

# Reports of Hazing Prompt 'Time Out' at Prairie View A&M

Contributed by Ryan Rudd -- Black College Wire  
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Recent death of a student raises questions

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In response to the recent events that have taken place on the Prairie View A&M campus, President George C. Wright has placed a moratorium, or temporary hold, on new membership intake processes involving all organizations on campus. Over the course of the past week there have been a number of questions surrounding the death of Donnie Wade on Oct. 20. Some university officials have suspected that the circumstances surrounding Wade's death might be linked to inappropriate acts that are in violation of the university's code of conduct. According to recent reports, Wade's early morning run was part of a process he was being forced to participate in while attempting to join an organization.

The university is using this opportunity to review its policies and procedures related to membership intake to make sure it is doing everything feasible to protect the students.

Wright said, "In a meeting that took place earlier this summer, I pleaded with all the organizations to make certain they follow all procedures when conducting the induction process. I feel as if students haven't complied with my request, because they have chosen to beat around the bush while involving themselves in inappropriate actions." According to Wright, the Organization Review Board (ORB), made the moratorium decision based upon several critical factors. First, the university thinks that many students don't see actions that surround hazing as wrong. Secondly, the university thinks that students have created a code of silence against actions of wrongdoing, called "no snitching." The third factor surrounding the board's decision was based on a personal concern of the university president.

Wright explained, "I am in my seventh year as president here at Prairie View, and in each of 12 semesters I've spent here, there has been a complaint or a report made about hazing or inappropriate behavior. We made this decision to ensure that students know how to police themselves when doing extracurricular activities. I'm all for student organizations, if their membership processes are done accordingly."

According to Wright, Wade's death hasn't been the only incident surrounding hazing. At the first home football game last year, the band was inactive due to an investigation related to hazing. Shortly after, eight young women in the band, including one who suffered a concussion, were allegedly hazed by four of their superiors in the band. Months later, Wright said, he received a phone call from a student's parent making a claim that her child had bruises on his body from hazing by members of an organization he was aspiring to join.

Dr. Laurretta F. Byars, vice president for institutional relations and public services, said, "Over the past two semesters, we've had a number of incidents surrounding hazing that have been investigated. That led us to believe that despite all of the efforts that we put in place, we needed to review our policies and procedures to make sure they are effective and that students will abide by them."

With the indefinite hold placed on new member inductions into student organizations, it seems as if there won't be a probate show this fall. However, the hold is not limited to Greek organizations on campus. In fact, due to the recent decision made by the university, Beta Gamma Sigma a non-Greek organization had to cancel its honor society induction ceremony which was scheduled for Oct. 28.

Brandon Green, an LCM from building 43 and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., said, "Our main objective is to assist young men in becoming positive role models. I feel by suspending Greek life on campus, the university is taking away the heritage of our campus and also destroying one of the main attractions of our campus as far as student activities are concerned."

Sheleah Hughes, director of public relations, said, "Seeing how less than five percent of students are involved in MIP related organizations, I don't think that it will affect the student body much. I hope that this will affect how those who are in Greek organizations and those who strive to be in Greek organizations feel about the pledging process. I feel as if they need to reinvent themselves and form positive structures."

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Ryan Rudd writes for The Panther, the Prairie View A&M University student newspaper, which originally published this article.