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# BU suspends fraternity for demeaning women, sponsoring 'blackout party'

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By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Boston University announced Thursday it had suspended a fraternity for its alleged involvement in promoting a party using misogynistic and sexually suggestive photos and videos.

The Kappa Sigma fraternity also allegedly used the university's name in marketing the event without authorization.

The "blackout" party, which was scheduled for Dec. 10 at Royale nightclub in downtown Boston but eventually canceled, was cosponsored by the fraternity and an outside event planning group called Blackout University, officials said.

Online promotional materials for the party included a link to a website with pictures and video of "a culture of abusive behavior

that openly celebrates verbal sexual coercion, belittling women, grabbing, groping, forced kissing, and the badgering of women for sex," John Battaglino, assistant dean of students, wrote to the fraternity's leadership in a Feb. 6 letter.

Dean of students Kenneth Elmore said when BU learned of how the party was being marketed, administrators contacted the fraternity, prompting the student group to remove the promotional content.



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The nightclub told university news website BU Today that the party never took place.

Nationally, fraternities have faced heightened scrutiny amid a drumbeat of reports of sexual violence, hazing, and dangerous, even deadly, partying.

In the past two years, BU has suspended several Greek organizations and some members of the groups over reported misconduct. They included two incidents of fraternity hazing, one of which prompted criminal charges and led to the chapter shuttering; and a case in spring 2013 where a student died from apparently accidental alcohol poisoning after he allegedly attended a fraternity party.

Fraternities on many campuses, including BU, have vowed to take steps to curb the destructive behavior.

Battaglino wrote “ ‘blackout parties’ have become associated with a social sanctioning that it is OK to take advantage of intoxicated women.”

He said the national fraternity and its BU chapter should “develop a method to reexamine your own behavior as members of an all-male organization within a culture of violence that often regards sexual assault as acceptable behavior or as ‘just sex.’ ”

Battaglino’s Feb. 6 letter notified the fraternity that BU was withdrawing its recognition, meaning the chapter can no longer recruit members, sponsor events, or use campus facilities. The chapter can ask the university to reconsider its unrecognized status on or after July 9, according to BU Today.

BU officials declined to say whether any individual students were disciplined.

Battaglino’s letter said the fraternity’s president had written a heartfelt apology to the dean of students.

In light of the recent incident, Kappa Sigma president Nicholas Supple, a BU junior, told the Daily Free Press, the student newspaper, that “while being suspended from campus is never a good thing, we’re confident that we will be able to find common ground with the school, and we welcome this opportunity to strengthen our chapter internally and our working relationship with the community.”

Derald Dryman, a national Kappa Sigma spokesman, said in an e-mail the party “was not a Kappa Sigma function — it was planned and funded . . . by an outside organization.

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*Correction: An earlier version of this story said the party had taken place.*

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