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October 19, 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU PLACES FRATERNITY ON SIX MONTHS PROBATION

CHARLESTON, IL--Following an investigation into allegations of alcohol-related student hazing by members of the Eastern Illinois University Zeta Gamma Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, the university has placed the fraternity on probation for six months and imposed sanctions against its members.

Eastern's Office of Student Activities placed the fraternity on probation after the investigation concluded that the fraternity was in violation of the university hazing policy as stated in the Student Conduct Code and Recognized Student Organization Handbook.

University policy prohibits hazing of prospective members during unauthorized membership selection and pledge activities.

The university defines hazing as "any act or action taken, however communicated, involving or resulting in abusive physical contact or mental harassment to a member or prospective member, whether on or off the organization/fraternity/sorority premises, campus or place where chapters or prospective members meet, designed to or the result of which is to produce excessive mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment or harassment."

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While the chapter president can appeal the university's decision to place the fraternity on probation, EIU Director of Student Activities David Milberg said an appeal is unlikely in this case.

Hazing violations by Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity were brought to the attention of the Office of Student Activities on Sept. 30 by a member of the university's housing staff.

The university's investigation centered around a Sept. 29 Pi Kappa Alpha function, "Big Brothers Night," an alcoholic social event where pledges were teamed up with initiates. One specific situation resulted in a pledge being hospitalized with a blood alcohol level of .22, which exceeds the legal limit of .10.

University officials concluded that the fraternity violated the hazing policy for all Recognized Student Organizations in regard to 1) mentally abusing pledges; 2) encouraging or forcing the use of alcohol; 3) promoting activity that would endanger a prospective member or others; 4) demeaning prospective members; and 5) violating the state's legal drinking age.

Milberg said, "While the university regrets imposing sanctions on any student organization, it cannot tolerate hazing by members or prospective members."

The university has forwarded its findings and sanctions on the local chapter to the national chapter's executive director for appropriate action and followup.

During the fraternity's probationary period, the chapter may

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not sponsor or co-sponsor any alcoholic social function on any premises/property (sponsorship refers to financial support or organizational effort); is required to initiate its new members no later than Nov. 12 and shall work with the general fraternity's headquarters to achieve this goal; shall sponsor a team-building program/retreat for all members of Pi Kappa Alpha; and shall work with the general fraternity's headquarters to establish a local advisory board that will be active with the chapter and attend meetings/events on a regular basis.

The fraternity has cooperated fully with the university's investigation and has been "proactive" by imposing its own restrictions and sanctions against all "big brothers" involved in making "Big Brother Night" an event with alcohol as the focus.

In addition, the fraternity has recommended that those involved be placed on the fraternity's prescribed probationary status for one year, which restricts them from participating in any social functions and requires them to complete community service work.

The university sanctions will be in effect until March 15, 1994. A progress review will be conducted by the Office of Student Activities at the close of the 1993 Fall Semester.

Any significant violation of the Student Conduct Code or the hazing policy while in a probationary status will likely result in the immediate suspension of the chapter by the university, as will violations of the terms of the probationary status.

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PI KAPPA ALPHA

Upon satisfactory completion of the terms of the probation, the fraternity will be restored to "good standing" by the university.

The Zeta Gamma Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity, founded in 1964, is located in the university's Greek Court and has approximately 115 members.