

Bowie State University Summary of Report Findings

Summary

Between the dates of October 13 and November 1, 2018, Bowie State University (BSU) received two (2) separate reports that community members were accosted following encounters with the University Symphony of Soul (“SOS”) Marching Band. The evidence supports a finding that hazing, as defined by the BSU policy, is a prevalent part of the activity that students have engaged in during their membership with the SOS Marching Band. Evidence uncovered to date indicates that band administrators were aware, at least in part, of the information leading to the current findings.

The investigators were assigned to collect and review evidence and provide findings in three (3) different categories:

- Hazing as Misconduct of Registered Student Groups – INVESTIGATION COMPLETED
- Student Conduct violations (hazing and non-hazing assault and battery) – INVESTIGATION COMPLETED with the exception of allegations of paddling
- Administrator knowledge of ongoing activity – INVESTIGATION COMPLETED

Method of Investigation:

- Investigators met with students and administrators to conduct interviews. Investigators collected and reviewed evidence based on the interviews conducted, reviewed the SOS Band Constitution, and reviewed all other relevant documents, video evidence, written communication, and other materials.
- Preliminary interviews were conducted of 22 students and Dr. Adolph E. Wright, Director of University Bands between November 2 and November 6, 2018. Those interviews utilized a single investigator model.
- The interviews conducted upon establishment of the credibility of the underlying claim between November 7, 2018 and November 27, 2018 were conducted using the dual investigator model in which two individuals sat in to take notes of each individual interviewed. Individuals interviewed beginning November 8, 2018 signed an Acknowledgement of Policy Review and Confidentiality.

Summary of Findings

- The evidence supports a finding that there have been incidents of hazing that constitute violations of the BSU Policy on Hazing and the BSU Student Code of Conduct.
- The Policy on Hazing states that the university considers hazing as, “[A]ny action taken, or situation created intentionally to produce physical or mental discomfort,

embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.”

- The evidence uncovered to date indicates that administration of the band is aware, at least in part, of the information leading to the current findings.
- The “Symphony of Soul” band has an unauthorized Constitution that prescribes physical discipline for conduct infractions, requires students new to the band to do certain acts of service for other band members, and further delineates differences in conduct and consequences for those new members. This violates the BSU Student Code of Conduct definition of hazing, which forbids any action taken or situation created intentionally to produce physical discomfort, and requiring any personal servitude, as examples of prohibited conduct. The university reserves the right to take action against a student group for conduct prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct. Such acts of misconduct by students engaged in organized activities of student groups ...whether committed on or off campus, are subject to disciplinary action.
- The university has determined that it is the best interest of the current members of the band and the overall program to place the band on probation for one year. During this period, any performances will be limited and subject to strict conditions and monitoring.
- The university will move forward to revitalize the band program with new administrative leadership and enhanced education and training.