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## Update: Two charged with hazing in Drake alcohol poisoning

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Police have charged two men with hazing in connection with a weekend alcohol poisoning.

Des Moines police said Skylar Otto, 20, and Joseph Hatchett, 19, are accused of hazing, a serious misdemeanor. They were to be released on their own recognizance.

Police said a person commits an act of hazing when the person intentionally or recklessly engages in any act involving forced activity which endangers the physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into ... any organization operating in connection with a school, college or university.

Prohibited acts include but are not limited to any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, forced confinement, or any other forced activity which endangers the physical health or safety of the student.

Three members of the Iowa Delta Chapter of Phi Delta Theta at Drake University have been suspended from the fraternity pending a full investigation into their alleged roles in the incident.

Nathan Cody Erickson, 19, a freshman at Drake University and a new member of the fraternity, was admitted to a Des Moines hospital with a blood-alcohol content of nearly .50, early Sunday morning.

He later was released from the hospital.

Tim Coonan, local alumni representative, did not identify the three members who have been suspended.

He said the fraternity's social calendar has been canceled until further notice. There will be no meetings or fraternity education sessions with new members, and no social events of any kind.

The university and Des Moines police are investigating.

Coonan said the event Saturday night and early Sunday was not sanctioned by the chapter. The drinking occurred in a house behind the fraternity house. "I would hesitate to call it a party," he said. "My understanding of it is that only five people were involved and it was not a fraternity event."

He added, "I'm very interested in finding out what they were doing."

Coonan said other current members of the fraternity "have been shocked by this. This was a few members of the chapter."

Bob Biggs, executive vice president of Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity, released the following statement today:

"Early Sunday morning, Nov. 8, Nathan Erickson, a new member of the Iowa Delta Chapter of Phi Delta Theta at Drake University, was taken to Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines Iowa by ambulance after he was found unresponsive at an off-campus residence by a member of the fraternity.

"Since learning of the incident, Phi Delta Theta officials have been working in conjunction with Drake University and local alumni officers to conduct a thorough investigation. The chapter's operations, specifically relating to social programming and new member education, have been suspended during the course of the investigation by Phi Delta Theta.

"First and foremost, we are concerned about Nathan and we hope he has a full and speedy recovery from this incident. We are currently investigating the details of the incident to determine who was involved. After our investigation is complete, the chapter and all individuals involved will be held accountable for their actions," said Biggs.

Founded at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in 1848, Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity has 162 chapters and 114 alumni clubs across the United States and Canada.

Coonan said, "Regardless of what Drake University and the Des Moines police do, we have our own track. We are a dry fraternity. In 2000 the national fraternity went dry.

"This went counter to the values of our fraternity. Obviously, we don't know all the facts. But we want to be judicious and proactive. We are taking this very seriously and will take immediate action. I don't want anyone to think this will in any way be covered up. This has jarred us."

He said, "At this point the health of the student is most important. Then we want to know how this happened and how to make sure this never happens again."

## Additional Facts

Statement on behalf of the family of Nathan Erickson

Jacqueline Nickerson, the mother of Drake student Nathan Erickson, who suffered alcohol poisoning Sunday, released the following statement today through Drake University:

"It is our sincere hope that the extensive media coverage of the alcohol poisoning that nearly killed Nate this past weekend will help raise awareness of how dangerous alcohol can be and help prevent similar situations from occurring on college campuses.

We want to make sure no student dies with a blood-alcohol level of .500 -- the same level that Nate had. It's frightening to think that ... death often occurs at blood-alcohol levels less than that.

If we can prevent even one case of alcohol poisoning, then it will be worth all of this pain and struggle to see some good come out of this situation.

Nate believed his fraternity brothers when they assured him that they wouldn't let him get hurt. He trusted their judgment. They trusted their own judgment. But there was no judgment to be trusted. They all believed in their own minds that they could control the situation, but they didn't understand the strength of the alcohol. Alcohol is its own monster.

We believe the other young men had no malicious intent. They just made bad choices. Nate acknowledges that he also made bad choices. That doesn't mean they're bad people.

Apparently no one realized that Nate was on his way out until it was almost too late. He didn't appear nearly as intoxicated as he was. He was talking and sending text messages to his friends without any recall of those activities now.

We want to thank whoever finally realized Nate was in trouble and called 911 for an ambulance in time to save his life. Without that person's action, it would have been an entirely different outcome, God forbid.

We would like to thank everyone for their concern and support. Nate is recovering well and plans to return to his classes at Drake later this week. With the ongoing investigation, he is keeping his contacts with the fraternity to a minimum.

We hope this tragedy can raise the awareness of the role of alcohol in fraternity initiations. We want Nate's experience to provide a catalyst that allows students to become more educated about the power and destructiveness of alcohol."

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