by turning a blind eye or supporting traditional practices. Next, I similarly explore the influence of donors on hazing prevention efforts.

Cultural Constraints: Donor Influence

Though only a small portion of interview respondents (n=4, 21%) highlighted the influence of donors and alumni as barriers to hazing prevention, it is important to underscore this point due to its significant implications for institutional decision-making. Universities, especially those reliant on donations and funding from alumni and external sources, often face pressure to align their policies with donor expectations—expectations that can sometimes conflict with goals like hazing prevention. This is increasingly the case in a neoliberal economic environment. One administrator shared their struggle in balancing the need for accountability with the pressures from alumni donors and university leadership:

> *…So, one of the fraternities that I removed from campus had a huge alumni base, still has a huge alumni base, and they all were like, "We're gonna never donate to the university," and the President's like, "Are you sure you really need to do this?" You know, it's one of those things where you get a lot of pressure for holding people accountable. And sometimes that's on the board, it's from the community, it's from alumni, from the President, all those people, and there's a cost for every good decision you make. I think anyone who thinks it's easy to make the right decisions is an idiot and has never been in a leadership position. But it's super easy to see why people make that decision sometimes, because I think they feel like they're in a lose-lose situation, which you are, like, if you want to be happy, and you want to make other people happy, don't be a leader, like, especially don't be a VP or above, like, that's a stupid idea. And so, you just have to be willing to not be liked. And you also have to be willing to figure out like, how's the balance, because the reality of it is, is that we do need money, especially as a regional institution, it's not like, we can just throw our foot at a huge donor or whatever, and be like, "Who cares?" ... I mean, that's probably been the hardest thing was figuring out like, how do you do the right thing and not get fired or ruin your career? And I feel like I've been faced with that decision and a bunch of other ways so many times. [My colleagues] still say to this day, "I don't know why I'm doing this job."*

This excerpt illustrates the complex challenges administrators face when navigating the pressures of hazing prevention, with donor influence playing a crucial role. As this administrator points out, making the 'right' decision is often difficult when weighed against alumni influence and financial imperatives. These findings highlight the intersection of financial constraints (structural) and cultural expectations surrounding hazing prevention. As this administrator acknowledges, the balancing act of addressing hazing while managing the pressures of alumni and donor expectations can be emotionally and professionally taxing. This conflict between doing what's right and appeasing stakeholders like alumni is particularly relevant as universities face financial hardships and declining enrollments, making such decisions increasingly difficult.

The four respondents who mentioned the role of alumni-donors also described how structural and organizational aspects of universities intersect with donor influence. For example, Andrew, an administrator at a large private university in the Northeast U.S., discussed how alumni-donors shape hazing prevention policies at his private university:

> *I think this is probably not unique to us, but we have a vocal alumni population at PRIVATE-LARGE-NORTHEASTERN University. As a private institution, a significant portion of our budget comes from philanthropic work. Consequently, our alumni have an outsized influence compared to other institutions I've worked at. They shape and sometimes dictate our policies, strategies, and educational requirements. Our Board of Trustees, composed entirely of alumni, significantly influences how aggressively we can address issues like hazing. While the board does not support hazing, they are sensitive to upsetting large factions of alumni with certain policy decisions. This dynamic requires us to engage with students differently…. And I think that the President, and to some extent, the Vice President can only move things as far as the Board will tolerate, right? I don't want to suggest that our Board wants to tolerate hazing, but they also don't like when we upset large factions of our alumni with certain policy decisions. And so, it just it means that we have to also engage, we do have an alumni council that supports this focus on one area of our Greek community. And so, we spend a lot of time working with that Alumni Council on a regular basis, talking about prevention practices, education practices, again, so that when we get into a situation where we have to be responsive, it doesn't feel like we're just reacting to that moment, but that we've been talking about these things. But what that means is, I think things move a bit more slowly than we would like otherwise.*

This dynamic places administrators like Andrew in a difficult position, as they must balance institutional goals with the demands of influential alumni. Similarly, Nolan, an administrator at a public university in the South, shared the complications he faced following a hazing incident involving extreme alcohol consumption by a women's sports team:

> *It wasn't a team you'd typically think of…maybe it stood out to me because it was a woman's team, but the report we got was that a couple of students had been intoxicated to a very high level, were found by some students, contacted the right people, the police, who got the ambulances there and got them off to the hospital. They were not well for a long time; it was questionable whether there was permanent damage from the amount that they consumed… As we got more involved and started asking questions, we learned that it was a part of an initiation for new members on the women's [sport] team… when we took the action we took, that upset the whole athletic community, so you're really in this bad spot, no matter what you do. In the end, we stayed with what we were doing. The senior administration supported it, which, you know, sometimes they have, they're in a bad spot, you have big funders, big donors. Sometimes that's really hard for them to stay with. But in this case, it was it was rather apparent that these students were close to not, you know, the phone call would have been much different. So that's that we did make that decision. It was strained relationships for quite a while after that, between several donors and athletics and we had very good relations before that. So that hurt relations for quite a while.*

Yvette, another administrator, discussed how alumni and advisors perpetuate hazing cultures:

> *One of our biggest barriers has been getting buy-in from advisors who have always done it that way. Particularly, I think about our fraternities, we have some old guys that have just been around a long time. And they're like, added this, this is what this is, as well as in like our Divine Nine organizations that have so much input from graduate chapters outside of the university, that are just like, hey, this is what it is, this is what we do. You know, because they're soft. And so, I have that conversation all the time. Whenever somebody calls, we want to have this event, I'm like, hey, I think that's gonna work. And I want my go-to and responses. What does this say about your organization? How does this show your values as an organization? What are you communicating with other people? And the number of advisors that still think, well, I'm proving that we're tough? That answer is concerning. So, I think that is a big barrier, just getting their buy in.*

Yvette's observation underscores the cultural dimension of donor influence, where alumni and advisors—especially those with longstanding ties to organizations—continue to perpetuate hazing as a tradition. This creates a significant barrier for administrators trying to prevent such

behaviors, as the cultural expectation of "toughness" in some Greek and athletic organizations continues to prevail. Ralph, a Black administrator at another public institution, further noted the challenges of addressing ingrained beliefs about hazing:

> *And even then, you're still, you know, you can't change it overnight. But if you think [that advisor's] just going to all sudden fix it [shakes his head], you've got to slowly create a culture that's focused on the right things. And it has to be about relationships. And you've got to be conscious to that someone doesn't come in, that preaches all the right things but then does all this shit behind your back. Because I've seen that I don't know how many times, I'll hear about a staff member. I'm like, "Oh, my God," like, "Why didn't anybody tell me?" You know, and like, "We needed to fire that person a long time ago," because then they do all this irreparable damage, because they came in with these stupid ideals about what should or shouldn't be happening in an org, and they cover it up for it for people. And that's beyond frustrating to me, because it's like, you just, really? Everything we've done for the last five years, you know? It's like, "Thanks a lot."*

Yvette's and Ralph's experiences underscore the significant role that alumni and advisors play in sustaining hazing cultures, complicating administrators' efforts to enact meaningful change. Universities facing budget constraints are especially susceptible to these influences, as financial dependencies can dictate institutional priorities and decision-making processes (Levine 1978). In such cases, administrators must navigate competing demands that may hinder swift action on hazing prevention, as donor expectations often conflict with institutional commitments to student safety. Next, I explore the role of major university transitions and media efforts on hazing prevention efforts.

Cultural Constraints: Major University Transitions & Media Effects

Major transitions, such as significant shifts in enrollment or changes in sports divisions, were commonly identified by interview participants as barriers to their work on hazing prevention and education. In this section, I explore how these transitions, along with other factors like social media and public relations pressures, impact efforts to address hazing on

university campuses. The following discussion examines how these compounded challenges create obstacles for administrators and the strategies they use to navigate them. This analysis contributes to the broader goal of understanding the specific barriers administrators face in combating hazing.

Approximately one-third of the administrators interviewed (n=6, 31.5%) noted the influence of major institutional transitions on their hazing prevention and education work. They also highlighted how local news and media outlets shape public perceptions of these issues. Similarly, 11 percent (n=12) of survey respondents cited public relations and communication challenges as significant barriers to their hazing education and prevention efforts, echoing concerns about local news media coverage of hazing incidents. For example, Reginald discussed the transitions at his university and how these shifts influenced his work on hazing prevention and education. Specifically, the university's shift to a different sports conference and the resulting increased media coverage heightened pressures on his office regarding hazing prevention and education. He described this process at length:

> *I don't know if you've ever watched College GameDay from ESPN, but it's football on the weekend. Football and then basketball in the spring, but we were featured. We love the idea, right? That means that there's a lot of exposure there, right? So people are sitting at home for four or five hours on this broadcast, they're seeing glimpses of, you know, all of our students and bands are out on the quad, they're showing our oldest buildings on campus, and, you know, they're seeing the stadium, lit up, and you know, so I think that, you know, all of that kind of plays into, "Oh, there's energy there." And we know, post-COVID a lot of people, really gravitated towards us. We're trying to get big community feel and being social, because that's the thing that we weren't going without. So that has really kind of shifted our profile. And, you know, within our conference, which is what we're always typically going to compare ourselves to, you know, we're now looking at being one of the rising kind of institutions within the conference, in ways that were not there before So all of that is creating an energy on campus, and an energy around, again, what people think is the typical way that you should do thing in groups and teams.*

As Reginald illustrates, the elevation of their football team within their conference has impacted his work on hazing prevention and education due to the heightened notoriety and scrutiny that accompanies this shift. This situation can be understood through Levine's (1978) concept of environmental entropy, where external changes create instability and increased pressure on organizational functions.

Others, such as Yvette, a higher education professional from a medium-sized public university in the South, also highlighted heightened social media presence as a major barrier to her university's hazing prevention work. For example, she recounted a hazing incident that occurred on her campus that was live-streamed on Instagram. She detailed:

> *So, this incident was a group of students. I saw that they posted on Instagram that they were doing a dare fundraiser. So, what this meant is there as a list of things you can dare the officers and members to do. And you can pay money and then they would go do that thing. And they posted this very publicly on their Instagram and said they were going to do the challenges on Instagram Live. They range from like eat a lemon or lime wedge to hot sauce, all the way to the would jump in the lake right beside campus, you can pay them to jump in for an amount of money. Also, for $50, they would taze one of the members, very publicly on Instagram. I was like, "Hey, I need you to cancel this, and these are the reasons why," and they don't respond … it was obviously at night by this point, but I call them back. Like, "Hey you just can't do this. ", he said, "Okay, well I guess I get your point on the taser." And I was like, "Yes, obviously, that looks terrible." He said, "We won't live-stream anything that causes bodily harm." And I went, "No, you're not gonna do any of it."…They do go Live on Instagram. I, of course, like you can see I'm online, so I join the stream. They noticed I join, and they are like, "[Miss] we're not doing anything wrong," and I'm like, "I know, I'm still gonna watch, I'm still here…. So then, the next day, they come to my office and they're like, "Hey, we're really sorry," and I think this is where that rapport-building does help… they were embarrassed. And I was like, "You probably should be, now let's talk about why. Why did you think any of this was acceptable?" … I mean, what if someone had given them $50? What if someone did and they decided to go jump in the lake and have it on the live stream on Instagram? There's so many things that could go wrong.*

In this discussion, Yvette highlights the role of Instagram and live-streaming as its own influence on their behaviors, such as asking subscribers (not limited just to other students or members of the campus community) to pay varying amounts of money for students to engage in

specific behaviors in their group contexts, such as jumping in a local lake, drink hot sauce, or even be tased on video. Here, the role of live-stream and a heightened social media presence as demonstrated by the group in this example influenced their engagement with hazing behaviors. This extreme concern about the publicization of these events can be seen via the lens of political vulnerability, where Yvette is especially worried about this event being broadcasted or recorded by members outside her campus community.

Interestingly and somewhat similar Yvette's story, others suggested that social media can be used as a tool for intervention, allowing administrators and advisors to uncover hazing events that they may otherwise not know about. In this passage, Vincent describes a hazing event on their campus involving a fraternity/sorority auction and a situation where a participant was led around on a dog collar, and videos and photographs were distributed outside of the organization, leading to sanctions against the group:

> *Basically, it was an auction, so they auctioned off different members of the organization, and then they had to do goofy things. One of them ended up on a dog collar, and went into a sorority meeting, you know, they were, they were doing a sorority thing. And they were on this dog collar walking around. And so, for about 20 of the women, it was like, "Okay, this is kind of funny." But for two or three of those women, it wasn't funny. And we ended up with a couple of pictures, because it wasn't funny, this was obviously hazing. You know, you know, it was it was it was it was at risk of harm, no, but it was embarrassment, humiliation, you know, some of those other things that come into play with hazing... And so, in this situation, you know, there were a few of the women that were very uncomfortable by the situation, and the fact that he was being yanked around on this collar. And so, you know, we hear about it, most times from those people who are uncomfortable. Sometimes the video just gets out, because it's out, you know, somebody puts it on the one of the anonymous sites, I mean, social media really works against the students in that because they'll take a video of a phone video, and so you'll see that, right? And so, I just think that work, we want people to we want somebody to tell us what's going on, you know, and if we can find that out, then we can hopefully limit some of the behavior, you know, and sanction some of them.*

Social media and similar sources were also cited as barriers to hazing prevention as they can be used to normalize hazing behaviors and expectations. For example, Ralph illustrated how

social media like Tik-Tok can spread expectations of hazing behaviors in groups and teams through media representations of these activities. He explained:

> *So, when I go back to a number of students that are watching Tik-Tok videos, and they watch something about rushing a fraternity or joining a sports club, team, whatever, and they see how a part of that experience is doing these things, right?... That's the culture that we're in.*

In contrast to individuals like Yvette and those described in this section, many survey participants perceive few to no barriers in hazing prevention. According to my survey data, roughly one-third (n=32, 30.2%) of respondents suggested that "*No barriers impede their work on hazing prevention."* While this attitude can correspond with a rigorous and robust hazing prevention repertoire at a university, it can also stem from a lack of awareness or understanding about what hazing is and how it manifests across university clubs, teams, and organizations. This lack of awareness can also be conceptualized via the lens of problem depletion (Levine 1978) where the perceived absence of issues leads to complacency and a lack of proactive measures on a particular social problem. Interestingly, however, no interview participants perceived zero barriers, suggesting those who engaged in interviewing had stronger experiences overall with hazing education and prevention.

These findings underscore how hazing behaviors are deeply embedded within the organizational fabric of campus life, reinforced by cultural scripts, alumni influence, and internal value systems. These internal value systems present a direct barrier to intervention efforts because they shape not only participants' willingness to engage in hazing but also their resistance to external regulations. Even law enforcement—expected allies in prevention efforts—can reflect and perpetuate these ideologies, further complicating administrators' ability to implement change. Attempts to impose anti-hazing policies often clash with the deeply held belief that such rituals serve a meaningful function. The cultural idea that hazing is a necessary rite of passage

reinforces its persistence, as individuals and groups construct justifications that legitimize these practices.

Levine's (1978) framework provides a critical lens for understanding these challenges. His organizational theory highlights how external cultural forces intersect with internal subcultures, creating a self-reinforcing system that resists change. Hazing persists not merely as a set of behaviors, but as an ingrained organizational logic that aligns with internal priorities while conflicting with external mandates. This ideological entrenchment means that surface-level interventions are insufficient; effective prevention requires a fundamental reorientation of the cultural meanings that sustain hazing traditions.

By applying Levine's framework, universities can better recognize the structural and ideological barriers to change. Addressing hazing, therefore, demands more than policy enforcement—it necessitates a shift in organizational culture, aligning institutional goals with deeply embedded values. Sustainable prevention efforts must disrupt the norms that normalize and valorize hazing, fostering an environment where cultural transformation can take root.

CHAPTER 5: NAVIGATING WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

Beyond illuminating these challenges to hazing prevention and education, my aim was to explore how university administrators navigate daily challenges. Despite facing significant challenges and hardships, how do they continue to implement effective hazing prevention strategies? In this section, I describe the diverse approaches administrators employ to navigate workplace challenges related to hazing education and prevention work. It is crucial to examine the specific strategies used by upper-level administrators at higher education institutions to do their work in the face of a variety of challenges, as this analysis forms the basis for my recommendations and suggestions for those in similar roles, as well as for other relevant stakeholders, researchers, and practitioners. The research question I address in this chapter includes:

RQ3. How do administrators navigate daily workplace challenges regarding hazing prevention and education at institutions of higher education?

Navigating Barriers: Hazing Prevention as a Commitment Area

According to my interview data, one primary way administrators overcome workplace challenges and barriers is by treating hazing as a passion project, advocacy area, or otherwise an initiative that is personally important to them. Although not explored in the previous chapter as a central challenge, the framing of hazing as a passion area emerged as a strategy to stave off fatigue, burnout, or emotional wear and tear. Just over half (n=10, 52.6%) of my interview participants suggested that hazing was an interest area for them on their college campus, and most who indicated this interest (n=6 of this 10) had engaged in specific hazing prevention trainings, national workshops, etc., related to their own education and prevention.

Richard, a long-serving administrator at a private, small university, highlighted the significance of personal motivation in sustaining his work towards campus safety in Fraternity and Sorority Life:

> *You know, it's funny, because when I go to things like, you know, AFA, and NAPSA and those kinds of things, people like, "Oh, how long have you been working for?" and I'm like, "Eight-and-a-half years," I get these, like, "Are you joking?" And like, "No." And almost like, "How have you lasted that long?" You know, and, for me, [Fraternity and Sorority Life] is a passion area…This for me has become like my advocacy space. You know, as we continue to advocate for, you know, the continued growth of our organizations the reaction that I get when I tell somebody "Oh, I've been doing this eight-and-a-half years," when they're when their reaction is like wowed, well, this tells me everything I need to know. Right? You know, they're burnt out, they're tired, they're tired of dealing with all the drama from the students from, you know, leadership, of why are they being bad again? Well, they're not being bad, you just want a soundbite, you don't want to listen to nuance…One of the biggest pieces would be like, continue to find ways to energize yourself to stay in this work. So that, at minimum, we can get a full generation of students [4 years] out of each person.*

Similarly, Spencer, an administrator at a small public university in the South, described his commitment:

> *I think the more time that I do my personal education and growth with hazing prevention, and I see the process here, I think I get more and more frustrated that like we're not doing enough to address it, but also at the same time, this isn't just a narrative for Fraternity and Sorority Life. This is a narrative for athletics, honor societies, marching bands, clubs and organizations like everyone experiences hazing... I've been able to be in spaces that or I've been able to push my way into spaces that [our office] hasn't been able to before... I've been able to work to towards [education and prevention], and that's been able to help me and my work. So, doubling down on this area and really getting deeper into it has been a way for me to overcome some of these issues.*

Survey respondents also highlighted the role of commitment in overcoming workplace barriers. One administrator noted:

> *My dissertation is about hazing, so I have become the de-facto person who promotes hazing prevention work, and this made sense when I was working directly with student orgs and Fraternity Sorority Life. Participants in those roles see it as more of a compliance function rather than from as student development approach. This speaks to the fact that the approach often has to do with the motivation of the participants who choose whether or not to spend their time on the efforts that actually work.*

This finding aligns with Levine's (1978) framework, which suggests that in times of resource scarcity and organizational decline, administrators rely on personal commitment and advocacy to sustain their efforts and maintain organizational effectiveness. In the context of hazing prevention, where emotional labor is substantial and resources are often limited, this dedication becomes crucial for administrators' persistence. Similar to research on campus sexual violence prevention (Levine, 2018), my findings suggest that administrators actively reframe their work as a mission-driven endeavor, allowing them to persist in challenging environments. However, not all administrators were able to sustain their work through passion alone. Some participants described experiencing significant burnout, such as Candace, who reported physical symptoms including chronic neck pain, muscle soreness, and even a prolonged eye twitch during peak academic periods.

Navigating Barriers: Capitalizing on Higher Education Resources

Another key strategy administrators use to navigate workplace challenges is leveraging the extensive resources and collaborative networks inherent to higher education. Vincent, a Vice President of Student Affairs, emphasized the unique intellectual capital available in universities:

> *This is higher education, you know, and when I stepped back, and I realized higher education, it's not elementary, middle, high school; It's higher education. If we can't figure out the answers to these things, I don't know where they think the answers are. We have brilliant students, brilliant staff, brilliant faculty, researchers, we have everything that we could possibly have to solve virtually any problem…Reach out to people, whether it's in your institution, or across the street, department, and commiserate, and find out what who has what knowledge and who's got success. But do that before you end up in a situation…*

Vincent's approach underscores the importance of proactive engagement with campus networks. Bianca similarly emphasized the role of professional relationships in navigating challenges:

> *With that circle of trust, I'm talking about colleagues and people in positions around [the university] that might not be in my unit but I can go to them and ask them questions when I need to, whether it's about health and safety, hazing prevention, policies, or even climate survey data that I might not have access to.*

This proactive approach aligns with Levine's (1978) theory of environmental entropy, which emphasizes the necessity of adaptive strategies in chaotic environments. By fostering strong relationships and drawing on institutional resources, administrators can mitigate the limitations posed by bureaucratic constraints and financial shortfalls (Allan, Payne, & Kerschner, 2018).

Navigating Barriers: Cutback Management & Tightening the Belt

As discussed in Chapter Three, hazing prevention efforts are often constrained by limited institutional funding. Administrators must therefore adopt cutback management strategies, a concept outlined by Levine (1978), which emphasizes flexibility and adaptability in the face of fiscal constraints. Several interviewees addressed budgetary limitations by embracing technology-based solutions (n=5, 26.3%). Royce, an administrator in the South, described how his office adapted to budget shortfalls and new legislative requirements by developing an online education program:

> *And so, when the state passed the series of statutes in 2018, was shortly before COVID. So, I think they went into effect for the 18-19 academic year, it included several requirements in which we're required to do some preventative education for any student that is new to PRIVATE-MEDIUM-SOUTHERN University. And so, I wrote that course, with a few, a few stakeholders that consulted, and so we created this online course, that any student that is near to PRIVATE-MEDIUM-SOUTHERN University has to take to comply with that statute, no matter what budgets or other issues like a pandemic look like….*

Royce's approach demonstrates how technology can provide cost-effective and scalable solutions to institutional challenges. Similarly, Dakota emphasized the importance of maximizing existing resources:

> *… It's not like my funding pot for hazing is going up. I try to streamline things as much as possible and make things, the websites, processes, and everything flow better. I want students to be able to use what already exists and improve on what's already there and been paid for.*

Like Royce, Dakota expressed frustration with limited funding for hazing prevention but found ways to maximize the available resources. By utilizing existing tools and refining processes, they were able to create efficient and accessible resources for students. This strategy allowed administrators to address financial challenges while still making progress in preventing hazing. These examples illustrate how administrators, facing financial constraints, turned to technology and existing resources to overcome barriers. Adopting online tools and streamlining processes reflect the principles of cutback management, which highlight the strategic use of limited resources. Both Royce and Dakota illustrate how universities apply these strategies to address legislative demands, economic pressures, and reduced funding, ensuring that hazing prevention efforts remain effective despite budget limitations. Their approaches align with Levine's (1978) framework on cutback management, which emphasizes adaptability, strategic decision-making, and efficient resource use in the face of external pressures.

Administrators employ a range of strategic approaches to navigate the daily complexities of hazing prevention and education. By framing their work as a passion-driven endeavor, leveraging institutional networks, and employing cutback management strategies, they sustain their efforts despite persistent resource constraints and the emotional toll of their roles. This chapter underscores the resilience and adaptability of higher education administrators, offering critical insights into how similar challenges can be addressed across institutional contexts.

Throughout these three chapters, I highlighted my findings, including the primary mechanisms administrators rely on in their daily work toward hazing prevention. These mechanisms include fostering strong collaborations both on- and off-campus, assessing student

body characteristics, and accounting for broader campus cultural influences that may shape hazing prevention efforts. In addition, I examined the significant barriers that interview and survey respondents encounter across various roles on college campuses as they work to address hazing.

This discussion underscores the complex nature of hazing prevention and the ways in which campus contexts play a major role in the success (or lack thereof) of these initiatives. At the same time, it sheds light on how administrators and staff navigate and contend with daily workplace challenges. In doing so, they develop strategies to mitigate stress, burnout, and fatigue, enabling them to sustain their commitment to student safety and institutional change. In the next chapter, I offer a broader synthesis of these findings, discussing their implications and presenting recommendations for future research and policy development in hazing prevention.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESARCH & POLICYMAKERS

Hazing in higher education remains a critical yet under-researched issue, particularly from an administrative perspective. Although it has long been part of campus culture, researchers have struggled to study hazing comprehensively due to its covert nature and universities' reluctance to confront it directly. This study surveyed administrators and conducted qualitative interviews to examine their experiences, the barriers they face, and the strategies they use to navigate workplace challenges regarding hazing prevention and education efforts. Data collected between January 2023 and February 2024 reveal several key insights. Administrators often lack adequate training and resources to address hazing effectively, while financial constraints and alumni influence shape institutional responses. In addition, competing demands frequently push prevention efforts aside, though some universities have adopted cost-effective, technology-based solutions to streamline hazing prevention. These findings deepen our understanding of the institutional dynamics affecting hazing prevention and underscore the need for policy and programmatic changes.

Contribution to Existing Research

Hazing continues to pose significant risks on college campuses, particularly within student organizations such as fraternities, sororities, athletic teams, and other campus groups. Over the years, journalists and researchers have documented numerous instances of high-risk hazing behaviors, many of which are dangerous, abusive, and sometimes illegal (Allan &

Madden 2012; Campo, Poulos, & Sipple, 2005; Finkel, 2002; Gerschel et al., 2003; Hoover & Pollard, 1999). While the consequences of hazing range from severe physical injuries to fatalities (Brackenridge, Lindsay, & Telfer, 2009; Ellsworth, 2004; Nuwer, 2000, 2004), its broader social implications extend beyond individual victims to impact campus culture and institutional policies.

Expanding on prior research that connects peer victimization to academic struggles, mental health issues, and potential long-term behavioral consequences (Brackenridge et al., 2009; Crosnoe, 2011; Smith et al., 2004), this study situates hazing within a broader framework of social harm. While some scholars suggest a link between peer victimization and later criminal offending (Sourander et al., 2007), others argue that victimization may deter individuals from engaging in future deviant behavior (Bijleveld, Van der Geest, & Hendriks, 2011; Olweus, 1993). This complexity underscores the importance of contextualizing hazing within institutional and administrative structures that shape both prevention efforts and responses.

A key factor in the persistence of hazing is its normalization within institutional settings. Universities often struggle to recognize or adequately address hazing, inadvertently enabling these behaviors (Wickremasinghe, Axemo, Essén, & Trenholm, 2022). Large-scale studies such as Hoover and Pollard's (1999) research on NCAA student-athletes and Allan and Madden's (2008) survey of over 11,000 students demonstrate the pervasiveness of hazing across various student groups. Findings from these studies reveal that hazing is not confined to fraternity and sorority life but extends to varsity athletics, club sports, performing arts, and service organizations (Allan, Kerschner, & Payne, 2019; Allan & Madden, 2008). These insights highlight the systemic nature of hazing and the challenges institutions face in developing comprehensive prevention strategies.

Compounding these challenges, shifts in higher education governance have altered administrative responses to hazing. The transition from an *in loco parentis* model to a more facilitation-based administrative approach has created ambiguity in institutional responsibility. Research suggests when universities fail to address hazing effectively, other harmful behaviors—such as binge drinking and sexual violence—are more likely to persist (Allan & Madden, 2012; Johnson & Holman, 2004; Boyle & Walker, 2016). Given the increasing rates of mental health concerns among college students (Lipson et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019), hazing can also exacerbate psychological vulnerabilities, particularly for individuals with histories of trauma, addiction, or previous victimization (Apgar, 2013).

The ramifications of hazing extend beyond direct participants, affecting bystanders, student advocates, and university personnel responsible for intervention. Secondary traumatic stress among these individuals can manifest as guilt, distress, and a sense of helplessness (Pezza & Bellotti, 1995; Fisher & Dzikus, 2010; Lynch, 2017). Despite growing awareness, research on administrators' roles in hazing prevention remains limited. As a result, many institutions lack clear frameworks for intervention, often relying on reactive rather than proactive measures.

Amid these challenges, increasing legal scrutiny and public pressure have compelled universities to reassess their hazing prevention strategies. While institutions have adopted data-driven approaches to combat binge drinking and sexual violence, hazing prevention has lagged due to inadequate training and resource limitations (Allan & Madden, 2008). This study advances the field by shifting the focus to administrative perspectives, exploring how factors like financial constraints, alumni influence, and institutional priorities shape prevention efforts. While previous research on this topic has largely centered on student experiences and

organizational dynamics, this dissertation highlights the mechanisms of prevention, as well as challenges faced by administrators in implementing effective policies.

Applying a sociological lens to administrative practices, this research contributes to both hazing prevention scholarship and higher education policy. Similar to other "wicked problems" in higher education—such as substance abuse and campus sexual violence—hazing demands a nuanced, multi-level approach (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Given the vast scope of student involvement in campus organizations and NCAA athletics (NCAA, 2024), understanding the administrative dimensions of hazing prevention is crucial. This dissertation illuminates institutional responses and emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate education, policy reform, and cultural change. In the next section, I recap the methods used to address these issues.

Methodology: Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate how university administrators engage in hazing prevention and navigate the challenges they encounter. By integrating both quantitative survey data and qualitative semi-structured interviews, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of administrators' roles, strategies, and barriers in hazing prevention efforts. The combination of these methods ensures a balanced approach, capturing both broad trends and in-depth personal experiences that contribute to the broader discourse on hazing prevention in higher education.

The quantitative component of this study involved a web-based Qualtrics survey distributed to administrators at public and private four-year universities in the United States with enrollments greater than 500 undergraduate students. This survey aimed to identify key themes

in hazing prevention practices, administrators' knowledge of hazing policies, and their perceptions of hazing prevalence on their campuses. By utilizing a structured survey instrument, the study was able to collect standardized data that facilitated systematic analysis of hazing prevention efforts across institutions. Despite a relatively low response rate of 13.3 percent, the survey findings remain valuable in highlighting patterns and informing further qualitative exploration.

The qualitative component consisted of semi-structured interviews with administrators who expressed interest in discussing their experiences in more depth. This methodological choice allowed for a richer understanding of the nuances in hazing prevention efforts, capturing administrators' personal insights, institutional constraints, and the complexities of their decision-making processes. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews provided space for respondents to elaborate on their experiences beyond the confines of predetermined survey responses, revealing deeper insights into the motivations, challenges, and institutional barriers they encounter.

The decision to employ a mixed-methods approach was guided by the recognition that hazing prevention is a multifaceted issue requiring both breadth and depth of analysis. The survey provided a broad overview of hazing prevention efforts, while the interviews allowed for an exploration of individual perspectives and institutional dynamics. This triangulation of data strengthens the validity of the findings by corroborating trends observed in the quantitative data with detailed qualitative narratives. Further, this approach aligns with best practices in social science research, as it enhances the ability to capture and interpret the complexities of social phenomena that may be overlooked by a single-method study.

Throughout the research process, methodological challenges were acknowledged, including potential survey fatigue, concerns over confidentiality, and institutional constraints that may have influenced participation rates. However, these limitations were mitigated through careful research design, ethical considerations, and the integration of qualitative data to supplement and contextualize survey findings.

By employing this rigorous mixed-methods approach, this research contributes valuable insights into the landscape of hazing prevention in higher education. The findings not only enhance theoretical understanding but also offer practical recommendations for improving hazing prevention strategies at the institutional level. Through the integration of survey data and interview findings, this study highlights the critical role university administrators play in addressing hazing and underscores the need for continued research and policy development to support their efforts in fostering safer campus environments. Next, I briefly recap and describe the theoretical framework used for this study, as well as highlight several of the key findings from this project.

Theoretical Framework: Application of Levine's Theory of Organizational Decline

Levine's (1978) theory of organizational decline provides a valuable framework for understanding how higher education institutions respond to internal and external pressures, particularly in times of financial strain, demographic shifts, and political turbulence. While multiple organizational theories could be applied to hazing prevention, Levine's framework is particularly useful because it directly addresses how institutions navigate resource scarcity, competing demands, and shifting political landscapes—factors that emerged as central themes in this study. Unlike theories that focus primarily on organizational growth or stability, Levine's

model accounts for the structural vulnerabilities that influence administrative decision-making, making it well-suited for examining the barriers to effective hazing prevention.

Levine identifies four primary causes of decline—environmental entropy, organizational atrophy, political vulnerability, and problem depletion—each of which sheds light on the challenges administrators face in hazing prevention. Findings from this study align with Levine's theory, particularly in demonstrating how resource constraints shape institutional responses. Many universities prioritize cost-efficient prevention strategies, such as online reporting tools and awareness campaigns, while others lack even basic initiatives like hazing prevention task forces. This pattern reflects broader organizational atrophy, where competing institutional priorities overshadow hazing prevention efforts.

In addition, this study underscores the role of political and financial pressures in shaping university decision-making. While some institutions may not be in an absolute state of decline, they experience acute vulnerabilities—such as budget cuts, fluctuating enrollments, and external political pressures—that influence their capacity to address hazing. Levine's framework helps contextualize these constraints by illustrating how institutional structures shape prevention strategies. However, my findings suggest that Levine's theory does not fully capture the complexity of university responses to hazing prevention.

Specifically, Levine's model focuses on organizational decline as a broad structural process, emphasizing financial stress and political instability as primary drivers of institutional decision-making. While these factors undoubtedly shape hazing prevention efforts, my research reveals additional dynamics that Levine's theory does not adequately explain. For example, several administrators indicated that hazing prevention was deprioritized not just due to financial constraints but because it lacked institutional champions who could advocate for sustained policy

changes. In some cases, universities with sufficient resources still failed to implement effective prevention strategies due to competing administrative priorities or a reluctance to acknowledge hazing as a systemic issue. This suggests that beyond financial and political pressures, organizational culture and leadership play a crucial role in determining how hazing prevention is approached.

Further, my survey and interview data show that many universities lack a hazing workgroup or task force, despite evidence that such structures can significantly improve prevention efforts. One might expect institutions facing financial and political strain to embrace cost-effective, structured interventions like task forces, yet my findings indicate otherwise. Levine's framework does not fully explain why universities fail to implement these targeted, evidence-based solutions, even when they align with institutional efficiency goals. This gap highlights the need for a more nuanced theoretical approach that accounts for not only economic and political constraints but also the cultural, social, and leadership-driven factors that shape institutional responses to hazing.

A novel contribution of this study is its examination of alumni influence on hazing prevention. While prior research has explored alumni involvement in university governance and fundraising (Williams, 2025; McDearmon, 2013; O'Neil & Schenke, 2007), little attention has been given to its intersection with hazing prevention policies. This study highlights how alumni expectations and financial contributions can shape university responses, at times impeding meaningful reform efforts. Levine's theory provides insight into how alumni, as part of the institution's political ecosystem, may either exacerbate or alleviate the organizational vulnerabilities that hinder effective hazing prevention. However, there may be limits to how well Levine's theory captures the influence of alumni in creating or alleviating institutional decline.

The theory's emphasis on structural decline may overlook the more dynamic, agent-driven factors of alumni involvement that could either mitigate or accelerate challenges in hazing prevention.

Ultimately, this research illustrates how institutional structures influence hazing prevention strategies. While some universities have implemented effective, low-cost interventions, others struggle with internal barriers that hinder progress. Levine's framework provides valuable insight into these dynamics, emphasizing the need for sustained institutional commitment, cross-campus collaboration, and targeted resource allocation to mitigate hazing risks. That said, Levine's theory might not fully explain the variations in success across institutions. Factors such as leadership styles, institutional culture, and historical legacies may play roles in hazing prevention that are not completely captured by a focus on decline. Further research could expand on Levine's framework by integrating these additional elements, offering a more holistic understanding of hazing prevention in higher education.

The Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA), Institutional Challenges, and Future Directions

The Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA), introduced in 2023 and passed in 2024, represents a significant step forward in hazing prevention by increasing transparency and accountability in higher education. Modeled after the Clery Act, the SCHA mandates improved data collection and public reporting of hazing incidents, reinforcing the recognition of hazing as a systemic issue rather than isolated misconduct. This shift pushes institutions to adopt more comprehensive, evidence-based prevention strategies rather than reactive or fragmented approaches. However, the act's success will depend on institutional commitment, administrative capacity, and resource availability.

While the SCHA enhances transparency and data-driven decision-making, universities—particularly those with limited resources—may struggle with compliance and effective implementation due to a lack of dedicated funding. Institutions must assess their resource needs and advocate for state or institutional support mechanisms, including funding allocations, staffing capacity, and administrative infrastructure necessary to implement prevention policies effectively. Without adequate support, even well-intentioned mandates risk being underfunded or poorly executed, undermining their intended impact.

Beyond assessing policy effectiveness, the SCHA provides an opportunity for scholars to refine theoretical frameworks on organizational compliance, risk management, and cultural change within student groups. Future studies should explore how institutions integrate hazing prevention within broader campus safety and student well-being initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact. Additionally, research should examine whether mandated reporting influences student and administrator perceptions of hazing and whether increased scrutiny pushes hazing further underground or alters self-reporting patterns among student organizations.

Policy, Programming, and Research Recommendations

To effectively implement hazing prevention initiatives and comply with the SCHA, universities must invest in ongoing training and professional development, equipping administrators with the skills necessary to recognize and address hazing. Establishing dedicated hazing prevention task forces can provide continuity despite leadership transitions or shifting institutional priorities. Moreover, institutions must allocate sustained funding to hazing prevention efforts, ensuring they remain a priority even during budget constraints.

Cross-campus collaboration—including faculty, staff, students, and alumni—is essential for fostering a collective commitment to eliminating hazing and creating a safer campus environment. Engaging student leaders, coaches, and other influential stakeholders is particularly crucial for embedding prevention efforts within campus culture, legitimizing institutional policies, and fostering meaningful change. Institutions should also integrate hazing prevention into broader safety initiatives, clearly communicating the far-reaching benefits of these efforts for student well-being.

In addition to policy and programming recommendations, this study highlights key areas for future research. Longitudinal studies should examine how administrative attitudes and institutional policies evolve in response to hazing prevention mandates, particularly the implementation of the SCHA. The finding that alumni influence hazing policies suggests a need for further exploration of financial donors' role in shaping risk management decisions in higher education. Furthermore, cross-cultural research can provide valuable insights into how hazing prevention strategies vary globally, considering different social, cultural, and policy contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations, including potential selection bias in interview participation and a low survey response rate. However, the use of mixed methods helps mitigate these concerns by offering a robust analysis of administrative perspectives on hazing prevention. Future research should continue refining best practices for institutional accountability, ensuring that hazing prevention remains a sustained priority rather than a reactive measure following high-profile incidents.

Conclusion

This study underscores the complexities administrators face in hazing prevention while providing actionable policy and research recommendations. Many interview and survey respondents emphasized the need for greater institutional visibility and support for hazing prevention efforts. Strengthening institutional commitment, fostering cross-campus collaboration, and aligning prevention efforts with broader university priorities are key steps toward creating safer campus environments.

As colleges balance fostering student connections with ensuring safety, data-driven prevention strategies offer a roadmap for sustainable change. By implementing even a few of these recommendations, university officials can enhance their effectiveness in preventing hazing and contribute to a campus culture that prioritizes student well-being.

Reflections from Participants

In addition to providing the basis for these findings, many interview respondents (n=13, 68%) and several survey respondents (n=10, 7%) expressed their appreciation for this research, emphasizing the importance of continued attention to hazing prevention. For example, Candace, reflected on the significance of this research, stating:

> *… As somebody who does this work, I appreciate the research that you're doing, because that's going to help us affect our practice and inform our practice. So, you know, thank you for doing this work. It really is meaningful work. I'm glad to hear that the outcome is not to languish in the library, but rather like do something with it. And so, I appreciate that. That's where we're going with this and that's why I'm doing this interview.*

Similarly, Rosemary, representing a small private university, thanked the researcher for prompting new ways of thinking about her work:

> *And thank you again for your questions, I don't, there's a few things I guess I never thought about before, and it was hard to wrap my head around. You know, I do this every day, how have I never thought about this before? I mean, what do I do every day? I deal with this, I deal with that, I, [stutters], what does an administrator do? God, I don't even*

know. I put up with problems. Isn't that sorry? I can't believe this is how I answer. I guess that gives me something to think more about on hazing.

These reflections underscore the vital role of academic research in shaping institutional policies and administrative practices, particularly on complex and often overlooked issues such as hazing prevention. Beyond expressing appreciation, participants conveyed a shared hope that this research would translate into meaningful change, reinforcing the need for continued inquiry and action. Their words serve as a reminder that research does not exist in isolation; rather, it has the power to challenge assumptions, spark new ways of thinking, and ultimately contribute to safer, more accountable campus environments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - University Administrator Hazing Prevention Survey

Thank you for participating in this research project. This survey has three sections: 1) Information about your job responsibilities and daily work; 2) Questions about your understandings of hazing on campus; and 3) Questions about your own perspectives regarding how your university can address hazing. This survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Questions: ***I want to first know about your daily duties and the kinds of work you do on an average day.***

1. Job Title/Role: Text box
2. How long have you held this title?
   - *Less than 1 year*
   - *1-5 years*
   - *5-10 years*
   - *10-15 years*
   - *15+ years*

3. What are some of your typical duties? Options:
Supervision, budget, crisis response, meetings, email/correspondence, strategic planning, other (fill in)

4. Please describe your engagement with students (Are you in charge of student behavior, does conduct report to you?): Text box

Now I'd like to ask about your understandings and knowledge about hazing on your campus.

Hazing is any behavior expected of someone joining or maintaining membership in a group that humiliates, degrades, or endangers, regardless of a person's willingness to participate, and can include behaviors ranging from depriving members of sleep, food, or water, forced alcohol consumption, or even branding, paddling, or whipping (Allan & Madden 2012; Hoover & Pollard 1999).

5. Does your campus have a hazing prevention policy currently? Yes/No/Unsure

6. Does your campus have a hazing prevention workgroup/task force or similar group currently? Yes/No/Unsure

7. If yes, what are the responsibilities of this task force? Options: Education, Programming, Investigation, Research/Assessment, Communication/Marketing, Outreach, Other (Fill in)

8. What campus areas are represented on this group? Health, athletics, performance, ROTC, FSL, sport clubs, student orgs, religious groups, conduct, residence life/housing, general counsel, legal, PR, faculty, student reps, community members, dean of students, other (fill in)

9. If you wanted to learn more about hazing and prevention, which resources would you go to? Text options: Websites (StopHazing.org, HazingPrevention.org, etc.), Hazing prevention experts, journal articles/publications, general counsel, legislative bodies/policies, police/law enforcement, colleagues, peer institutions, professional associations, None, Other (please specify)

10. What forms of hazing prevention does your institution use the most? Education, presentations, trainings/leadership summits, social media campaigns, videos/posters/signage, Other (please specify)

11. Hazing prevention can include hazing education, presentations, trainings, social media campaigns, videos, as well as other events related to preventing hazing on campus. Do you have an estimate of how much your college or university spends on hazing prevention annually across the entire institution? Yes/No.

12. If yes, how much?

No, I do not have an estimate of our annual hazing prevention spending
Yes, less than $500
Yes, between $500 and $1500
Yes, between $1501 and $5000
Yes, between $5001 and $10,000
Yes, between $10,001 and $20,000
Yes, more than $20,000

13. In the next 2 to 5 years, do you anticipate your college or university's budget for hazing prevention programming will:

Increase substantially
Increase moderately
Roughly stay the same
Decrease moderately
Decrease substantially

14. Related to the previous question, why do you believe your college or university's budget for hazing prevention programming will change or not change? Major hazing incident, major economic changes, major university budgetary changes, anticipated legal changes, policy changes at your institutions, Other (please specify)

15. Lots of barriers may exist when it comes to hazing prevention on a college campus. What kinds of barriers impede your work on hazing prevention? Time constraints, other priorities, budgetary constraints, buy in from above/below, PR, no hazing, Other (please specify)

16. What else do you want me to know about your university, your work on hazing at your university, your knowledge regarding hazing prevention, or the policies that exist on your campus? Text box

This last set of questions asks about you and will only take a moment to complete.

17. In terms of my gender, I identify as:
    - o *Man*
    - o *Woman*
    - o *Non-binary*
    - o *Other gender identity (Please specify: _____)*

18. In terms of my race, I identify as:
    - o *Hispanic or Latino*
    - o *White/Caucasian*
    - o *Black/ African American*
    - o *Asian or Pacific Islander*
    - o *Native American*
    - o *Multi-Racial (Please specify: _____)*
    - *Other (Please specify: _____)*

19. The estimated undergraduate enrollment of my college or university is:
    - o *0-500 students*
    - o *501-1,000 students*
    - o *1,001-5,000 students*
    - o *5001-10,000 students*
    - o *10,001-15,000 students*
    - o *15,001-20,000 students*
    - o *20,001-25,000 students*
    - o *25,001-30,000 students*
    - o *Greater than 30,001 students*

20. Geographic region of university
    - o *Northeast*
    - o *Mid-Atlantic*
    - o *South*
    - o *Southwest*
    - o *Midwest*
    - o *West*
    - o *Other (Please specify: ____)*

21. My college or university is:
    - o *Private*
    - o *Public*
    - o *Other (Please specify: ____)*

22. ***I am working to understand administrators' work on college campuses towards hazing prevention and education. I am particularly interested in administrators' experiences and challenges at work regarding these issues. If you would like to be contacted for further interview (45 minutes to an hour via Zoom Video Communications, Microsoft Teams, or Google Duo), please provide your information below and I will be in touch shortly. I appreciate your time.***

Name:
Email address:

Thank you again for participating.

Appendix B - IRB Approval & Informed Consent Declaration

PROTOCOLS

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The protocol listed below has been approved by the CSU IRB Determinations Fort Collins on Friday, February 3rd 2023.

PI: Opsal, Tara D

Submission Type and ID: Amendment 3941

Title: An exploratory mixed-methods analysis of university administrators' perspectives and policies to combat hazing on college campuses

Approval Date: Friday, February 3rd 2023

Continuing Review Date: no date provided

Expiration Date: Tuesday, November 16th 2027

The CSU IRB (FWA0000647) has completed its review of protocol 3941 An exploratory mixed-methods analysis of university administrators' perspectives and policies to combat hazing on college campuses. In accordance with federal and state requirements, and policies established by the CSU IRB, the committee has approved this protocol under Exempt review.

Any additional comments regarding this approval are included below. If you have additional questions about this please contact RICRO IRB Staff.

Please note:

- This protocol will need to undergo Continuing Review and approval prior to no date provided.
- Any additional changes to this approved protocol must be obtained prior to implementation of those changes, by submitting an amendment request to the CSU IRB for review/approval.

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Kellie Alexander, and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the Sociology department. We are conducting a research study on university administrators whose work involves hazing prevention to understand the challenges they face. The title of our project is, "An exploratory mixed-methods analysis of university administrators' perspectives and policies to combat hazing on college campuses." The Principal Investigator is Dr. Tara Opsal in the Department of Sociology and I am the Co-Principal Investigator also in the Department of Sociology.

We would like to invite you to take an anonymous online survey. Participation will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

We will not collect your name or personal identifiers (although if you'd like to participate in future interviews, you may provide your contact information at the end of the survey – this will be stored separately and will not be included in this data). When we report and share the data to others, we will combine the data from all participants. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on how university administrators carry out hazing prevention, the barriers they face, and how they overcome these challenges.

There are no known risks associated with participation in this project. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential (but unknown) risks.

To indicate your consent to participate in this research and to continue to the survey, please click here, or copy and paste the link listed:
https://colostate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9Y3pz1aysoLTV4y

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Tara Opsal at (970)491-5438 or Kellie Alexander at (970)491-6044. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: CSU_IRB@colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Tara Opsal	Kellie Alexander
Associate Professor	Graduate Research Assistant

Appendix C – University Administrator Qualitative Interview Guide

Hi, thanks for meeting with me. Today I'd like to talk to you about your role on campus, your daily responsibilities, and your perceptions or understandings about hazing on campus as well as policies that might exist relevant to your campus. If it is okay, I'd like to audio-record this interview so I can transcribe it later. Is this okay with you? Yes/No

1. To begin, what are your job/daily responsibilities on campus?

2. Tell me a little about your university – what are the two or so characteristics that make your university stand out from other schools? [private/public, land grant, research, commuter/residential, HBCU, etc.]

3. Who is responsible for creating hazing responses on campus?

4. Is there a hazing prevention task force?
    1. How long has it been in place?
    2. Hazing incident – before or after
5. Are there hazing prevention policies in place on campus? Can you briefly describe these policies?
    1. How did these policies come about? How long have they been in place? (Is there a Zero Tolerance policy, is there a Safe Haven/Good Samaritan clause?)
    2. How does your unique student body shape these policies?
    3. Are there other features at your university or college that shape your policies on hazing?

6. Have you partnered or worked with other organizations on or off campus regarding education and prevention?
    1. How have you collaborated with these orgs? Think about one example of how you've collaborated with an organization – Tell me a little about this experience.

7. Lots of barriers may exist for you in terms of hazing prevention. What is the biggest barrier that exists for you regarding hazing prevention?
    1. How have you worked to overcome this challenge/these challenges?
    2. Have you experienced personal challenges related to hazing prevention?
    3. What advice would you give to others in your role or similar roles at universities when it comes to overcoming these challenges?

8. Has your university had a recent incident relating to hazing? If so, can you briefly describe the incident? When did this event occur?

9. In your opinion, what is most effective in addressing hazing behaviors on your campus?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss regarding your work as it relates to hazing, prevention, education, etc.?

11. Is there anything you'd like to ask me about this project?

Thank you so much for participating.

END OF INTERVIEW