

I notice ~~that~~ the Humboldt State University men's soccer team had its season suspended for engaging in hazing at a recent ~~off-campus~~ party. The women's team too is being investigated ~~for~~ hazing. It is kind of sad for the players who will not be allowed to play soccer this season—especially seniors. But then, hazing has reached absurd levels of late, and the ~~dangerous~~ rituals of humiliation should not be tolerated, not by sports teams or any other groups at any University. <sup>entire</sup>

Well, ~~what~~ what's so bad about hazing? the word sounds innocuous; almost like we're describing a windless day in smoggy Southern California. But let us not equivocate: dictionaries ~~almost~~ <sup>scarcely</sup> capture the force of the verb "to haze" <sup>by</sup> defining it as: "to subject newcomers or initiates to pranks and humiliating horseplay by imposing disagreeable tasks." *That's the polite definition.*

In a Rolling Stone article published a few months ago, Andrew Lohse: infamously blew the whistle on Dartmouth University hazing: I'll warn you, the following quote is graphic, ~~and I can't~~ <sup>not polite.</sup> 'I was a member of a fraternity that asked pledges, in order to become a brother, to: swim in a kiddie pool full of vomit, urine, fecal matter, semen and rotten food products; eat omelets made of vomit; chug cups of vinegar, which in one case caused a pledge to vomit blood; drink beers poured down fellow pledges' ass... ; and vomit on other pledges, among other abuses. Certainly, pledges could have refused these orders. However, under extreme peer pressure and the desire to "be a brother," most acquiesced.'

An HSU administrator said she was 'stunned and saddened' to hear about hazing at HSU. I am saddened, but not stunned, because I agree with Mr. Lohse's conclusion <sup>of</sup> that the hazing per se is not ~~really~~ <sup>core of</sup> the problem: it is rather the culture of nihilism found at many of today's universities. Nihilism is the doctrine that there is no such thing as knowledge or truth; nihilism therefore tends to disparage traditional values, principles and a sense of common decency. Since traditional standards have been largely discarded, it does not surprise me that students at an Ivy League university endure rituals like swimming in vomit, waste and ~~fecal matter~~ <sup>other bodily secretions</sup>.

Perhaps another testament to the nihilism <sup>w</sup> of modern education is found in the article's conjecture that some soccer players might consider transferring from HSU in order to play elsewhere. The article also said senior players might reduce their class units so as not to graduate, and perhaps play next year. I find that revealing... It used to be that sports were something to round out one's education; classes and learning were the main course. Today, it is often the case that sport has become the main course and taking classes, for many athletes at least, little more than a necessary evil. College sports like football, have become the tail <sup>that wags</sup> wagging the dog.

~~My hat is off to Rollin Richmond and other administrators at HSU who are attempting to keep discipline and accountability for college athletes. The suspension of men's soccer will likely send a strong message to others at the university, be they sports teams, fraternities or other groups, that humiliating another human being for the sake of initiation—is both stupid and wrong.~~

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment