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Parents retell story to prevent alcohol abuse among frats

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The Interfraternity Council showed members of UT fraternities, sororities and other organizations a video warning them of the dangers of binge drinking and hazing on Monday night.

The video, "Haze the Movie," centered on the death of Lynn Gordon "Gordie" Bailey Jr., who was found dead in a Chi Psi fraternity house at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2004 after a night of heavy drinking with other pledges.

"Gordie would still be with us today if the brothers in that fraternity or pledges had known about the dangers of alcohol misuse, about peer pressure, about hazing and about pledging ceremonies that involve alcohol," said Michael Lanahan, president of the Gordie Foundation. "Our goal has always been to not try and search for the guilty or assess blame."

In April, the Travis County Attorney's Office charged three UT Sigma Alpha Epsilon members with providing alcohol to a minor and hazing after they allegedly beat pledges with bamboo sticks and shocked them with cattle prods. Another member was charged with failure to report hazing. All four pled no contest and two served four days in jail.

At one point, the video showed a young man flinging himself down a flight of stairs, landing on his neck. Another scene showed a forearm catching darts.

"[The video] tried to be emotionally provoking, which is important to get people to pay attention," said Nick Tamsma, a government and business sophomore. "Everyone's taught what to do, how to prepare for a test — but nobody's taught what to do in a situation where somebody's completely drunk and passed out."

He said watching the video was not a learning experience.

"These incidents are pretty familiar," Tamsma said. "It was almost routine in a lot of ways."

Gordie's mother and stepfather, who presented the movie, started the Gordie Foundation after their son's death.

Charles Maddox, Greek relations chair for the Interfraternity Council, said attending the video conference was a required part of the new member education for joining a fraternity in the council. He said that other Greek organizations are starting to make watching the video a part of their new member education.

According to the Gordie Foundation's Web site, more than 1,700 deaths result from alcohol use and hazing on college campuses.

This week is National Hazing Prevention Week.



May-Ying Lam, Daily Texan Staff

Students listen to Michael Lanahan speak about his stepson, who died as a freshman at the University of Colorado from alcohol poisoning.