Criminal hazing charges have been filed against 22 students at Northern Illinois University following the alcohol-related death of a freshman at a fraternity initiation event.

The charges announced Monday come about six weeks after David Bogenberger, 19, was found dead at the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity house in DeKalb.

Tests done after his Nov. 2 death show Bogenberger, of Palatine, had a blood-alcohol level more than four times the .08 limit at which a driver is legally considered drunk. An autopsy concluded that he died of heart arrythmia, but it listed alcohol intoxication as "a significant condition" that contributed to his death.

Five student leaders of the now-suspended fraternity — including two from Naperville — face felony hazing charges that could send them to prison for up to three years. Seventeen students who belong to the fraternity were charged with misdemeanors that carry a maximum one-year jail sentence, DeKalb County prosecutors and DeKalb Police said in a statement.

Bogenberger's family on Monday released an emotional appeal asking college and fraternity officials to end "the hazing and initiation rituals" that sometimes prove deadly.

"No other family should endure what we are going through. Yet we are losing these talented, beautiful and hopeful young people because of illegal drinking unrestrained by maturity and exacerbated by social pressure," his parents, Gary and Ruth, along with two siblings, said in a written statement.

The evening before he died, Bogenberger had taken part in a "Parent's Night" pledging event at the fraternity, authorities said. Bogenberger and other pledges were shuttled between several rooms in the fraternity, asked a series of questions, then given vodka and other liquor, authorities alleged.

"This resulted in the pledges drinking a large quantity of alcohol" during a two-hour span, officials said in their statement.

Several other pledges who took part in the initiation either became ill or passed out because of the amount of alcohol they drank, police and prosecutors alleged.

The five students charged with felonies are fraternity president Alexander Jandik, 21, of Naperville; vice president James Harvey, 21, of DeKalb; pledge adviser Omar Salameh, 21, of DeKalb; chapter secretary Patrick Merrill, 19, and event planner Steven Libert, 20, of Naperville.

They face felony charges for allegedly providing alcohol to underage pledges and creating a situation "where the pledges felt compelled to consume alcohol," authorities allege.

Bogenberger's relatives are still struggling to come to terms with his sudden death.

"They are coping. Every day is emotional," said the family's attorney, Peter Coladarci.

David Bogenberger was following in his father's footsteps by attending NIU, though his dad didn't belong to a fraternity.

David Bogenberger wanted to join Pi Kappa Alpha. "He liked being liked and accepted. He was gregarious," Coladarci said.

NIU officials temporarily suspended the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity after Bogenberger died, saying the pledge event was unsanctioned. On Monday, school officials said they have filed judicial charges against 31 students who belong to the fraternity for violating campus rules.

Punishments could include expulsion for the students and permanent removal of the fraternity, NIU spokesman Paul Palian said.

"There are rules to be followed by students and student organizations," Palian said. "It appears in this case those rules and standards of conduct weren't followed."

Source: http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/17081716-418/22-in-niu-frat-charged-with-hazing-in-freshmans-alcohol-related-death.html