

## Office of the Dean of Students

### Outcome Summary Regarding Case Number: 2021182905

A University Conduct Committee hearing was held on February 23, 2022, and March 10, 2022 to resolve alleged Code of Student Conduct policy violations brought against Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. involving unsanctioned, off-campus events that occurred in the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters at various locations that were reported to the University in fall 2021. Specifically, the hearing was held to determine if Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. at BGSU, violated these six (6) policies from the 2020-2021 BGSU Code of Student Conduct.

#### Alleged Policy Violations

**6.B.1.a. Offenses Against Persons: Harm to Others** – *Endangering, threatening, intimidating, or attempting to cause physical harm to another person, causing reasonable apprehension of such harm or engaging in conduct or communications that a reasonable person would interpret as a serious expression of intent to cause harm.*

**6.B.2.a Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – *When done intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing an individual's membership or status in a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, the Code prohibits causing, coercing, or forcing an individual to **consume any food, liquid, drug, or other substance.***

**6.B.2.b Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – *When done intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing an individual's membership or status in a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, the Code prohibits causing, coercing, or forcing an individual to **endure any act of a physical nature including, but not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, paddling, kicking, pushing, shoving, tackling, calisthenics, or exposure to the elements.***

**6.B.2.c Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – *When done intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing an individual's membership or status in a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, the Code prohibits causing, coercing, or forcing an individual to **endure any act which may adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual including, but not limited to, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact, or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment or degradation.***

**6.B.2.d Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – *When done intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing an individual's membership or status in a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, the Code prohibits **any activity which has the potential to be frightening, degrading, or unduly deceptive,***

*including deception designed to convince the individual of impending pain, injury, or non-initiation including, but not limited to, promoting servitude, berating or verbally harassing individuals, throwing items at or on individuals, forcing individuals to carry items, forcing individuals to yell when entering or departing a physical structure or in the presence of designated individuals, forcing individuals to use designated entrances or exits, requiring individuals to run personal errands, intentionally creating labor or clean-up work, and requiring individuals to wear scant clothing or to be nude.*

**6.B.2.h Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – When done intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing an individual's membership or status in a band, athletic team, club, or recognized student organization, the Code prohibits **any violation of federal, state, or local law or rule or University policy.**

### **Findings**

Utilizing the preponderance of the evidence or "more likely than not" standard, the following decisions were reached by the hearing chair following the conduct hearing for each alleged policy violation:

**6.B.1.a. Offenses Against Persons: Harm to Others** – Organization Responsible

**6.B.2.a. Offenses Against Persons: Hazing**– Organization Responsible

**6.B.2.b. Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – Organization Responsible

**6.B.2.c. Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – Organization Responsible

**6.B.2.d. Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – Organization Responsible

**6.B.2.h. Offenses Against Persons: Hazing** – Organization Responsible

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.1.a**, testimony showed that Sigma Gamma Rho endangered, threatened, intimidated, or attempted to cause physical harm to potential members. Specifically, potential members were assigned a number by which to line up to perform at "set." If a potential member incorrectly answered a question or fell behind in the "set," they were "face-swiped," which involved being slapped in the face from the forehead to the chin. At least one potential member was also hit on the arms by active members while they were lined up. Repeated hitting of one's self to leave "dark enough" bruising was required of at least one potential member. In addition, a potential member was required to consume alcohol to the point of illness. Members of the organization told at least one potential member that they would get in trouble for reporting concerning behaviors and that they would be "jumped."

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.2.a**, testimony at the hearing showed that potential members to the organization were required to consume alcohol. Carlo Rossi and Four Loco were purchased by one or more active members and provided at an off-campus residence of an active member/chapter leader on January 13, 2021. The alcohol was passed down the line of potential members, and at least one potential member became intoxicated to the point of vomiting.

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.2.b**, testimony at the hearing showed potential members endured acts of a physical hazing. Potential members were assigned a number by which they were required to line up and perform at what was referred to as "set." Some potential members were physically struck in the face by active members during "set" if they got a question wrong or fell behind in the "set." This was called "face-swiping" and involved being slapped in the face from the forehead to the chin. Active members hit at least one potential member on the arm with their hands while they were lined up in order to make them "tight" (i.e., line up very close to one another such that they were not able to be divided up). Some potential members were required to do wall sits and jumping jacks during "set." Water was squirted in the face of at least one potential member during jumping jacks during one of the "sets," which caused

difficulty breathing. At least one potential member was required to repeatedly hit herself in the leg during “set,” which left bruising. Additional hitting by one’s self was required, if the bruises were not dark enough or black.

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.2.c**, testimony showed that potential members endured acts which may adversely affect their mental health or dignity. Some potential members were required to dress similarly, including removal of prescription eyeglasses and removal of hair extensions. At least one potential member was told that they were not allowed to shower or clean themselves, which resulted in health issues. Some potential members were required to share their GPS location on their phone as well as their school and work schedules. Some potential members were required to change their passwords to the same pin so that the active members could access potential members’ phones. Active members took some potential members’ phones to delete incriminating evidence. Certain potential members were required to block interests who had dropped out of the pledging process from their phone. Multiple potential members were required to live together at the start of the spring 2021 semester.

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.2.d**, testimony showed that potential members were required to engage in activities that had the potential to be frightening, degrading, or unduly deceptive. During the fall 2020 semester some potential members would receive phone calls and text messages from the active members asking questions regarding the sorority which later transitioned into requiring multiple potential members to complete tasks or errands for active members. Some potential members were told to go to Walmart and obtain items for the active members. At least one potential member was told by an active member that if they could not afford items, they should steal them. During the fall 2020 semester a potential member received a phone call and was given a time limit to bring an active member a specific food item. At least one potential member was expected to guess what actives wanted for lunch and bring it to them. Two potential members were told they needed to purchase marijuana and one potential member was told they needed to purchase alcohol for active members. A potential member was squirted in the face with water by the actives during one of the “sets,” which caused difficulty breathing. Multiple potential members were required to record themselves reciting information about the sorority within a certain time limit. At least one potential member was told that they would get in trouble for reporting concerning behaviors and that they would be “jumped.”

In regard to the alleged policy violation under **6.B.2.h**, testimony showed that Sigma Gamma Rho violated University policy and/or state law. Acts of servitude, being required to purchase alcohol and marijuana, being physically struck, the deletion of incriminating evidence, and requiring consumption of alcohol to the point of illness, implicating University policy and state law.