Wartburg Theological Seminary

Hazing Prevention and Response Policy

1. Purpose

Wartburg Theological Seminary is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and respectful learning and living environment for students and their families as well as members of faculty and staff. Hazing, in any form, is harmful and undermines the seminary's missions of spiritual formation, mutual respect, and communal care. In compliance with the Stop Campus Hazing Act (SCHA), and Clery Act requirements, this policy establishes expectations regarding hazing, outlines reporting procedures, and describes preventive and educational measures.

2. Definitions

A. Hazing*

For purposes of this policy, and reporting statistics, the term "hazing," means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act committed by a person (whether individually or in concert with other persons) against another person or persons regardless of the willingness of such other person(s) to participate, that is committed in the course of an initiation into, an affiliation with, or the maintenance of membership in, a student organization and causes or creates a risk, above the reasonable risk encountered in the course of participation in the institution of higher education or the organization (such as the physical preparation necessary for participation in an athletic team), of physical or psychological injury including, but not limited to:

- Whipping, beating, striking, electronic shocking, placing of harmful substance on someone's body, or similar activity;
- Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, extreme calisthenics, or other similar activity;
- Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to consume food, liquid, alcohol, drugs, or other substances;
- Causing, coercing, or otherwise inducing another person to perform sexual acts;
- Any activity that places another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words or conduct;
- Any activity against another person that includes a criminal violation of local, state, tribal, or federal law; and
- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires another person to perform a duty or task that involves a criminal violation of local, state, tribal, or federal law.

B. Student Organization*
For the purpose of this policy, and reporting statistics, a student organization is defined as, "an organization at an institution of higher education (such as a club, society, association, varsity or junior varsity athletic team, club sports team, fraternity, sorority, band, or student government) in which two or more of the members are students enrolled at the institution of higher education, whether or not the organization is established or recognized by the institution."

**Definitions of "hazing" and "student organization" are derived from the Clery Center's "Stop Campus Hazing Act Getting Started Guide" (2024), available at Clery - Hazing Resources*

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, faculty, volunteers, and campus visitors. It covers all recognized and unrecognized student organizations and applies in all on-campus, off-campus, and virtual settings. Any activity intended to humiliate, degrade, intimidate, or harm another individual, or to pressure them to violate Seminary rules, state or federal law, or ethical standards, is prohibited.

4. Prohibited Conduct

Hazing in any form is strictly prohibited. Conduct that may constitute hazing includes, but is not limited to, physical or mental harm, coercion to violate laws or Seminary rules, public or private humiliation, and secret or ritualistic activities performed as part of organizational membership. All students and organization members are expected to comply fully with this policy.

5. Reporting, Investigation, and Adjudication

Individuals who become aware of hazing are encouraged to report it promptly to a Campus Security Authority (CSA). CSAs at Wartburg Theological Seminary include the Director of Community Life and Candidacy, Superintendent for Maintenance, Director for Financial Aid and Reporting, and the President. Reports may also be made anonymously through Wartburg's confidential online reporting system, which can be used to report hazing, concerning behavior, unethical situations, harassment, or incidents that may fall under Title IX, including sexual misconduct. All reports will be handled promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially to the extent possible. Retaliation against anyone reporting hazing is strictly prohibited.
* Incident Reporting Form

The CSA receiving the report will coordinate with relevant campus officials, including members of the Cabinet, to review the facts, gather documentation, and determine appropriate next steps. Investigation may include interviews with

involved parties, review of records, and consultation with other administrators as necessary to ensure a fair and thorough process.

Following the investigation, appropriate actions may be taken, ranging from educational or restorative measures to loss of recognition for student organizations, depending on the severity and nature of the conduct. The Seminary may also implement interim measures during the investigation to protect the safety and wellbeing of the campus community.

6. Prevention and Education

Wartburg Theological Seminary, committed to preventing hazing and fostering a safe, respectful, and Christ-centered campus environment, will provide educational resources to students, faculty, and staff. Understanding what constitutes hazing, responsibilities under this policy, and how to report concerns will be key components of the information provided. Resources may include handouts, website postings, and references in student handbooks. These materials will be made available to the community on an ongoing basis and updated as necessary to maintain and ensure compliance with federal law.

All reports of hazing will be documented internally and may be included in the Seminary's Campus Hazing Transparency Report (CHTR) and Annual Safety and Security Report (ASSR) in accordance with federal requirements. Such reports summarize the organization involved, the nature of the incident, the dates, and any actions taken, without disclosing personally identifiable information. This approach ensures accountability, transparency, and institutional compliance while reinforcing the values of mutual respect and community responsibility.