OSU fraternity responds to racial incident at Wisconsin

By Michael Wagner
Lantern staff writer

Members of the OSU Zeta Beta Tau fraternity have denounced a racially offensive event that involved the ZBT fraternity at the University of Wisconsin.

The New York Times first reported the event on Oct. 25 as being a mock slave auction that was held as part of a fund-raising event for the fraternity.

The story said several fraternity pledges painted their faces black and wore afro wigs at a residency dorm, where they attempted to sell their services.

The pledges videotaped the event, which revealed the pledges making racially offensive remarks about blacks.

"Never has any of our fraternity members here at Ohio State participated in an event like this and they never will," said Eric Schwartz, president of the ZBT’s and a junior from Cleveland. "The incident was terrible and we are ashamed that people connected with our fraternity performed an offensive event like this.

"We really teach social responsibility and those individuals totally misrepresented what we are all about as a fraternity," Schwartz said.

According to the article, the Wisconsin ZBT house has been suspended from all fraternity activities on campus by the Interfraternity Council, the governing body of fraternities, which also recommended expulsion of all students involved.

The Interfraternity Council refused to comment further on the issue.

Randy Kolin, head of pledge training for Ohio State’s ZBTs, said the incident involved pledges of the fraternity only and the active members had no previous knowledge of this being planned.

Pledge classes are not considered actual members of the fraternity, Kolin, a senior from Cleveland, said. However, pledge activities should be monitored closely at all times by the active members.

"It showed lack of control by their fraternity masters to let their pledges act in a manner like this," Kolin said. "I try to teach our pledges to respect society and all its people.

"I don’t think the event had intentionally been planned to be racially offensive but it showed bad taste and the people involved should be punished," said Kolin.

Several ZBT members agree that if any active members or pledges were involved in any way with an activity like this, they would be cut from the fraternity immediately.

There is a six-week evaluation period for all pledges which, in the ZBT fraternity, will be shortened to three weeks next year to help eliminate similar incidents from occuring.

"The other regrets we do have is for the fraternity members at Wisconsin that were not involved in the action. It’s a shame that bad judgment by a few individuals had to terminate an entire fraternity house," Schwartz said.

Brian Finkenthal, an active member who is a senior from Beachwood, apologizes for the entire fraternity.

"We apologize to any and all people that this offended and we can promise that nothing like this will ever take place at Ohio State."

Some OSU black students also have a strong reaction to the Wisconsin incident.

"Yes, what took place does offend me," said Bill Moseley, a sophomore from Dayton. It would be the same thing as if my friends pretended to be Jewish and re-enacted the Holocaust," he said.

"But it is good to know the ZBT fraternity at Ohio State has the proper respect for people and do not participate in garbage like that," Moseley added.

The ZBT fraternity is nationally a predominantly Jewish fraternity.

Sherwin Graves, a junior from Xenia, said the incident does not reflect the fraternity as a whole.
ZBT burglary inquiry raises confusion

By Spencer Schein

The investigation of a burglary at the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity house, sometime between Sept. 15 and Sept. 19, is at a standstill because of confusion over what exactly happened, said Dr. Jack Ward, the Columbus Police Detective.

Ward said the one witness who could identify the suspects said the police were called and the police spoke with the suspect, but determined that the suspect was doing legitimate work.

Ward said he does not consider the persons listed on the report as suspects, as he has never spoken with the witness.

"SO, WE'RE BACK TO FIRST BASE," Ward said.

The offense report filed by Kevin Kovacek, director of housing for ZBT's national office in New York, said the ZBT house, located at 174 S. Front St. in Columbus, was broken into between 1:50 a.m. Sept. 17 and 7 a.m. Sept. 18 by four suspects who were meeting at the fraternity before ZBT national officials closed the chapter this past summer.

"THE ONLY way anyone from Acacia would be able to see the interior of the house was through the window into the back room," Ward said.

Officers said they were filling the house and a person they called "an older man" who had been there and said he was "an older man and a member of the national office hand.

The report said the suspects entered the house through a rear door and a window, but Ward said he has never verified how they entered.

The suspects were described as four to five men, aged 19 to 21 years, one of whom was wearing a black, work shirt, bleached jeans and a black hat, and the other was wearing a black, work shirt, white pants and a black hat.

The suspects were described as having dark hair and being 6 feet tall. They were wearing black shoes and white socks, and one of them was wearing black pants and white shoes.

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OVER THE course of the last year, several of the local alumni members of the fraternity, which has a chapter on Ohio State campus, have been involved in various incidents. The chapter's national president said the fraternity was closed in the fall of 1982 due to drug abuse and hazing.

The chapter has been closed for reasons stemming from eight to 10 years of mismanagement.

"They were passed down from one executive board to the next," Jaffe said.

He said that the chapter has not been under pressure to help them out of their debt, and that they have been trying to help them out of their debt.

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ZBT chapter to restart

By Carol Helwick
Lantern staff writer

The national organization of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity will make another attempt next month to restart the OSU chapter. The chapter was closed in July of 1989.

Jim Greer, the national Zeta Beta Tau executive vice president, said Ohio State has a fine Greek system and Zeta Beta Tau would like to have a chapter here. The national group also like to be a full member in the Inter-Fraternity Council, he said.

The recolonizing of the OSU chapter is now being done at a national level and work at the local level will begin in October, Greer said.

A national representative will be on campus recruiting members to form a chapter nucleus, he said. The representative will use newspaper ads and contacts from Central Ohio alumni to obtain the new members.

"We would want to start recolonizing with at least 25 men and by the time they are given their charter we would hope to have doubled in size," Greer said. Members must be ethical, understand fraternity policy and successfully manage the group's finances, he said.

The ZBT national revoked the chapter of the Ohio State chapter after the chapter had reached the point of financial insolvency and members stopped paying dues, Greer said.

"The chapter had internal management problems, as well as illegal use of alcohol by its suspected hazing had occurred," he said.

"Our local alumni could not carry the burden any longer, and they contacted the national office," Greer said. National staff members came to Columbus to investigate the allegations, he said.

The students were given an ultimatum, Greer said. They were told to straighten out their accounts; abide by all state and federal laws and repair their house. He said students initially agreed, and the national was willing to help with funding.

"They didn't give us an alternative to save the house except to pay more money," said Dave Cohen, a senior from New Jersey and a former ZBT executive member. "We were not surprised that they closed us. We had a feeling, but we thought that they would have taken us under their wing."

Cohen said they had a lot of problems with members not paying their house bills; therefore, the chapter could not meet the one-quarter deadline to comply with some of the requirements. Members and guests, Greer said. The national chapter also
Efforts fail to rescue OSU's troubled fraternity

By Tim Doelin
Dispatch OSU Reporter

Michael Zweig has no regret about pledging to The Ohio State University chapter of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. "ZBT was a great learning and growing experience," said Zweig, 22, a senior from Cleveland. "I endorse any effort to get that chapter back on its feet."

For now, the chapter is down and out.

A series of behavioral and organizational problems reminiscent of the movie Animal House has prompted Zeta Beta Tau to close the doors of the OSU chapter house to its 59 members.

"It wasn't any single event," said James E. Greer Jr., executive director of the New York-based fraternity. "It was a process over the last three years where they were having problems, having them on a continual basis and were unwilling or unable to reform."

Greer said the problems included:

- Hazing of pledges, which is prohibited by the fraternity and illegal in Ohio.
- "They were hopelessly in debt, constantly."
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- "Damage to the chapter house, estimated at $100,000 during four years. Doors were ripped from doorjambs, plumbing was broken and holes were punched in walls.
- Serving alcohol to minors.
- Use of illegal drugs by some members.
- The problems came while Zeta Beta Tau, which has 5,000 undergraduate members and 97 chapters nationally, was moving to enhance its image as a responsible fraternity.
- Last month, Zeta Beta Tau became the first fraternity to eliminate pledging to discourage hazing. It adopted a stricter set of rules.
- "We just felt that here was a situation that was blatantly in violation of major policy and decisions by the national fraternity, and for us to ignore it would make a lie of what we were planning to do," Greer said.
- "We just felt that here was a situation that was blatantly in violation of major policy and decisions by the national fraternity, and for us to ignore it would make a lie of what we were planning to do," Greer said.
- The chapter had a spoiled reputation on campus, having been placed on probation by the Office of Greek Affairs for a hazing violation in 1988. It also had run-ins with police, both in and out of Columbus, said Margaret E. Miller, director of the Greek Affairs office.
- Zweig, a member of the fraternity from 1984 to 1988, said the chapter's problems were mostly organizational.
- "A fraternity is a business, and it wasn't being run like a business," Zweig said.
- A handful of members un成功fully tried to run the house. Duels were not collected on time, and bills went unpaid. That led to financial problems.
- "It was a case of some kids trying to run the business," Zweig said.
- Matters came to a head last spring. In a letter to the national fraternity, Miller recommended reorganizing the chapter because the university "questioned whether the experience being received at ZBT was in keeping with what we would like to see in a fraternal organization."
- Alumni advisers also complained to the fraternity's national board about the chapter, Greer said.
- "Finally, in effect, they threw up their hands and said, 'We can't deal with it anymore,'" he said.
- A member of Greer's staff went to OSU to investigate and laid down conditions under which the chapter would be allowed to continue.
- The chapter was asked to comply with the fraternity's risk management program (no hazing, no illegal drugs and no alcohol served to minors) and clean up the house.
- Also, each member would have to pay a $200 special assessment to bail the chapter out of financial trouble.
- When the chapter did not accept the conditions, the fraternity withdrew the chapter's charter. Zweig blames the national fraternity for not providing enough guidance.
- "There were a lot of guys who really cared and really tried to turn the house around."
- The national fraternity did everything it could, Greer said.
- "We warned the chapter. We counseled the chapter. We visited the chapter. We did everything we could to rectify the situation," Greer said.
- Zeta Beta Tau is having the chapter house refurbished "so it satisfies housing codes," and fraternity staff members will organize a new chapter "that we can all be proud of," Greer said.
- The fraternity hopes to reopen the chapter house in September 1990.

As for the old chapter members?

"They have alumni status with the fraternity, although some may still be undergraduate students. But they are not eligible for the new chapter. They must find a new place to live," Greer said.
Social fraternity reorganizes

ZBT members anticipate new national charter

By Stacy Goldheimer
Lantern staff writer

A group of men is currently working to re-establish a new Zeta Beta Tau social fraternity, which closed in 1989 for financial reasons.

The group, which is only an interest group right now, hopes to be nationally recognized as a colony by Jan. 31, 1992, said Steven Kaufman, national expansion consultant for ZBT. The group must be strong and motivated in order to be recognized by its national organization.

"We have a house and it's a great school with a great fraternity system. There is no reason ZBT should not be on campus," Kaufman said.

ZBT began at Ohio State in 1911, but closed in 1989 because of financial reasons, Kaufman said. "They basically did not balance their budget well," he said.

"ZBT went into debt between 1980 and 1986 by not paying taxes to the government," former ZBT member Steve Chappelle said. "The house was never given any financial help through the national organization, he said. Kaufman said he was new, and therefore, could not comment on past circumstances.

In 1989, ZBT became the first national fraternity to abolish the pledging program, Kaufman said.

This national no-pledging policy enables men receiving a bid from ZBT to become active members within 72 hours, he said.

"The no-pledging policy was enacted to eliminate hazing and to get back to the basics of unity, and brothers having strong bonds," Kaufman said.

Since the no-pledging policy went into effect, rush numbers are up and the expansion rate of new chapters has increased, he said.

With 110 chapters and 125 new interest groups across North America, ZBT is one of the fastest growing fraternities in North America, he added. ZBT is currently not a member of the OSU Interfraternity Council, but will be holding informal rush in January, said Danny Roth, president of the interest group.

"I think ZBT's going to be a success. All the guys are really cool," said Doug Teague, a sophomore member of the group.

"I think it's great that they restarted. This campus is too big not to have a ZBT house," Chappelle said.

ZBT attempted to restart the OSU chapter in the fall of 1990, according to a past Lantern article.

"This group, unlike the group that attempted in 1990, has the maturity and leadership to establish a ZBT colony," Roth said.

When asked if the recent history of the OSU ZBT chapter might adversely affect their rush, Roth said, "The former reputation of solid brotherhood and strong social status will be upheld."

The old ZBT house has been renovated for use by future members, Kaufman said.

Roth said the "founding fathers" were planning on moving into the house during winter break.
ZBT NU CHAPTER
Z BT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
REUNION

OCTOBER, 1999

CLEVELAND, OHIO
Nu Chapter ZBT Directory – October, 1999

(Note: The following list contains information obtained only from persons who responded to our mailings for the October 2, 1999 Nu Chapter ZBT Reunion in Cleveland, Ohio.)

Edwin W. Arsham – Class of 1942  (Ed and Adelle), 12 Kenwood Court, Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-292-3668  Fax: 216-464-9538  E-mail: Edarsham@aol.com

Martin Arsham – 1950  (Marty and Lois Kates-Arsham), 5 Hampshire Court, Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-494-4795 (home) 216-781-3030 (work)  Fax: (work) 216-619-3035

Anthony Babin – 1949  (Tony and Marilyn), 3925-2 Lander Road, Orange Village, OH 44022  
Phone: 216-765-1499  Fax: 216-283-6529  E-mail: Ababin111@aoo.com

C.D. Baron - 1946  1077 Stone Spring Way, Louisville, KY 40223  
Phone: 502-244-7198  Fax: 502-426-2044  E-mail: baronbarclay@baronbarclay.com

Kermit Baumoe – 1943 (Anita) 7018 Poco Senda, Riverside, CA 92504-4830  Phone: 909-780-7122

John I. Biskind, M.D. – 1943 (June) 24600 Shaker Blvd., Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-464-4450  Fax: 216-464-2443  E-mail: JCBJIB

Robert D. Blashek – 1944  (Bob and Barbara), 10350 N. 101st Place, Scottsdale, AZ 85258-4838  
Phone: 480-451-1808  Fax: (call first)  E-mail: busvhs@webtv.net

Dina Stern Boettcher – 1942 (not a ZBT) 200 Overlook Road, Richmond, VA 23229  
Phone: 804-288-6951  E-mail: dinastern@aol.com

Robert D. Deitz – 1947  (Bob and Sallie), 24818 Wimbledon Road, Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 330-273-8872  Fax: 330-273-6169

Robert Deutsch – 1951  (Bob and Sandy), 500-4 Pond Run, Aurora, OH 44202  Phone: 330-562-3193

Myron S. Eckstein – 1946  (Mike and Lucy), 20726 Byron Road, Shaker Heights, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-752-0321  Fax: 216-283-5466

Myron B. Edelstein – 1950  3444 Shakespeare Lane, Toledo, OH 43615

Morton S. Frankel – 1946  (Mort and Carol), 2615 Fairwood Drive, Pepper Pike, OH 44124  
Phone: 440-461-3556  Fax: 440-461-3557  E-mail: mortsf

Joel B. Friedman – 1945  (Judy), 2119 Emkay, Toledo, OH 43606  
Phone: 419-531-1035  Fax: 419-241-7010

Joseph S. Galeski, Jr. - 1944  (Joe and Jean), 15 Greenway Lane, Richmond, VA 23226-8459  
Phone: 804-288-3590  Fax: 804-282-8459  E-mail: G3707@aol.com

M. Robert Garfield – 1944  (Pegge), 3144 South Farmcrest Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45213  
Phone: 513-631-0865  Fax: 513-241-4170

Donald A. Gaynor – 1945  (Don and Lois), 5150 Three Village Drive, Lyndhurst, OH 44124  
Phone: 440-442-4580  Fax: 216-831-5871  E-mail: dagaynor@aol.com

Ivan S. Gilbert - ?  (Marcie), 2824 Elm Avenue, Columbus, OH 43209  
Phone: 614-818-3222  Fax: 614-818-3239  E-mail: igilbert@ahhine.com

Donald Glaser – 1950  (Don and Mell), 20 Stonewood Drive, Moreland Hills, OH 44022  Phone: 440-893-9444

Richard L. Golden – 1949 (Dick and Tammie), 320 Villa Oaks Lane, Columbus, OH 43230 (June-Oct.)  
6816 Mill Run Circle, Naples, FL 34109 (Nov.-May)  Columbus Phone: 614-337-0969

Naples Phone: 941-592-0972  E-mail: boptam@aol.com

Charles B. Goldman – 1943  152 Ross Street Ext., Auburn, NY 13021  Phone: 315-252-8765

Leonard M. Goldstein – 1942  (Len and Rikki), 116 E. Berry St., #1835, Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
Phone: 219-424-7922  Fax: 219-426-9241  E-mail: rkg@fortwayne.infi.net.com
Edward Meadow – 1950  (Eddie and Ruthe), 5712 Daphne Lane, Dayton, OH 45415  
Phone: 937-277-4021  Fax: 937-277-4017  
Dr. Milton Meltzer – 1944  (Milt and Sallie), 2934 Fessenden Street, Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: 202-244-7007  Fax: 202-244-1383  E-mail: washmilt@aol.com  
Irvin J. Mindel – Ex 1940  (Irv and Dotty), 4343 West Bancroft Street, Toledo, OH 43615  
Phone: 419-533-6113  Fax: 419-476-3538  E-mail: imindel@aol.com  
Michael A. Moss – 1944  (Mike and Joy), 6234 The Hamlet, Jamesville, NY 13078  Phone: 315-446-1473  
Dr. Paul Newman – 1950  (Shirley), 279 South Main St., Akron, OH 44308  Phone: 330-253-1627  
Eugene A. Polster - 1948, 80 S. Merkle Road, Bexley, OH 43209 Phone: 614-237-2946 Fax: 614-221-5914  
William M. (Buck) Reed – 1946  2 Southport Lane, Apt. C, Boynton Beach, FL 33436  
Phone: 561-737-3937  E-mail: wrede8@aol.com  
James M. Reich –1944 (Jim and Bobbi), 2619 Courtland Oval, Shaker Heights, OH 44118 Phone: 216-321-9376  
Larry J.B. Robinson – 1950 (Barbara), 50 Public Square #905, Cleveland, OH 44113 Phone: 216-241-0820  
Daniel E. Rocker, D.D.S. – 1944 (Dan and Elaine), 26611 Fairmount Blvd., Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-464-9485  Fax: 216-464-5150  
A. John Rose – 1942  (John and Ruth), 22655 Chagrin Blvd. - #410, Beachwood, OH 44122-5314  
Phone: 216-751-2202  Fax: 216-751-9850  E-mail: ajrotry@aol.com  
Irwin R. Rose – 1950  (Jill), 8577 One West Drive - #303, Indianapolis, IN 46260-5345  
Phone: 317-253-1424  Fax: 317-575-0850  E-mail: irose8448@aol.com  
Tom D. Rose – 1948  1062 Libby Ariail Circle, Chapin, SC 29036-9737  
Phone: 803-345-3305  Fax: 803-345-0438  E-mail: tc@cheerful.com  
Albert Rosen – 1936  606 Lewis Street, Clarksburg, WV 26301 Phone: 304-623-2803  
Hyman (Hy) Rosen - 1968 8 Waters Pond Lane - #803, Boca Raton, FL 33434  Phone: 561-479-2295  
Bob Rosenberg – 1950 (Carole), 5 Dunrovin Lane, Rochester, NY 14618-4813  
Phone: 716-744-6543 Fax: 716-242-8459 Amateur radio call: W2EOJ E-mail: hameoj@aol.com  
Dr. Allen R. Ross – 1955  3885 Wales Drive, Dayton, OH 45405 Phone: 937-278-0400  
Sam Rubin – 1945  (Sugar), 723 Courtside Drive, Naples, FL 34105  
Phone: 941-649-4673  Fax: 941-649-4644  E-mail: wvnusu@aol.com  
Stanley M. Rubin – 1947  1202 Williamsburg Way, Charleston, WV 25314 Phone: 304-346-1756  
Charles R. Sandler - 1939  95 Lake Ledge Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221 Phone: 716-634-0939  
Melvin W. Schaengold – 1944 (Mel and Joan), 2444 Madison Rd. - #1602, Cincinnati, OH 45208  
Phone: 513-871-1444 Fax: 513-871-2821 E-mail: mtorab@aol.com  
Robert N. Shamansky – 1947 (Bob), 88 East Broad Street, Suite 900, Columbus, OH 43215  
Phone: 614-223-9326 Fax: 614-223-9330 E-mail: RShamansky@BFCA.com  
Robert Shaper – 1946 (Bob with Nancy Mathes), 190 Meadowhill Lane, Moreland Hills, OH 44022  
Phone: 216-831-9185  
Richard M. Sheldon – 1941 (Shap and Claire Poder), 25114 Hazelmere Rd., Beachwood, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-464-0686  
M. H. Slessinger – 1948 (Bud and Sandy), 19601 Van Aken Blvd. #38, Shaker Heights, OH 44122  
Phone: 216-623-3013 Fax: 216-623-3109  
Charles Sogg – 1943 (Chuck and Eleanor), 2268 Channel View Lane, Chico, CA 95926  
Albert Solkov – 1942 (Barbara), 5210 Pebble Brook Drive, Englewood, OH 45322  
Phone: 937-836-6696 Fax: 937-228-9154  E-mail: alsockee@ix.netcom.com  
Winter address: 804 Cypress Blvd., Pompano, FL 33069 Phone: 954-984-8122  

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Ohio State suspends Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity for three years

By Jennifer Smola
The Columbus Dispatch
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An Ohio State fraternity has been suspended for three years, and at least three others have been placed on disciplinary probation as newly-released university investigations shed light on allegations of hazing, alcohol and other student code-of-conduct violations.

In November, Ohio State suspended all 37 of its fraternities governed by the Interfraternity Council because of a high number of investigations into their conduct last semester. At the time, 11 fraternities had been under investigation for violations of the student conduct code.

The Dispatch requested the investigations of all 11 Ohio State fraternities immediately following the November suspension. The university still hasn’t released the investigations into eight of those fraternities, stating those cases include records that pertain to law enforcement matters and constitute specific investigatory work and are confidential.

Ohio State’s Tau Kappa Epsilon chapter has been suspended for three years after an investigation found the group violated hazing, alcohol, and “endangering behavior” rules. Ohio State has not released the investigation into the fraternity.

The OSU Beta Theta Pi, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and Zeta Beta Tau chapters each have been placed on disciplinary probation for similar rule violations, according to the investigation reports released Tuesday to The Dispatch. Disciplinary probation is defined by Ohio State as a “state of warning.” Those three fraternities accepted responsibility for their code violations.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon, or SAE, has been placed on disciplinary probation until December 2018.
Among the documents included in the university file provided by Ohio State was an email from a concerned parent of an SAE member sent to university and SAE leaders in September, outlining physical abuse of pledges, members being forced to miss classes to clean the fraternity house and heavy drug use.

"Pledges are doing wall sits, planks, but after chugging bottles and bottles of liquor," the email said. "Not just a beer here and there. Pledges are vomiting all over the place then they have to clean it up. Some pledges black out, fall, get concussions, this occurs during the school week."

The parent also said there are "major drug dealers inside this chapter."

"Not just marijuana, any drug you want," the email said. "Strangers come off the streets, knock on the door of the chapter house, which belongs to the University, and request names of brothers that are dealing."

Fraternity brothers also "slip drugs into the drinks of pledges," the parent wrote, "just to see them freak out, vomit, make fools of themselves."

Ohio State's Zeta Beta Tau chapter, or ZBT, has been placed on disciplinary probation until May 2019. In September, alcohol was allegedly provided to new members at the chapter house, with one new member consuming so much alcohol that he became physically sick. At two social events that month hosted by Zeta Beta Tau, students under the age of 21 allegedly drank alcohol, becoming so intoxicated that they either required assistance getting home or required attention from university staff, Ohio State police and EMS personnel.

In October, an individual submitted a hazing incident report after a brief encounter with a ZBT-affiliated student.

"Saw a (redacted by Ohio State) of ZBT who was covered in Sharpie and drunk around 3 a.m. walking home and he said, 'ZBT hazes,'" the individual reported.

When ZBT was placed on probation in November, they were ordered not to have any events with alcohol until Monday.

Beta Theta Pi was placed on disciplinary probation until May 6, 2018 after allegations that new members "repeatedly consumed alcohol" as part of their new member education and pre-initiation process and were "encouraged or otherwise permitted to egg and/or toilet-paper another fraternity house."
Ohio State suspends Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity for three years

Tau Kappa Epsilon also will have a year of probation should it return to Ohio State following the suspension. Pending any appeal, Tau Kappa Epsilon, or TKE, can petition to return to campus in the spring of 2021, said Ohio State spokesman Dave Isaacs.

Following the blanket-suspension of the 37 IFC fraternities, a memo was distributed last month outlining guidelines and requirements to move toward reinstatement. As of Tuesday evening, 10 fraternities had submitted plans and had been approved for recruitment events, according to Ohio State’s Greek Life website. Of those, three were also approved for new member activities and a third was approved for both new member activities and social events.

“The university will not tolerate behavior that puts the health and safety of its students at risk,” Ohio State spokesman Chris Davey said in a statement Tuesday.

Tau Kappa Epsilon is in the appeal process with Ohio State, national organization spokesman Alex Baker said in a statement.

“Our expectation is that the appeal process is taken seriously and officials have not predetermined an outcome without completing the rights afforded to this student organization.

jsmola@dispatch.com

@jennsmola