JOHN MCKEE
McKEE—John.

The City University of New York deeply mourns the passing of John McKee, CUNY's Deputy Director of Public Safety, who died September 12 at his home after a long illness. Not long after taking that post in 2000, he courageously led the University's 9/11 Response Team at Ground Zero. As Deputy Director, he was instrumental in formulating the University's emergency response plans as well as coordinating the CUNY SAFE Team, which responds to emergencies throughout the city. He left his mark on many CUNY colleges, but most notably Bronx Community College and New York City College of Technology, where he served as Acting Director of Public Safety, before ending his career as the full-time Director of Public Safety at The City College of New York (CCNY). He graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice with a B.A. and joined CUNY's Public Safety Department as a sergeant in 1992, assigned to CCNY. He was a respected leader of the women and men of the CUNY Department of Public Safety. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to his family. James B. Milliken, Chancellor
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CSI track and field facilities to get $1 million overhaul

NWS CSITRACK

Assemblyman Michael Cusick, left, with CSI Athletic Director Charles Gomes, College Vice-President Ira Persky, and CSI President Dr. William Fritz, on the CSI track, after Cusick announced $1 million in funding to refurbish the track and field facilities. (Staten Island Advance/Diane C.Lore)

Diane C. Lore | lore@siadvance.com By Diane C. Lore | lore@siadvance.com

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on September 14, 2015 at 5:18 PM, updated September 14, 2015 at 6:37 PM

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Track and field facilities at the College of Staten Island will get a $1 million overhaul thanks to funding from Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D-Mid-Island).

The grant will allow CSI to make state-of-the-art upgrades to enable the school to host inter-collegiate events on the Willowbrook campus, and expand its Division III athletic offerings to field NCAA-sanctioned men and women's track and field teams.

The upgrades include the replacement and resurfacing of the entire track, which has only been resurfaced once since it opened in 1994.

Additionally, event facilities, including shot put, discus, hammer throw, long-jump, triple-jump and high-jump, will be constructed within the grass oval on the inside of the track.

There will also be an expansion of the bleacher seating to accommodate an additional 500 spectators.

Cusick said he has run on the track himself, and is aware the facility needs a resurfacing. He also uses the CSI track for his "total fitness challenge" involving Staten Island students. The track is open to the community, CSI officials said.

"As someone who is a runner, I think this will be a win-win situation for the college and the community," said Cusick, who met Monday with CSI administrators, students and athletic staff to announce finding for the project.

While CSI fields a cross-country team, it has not had an intercollegiate track and field team. The upgrades will allow the college to put a competitive track and field program in place.
Athletic Director Charles Gomes said the college has been seeking to expand its offering of NCAA teams. "We had been looking to expand, and track and field seemed to be a natural fit for us, since we have the space, and given there is so much interest in running," he explained.

CSI President William Fritz, who thanked Cusick for the funding, said the project will enable the college to expand its profile nationally and within the community.

"The improved facilities will provide the perfect place for the college community and Staten Island community to exercise and improve health and wellness," Fritz said.

"Additionally, this investment comes at a most opportune time as the college is increasingly being recognized locally, regionally, and nationally, with more accolades coming over the summer," he said, a reference to Money magazine which ranked CSI third in New York state and 123rd nationally for institutions that provide the best value for students' tuition dollars. Forbes magazine followed by ranking CSI one of "America's Top Colleges" offering a high return-on-investment education.

There was no timetable given for the project, which must go through the state Dormitory Authority, the agency that oversees construction for public colleges and universities in New York State.
5 From Baruch College Face Murder Charges in 2013 Fraternity Hazing

By RICK ROJAS and ASHLEY SOUTHALL  

Five fraternity members from Baruch College in Manhattan will face murder charges in Pennsylvania for their involvement in the death of a freshman who was hazed during a rural retreat in 2013, officials said on Monday.

A grand jury in Monroe County, Pa., recently recommended that five people face third-degree murder charges and that a total of 37 would face a range of criminal charges, including assault, hindering apprehension and hazing in Chun Hsien Deng's death.

The authorities said Mr. Deng, 19, known as Michael, died on Dec. 9, 2013, after he was blindfolded and made to wear a backpack weighted with sand while trying to make his way across a frozen yard as members of the fraternity, Pi Delta Psi, tried to tackle him. During at least one tackle, he was lifted up and dropped on the ground in a move known as spearing, according to the Pocono Mountain Regional Police Department. He complained his head hurt but continued participating and was eventually knocked out, the police said in a news release.

After Mr. Deng was knocked unconscious, and the authorities said the fraternity members delayed in seeking medical help.
E. David Christine, the Monroe County district attorney, said his office would follow the recommendations of the grand jury. "We believe the recommendations were sound and worthy of action on the part of the commonwealth," Mr. Christine said.

Prosecutors have started filing the charges and expect all the charges to be filed within the coming weeks, he said.

Those facing third-degree murder charges are Charles Lai, Kenny Kwan, Raymond Lam, Daniel Li and Sheldon Wong. The fraternity is also being charged, officials said. Third-degree murder, which does not involve premeditation or a specific intent to kill, carries a penalty of up to 20 years in prison.

Reached by telephone at his home in Flushing, Queens, Mr. Lam said he was aware of the charges but referred further questions to his lawyer, who could not be reached for comment. Efforts on Monday night to reach the four others facing third-degree murder charges or to determine the identity of their lawyers were unsuccessful.

Mr. Christine said the investigation had been lengthy because the authorities had to figure out who of the dozens who were present for the retreat were most involved in the hazing. He said investigators had to "try and make sure people were put in the right category of involvement."

Mr. Deng’s parents applauded the criminal charges in a statement released on Monday. Their son’s death, they said, was tragic and entirely preventable.

"Too many families have been devastated as a result of fraternity hazing, with at least one student dying every year from hazing since 1970," the Dens said. "Fraternities and their members must be held accountable, and this step by authorities is an important one."

In Mr. Deng’s honor, the family said it would continue pursuing a wrongful-death lawsuit seeking changes in Pi Delta Psi and other fraternities, so "other parents will be spared the loss of a precious child." In light of the charges, the family plans to amend the suit to take into account the names and roles of those involved in Mr. Deng’s death.
Among the changes the family is seeking in the lawsuit, which was filed in April, is an end to the pledging process, their lawyer, Douglas E. Fierberg, said in a telephone interview on Monday. “If there was no pledging process,” he said, “Michael would not be dead.”

After the death, Baruch suspended the rights of Pi Delta Psi on campus while conducting an internal investigation and imposed a moratorium on that fraternity’s pledging and rush activities. In May, officials extended the moratorium for three years.

Spokesmen for Baruch College, part of the City University of New York, did not return multiple phone calls and emails seeking comment on Monday night. Reached by telephone on Monday, Victor Yin, the national vice president of Pi Delta Psi, said that he had not heard about the charges.

Mr. Deng was one of four pledges who joined members of Pi Delta Psi on an annual weekend retreat at a rental house in the Poconos, where he took part in a ritual called the Glass Ceiling.

After he was seriously injured and unconscious, fraternity members carried him inside the house, where they contacted a national fraternity official, who told them to hide fraternity items, the police said. Some members left the house, while others changed his clothes and conducted searches to diagnose his symptoms.

At some point, it was reported that Mr. Deng was having trouble breathing, the police said. Three fraternity members put him in a car and drove him to a hospital a half-hour away. By the time he arrived, he was unable to be revived. He died the next morning of severe trauma to the head, officials said.

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.
Actors, mentally ill aid NYC police training meant to calm

NYPD Mentally Ill
In this Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015 photo, instructors Melinda Wolbransky, center, Lt. Mark Turner, center background, and Detective James Shanahan, right, go over Sgt. Cecilia Luckie, foreground right, and Officer John Gonis's performance during a Crisis Intervention Training class at the New York Police Department Police Academy, in New York. A new training for New York City police is combining actors, the mentally ill and psychology experts to better prepare officers responding to people in the throes of a mental crisis. (Mary Altaffer | Associated Press)

The Associated Press By The Associated Press
on September 14, 2015 at 1:00 PM, updated September 14, 2015 at 1:02 PM

NEW YORK (AP) — A woman called Emily, tears streaming down her face, stood on a ledge threatening to jump. For 15 minutes, a police sergeant used the common thread that connects them — they're both mothers — to gradually talk her out of killing herself.

The scene, played out earlier this month at the New York Police Department's training facility, was an act, part of a training program meant to help patrol officers in the nation's largest department better handle the growing number of interactions they have with people in emotional or mental distress.

"Even though it's a scenario, my hands are like this," said a shaking Sgt. Cecilia Luckie after talking to Erin Shields, the actress portraying Emily. "My mouth is dry."

Patrol officers like Luckie are often first on the scene to the 911 calls and on-the-street pick-ups of people in crisis — a mother calling because her mentally ill son is acting erratically, a person threatening to jump off a building or a homeless veteran acting strangely on a street corner.

Police received more than 130,000 so-called "emotionally disturbed person" calls last year, about 23,000 more than in 2011, an increase experts say mirrors a national trend resulting from too few supportive housing options and services in the wake of a decades-old deinstitutionalization movement.

Advocates for the mentally ill have long complained that hard-charging officers, tactically trained to issue commands and take control, have unnecessarily escalated situations that can sometimes end tragically. At least nine people killed by the NYPD since 2007 had mental illnesses, according to Carla Rabinowitz, of the nonprofit Community Access. But Rabinowitz said more common are interactions that leave them with negative views of the police or send them unnecessarily to jail, a result reflected by the 40 percent of the city jail population with mental health diagnoses.

New York's program is built off a nationally recognized instructional model, called Crisis Intervention Training, that uses mental health consumers, professionals and police officials to train officers on how to recognize signs
of mental illness, respond to such calls and empathize with someone in the throes of a crisis. It emerged in the late 1980s from the Memphis Police Department and is now used by nearly 3,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide. Research has shown its use is associated with higher confidence among officers, better recognition of mental illness and fewer uses of force.

Earlier this summer the NYPD launched a four-day program that will be incorporated into standard training and issued a requirement that officers take annual refresher courses, officials said. The department already has a small, highly-trained unit of officers for mental health cases, but the training is meant to give more cops a better chance at deescalating crisis situations.

Officers taking part in the training are evaluated in real time by a clinical psychologist and instructors during scenes portrayed by John Jay College of Criminal Justice actors like Grant Cooper, who plays a paranoid homeless man named Reverend X screaming into a trash can.

For Cooper, it comes from a familiar place: When he was 12 his mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He draws on those memories — including his many 911 calls for help — when he plays his part.

"The police had to escort her many, many times," said Cooper, 52. "And she never got hurt. We were lucky. I didn't realize how lucky we were."

Cooper simulated someone high on the synthetic marijuana drug K2, doing backstrokes on the sidewalk as officers stood by, letting him tire himself out before rolling him onto his side, putting him in handcuffs and then an ambulance.

More than 270 officers assigned to Manhattan's East Harlem neighborhood have already been trained and police officials hope to train 5,500 overall. One of two city mental health drop-off centers, designed to give police an alternative place to send people in crisis besides jail or an emergency room, will open in the neighborhood later this year.

"If we get those kinds of responses where people feel they've got more tools in their toolbox, if they feel more confident and if they can respond more appropriately more of the time, that's exactly what we want," said Susan Herman, the NYPD deputy commissioner for collaborative policing.

In another exercise, former soap opera actor Nathan Purdee, playing a Vietnam war veteran with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder experiencing a flashback, didn't quite calm down until one of the officers on patrol talking to him convinced him to sit down on a bench and shared a personal detail: He himself was a military veteran and understood what he was going through.

"You didn't challenge him," said Det. James Shanahan, one of the instructors, after the exercise ended. "You cared for him."
Ex-CUNY official dies of 9/11-related cancer

By Philip Messing

A former top official at the City University of New York died of 9/11-related brain cancer over the weekend — making him the school’s first Ground Zero responder to pass away from illnesses tied to the attack’s aftermath.

John P. McKee, 49, the one-time deputy chief of public safety for CUNY, died at his home in Lynbrook, Long Island, at 6:25 p.m., said his friend and former colleague, CUNY Lt. Anthony Laperuta.

McKee was diagnosed with brain cancer in November 2012.

Once second-in-charge of the city’s university security apparatus, McKee responded to Ground Zero immediately after the Twin Towers collapsed and spent three straight days living there while dealing with issues related to CUNY.

He then spent a month working there on search-and-recovery efforts, sources said.

Although McKee participated in regular screenings for first-responders as part of a program at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, nothing unusual showed up until he fell ill in November 2012, complaining of dizziness, trouble gripping objects and difficulty speaking, Laperuta recalled.
An MRI revealed a golf-ball sized tumor in his brain, which was diagnosed as glioblastoma multiforme Stage IV cancer, for which he underwent surgery in January 2013, said his wife, Sandy Santiago McKee.

His widow, a purchasing administrator at Jamaica Hospital, fought back tears when she recalled marrying McKee soon after his diagnosis.

"He was a tough Irishman. John was the best — he fought until the end with his last breath," she said.

"About six months after he was diagnosed, he said to me, 'I guess you don't want to get married now because I have cancer.' I told him, 'When you love someone, you love them whether they have cancer or not,'" she recalled.

"He was happy he could die at home instead of at a hospital," she added.

Last month, The Post reported how the feds have certified 3,700 first-responders and others as suffering from 9/11-related cancers.

That total includes approximately 1,100 members of the FDNY, 2,134 cops and other first-responders and 467 downtown workers and residents.

McKee began his CUNY career in September 1992 and rose through the ranks, serving under Director of Public Safety William Barry.

After his cancer diagnosis, he grew increasingly weaker and went out on permanent disability in July 2014.

Initially, his cancer was not included as those covered under the so-called Zadroga bill, which was signed by President Obama in January 2011.

The legislation provides special health benefits to thousands of first-responders who have developed cancer and a variety of respiratory ailments in the years since 9/11. It was expanded in June 2012, enabling McKee to finally obtain benefits he'd initially been denied.

The Zadroga bill is currently the subject of intensive legislative lobbying in Washington, as temporary funding to cover the cost of providing benefits is expected to expire in October.

McKee is survived by three children from a prior marriage.

A wake will be held Flinch & Bruns Funeral Home, at 34 Hempstead Ave., in Lynbrook on Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon, 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m.

A funeral mass will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, at St. Raymond Church, 265 Atlantic Ave., East Rockaway, Long Island, followed by burial at Saint Charles Cemetery in Farmingdale.
Former CUNY official John McKee dies of 9/11-related illness aged 49

BY BEN CHAPMAN / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Tuesday, September 15, 2015, 4:23 AM

A former City University of New York deputy chief of public safety died of 9/11-related illness at his Lynbrook, L.I., home.

John McKee, 49, was a 9/11 first responder who was diagnosed with brain cancer in November 2012.

McKee, who died Saturday, is survived by his wife, four children, two stepchildren, his father, his brother and his sister.

McKee, a graduate of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, started at CUNY's Public Safety Department in 1992 as a sergeant assigned to the City College of New York.

When the World Trade Center was attacked, McKee worked at Ground Zero for three days providing security, searching for victims and helping manage CUNY's response.

"Nobody got out of there unscathed":
THOUSANDS SUFFER FROM 9/11-RELATED ILLNESSES 14 YEARS LATER

"John was a saint," said his widow, Sandra McKee.

"He was always putting people in front of himself, until the day he died.

"Unfortunately, 9/11 took over his life and killed him slowly and painfully."

A Mass of Christian Burial will be offered Wednesday at 9:45 a.m. at St. Raymond’s Roman Catholic Church on Atlantic Ave. in East Rockaway.

Burial will be at St. Charles/Resurrection Cemeteries in Farmingdale, L.I.
Is college really a path out of poverty?

Angela Rachidi
September 14, 2015 5:38 pm | AEIdeas

In an excellent piece (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/magazine/is-college-tuition-too-high.html?mwrsm=Email&r=0) in the New York Times Magazine this past weekend, Adam Davidson highlights the “fascinating, complex business” of higher education. The article is worth a look, especially as it relates to the shortcomings of education as a path out of poverty – at least under the current system of higher education. And it should caution policy makers from thinking that more college will reduce poverty.


Shutterstock.

Davidson writes about three higher education markets: the elite schools, the selective powerhouse schools, and the nonselective schools. In referring to the third, he writes (emphasis mine):

...
Finally, there are the nonselective public, community and private for-profit colleges that admit nearly every paying applicant. A vast majority of people pursuing postsecondary education will start in these schools. They vary greatly in quality. Some provide a solid education, especially in technical expertise, that can lead to higher-paying, skilled jobs in manufacturing, health care and other fields. Some of these places, especially the private for-profit ones, seem to be little more than a scam, recruiting students, taking their government-funded loans and offering them a degree of minimal worth. Well more than half of all new students at four-year schools in this segment won't finish. But still they will be burdened with debt or will default, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill.

In discussing President Obama's proposal to provide free community college for anyone who maintains a 2.5 grade point average, Davidson correctly argues:

Still, it [the President's proposal] doesn't fully address the crisis confronting our system of community colleges: lots of people enter, but most won't graduate. Some four-year schools have truly abysmal records when it comes to graduating their students in six years or less. Medgar Evers College in the CUNY system has a graduation rate of 8 percent as of 2013. Entire state public-university systems with collective graduation rates below 50 percent include Arkansas (39.7 percent), Montana (45.6 percent) and Alaska (30.6 percent). Baum says that among nonselective, four-year, for-profit schools, graduation rates above 50 percent are the exception, and a few, especially online schools, have rates well below 10 percent.

Getting a college education is frequently identified as the best way to escape poverty, mainly because most college educated people have jobs. Workers with a bachelor's degree had an unemployment rate (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm) of 3.5% in 2014, compared to 6% for those with a high school diploma only. And they earned almost twice (http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm) what a high school graduate alone earned in the average week.

But beyond the few who get into elite and selective schools, many students from low-income families have limited prospects under the current system of higher education. AEI's Andrew Kelly (https://www.aei.org/scholar/andrew-p-kelly/) made this exact point in a report (https://www.aei.org/publication/big-payoff-low-probability/) last year and offered some recommendations on how to fix it.
Holding schools more accountable for graduating their students, and expanding programs like CUNY ASAP (http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/asap/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/02/MDRC_Doubling_Graduation_Rates_ASAP_Final_Report_Feb_2015.pdf), which have proven successful at increasing graduation rates, are good starts. A national priority should be increasing the percentage of low-income students who complete their degrees. Only then can we have a real discussion about college as a path out of poverty.

This article was found online at: https://www.aei.org/publication/is-college-really-a-path-out-of-poverty/
37 Fraternity Members Face Charges in Hazing Death of CUNY Student

A grand jury in Pennsylvania has recommended that charges be filed against 37 fraternity members for their alleged roles in the death of a pledge in 2013, as reported by the New York Times. The students, all members of Pi Delta Psi at Baruch College of the City University of New York, were on an annual weekend retreat at a rental house in the Poconos when the activities that left 19-year-old Chun Hsien (Michael) Deng with a fatal head injury occurred.

Five members of the group as well as the fraternity itself face the most serious charge, third-degree murder, as well as lesser charges that include assault, hindering apprehension, and hazing. The other defendants also face lesser charges. A prosecutor told the Times that his office would follow the recommendations of the grand jury and had already started filing the charges.

The fraternity chapter was shut down amid an overall three-year moratorium on pledging and other such recruitment on the CUNY campus.
Five fraternity brothers face third-degree murder charges in the hazing death of a Baruch College freshman, authorities said.

Police in Pennsylvania said a grand jury recommended the charges against the Pi Delta Psi fraternity members in the death of fellow student Michael Deng, 19, who died in 2013 during a hazing incident in the Poconos.

Third-degree murder — which doesn’t involve intent to kill — carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Thirty-two other fraternity members were also charged with assault, hazing and criminal conspiracy.

Deng was fatally injured during a twisted ritual known as the “glass ceiling.” About 30 of his would-be Pi Delta Psi frat brothers rented a home in the Poconos, where the freshman was repeatedly hit while blindfolded and lugging 30 pounds of sand in a knapsack.
After he was knocked unconscious, the brothers waited over an hour to get him medical help, officials said.

"Michael was a wonderful, beloved young man, and, in his honor, the family will also continue pursuing its wrongful-death case against the fraternity to cause it and other fraternities to change so that other parents will be spared the loss of a precious child," his family said in a statement.

Michael Deng, 19, died after an alleged hazing incident inside this house in Tunkhannock Township, Pa., in 2013.

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5 Students Face Homicide Charges in Baruch Hazing Death

By Pei-Sze Cheng and Brynn Gingras
Five Baruch College students have been charged with homicide in the death of a student during a hazing ritual on a fraternity trip to the Poconos, authorities said Monday. Brynn Gingras reports (Published Monday, Sept. 14, 2015)
Updated 3 hours ago

Five Baruch College students have been charged with homicide in the death of a student during a hazing ritual on a fraternity trip to the Poconos, authorities said Monday.

Chun Hsien "Michael" Deng, 19, died in December 2013 after participating in the ritual in which he and other pledges were blindfolded, weighted down with backpacks full of sand and knocked over repeatedly while trying to walk, police said.

• NYC Freshman Dies After Frat "Ritual": Authorities

The five students are charged with criminal homicide, involuntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, hazing, hindering apprehension and criminal conspiracy.

Five other students were charged with assault as well as the conspiracy and hindering apprehension charges, and 27 more students were charged with hindering apprehension, hazing and conspiracy charges.
According to a police affidavit, three students who first brought Deng to the hospital initially told police that the group was wrestling in the snow when the 19-year-old fell backwards and hit his head. The group said they brought him inside and laid him by the fire, but he did not wake up.

In later interviews, the story emerged that Deng was actually injured during a fraternity ritual.

After Deng died, the school and fraternity said the group had taken an unapproved trip. The national chapter severed its ties with the Baruch group, and revoked the memberships of its brothers for allegedly violating Pi Delta Psi's values and anti-hazing policy.

Student Devon Ressner said on campus Monday she'd wondered over the past two years whether the case was swept under the rug. She said she's glad charges were finally filed.

"I think it's really important to send that message that this is completely unacceptable," she said.

Former student Aquiv Hussain said, "Whoever was directly involved should be behind bars because someone did pass away in this situation."

Published at 5:21 PM EDT on Sep 14, 2015
Baruch College Hazing death: 37 people charged over death of Asian American student in initiation ritual

The parents of the 19-year-old student have welcomed the charges

Andrew Buncombe

Tuesday, 15 September 2015

More than 30 people have been charged over the “hazing” death of a first year Asian American student who was died during a college’s rural retreat in Pennsylvania.

Five fraternity members from New York’s Baruch College will face murder charges in connection with the death two years ago of Chun Hsien Deng. In total, 37 people will be face a variety of charges, including assault.

The 19-year-old first year student, who went by the name Michael, died during the retreat held by members of the Pi Delta Psi fraternity – an Asian American association - in December 2013 at the Pocono Mountains.

Officials said he was blindfolded and made to wear a backpack weighted with 20lbs of sand while trying to make his way across a frozen yard as members of the fraternity tried to slam him to the ground.

During at least one tackle, the Associated Press said, he was lifted up and dropped on the ground in a move known as spearing. He complained his head hurt but continued participating and was eventually knocked out, the police said in a news release.

Prosecutors have started filing the charges and expect all the charges to be filed within the coming weeks, officials said.

The New York Times said that after the announcement of Monday’s charges, Mr Deng’s parents issued a statement welcoming the decision by prosecutors.

"Too many families have been devastated as a result of fraternity hazing, with at least one
student dying every year from hazing since 1970," the Dens said.

"Fraternities and their members must be held accountable, and this step by authorities is an important one."

In Mr Deng’s honour, the family said it would continue pursuing a wrongful-death lawsuit seeking changes in Pi Delta Psi and other fraternities, so "other parents will be spared the loss of a precious child".
Five Baruch College fraternity members face criminal homicide charges in 2013 hazing death

By Sarah Kaplan  September 15 at 9:00 AM

Nearly two years after 19-year-old Chun Hsien Deng died from major brain trauma after being knocked unconscious in a frozen Pennsylvania field during a brutal initiation ritual, five of his fraternity brothers will be charged with his murder.

The five men, who attended Baruch College in Manhattan with Deng and were members of the Pi Delta Psi fraternity, will face charges of third degree murder, Pocono Mountain Regional Police said in a press release Monday.

More than 30 others will be charged with a range of other crimes, including assault, conspiracy and hindering apprehension, in connection with Deng’s death. The charges were recommended by a Pennsylvania grand jury after a year-long investigation into the death.

Deng, who went by Michael, died during a fraternity retreat to the Poconos in December 2013. The students were playing a game called “the glass ceiling,” according the release. Deng was blindfolded and forced to wear a weighted backpack while making his way across a field. Meanwhile, his fellow fraternity members repeatedly tackled him, knocking him off track and into the ground.

After one-too-many tackles, Deng was knocked unconscious. According to the press release, a medical examiner found that he suffered “multiple blows and impacts to his body including and sustaining a significant head injury” and that he was “subjected to repeated blunt force trauma which was applied to three different organ systems of the body,” including the head, the torso and the thighs.

There were “at least three clear impacts to the head,” said the release, and a “massive bruise to the back due to repeated blunt force impacts which resulted in traumatic asphyxia.”

For a while, the other young men did nothing, according to Pocono Mountain Regional Police. Allegedly, some left the house, while others contacted a national Pi Delta Psi representative, Andy Meng, who told them to hide fraternity items. A few frantically searched online to try and diagnose Deng’s condition.

But when Deng failed to wake up, three of his fellow students brought him to the hospital, telling officials that the young man had passed out after falling over while the group wrestled in the snow, according to NBC. Later, the true story of the brutal “Glass Ceiling” game emerged.

Deng, who was scratched, cut and bruised in addition to suffering major head trauma, was placed on life support. He died of
And E. David Christine Jr., the district attorney in Monroe County, where Deng died, told CNN that the students made matters worse by not calling an ambulance.

"The transport was done in a private vehicle ... which means this poor victim wasn't receiving any medical attention until the time he actually made it to the hospital."

The five facing murder charges are Charles Lai, Kenny Kwan, Raymond Lam, Daniel Li and Sheldon Wong. The fraternity is also being charged.

Hugh H. Mo, an attorney for one of the 37 students charged, said in a statement to NBC that the "across-the-board charges against all the young men in the house and outside in the backyard is not justified nor provable," and added that 36 of the 37 students were "overcharged."

Christine, the district attorney, said he agreed with the grand jury's recommendations.

"We believe the recommendations were sound and worthy of action on the part of the commonwealth," he told the New York Times.

He said it took nearly two years to file charges because authorities had to figure out who among the dozens who were there bore the most responsibility for the death.

Deng and his fellow fraternity members attended Baruch College, a school in the City University of New York system attended mostly by commuter students from Brooklyn and Queens. The school is known more for its history and academic rigor — Jonas Salk and Upton Sinclair went there — than for a raucous Greek system. None of the fraternities or sororities had group houses on campus, and Pi Delta Psi met in a tiny office space shared with two other clubs, according to the Times.

Pi Delta Psi, which disbarred the Baruch chapter after Deng's death, is an Asian American cultural fraternity, according to its Web site. The group says it is guided by "four pillars": academic achievement, cultural awareness, righteousness, and friendship/loyalty.

The national president of the fraternity, Andy Meng, told NBC that the trip was "an unsanctioned event that was strictly prohibited by our organization." Meng, the Pi Delta Psi representative who allegedly spoke to the students after Deng was knocked unconscious, is among those being charged with hazing, hindering apprehension and criminal conspiracy, according to Pocono Mountain Regional Police.

Officials at Baruch also said they didn't know about the retreat.
hazing since 1970," the Dengs said in a statement. "Fraternities and their members must be held accountable, and this step by authorities is an important one."

The family is seeking an end to the pledging process, which they say is responsible for their son's death.

Deng was one of four new pledges being initiated during the Poconos retreat, according to the Times. A freshman from Queens, he had graduated from the prestigious Bronx High School of Science that spring, according to NBC.

When he graduated, the quote beneath his yearbook photo read, "If people are doubting how far you'll go, go so far that you can't hear them anymore."
Grand Jury Recommends Charges Against Fraternity Members in Baruch College Student's Death

By NY1 News
Monday, September 14, 2015 at 10:32 PM EDT

A grand jury is recommending charges be brought against more than thirty-three fraternity members in connection with the death of a Baruch College student.

Prosecutors say Pi Delta Psi Fraternity members fatally assaulted 19-year-old Chun "Michael" Deng in a hazing ritual in the Poconos in 2013.

They say Deng was blindfolded, speared and forced to carry a 30-pound backpack before he passed out.

Officials say fraternity members hid evidence and changed Deng's clothes before taking him to the hospital, over an hour later.

Deng's family lawyer, Douglas Feinberg, says the fraternity should be held responsible for the incident.

"It was clear to the individuals there that he needed emergency medical care, but they didn't get him to the hospital and then when they finally did get him to the hospital and there was the beginning of a potential police inquiry they began to hide evidence of the fraternity. It absolutely needs to be charged.

Everything that Michael was doing was in connection with trying to join that fraternity and that fraternity," Feinberg says.

Six fraternity members are facing homicide charges.

Baruch College has since cut ties with the organization.
37 fraternity members charged in hazing death of pledge

By Jamie Altman, Chapman University September 15, 2015 8:18 am

Five Pi Delta Psi members at Baruch College in New York City were charged with third-degree murder on Monday for the 2013 hazing death of student and fraternity pledge Chun "Michael" Deng, according to multiple reports.

Thirty-two others face criminal charges in assault, hindering apprehension and hazing, according to The New York Times.

In December of 2013, Deng, a 19-year-old freshman
at Baruch, was attending a fraternity retreat in Pennsylvania where he was forced to carry a backpack filled with 30 lbs. of sand and walk blindfolded across a frozen yard. During this hazing ritual — called the "glass ceiling" — Pi Delta Psi members attempted to get in his way and tackle him, according to a Times' account of a Pocono Mountain Regional Police Department statement.

The statement, it reports, went on to say that these tackles allegedly involved members picking him up and throwing him on the ground, an act referred to as "spear." Although Deng complained of head pains, he continued the process until he was knocked out. The fraternity delayed in seeking medical help, the Times reported.

Fraternity members told authorities that they saw Deng fall to the ground, but couldn't make out who pushed him because it was dark, according to an affidavit obtained by CNN. They then brought Deng, who was unconscious, inside near a fire, where they called the Pi Delta Psi national president Andy Meng. Meng told the men to hide all fraternity materials, according to the affidavit.

The next morning, members transported Deng to the hospital, where he died of head trauma.

A week after Deng's death, Meng released a statement condemning the chapter, and announced that National Pi Delta Psi was revoking its affiliation with Baruch College.

"Baruch Colony has violated the values and rules of our organization, including our strict no hazing policy," Meng wrote. "As such, they shall no longer be recognized as having any association with Pi Delta Psi. Additionally, we will also revoke the individual memberships of any member found involved in this incident."
Monroe County district attorney David Christine told the Times that he thinks the charges are fair, and will follow the grand jury's recommendations.

"We believe the recommendations were sound and worth of action on the part of the commonwealth," he said.

These charges of third-degree murder, which does not imply premeditation, could land the fraternity members in prison for up to 20 years.
Cheating allegations rise under de Blasio, continuing a Bloomberg-era trend

By Patrick Wall @patrick_wall pwall@chalkbeat.org
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Allegations of test-tampering and grade-changing by educators this year are on a pace to exceed the number of complaints made in 2014, continuing a rise in such allegations that began during the previous administration and has persisted under Mayor Bill de Blasio.

The allegations come as New York City has scrambled to respond to a string of reports this year involving academic fraud and grade inflation, such as a high school that let students earn credits without receiving instruction and an elementary school principal
who forged student answers on a state exam. Last month, the education department established a $5 million task force to closely monitor schools' test scores and how they assign credits.

The rise in complaints does not automatically signal a rise in misconduct; it could also indicate that staffers are making greater use of an anonymous email complaint system, for instance. Still, the growing number of allegations suggests that some teachers and principals continue to feel intense pressure to show test score, pass rate, and graduation rate gains, even as de Blasio has tried to de-emphasize those numbers as the primary measures of schools' success.

"Habits are stronger than words until someone comes in and says you can't do that anymore," said Lehman High School math teacher Jeffrey Greenberg, explaining that de Blasio's rhetorical shifts did not translate into different grading policies or credit-assigning practices at his school last year.

By early August, more than 300 complaints that fall into the category of educator test-tampering or grade-changing had been filed with the office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation, an independent office that handles adult misconduct charges in the school system. That is the same number of such complaints made during all of 2014, making it very likely that this year's total will be higher.

Last year's allegations already exceeded the number from 2013, continuing a trend that began under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Under Bloomberg, who rated and closed some schools largely on the basis of test scores and graduation rates, the number of educator cheating allegations more than tripled, according to a 2011 New York Times analysis.

De Blasio scrapped his predecessor's A-to-F school ratings and launched a program to revamp rather than close low-performing schools. However, those schools still could face closure or state takeover if they do not show academic gains within a short period. And despite de Blasio's ambivalence about test scores, they may soon play a larger role in teacher evaluations under a new state law pushed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

"Things are getting worse," said Arthur Goldstein, an English language teacher at Francis Lewis High School, referring to the state's teacher evaluations. "The pressure they put on teachers is just terrible."

The cheating allegations represent only a portion of the complaints made to Richard Condon, the special commissioner of investigation. Last year, his office fielded 5,287
complaints — the most in its 25-year history.

The office investigated just three of last year’s 300 test-tampering and grade-changing complaints and did not substantiate any of them, according to Condon’s spokeswoman, Regina Romain. This year, 10 of those complaints are under investigation, she said.

Still, the office refers most academic fraud allegations to the education department’s investigative unit, the Office of Special Investigations. Education Department spokesman Harry Hartfield would not say how many cheating complaints the agency has received or investigated this year.

The department’s new six-member “Academic Integrity Task Force” will examine the way schools award credits, including their use of credit-recovery courses, which allow students to earn credits for classes they previously failed. While credit recovery has come under new scrutiny, it is a longstanding practice in city high schools that many educators say was ramped up under the Bloomberg administration as schools sought to avoid sanctions tied to student credit-earning and graduation rates.

In addition to the task force, staffers at the department’s new school-support centers will review school data for potential improprieties. And at any school where allegations have been made, officials are investigating student transcripts and the school’s procedures for giving credits and enrolling students in courses, Hartfield said in a statement.

“We have zero tolerance for schools that don’t abide by our regulations,” he said.

The moves suggest the department will try to more aggressively seek out instances of fraud, rather than wait for whistleblowers. They follow a spate of high-profile investigations and media reports about grade inflation and test tampering.

In July, the department removed the principal of John Dewey High School in Brooklyn after a yearlong investigation found that students who had failed classes were able to pass by taking credit-recovery courses that consisted of little more than completing work packets — sometimes without any instruction from teachers. One teacher was told to give students credit simply for attending those courses, the investigation found.

In a series of articles this summer, the New York Post documented more instances of credit-recovery classes that appeared to violate city and state regulations. Several stories focused on grade inflation at William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens, which is now under investigation.
In April, the principal of Teachers College Community School in Harlem filled in questions left blank by third graders on this year's English exams, according to a city investigation. Shortly after a whistleblower filed a report about the principal, Jeanene Worrell-Breeden, she jumped in front a subway train and later died.

David Bloomfield, an education professor at the CUNY Graduate Center and Brooklyn College, said the new task force could help the city move beyond whistleblowers as its main tool for catching academic fraud by educators.

"I'm hoping that the task force will soon report its findings and recommendations," he said, "and institute a 360-degree system of prevention, monitoring, and identification."