Hazing and Crime

A primary goal of the GRB is to help our campus organizations spot emerging trends. After all, you have to know your risks to be able to do something about the risks. One trend at the top of the list is the renewed interest of prosecutors to treat hazing not just as a school conduct violation, but as a crime.

A recent example involves the death of a student at Baruch College. A group of fraternity members rented a home in a vacation area. Pledges were allegedly given weighted backpacks, blindfolded, and told to find their way across the lawn to another member without being tackled. A pledge named Michael suffered a fatal head injury after being shoved by another member. Initial reports indicate that the other fraternity members may have searched for web information on his symptoms, delaying the trip to the hospital.

Police developed a case from numerous sources: witnesses, cell phone videos, photos, and panicked communications among the members who may have tried to hide evidence. Criminal charges are expected.

It’s likely that no one intended for Michael to die. However, consequences can be unintended. And, when death or serious injury occurs in the process of a crime like hazing, serious charges will follow. Our campuses and your nationals take a strong stand against hazing. What are you doing to support that stance? Don’t be a defendant, be a brother or sister.