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July 5, 2024

Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity  
Sent electronically to ethanda@bgsu.edu

**PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Please print or save a copy for your records.

Regarding Case Number: 2023384301

Dear Chapter President:

This letter confirms the outcome of the Administrative Hearing that occurred on June 21, 2024.

Consistent with BGSU's Code of Student Conduct, Lambda Chi Alpha ("Lambda Chi Alpha" or "the chapter") was provided prior written notice of the hearing date and time. The chapter submitted materials which, when determined to be relevant, were included within the hearing packet, and was accompanied by an advisor of its choosing. During the hearing, Lambda Chi Alpha was given the opportunity to call witnesses and ask questions of the investigator and all witnesses. As such, all procedural regularities were complied with, and a verbatim record of this hearing was made.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

On May 31, 2024, Carly Snyder, Coordinator for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution sent a letter notifying you that she had conducted an investigation into whether Lambda Chi Alpha, a fraternity and recognized student organization, engaged in pre-initiation/initiation activities and participated in St. Patrick's Day parties in a manner that violated the BGSU Code of Student Conduct. Ms. Snyder determined there was sufficient justification to proceed with the following four alleged Code of Conduct violations:

- **G.2.f.iii.a. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing** Per University Policy 3341-2-49, purposefully, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently hazing any person.
- **G.2.f.iii.b. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing** Per University Policy 3341-2-49, involvement in the planning of hazing and/or being present during hazing.

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- **G.4.b.ii. Offenses Disrupting Order or Disregarding Health and Safety - Furnishing Alcohol** Sell, distribute, furnish, produce and/or offer for sale except as expressly permitted by law.
- **G.4.b.iv. Offenses Disrupting Order or Disregarding Health and Safety - Organization Alcohol** Failure of a recognized student organization or student group to take all necessary steps to ensure that no person under the legal drinking age possesses alcoholic beverages at functions it sponsors or within any property or transportation it owns, operates, and/or rents.

The May 31, 2024, letter outlined the chapter's options to resolve these violations associated with the above case number. In a June 4, 2024 email you sent on behalf of Lambda Chi Alpha to Ms. Snyder you stated that Lambda Chi Alpha was *accepting responsibility* for the following violations:

- **G.4.b.ii. Offenses Disrupting Order or Disregarding Health and Safety - Furnishing Alcohol** Sell, distribute, furnish, produce and/or offer for sale except as expressly permitted by law.
- **G.4.b.iv. Offenses Disrupting Order or Disregarding Health and Safety - Organization Alcohol** Failure of a recognized student organization or student group to take all necessary steps to ensure that no person under the legal drinking age possesses alcoholic beverages at functions it sponsors or within any property or transportation it owns, operates, and/or rents.

However, you requested a *formal hearing* to resolve the following alleged violations:

- **G.2.f.iii.a. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing** Per University Policy 3341-2-49, purposefully, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently hazing any person.
- **G.2.f.iii.b. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing** Per University Policy 3341-2-49, involvement in the planning of hazing and/or being present during hazing.

## FINDINGS

After careful consideration of all relevant information, including the final hearing packet, witness testimony, and the information provided during the June 21, 2024, hearing, I, using the preponderance of the evidence standard, have made the following determination of responsibility:

- G.2.f.iii.a. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing Per University Policy 3341-2-49, purposefully, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently hazing any person. - **Responsible**
- G.2.f.iii.b. Offenses Against Persons - Hazing Per University Policy 3341-2-49, involvement in the planning of hazing and/or being present during hazing. - **Responsible**

Specifically, regarding the finding of responsibility for violating sections G.2.f.iii.a and G.2.f.iii.b of the Code of Student Conduct, I have made the following factual findings:

## **The Black Sheep/White Sheep Tradition**

- During the hearing, and in the hearing packet materials you submitted, you stated that the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition was introduced to the fraternity in 2015 or 2016.
- As part of Ms. Snyder's investigation, Lambda Chi Alpha national headquarters confirmed this activity is not a sanctioned tradition.
- You described that this tradition historically began in the weeks leading up to initiation, and acknowledged that when you were an associate member, active members would refer to the associate members as "black sheep" or "white sheep." You confirmed you were not told the significance of what this meant but assumed it was related to initiation. In the hearing packet materials, you stated that these statements were made to build up suspense and admitted that "[t]here is no doubt in [your] mind that this [was] hazing." Although you stated you believed this was done on an "individual" and not "organization" level – your testimony that in Spring 2023 Lambda Chi Alpha reviewed how it carried out its traditions, stopped making those comments as they were unnecessary, and limited the tradition to the night before initiation, establishes that these actions were organizational acts. These actions were not previously reported to BSGU, were not investigated in 2022, and Lambda Chi Alpha was never previously sanctioned for engaging in these activities. The Code of Student Conduct specifically states that "[t]here is no time limit on reporting violations of the Code." As such, Lambda Chi Alpha may be found responsible and sanctioned for admittedly having engaged in hazing in 2023.
- During the hearing, you confirmed that the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition occurred each semester, as recently as Spring 2024, and is always the night before initiation. You further admitted that all pre-initiation activities, including the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition, painting Zeta numbers on the Spirit Rock, and the candle passing ceremony, were all connected to or associated with initiation.
- You specifically described both during the investigation and at the hearing that during this tradition associate members come out of the chapter house, onto the back porch, and are instructed to face the house for, based on your experience, about two minutes. Associate members are then told to turn around. That is when they begin to chase the two members wearing the sheep heads and where associate members can choose between the Black Sheep path, which was shorter but harder, or the White Sheep path, which was longer but easier.
- It was also confirmed during this hearing that while both active and associate members run to the rock, it is only associate members who line up and face the house until they are instructed to turn around and begin running.
- While you stated that the associate members receive instructions from the Ritual Chair, you shared that associate members are not specifically told about the significance of the tradition, nor about the "Black Sheep" vs. "White Sheep" paths and their meaning. In fact, you shared there is no real significance to this tradition, or the use of sheep, as it relates to Lambda Chi Alpha.
- During the hearing, you also confirmed that you have witnessed associate members tackle the active member wearing the sheep head. When asked why tackling would take

place you stated, “I guess they were just told to chase the sheep” and further explained, “like I said I was a little confused during the event, and I just started chasing some of the active members as well as the sheep. I guess the reason that sometimes they were tackled is just because they don't really know what to do. They just are chasing people. I guess I don't know if they're specifically told to chase the sheep.” Your comments, that associate members are not provided any context before engaging in this activity, establish that a reasonable person may view this tradition to be frightening, intimidating, or deceptive.

- Next, you stated that during the spring 2024 Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition, you and George Cronk (member as of fall 2023) both wore sheep heads and “went outside a couple of minutes early and the reason is because [you both] took a route around the outside of the village, so that nobody saw [you] out the windows.”
- You also stated that you have participated in the tradition of wearing a sheep head every semester during your time in the fraternity and that the sheep heads are kept in the on-campus chapter house. During the hearing, you also confirmed that this tradition was a mandatory event and that the member serving in the Ritual Chair position facilitates the activity.
- While you stated that there were no discussions regarding the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition during chapter meetings, and that this longstanding activity was not planned, I do not find your testimony credible. Specifically, you stated that in spring 2024 it was not decided that two members would put on sheep heads until right before the activity began and that this activity has nothing to do with initiation. However, you described that the Ritual Chair needed to get the sheep masks out of the ritual closet before you could wear them. The fact that the decision was made to tell the Ritual Chair to provide you the masks, that you wore them, and had to stand out past the chapter house, waiting to be chased, itself establishes some discussion occurred and the night's events were planned. In fact, Lambda Chi Alpha's witness, and member, Michael Hackman admitted to participating in and helping plan the tradition in the past by telling members when to show up.
- Furthermore, during the hearing, the former chapter advisor, Joe Swary, confirmed that during the March 17, 2024, chapter meeting the Ritualist discussed the final event of pre-initiation as being the Rock and Candle Pass. It was confirmed during this hearing that The Rock and Candle Pass event was the same event in which the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition occurred, which took place on March 22, 2024. Mr. Swary confirmed that the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition was never discussed during chapter meetings. However, Mr. Swary admitted that he attended the chapter meetings via Zoom, and as such, it is possible that conversations occurred after he logged off. The fact that Lambda Chi Alpha shared with Mr. Swary, during the chapter meeting, that some traditions would occur, but specifically left out the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition, suggests that Lambda Chi Alpha engaged in deception to continue a tradition which was not approved, nor disclosed, to nationals, and which Mr. Swary stated he would have shut down, had he known.
- Lambda Chi Alpha's prior determination letter dated July 1, 2022, was included as part of the hearing packet. Although this letter and Lambda Chi Alpha's prior conduct was not used to determine responsibility for these charges, there was relevant evidence presented that Lambda Chi Alpha further engaged in deception by failing to report information to BGSU. While the chapter was on deferred suspension (which the chapter

still was on as of the spring 2024 semester), they were required to have all recruitment and associate member process plans, including their educational sessions, events, and activities approved by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. All Chapter events, functions, social events with alcohol, activities, and business operations were required to be registered with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Finally, the chapter's executive board was required to conduct an associate member education audit of activities to identify events that the chapter wants to keep and discard. This plan was to be submitted and approved by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and Lambda Chi Alpha's national headquarters. During the hearing, you shared that the Black Sheep/White Sheep was not part of any plan submitted to BGSU or Lambda Chi Alpha national headquarters. While you could not provide a reason for this omission, it further establishes a pattern of deception.

- The statements provided during the hearing establish that aspects of the March 22, 2024, event were discussed (i.e., painting of the rock and the candle pass) during chapter meetings, but the longstanding tradition of Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition was not discussed with associate members. A reasonable person would view this as deception, as associate members were only told aspects of what the March 22, 2024, pre-initiation event would include during the March 17, 2024, chapter meeting.

Based upon these findings, it is more likely than not that the Black Sheep/White Sheep is a longstanding tradition of Lambda Chi Alpha, having occurred since 2015-2016. This occurs as part of Lambda Chi Alpha's pre-initiation activities, and as you admitted that pre-initiation is connected to initiation, it is done for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating an individual into or with a student group.

Although it was stated that it was unclear whether the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition would occur in Spring 2024 you admitted it has occurred every semester in which you have been a member and that it always occurs on the same night, the night before initiation. In fact, you admitted that the chapter engaged in hazing activities related to this event until at least Spring 2023, and thereafter took steps to change how you carried out the activity.

Further, your pattern of participation by wearing a sheep over the course of multiple semesters, the statement of Mr. Hackman that he previously participated and helped plan the ritual, and the decision to instruct the Ritual Chair to retrieve the masks which you and Mr. Cronk wore during the Spring 2024 pre-initiation, establishes that the Black Sheep/White Sheep is a tradition planned and facilitated by those who hold leadership roles and positions in the fraternity (i.e., president and the Ritual Chair/Ritualists). As the described activity was to perpetuate or further a BGSU Lambda Chi Alpha tradition, it is more likely than not that the chapter was involved in the planning and coordination of hazing.

In addition to Black Sheep/White Sheep being directly tied to initiation, it is more likely than not that this activity is a tradition a reasonable person would view as frightening, humiliating, intimidating, or deceptive. Specifically, during this tradition, associate members are told to face the wall upon being escorted outside the chapter house, were given no instructions, and were deceived about what pre-initiation activities would occur. This has led to chaos and physical contact.

The admission that Lambda Chi Alpha understood what they did through the Spring 2023 semester was hazing, and the fact that they appear to have purposefully omitted reference to the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition in documents provided to, and conversations with, their advisor, nationals, and BGSU's Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, while making them aware of other traditions, establishes that it is more likely than not that Lambda Chi Alpha purposefully, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently hazed various members.

### **The Culture of “Zeta-ing”**

- During the hearing, you stated that being “zeta-ed” was a practice that once required younger members to engage in acts of servitude that older members required them to do, but that overtime being “zeta-ed” has come to be used in a joking, lighthearted manner among active members.
- You stated that you believe members stopped being “seriously” “zeta-ed” during the spring 2023 semester as the culture of the fraternity began to shift, and that the use of “zeta” in this manner was a “toxic culture activity.” Again, the Code of Student Conduct has “no time limit on reporting violations of the Code.” Because Lambda Chi Alpha was not previously charged with, found responsible, or sanctioned for this activity, they may now be found responsible for admitting to engaging in a “toxic” activity which promoted personal servitude, and would be humiliating, and intimidating to a reasonable person.
- You stated that current members knew being “zeta-ed” was a joke, and that there were no consequences associated with not completing the act of servitude. In support of this argument, you shared that it was previously announced by the former chapter president at a chapter meeting that members did not need to perform a task if they were “zeta-ed” and that members would intervene and instruct the member being “zeta-ed” not to complete the act of servitude. However, if members truly understood that the calling of “zeta” was a “joke” there would be no need to instruct members they did not need to perform a task nor for members to have to intervene to stop the acts of servitude from occurring. Rather, based on the information gathered during the hearing it would be reasonable for members, including associate members, to believe there was intention behind the use of “zeta” and that they must perform the task.
- Moreover, your testimony during the hearing and the information you submitted as a part of the hearing packet materials stated that no member of the spring 2024 associate member class was ever “zeta-ed.” You argued that if someone was jokingly “zeta-ed” it was from active member to active member because associate members do not receive their zeta number until they are initiated. However, you acknowledged that the Code of Student Conduct and the BGSU Anti-Hazing Policy apply to all students, and thus does not differentiate conduct, including hazing, between active to associate members and active members to active members. The BGSU policies pertaining to hazing includes behavior that occurs between active and active members, and in this case, it is the persistent culture of “zeta-ing” within the chapter that causes or pressures members to engage in this behavior in order to either enhance their membership and/or further a tradition or ritual of Lambda Chi Alpha. During the hearing, you confirmed that “zeta-ing” members was a tradition of the chapter through at least the spring 2023 semester. However, other witnesses confirmed that it has continued through the spring 2024 semester.
- Despite your claims, various witness statements during the hearing established that your

statements regarding being “zeta-ed” were not credible. Connor McNamara, (associate member during the spring 2024 semester), stated during the hearing that he witnessed an active member “zeta” a spring 2024 associate member when Mr. McNamara heard the active member tell the associate member, “Zeta, get out of the chair” while at the on-campus chapter house. Mr. McNamara stated that other members instructed the associate member not to give up his seat and while the associate member stood up, he did not end up giving up his seat to complete the “zeta” as other members intervened and told him that he did not need to do so. Mr. McNamara explained that he felt the use of “zeta-ing” was a joke that no one took seriously, but also stated he understood the practice of “zeta-ing” to be about the power associated with being an older member.

- Based off Mr. McNamara’s testimony, the associate member referenced above who was told to give up his seat did take the “zeta-ing” seriously until other members intervened. As such, it is reasonable to believe that if certain members were not present to intervene, a member may follow through and complete the requested act/errand.
- Additionally, in the written witness statement that was included in the chapter’s hearing packet, D’ Artagnan Tapler (spring 2024 associate member) stated, “I’ve never seen anyone zeta anyone for something serious...” confirming that during his time as an associate member in spring 2024, he has witnessed the practice of “zeta-ing.” This further establishes a credibility issue regarding your statements. Mr. Tapler’s statement is also of note as it implies that the use of “zeta-ing” that he witnessed was not as a result of serious infractions. This contradicts your assertion that members know that the use of “zeta” is a “joke” and that they do not perform the requested act.
- During the hearing, Chase Heissner, (associate member during the spring 2024 semester) stated that he was present when a member said to another member “zeta, give me 50 pushups.” Mr. Heissner did not recall who the specific members were; however, stated that when this would happen “they [Lambda Chi Alpha members] would jokingly act it out, then they probably do like a handful of pushups and then just stop. A lot of the times though, when that would happen, they would be like, “ha-ha, I’m not doing it”, also indicating that this was not a one-time occurrence. Mr. Heissner’s witness statements further support the fact that your statements regarding “zeta-ing” were not credible and that it is more likely than not, members did in fact, at times, carry out what they were instructed to do after being “zeta-ed” and that both associate and active members understood its meaning.
- Furthermore, active members, Parker Marsh (joined fall 2023), Steven Kocab (joined fall 2021), and Michael Hackman (joined fall 2021) all stated during the hearing that they had witnessed and/or have been “zeta-ed” during their time in the fraternity.
- Various active and associate members stated during the investigation that “zeta” was used to have people do “minor things” such as retrieve a sweatshirt or a beer, cut in line, or move seats. These statements support the credibility of the witnesses' statements, and further establish that your statements were not credible.
- Moreover, your statement that you were present during a chapter meeting when a former Lambda Chi Alpha president instructed members not to listen to the directive if they were “zeta-ed,” establishes that the culture of “zeta-ing” was pervasive throughout Lambda Chi Alpha over the last several semesters. However, no individual member was reported to Bowling Green State University nor held responsible by the fraternity

through the chapter standards board. Instead of holding members accountable for engaging in this “toxic culture activity” the chapter relied on members, including associate members, to resist pressure and not perform tasks, or on other members to intervene. This lack of meaningful action has led to the continued use of “zeta” throughout the chapter and, at least, had recklessly and/or negligently contributed to the hazing of various Lambda Chi Alpha members.

Based upon the foregoing, it is more likely than not that Lambda Chi Alpha purposefully, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently hazed their members by continuing the “zeta” tradition. Acts of a physical nature (i.e., pushups) promoting acts of servitude/requiring individuals to complete personal errands (i.e., being required to give up one’s seat, retrieving a beer, etc.) are activities that a reasonable person would view as frightening, intimidating or humiliating. While in your hearing statement, you claim to have “improved upon what using this term used to mean” the pervasive practice of “zeta-ing” within the chapter falls under the BGSU’s definition of hazing.

### **Car Ride to Initiation**

- During the hearing, Connor McNamara (spring 2024 associate member) confirmed during his witness statement that the Crazy Farm Song by Happy Learning and sheep noises were played during the drive to initiation. Mr. McNamara also confirmed that he was told not to speak during the car ride to initiation. Mr. McNamara confirmed that no context was provided about why this song or unusual noises such as sheep sounds were playing nor why he could not speak during the drive to initiation.
- During the investigation, active member Alejandro Alvarez also shared that in the past, on the way to initiation, active members have told associate members not to speak because it was supposed to be serious on the way to initiation. This establishes a continued tradition, and planning, of the conduct which occurred within the car ride to initiation.
- Joe Rager (spring 2024 associate member) submitted a statement and acknowledged that he had an “uneasy feeling” which came from “not knowing what to expect.” During the investigation, Ms. Carly Snyder reported that associate members referred to the music/sounds as “eerie” and a little “intimidating.”
- While I considered the hearing testimony of Chase Heissner (spring 2024 associate member), who rode in a separate vehicle from Mr. McNamara, I do not find that Mr. Heissner is a credible witness concerning his statements related to the car ride to initiation.
  - During the hearing, Mr. Heissner confirmed that during two separate interviews with Conduct Administrator, Carly Snyder, he reported to Ms. Snyder that the Crazy Farm Song by Happy Learning was played in the vehicle during the drive to Lambda Chi Alpha's initiation that took place on March 23, 2024. Mr. Heissner later stated he was confused about whether it was played on the drive to initiation or leaving initiation. Despite this, during the hearing Mr. Heissner denied the Crazy Farm Song was played at any point to or from the drive to initiation. Mr. Heissner stated that he remembered incorrectly during his interviews with Ms. Snyder on April 5, 2024, and June 12, 2024. Mr. Heissner



noted that he had come to realize he heard the Crazy Farm Song the night before initiation in his residence hall, when his roommate, George Cronk an active member of Lambda Chi Alpha, played this song for him with no connection to the fraternity or the fraternity associate member/initiation process, as the two often play funny songs for each other. Mr. Heissner stated that after obtaining clarification from his roommate (Mr. Cronk), he realized he mistakenly reported to Ms. Snyder that the song was played during the drive to or from initiation. However, during the hearing, Ms. Snyder confirmed that during the investigation George Cronk told her he had never heard of the Crazy Farm Song.

- Likewise, while I considered the witness statements from Steven Kocab and Michael Hackman, two active members who drove with Mr. Heissner. Given Mr. Heissner's prior admission that the song was played during the car to initiation, and the credibility issues I've outlined above, I found Mr. Kocab and Mr. Hackman's witness statements not credible.
- Furthermore, during the hearing, Parker Marsh's (member as of fall 2023) confirmed that sheep noises were played in past semesters during the drive to initiation as well. Mr. Marsh said that he believes the sheep sounds are meant to tie back to the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition that occurs the night before initiation.

Based upon the foregoing, the relevant, credible information establishes that the Crazy Farm Song and/or sheep noises were played in two out of the three vehicles which drove associate members to initiation. Further, at least one associate member was told not to speak, which was an instruction provided to past associate members on the way to initiation. This indicates there was some planning and collaboration as to what materials were played for associate members on the drive as well as what associate members could or could not do during the drive. Given that no context was provided to associate members about why the song/noises were played, the song/sounds connection to the Black Sheep/White Sheep tradition, and as an associate member was instructed not to speak, it is more likely than not that a reasonable person would view this conduct as frightening, humiliating, intimidating, or deceptive and for the purpose of perpetuating or furthering a tradition within Lambda Chi Alpha. As such this activity falls under BGSU's definition of hazing and would violate both sections G.2.f.iii.a. and G.2.f.iii.b.

### **Additional Concerning Conduct:**

During this investigation, various Lambda Chi Alpha active and associate members described certain aspects of their initiation process. Specifically, they shared that throughout their initiation, associate members were blindfolded and led from room to room. They further described participating in a "coffin ritual." As part of this ritual, an associate member shared that he was blindfolded, picked up by two individuals, and placed into a coffin. After a song was played, the associate member was then lifted out by two people and his blindfold was removed. Associate members confirmed that they were not given any prior explanation or warning that someone was going to be picked up and placed into the coffin. Lambda Chi Alpha's national headquarters confirmed that this is a

sanctioned ritual, and in fact suggested that as part of the ritual, the associate members hands may be tied, and a lid may be placed on top of the coffin.

This conduct was not considered as part of the hearing, this decision, the finding of responsibility, nor in determining a sanction. However, BGSU does not tolerate, condone, or sanction this activity. As carried out, this conduct may violate both the Code of Student Conduct and BGSU's *Anti-Hazing Policy* which defines hazing to include "[a]ctivities that a reasonable person would view to be frightening, humiliating, intimidating, or deceptive... such as ... blindfolding" as well as "[a]cts of a physical nature such as ... bondage."

During the hearing, you shared that Lambda Chi Alpha is not required to follow or complete all sanctioned rituals. Lambda Chi Alpha is encouraged to reconsider its use of this ritual, in the future, and consult with its headquarters to determine if it can be altered in a manner which would comply with BGSU's policies and state law.

**CONCLUSION:**

Based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, I have determined that Lambda Chi Alpha is responsible for violating Code of Student Conduct sections G.2.f.iii.a. and G.2.f.iii.b., by engaging in the conduct/activities described above. Further, Lambda Chi Alpha has previously accepted responsibility for violating Code of Student Conduct sections G.4.b.ii. and G.4.b.iv.

A separate letter outlining the sanctions as well as appeal rights will be sent to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Campbell-Jacobs", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Blaze Campbell-Jacobs

Assistant Dean of Students for Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

CC: Stacey Allan, Associate Director, Student Engagement  
Zach Rodgers, Health and Wellness Manager, Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity  
Mark Vinciguerra, Chapter Advisor

