HAZING
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Both the university and Kappa Sigma declined comment on the allegations.

“The facts and circumstances of the unfortunate traffic fatality is something that is involved in the lawsuit,” Mitchell Wilson, Kappa Sigma’s executive director, said in an email. “Discovery in the lawsuit will determine the actual facts.”

UL Lafayette spokesman Charlie Bier said in an email statement the university will not comment further “out of respect for the judicial process and the multiple parties involved in this tragedy.”

Fraternity’s expulsion stands in

According to documents provided by the university, some Kappa Sigma members were expelled for withholding information about fraternity activities, some of which included paddling, cigarette burns, forced servitude and physical abuse by older members.

In the weeks leading up to initiation and Homecoming week 2016, pledges were reportedly instructed to fight their best friends with boxing gloves in front of their fellow Kappa Sigma brothers resulting in at least one bruised eye. The pledges were also blindfolded, tied up and punched in the face; some pledges were also burned with cigarettes.

That weekend, between Nov. 4 and Nov. 6, 2016, new members were instructed to stay up all night to work on the Homecoming float, particularly a pepper signature to the fraternity, to destroy the pepper and to rebuild the structure. Bringing a keg to barn area beside the intramural fields where campus organizations traditionally construct Homecoming floats, Kappa Sigma members allegedly returned to the barn after ULPD officers ordered float-builders from all organizations to leave.

When finally instructed to leave around 6 a.m., the pledges were ordered back to the float at 8:30 a.m. and to drink before the parade began. Fraternity members allegedly continued drinking on the float and during the tailgate and game. After the parade, Gallagher and four other new members reportedly took their stations as designated drivers.

Michael Gallagher’s crash was one of two reported in internal documents provided to the media by an anonymous student. Gallagher’s crash is the only one reported to end in fatality.

According to the documents, some new members reportedly told “national representatives” about hazing activities that occurred during their first semester in the fraternity. The report stated the national organization did not find the allegations to be true, and cites a “tremendous lack of accountability” on an undergraduate, district officer, alumni and national headquarters level.

Multiple UL Lafayette Kappa Sigma members were found to have lied during initial investigations about fraternity operations, according to reports in the internal documents and a statement from Kappa Sigma’s national fraternity.

“The former undergraduate members were not honest with Kappa Sigma’s investigating officers in the initial investigation,” according to the fraternity statement released via email. “As soon as the fraternity found out during the investigation that they were not being honest, the chapter members were expelled from the fraternity for violation of fraternity policy.”

Of the 92 fraternity members expelled during the investigation, 35 were reinstated at an Oct. 14 board meeting. Members found to have lied during the investigation were expelled. An appeal to reinstate the chapter at UL Lafayette was withdrawn by alumni.

Julissa Lopez contributed reporting to this article.

Suspensions lifted for four fraternities

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The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has lifted suspensions on Kappa Alpha Order, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Nu and Theta Xi following investigations into each fraternity.

Documents released by the university report that Kappa Alpha, Sigma Nu and Theta Xi are on probation; each fraternity has submitted plans to correct behavior associated with hazing allegations.

The three fraternities must complete either online or in-person courses on topics such as alcohol, hazing and sexual assault. The report states alcohol is banned from Sigma Nu’s facilities until May.

The fraternities were placed on suspension in September due to hazing allegations reported in the weeks following the death of freshman Louisiana State University student Maxwell Gruver.

UL Lafayette spokesman Charlie Bier said in an emailed statement that the university supports the “decisions of each national organization.”

Louisiana Poet Laureate teaches trade, style at writing festival

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The University of Louisiana at Lafayette creative writing department hosted a workshop on Friday with Louisiana Poet Laureate and UL Lafayette alumnus Jack B. Bedell.

Part of the Deep South Festival of Writers reading series, the workshop showcased some of Bedell’s poetry and highlighted some of his writing techniques.

“I kept waiting to wake up and a poem would be fully formed, and all I had to do was transcribe it; they’re not falling out of the sky,” Bedell said.

Bedell dissected lines from his own poetry with attendees, who were mostly creative writing students, allowing for questions, critique and analysis. He also detailed a flowchart that helped him develop his writing style by sectioning off stanzas in a poem, a process he called “framing.” A standout point from Bedell’s lecture was that writers should not overemphasize vocabulary.

“I could have written all the poems I’ve written with the words I had in third grade,” Bedell said. “It’s not a matter of a lack of words.”

Bedell also analyzed work from two attendees who were UL Lafayette creative writing doctoral students, Kimberly Southwick-Thompson and Cimmerian Jones. The two wrote pieces titled “The Emperor is Upside Down” and “Auris Cavum.”

There was intimate, in-depth discussion about each poem. Additionally, Bedell detailed various “falsehoods” he was taught as a student. He lamented the idea of a “universal reader” and insisted everyone takes something different from a poem. He also offered healthy criticism, but was careful to avoid overvaluing his own opinion and highlighted the open-ended obligations of poetry.

“My confusion is only helpful if (the writer) was trying to be clear,” Bedell said. “My confusion is of no value if there was no investment in clarity. A poem is under no obligation to make sense.”

The Deep South Festival of Writers reading series will continue on at 7 p.m. Nov. 30 in Fletcher Hall room 134. New York Times best-selling author Kevin Wilson and poet Leigh Anne Couch will be the guest speakers.

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