

# LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

## Cheerleading Contract

### I. PHILOSOPHY

The Longwood University cheerleading program is a student activity. As a student activity, its first and foremost responsibility to the student is to support and enhance the student's academic experience. Secondly, the program should aid in developing the student participant into a responsible, mature and independent adult. Specifically, the program is a means of improving the student's mental and physical well-being. Cheerleading (1) will enhance their leadership skills; (2) will enhance their ability to respond to life's situations, e.g., conflict/frustration, win/loss, manage one's emotions; (3) will enhance their social develop, e.g., awareness of one's self, development of self-confidence, development of interpersonal relationships; (4) will learn time management and (5) the importance of taking responsibility and ownership of one's actions; and (6) generally will maximize their opportunity for student growth, change and maturity.

### II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL:** To be exemplary representatives of Longwood University

**OBJECTIVES:** The primary purpose of the cheerleader is to be a member of the team, which has as its goal the support of intercollegiate athletics and LU. That support is directed into four major areas, as follows: (1) to lead the cheers; to raise the level of fan support for intercollegiate athletics; to lead in positive vocal support for the team; to solicit that support from Longwood fans and to project that support to others, the University and its teams; (2) to participate in the athletic activity know as cheerleading by performing tumbling, partner stunts, motions, pyramids, dance movements; to perfect this athletic activity by keeping the crowd attention/direction focused on the field/floor where the intercollegiate activity is taking place, and for entertainment; (3) to serve as public relations ambassadors of intercollegiate athletics and Longwood University; to uphold, reflect and project the goals and ideals of the University; to appear at University activities, functions and programs, at charitable and public causes, to promote intercollegiate athletics and the University; (4) to represent the University and the cheerleading program, as a premiere University with cheer program excellence.

### III. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

It is imperative for Cheerleading members to remember they are representing Longwood University, the Longwood University Athletic Department and the State of Virginia. Conduct and behavior must be exemplary at all times, not just when in uniform. Therefore, Longwood University Cheerleaders will conduct themselves in a lawful manner and in compliance with all city, state and federal laws and the Longwood University Student Code of Conduct described in the Longwood University student handbook. Cheerleaders are also subject to the LU Athletic Department Code of Conduct.

#### IV. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity for selection to the cheerleading team shall not be denied to any person(s) because of race, color, creed, or national origin if otherwise qualified.

#### V. ACADEMIC STANDARDS – First and Foremost Priority. You are here for an education.

1. Cheerleaders must maintain 12 credit hours and receive a 2.0 grade point average each semester they are on the squad.
2. All cheerleading members must have a 2.0 GPA to tryout.
3. Cheerleading members who receive below a 2.0 will be on probation for one semester (Spring GPA lower than a 2.0, probation for the following fall semester / Fall semester GPA lower than a 2.0, probation for the spring semester and not able to tryout).
4. Cheerleaders who have a second consecutive semester below a 2.0 will be dismissed from the team.
5. Cheerleading members are expected to attend all classes. The Cheer Coach will conduct random checks.
6. Periodically each semester, cheerleading members will be directed to have their professors complete a grade form and return it to the appropriate athletic staff member.
7. Class excuses for official Cheerleading travel must be given to professor's prior to travel.
8. Study sessions and tutor sessions will be scheduled as necessary.

#### VI. RULES AND REGULATIONS

##### A. GENERAL

1. All squad members are expected to participate in **ALL** practice sessions, games, squad meetings, squad projects, pep rallies, fund raisers, camps, study hall, team workouts, and appearances mandated by the coach unless properly excused.
2. All squad members are expected to attend scheduled games and practices, regardless of holiday/academic break periods.
3. Disrespect to the Cheerleading Coach, University staff, alumni, and/or fellow teammates **WILL NOT** be tolerated and will result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
4. All cheerleaders are considered alternates. Attitude, appearances, physical fitness, knowledge and ability, and endurance are important and will determine if a cheerleader performs or participates.
5. The Cheerleading Coach will choose Captains for the Cheerleading squad. Decisions will be based on leadership skills, attitude, seniority, and experience.
6. If a Captain is not fulfilling her position, she will be asked to step down and will be replaced by a selection of the Cheerleading Coach.
7. Duties of the Captain will be determined by the Cheerleading Coach.
8. Each squad member is responsible for all of the clothing, uniforms, and equipment assigned to him/her. Care must be taken to insure such clothing, uniforms, and equipment is in a clean and presentable condition. Each squad member shall

- safeguard his/her clothing, uniforms, and equipment and shall be, therefore, personally liable for its replacement for loss or damage, excluding normal wear and tear. In the event a uniform must be altered for fitting purposes, all alterations MUST be cleared by the coach.
9. Further, uniforms are the responsibility of the individual cheerleader and will be fixed and/or replaced if damaged, and cleaned before each event and/or game.
  10. LU cheerleaders are known, subject to scrutiny, and can easily be the object of critique for their behavior or actions. Any actions that compromise the image, reputation, or goals of LU or the LU cheerleading program are subject to immediate dismissal from the squad.
  11. Cheerleaders may be expected to meet certain financial obligations. All practice wear, shoes, briefs, t-shirts, fleeces, sweatshirts, and shorts will be purchased by the cheerleader. Female team members should budget around \$150. **This is a non-refundable equipment fee.**
  12. Cheerleaders are not permitted to wear or display piercings (belly rings, nose rings, tongue rings, etc.) or tattoos of any kind during cheerleading events.
  13. No public display of affections during scheduled events is permitted.
  14. Cheerleaders are advised, if a personal relationship creates a conflict of interest, causes conflict in the program, interrupts the work/goals of the parties involved or other cheerleaders, or causes a negative practice/performance environment, one or both parties may be asked to resign from the team.
  15. In the instance that members are dismissed or voluntarily quit the squad, they are obligated to return all LU issued equipment immediately. Failure to do so will result in hold being placed on students accounts blocking future class registration, accessing transcripts, and accessing grades at semester end.
  16. If a squad member is dismissed or quits the squad during the year, that individual will relinquish the opportunity to try-out for the squad the next academic year.

## B. PRACTICES/WORKOUTS

1. Cheerleaders shall:
  - a) Not practice as a squad, or a portion of the squad, without a coach present
  - b) Attend all practices and required workouts
  - c) Not be tardy or absent from practice
  - d) Notify coaches **as soon as possible** if he/she finds it impossible to attend practice/workouts or knows he/she is going to be tardy
  - e) Not consume alcoholic beverages before practice
  - f) Cooperate with the captains and other team members, concentrating on individual improvement, listening to instructions, and letting the captains and/or coach know if there are any problems
2. Any skill performed at tryouts must be successfully executed to maintain your spot on the squad. This includes gymnastics, stunts, leaps, turns, and other skills.
3. Cheerleading members must be on time for all practices, workouts, sporting events, meetings, appearances, and any other team event or activity.
  - The first infraction will result in warning
  - The second will require sitting out a game or event
  - The third will result in dismissal from the team

4. In the event of tardiness, illness, or academic issues, all cheerleaders will be expected to notify the cheerleading coach 2 hours in advance of practice. Cheerleaders should call the Coach on their cell and leave a message at both places if there is no answer. Cheerleaders should also email the Coach in this event and explain the situation.
5. The cheerleader is still expected to attend practice if they are sick unless properly excused by the Coach prior to practice.
6. Academic absences are automatically excused but the Cheerleading Coach needs to be notified at least one week in advance.
7. If a cheerleader is excused from practice, they are responsible for the material and information given during the missed practice and will be completely prepared prior to the next practice or meeting.
8. An excused absence is strictly at the discretion of the coaching staff. An excused absence consists of a family illness/death or academic reasons. Proof of each must be shown to the coach to be excused.
9. Any unexcused absence or no call/no show will warrant immediate dismissal from the team.
10. Any conflicts with class and practices/workouts must be reported to the Cheerleading Coach at least **one week** in advance and in writing. All conflicts must also have supporting documentation.
11. Beepers and/or cell phones should be turned off or put in a silent mode at the beginning of practice.
12. Excessive long fingernails must be cut down. Only clear polish or a French manicure is to be worn while in uniform.
13. No gum or jewelry is allowed during practices and/or during scheduled events.
14. Practices take precedent over sorority, fraternity and other organizational commitments.
15. Squad members are expected to perform up to full potential at all functions. Cheerleaders unable to perform 100% at practices (due to illness or injury) are not eligible to cheer any games falling within the same week unless otherwise stated by the coach.
16. All cheerleading practices are closed to the public and individuals not part of the cheerleading program. Only the coaching staff may make exceptions to this rule.
17. Only the current squad members and coaches/advisors are allowed to participate in practice sessions. Anyone else in attendance must be approved in advance by the coach.
18. Cheerleaders, in compliance with AACCA regulations, may not participate in approved stunting without a spot unless the stunt is a one arm stunt or has a double twisting cradle. All unapproved stunts must be performed with a spotter present. An approved stunt is one that has been successfully completed 3 consecutive times in the presence of the cheerleading coach.

### **C. GAMES/APPEARANCES/EVENTS**

1. Cheerleaders shall:
  - a) Attend all basketball games, required scrimmages, and/or special scheduled games, fundraisers, or activities.
  - b) Arrive at the game warm-up site, taped and stretched 1 hour and 30 minutes prior to tip off, unless the advisor or coach designates an earlier or later time

- c) Not consume alcoholic beverages before a game.
  - d) Perform only approved skills that have been learned, practiced, and perfected (all partners will be required to hit a stunt (3) consecutive times prior to scheduled events in order to perform that skill); if a new skill is attempted without approval, all persons involved will be subject to disciplinary action;
  - e) Must not attempt new stunts while in front of crowds at scheduled games/events.
2. Tardiness will not be accepted! **If a member is late for a game or performance, they will forfeit their position to perform.**
  3. In the event of tardiness, illness, or academic issues, all cheerleaders will be expected to notify the cheerleading coach 2 hours in advance and follow previous guidelines.
  4. An excused absence is strictly at the discretion of the coaching staff. An excused absence consists of a death in the family, family illness, and/or academic reasons. Proof of each must be shown to the coach to be excused.
  5. Cheerleaders who miss a scheduled appearance (game or other) without prior notification to and approval by the Coach will be dismissed from the squad.
  6. Any conflicts due to academic reasons that will cause you to miss a game or performance must be reported to the coach at the **start of the semester** in writing or as soon as they arrive. All conflicts must also have supporting documentation.
  7. Games take precedent over sorority, fraternity and other organizational commitments.
  8. Squad members are expected to perform up to full potential at all functions.
  9. No gum or jewelry is allowed during scheduled events.

## VII. SAFETY

The LU cheerleading team recognizes the increased athletic activity in cheerleading has resulted in an increased concern for safety. Cheerleading involves a variety of gymnastics, leaps, motions, turns, partner stunts/lifts, rotations, pyramids, dance and heights; participation in cheerleading involves a certain amount of danger of personal injury. Cheerleaders are placed on notice that improper conduct of cheerleading activity may result in catastrophic injury, paralysis or even death. In becoming a participant in this program, all cheerleaders voluntarily assume the risk involved by participating in practices, games, and other activities. In addition, cheerleaders must be aware that body piercing can be dangerous to the individual and fellow squad members, and will not be allowed during practices and performances.

Specific to the LU cheerleading team, the cheerleading Head Coach is AACCA (American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors) certified. The LU cheerleading program at all times will abide by the College Safety Rules set forth by AACCA.

## VIII. HEALTH AND LIFE-STYLE

The LU cheerleading program is committed to promoting and fostering healthy lifestyles and eating habits for squad members. Conduct which opposes this philosophy and/or conduct which poses unacceptable risk and disregard for the health, safety and welfare of participants is unacceptable and will result in recommendations for appropriate counseling and/or additional actions taken by the Cheerleading Coach.

Cheerleaders at LU must be excellent athletes. Cheerleading involves some aspects of several athletic activities, e.g., rotation and tumbling of gymnastics, stamina of basketball, strength of bodybuilding or football, balance and movement of dance, etc. A primary activity of the LU cheerleaders is the partner/quad stunt. Pyramids are stunts combines vertically (in levels, not to exceed two-and-a-half human heights) and horizontally (side-by-side stunts). The nature of these activities demands certain general physical requirements of the LU cheerleader. Squad members acting as bases must have sufficient strength to base pyramids and to lift, hold, throw and catch fliers. Fliers must be of appropriate size and weight such that they can be lifted, held, thrown and caught safely and they must be able to support the weight of themselves and another if necessary.

## **IX. INJURIES/ILLNESSES**

Any illness shall be reported to the coach immediately and with appropriate documentation. Any injury must be reported to the coach and LU medical trainer immediately.

Any injury suffered during practices, games, or other official functions should be brought to the attention of the coaching staff and athletic trainer immediately.

Should the injury be able to be aided to wellness through rehabilitation, cheerleaders must follow all rehabilitation recommendations given by the LU trainer or doctor. Repeated failure to follow through with rehabilitation recommendations will result in removal from the team. Cheerleaders must keep all rehabilitations appointments with the trainer or they are subject to the consequences of a missed practice.

Should the injury limit types of participation, cheerleaders will perform all items permitted at 100%. This includes conditioning, stretches, and other activities.

All injured athletes are required to attend all scheduled events, regardless of injury. All injured students must sit in close proximity to practice and be attentive to the things occurring in practice so as when they return, there is little confusion.

In an injury or illness incapacitates a squad member, he/she shall not be permitted to practice and cheer for a period of time as determined by the trainer or a doctor. Generally, another member shall replace an injure/ill member of the squad until he/she is fully recovered. Return to participation at games or practices **will be determined by a trainer or a doctor.**

If a doctor recommends that a squad member no longer cheer, due to injury or a health problem, the squad member shall be removed from the squad. If chronic illness or injury causes a squad member to miss games or practices repeatedly, the squad member may be removed from the squad by the coach.

## **X. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND NICOTINE**

As stated earlier, cheerleaders are expected, first, to be good, law-abiding citizens of the nation, state, and city and have the skills to ascertain right from wrong. This expectation is foremost when it comes to alcoholic beverages and nicotine. Cheerleaders are reminded that, as highly visible members of the University community, their actions and behavior are under constant observation. While in uniform, but also while not in uniform, LU cheerleaders are known, subject to scrutiny, and can easily be the object of critique for their behavior or actions. Students should have an understanding of the LU Student Code of Conduct.

Members of the squad shall adhere to the following rules:

- Cheerleaders shall not consume alcoholic beverages or use any form of nicotine before or during a game or a practice; and
- Cheerleaders shall not offer to procure for or attempt to coerce cheerleaders who are under 21 or who do not want to drink alcoholic beverages into doing the same.
- Without special permission of the coach, cheerleaders, while in uniform, shall **not** go into any place where alcoholic beverages are served. Exceptions would be events such as an official appearance at LU Athletics or LU Alumni Associations events.
- Cheerleaders who violate these rules shall be subject to serious disciplinary measures up to and including immediate dismissal from the squad.
- If there is a time in which a LU cheerleader causes embarrassment to the University, the community, or the team; they may be immediately dismissed from the squad.

In summary, cheerleaders are expected to be good citizens and, therefore, carefully and faithfully abide by University rules and regulations and the laws and ordinances of the city or state which they live or travel.

## **XI. DRUGS**

The University is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for the cheerleading program. Thus, conduct which involves the unlawful possession, use, dispensation, distribution or manufacture of controlled substances by a cheerleader at any official cheerleading functions and/or activity **shall result in immediate termination from the LU cheerleading program.** These individuals will also be referred to the Office of Student Life for disciplinary action.

Similarly, the unlawful possession, use, dispensation, distribution or manufacture of controlled substances by a cheerleader at any other time shall result in appropriate discipline, up to and including termination from the cheerleading program. These individuals may also be referred to the Office of Student Life for disciplinary action.

The legal use of prescribed medicines under the direction of a LU athletic trainer or personal licensed physician is permitted.

## **XII. ANTI-HAZING POLICY**

Longwood University is committed to the belief that abusive behavior, harassment and assault does not build character, does not build leadership skills, and does not foster group loyalty or unity. Hazing is an abuse of power and relationships, and its purpose is to demean others.

Hazing is defined as any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off Longwood property, by either fraternity/sorority organizations, student clubs/organizations, athletic teams, individual students or student groups, to produce mental or physical discomfort, endangerment of life, embarrassment, harassment, intimidation, or ridicule. Willingness to engage in any hazing activity does not render the Anti-Hazing Policy unenforceable

All members of student clubs, organizations, and athletic teams must indicate each year that they have read the Anti-Hazing Policy.

The Anti-Hazing Policy includes information on designing new member activities, campus resources, and what to do if one is a victim of hazing. The full policy can be read in the Student Handbook.

### **XIII. ALTERNATES**

Should any permanent position open on the squad, the coach can choose an alternate to fill the position. The criteria for filling the position will be based upon which alternate, best fills the spot, at the given time. In addition, the coach may hold open tryouts. The same rules and expectations bind all cheerleaders who fill or replace regular squad members.

### **XIV. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Squad members are required to work as a team. Disputes among squad members should first be resolved between the squad members who are involved in the conflict. If an impasse exists, either individual may ask that the team captain assist with resolution. The team captain will meet with the individuals involved. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the team captain will notify the coach. The coach will meet with the squad members to assist with the resolution of the matter.

### **XV. ENFORCEMENT OF THESE GUIDELINES**

Participation as a LU Cheerleader is voluntary and is done so with the understanding that there are certain requirements and expectations that are necessary in order to maintain a high-quality cheerleading program. Failure to comply with these guidelines can result in the Cheerleading Coach/Advisor making a decision to either temporarily suspend an individual from one or more performances/events or to permanently dismiss the individual from the squad. Other rules concerning cheerleaders may be verbally communicated or in written form by the Cheerleading Coach.

1. Violations of any cheerleading rules shall be subject to discipline. The coach with consultation and advice of the athletic department and university always makes the final decision on discipline sanctions.
2. A serious violation of these rules or repeated violations shall result in one's being suspended from the squad. Less serious violations shall result in one's loss of the opportunity to cheer at a game. A squad member may be suspended from the cheerleading program for one or more games due to violations of these rules.
3. These rules and regulations are subject to addition and change when found necessary and beneficial. The coach makes final acceptance of all rules.

Squad members may receive disciplinary action for the following:

1. Missing practice/workout without approval of the coach.
2. Being late to practice/workout without approval of the coach.
3. Safety violation.
4. Violations of any team rule or regulation.
5. Missing a game or scheduled event without prior approval of the coach.
6. Other—left to the coach, based on the severity of the situation.

## **XVI. EXIT INTERVIEWS**

Exit interviews will be conducted with each squad member after the last basketball game and before spring tryouts. Each cheerleader is required to participate in the exit interview, regardless of their status with the squad during the coming year. All equipment and clothing will be returned at this time.

## **XVII. CHANGES TO THESE GUIDELINES**

The Cheerleading Coach may make changes in these guidelines during the year. Any changes will be provided in writing to all members of each squad prior to implementation.