



## THE SOCIETY OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE CAMPANILE

Fellow Knights,

Recent articles in the University Times, which I understand to have been somewhat misleading and improper, have created some general media interest in the Knights. Hence this note to update you.

It has been alleged that 'hazing' - a term denoting bullying and/or humiliation at initiation ceremonies - occurred at a private party, given in his private rooms, hosted by the Knights' President to welcome new Knights in College. I am assured by the President that bullying and/or humiliation played no part in the evening's proceedings. That the University Times also reports the Knights to be a "secret society", when we are anything but, further suggests these articles are not to be taken too seriously.

But what is serious is the behaviour of the University Times which involved trespass, invasion of privacy, and bugging. Their two reporters gained unauthorised access to a private residence in which the Knights President's rooms are located, they hid within this private residence while attempting to overhear a private party and they placed a bugging device in the doorway of the President's rooms. Such behaviour has disturbing implications for the privacy rights of all students in College and the University Times' behaviour is currently the subject of investigation by the Junior Dean.

In the meantime, as some Knights have been approached for comment and others might be, some points to bear in mind.

Media coverage has repeatedly described the Knights as an all-male College Society in a manner implying gender bias. This is inept and/or misleading journalism as the reporters involved should be aware the Knights have a sister College Society in the all-female Heraeans.

The Knights are described as a "secret society" which, very obviously, is not true. Woodward & Bernstein would, I'm certain, have uncovered our Society's website within minutes.

The Knights have also been described as elitist. This is true but not in the pejorative sense implied. Knights are an elite in the same sense that scholars can be described as an elite. Both are appellations earned through excellence. As ever, the criteria for election to the Knights remain: active high-level involvement in sport in College; participation in administration in the College Club promoting a specific sport; social skills to welcome sporting visitors to College.

A widely supported student petition may soon result in resources granted to the University Times being reduced. Some have sought to represent this petition as an attack on 'freedom of the press' but my understanding is that it actually arose from student disquiet with the University Times'



trespass, invasion of privacy, and bugging. In any case I am assured that the petition was not, contrary to what some have suggested, instigated by the Knights in College.

It is possible that Knights, and particularly those who attended the recent Annual Dinner, will be contacted for comment by media. If so, I would ask that you refer such requests to me for comment on behalf of the Knights.

I understand the Junior Dean's investigation is very soon to conclude and I will advise you of the outcome. In the meantime, do contact me directly (or through [admin@knightsofthecampanile.com](mailto:admin@knightsofthecampanile.com)) with any questions or thoughts.

Regards,

Peter Ledbetter

Master

1<sup>st</sup> April 2019