

The logo for The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Dean of Students is centered on an orange background. It features the university's name in a white serif font, with "The University of Texas" on the top line, "Rio Grande Valley" on the second line, and "Dean of Students" on the third line. A horizontal line of dots separates the university name from the title.

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Dean of Students

**Dear Vaquer@s,**

UTRGV is committed to providing a safe educational environment for all members of our campus community. Because the safety of our students is our top priority, hazing in any form is strictly prohibited.

Texas law requires the university to provide all enrolled students with information on how state law and university regulations define and address hazing. In addition, under the federal [Stop Campus Hazing Act](#), universities are required to develop a [Campus Hazing Transparency Report](#) that is accessible to students, faculty, and staff.

Individuals who engage in hazing may be subject to university disciplinary action, fines, and/or criminal charges.

**Reporting Hazing:** If you are aware of hazing activities, please put the safety of our students first and either [Report It](#) online or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at (956) 882-5141 (Brownsville) or (956) 665-2260 (Edinburg). Details about how state law and university regulations define and address hazing are provided below.

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## Information About Hazing

Under Texas law, individuals or organizations engaging in hazing could be subject to fines and charged with a criminal offense.

According to the Texas Education Code, a person can commit a hazing offense not only by engaging in a hazing activity, but also by soliciting, directing, encouraging, aiding or attempting to aid another in hazing; by intentionally, knowingly or recklessly allowing hazing to occur; or by failing to report in writing to the Dean of Students, firsthand knowledge that a hazing incident is planned or has occurred. The fact that a person consented to or acquiesced in a hazing activity is not a defense to prosecution for hazing under this law.

In an effort to encourage reporting of hazing incidents, the law grants **immunity** from civil or criminal liability to any person who reports a specific hazing event in good faith to the Dean of Students or other appropriate official of the institution and immunizes that person from participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from that report. Individuals and organizations can be prosecuted for a hazing offense. A hazing offense without injury and failure to report a past or planned hazing incident are Class B misdemeanors and individuals are punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000, up to 180 days in jail, or both. A hazing offense that

causes serious bodily injury to another is a Class A misdemeanor and individuals are punishable by a fine of up to \$4,000, up to one year in jail, or both. Hazing that results in the death of another is a state jail felony and individuals are punishable by no less than 180 days and up to two years in a state jail, and a fine of up to \$10,000. Organizations involved in a hazing offense are punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 when there is no injury and up to double the amount lost or expenses incurred because of an injury, damage, or loss. In addition to criminal penalties, students and student organizations may face disciplinary penalties imposed by the university.

## **Hazing Defined**

[Texas law](#) and University policy define hazing as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.

Hazing includes but is not limited to:

1. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity;
2. Involves sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other similar activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
3. Involves consumption of food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
4. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task which involves a violation of the Penal Code.
5. Involves coercing the student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage or liquor in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the student is intoxicated.

## **University Disciplinary Rules**

The law does not affect or in any way restrict the right of the University to enforce its own rules against hazing. The UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures, Policy Number STU 02-100 on Student Conduct and Discipline provides that

1. Hazing with or without the consent of the student whether on or off campus is prohibited, and a violation of that prohibition renders both the person inflicting the hazing and the person submitting to the hazing subject to discipline. Knowingly failing to report hazing may also subject one to discipline.
2. Initiations or activities by organizations may include no feature which is dangerous, harmful, or degrading to the student and a violation of this prohibition renders both the organization and participating individuals subject to discipline.

## **Penalized Organizations**

Texas Education Code, Section 51.936(c), requires that, no later than the 14th day before the first class day of each fall or spring semester, universities provide each enrolled student a summary of the provisions of Subchapter F, Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code and a

report that summarizes hazing offenses committed on or off campus by university-registered or recognized organizations during the three years preceding the date of the report.

- UTRGV found no organization responsible for hazing in the past three years as of the date of this report.

If an organization is found responsible for hazing, the following details will be published in the [Campus Hazing Transparency Report](#), available at [utrgv.edu/hazing](http://utrgv.edu/hazing):

- Name of the student organization.
- Dates of the incident, start of the investigation, determination of investigation, and notification of outcome.
- A general description of the violation.
- Whether hazing involved the abuse or illegal use of alcohol or drugs.
- Student code violations and/or criminal charges.
- Findings and rationale for the determination.
- Sanctions imposed.

For additional information or clarification of probationary member activities, contact the **Office of the Dean of Students**.



Ismael Amaya  
Dean of Students

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**Do you have comments or questions? Your feedback is important to us. Email us at [dos@utrgv.edu](mailto:dos@utrgv.edu) or call us at (956) 665-2260.**

**[UTRGV.EDU/STUDENTLIFE](http://UTRGV.EDU/STUDENTLIFE)**

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