

## **Southeastern Conference Senior Student Affairs Officers and Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers of the North American Interfraternity Conference Partner on Coalition**

*At Power 5 Conference, organizations commit to collaborating on the wellbeing of fraternities*

AUBURN, October 16, 2019 – A coalition has formed between senior student affairs officers of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) schools and the executive officers of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) member organizations on SEC campuses. The group will collaborate to adopt current best practices and develop next-best practices to enhance the fraternity experiences on member campuses.

The representative members of the coalition affirm the importance of the fraternity experience in the academic success and personal development of individual students. Additionally, they are committed to developing lifetime allegiances to both alma mater and member organizations.

“Fraternity and sorority life in the Southeastern Conference is an integral part of a vibrant climate on the 14 SEC campuses,” said Dr. Danny Pugh, vice president for student affairs at Texas A&M University. “The senior student affairs officers of the SEC came together in February of 2018 to affirm our commitment to these students and organizations. Our goals are to further develop best practices within the conference and to engage the collective student leaders of these organizations to meet current and future challenges. Our most recent work with the North American Interfraternity Conference presents a new opportunity to positively advance these organizations for the foreseeable future.”

With more than 100,000 students combined in fraternities and sororities, SEC chapters and individual members make significant, constructive impact in their communities. Specifically, research shows that academic performance, retention, philanthropy, campus leadership, and alumni involvement is enhanced through engagement in fraternal membership. Nationally, approximately one in 10 fraternity and sorority members attend SEC institutions.

“Our recent collaboration with NIC reflects our commitment to enhancing the fraternal experiences on our respective campuses,” said Dr. Brandi Hephner LaBanc, vice chancellor for student affairs at the University of Mississippi. “Our campus communities have worked tirelessly, but independently, to strengthen fraternity and sorority programs. With nearly one in 10 fraternity and sorority members attending an SEC institution, we are optimistic that this approach will provide a support structure to strengthen the experience for all of our students while also creating future best practices for universities across the nation. ”

Leadership within SEC and NIC organizations have committed to open and transparent communication within the collective group as well as individual member institutions and member organizations, while recognizing the unique attributes of each organization.

“Strong relationships move the needle for positive advancement which is why our members are thrilled to partner with the SEC to better serve the conference’s alumni and students,” said

Judson Horras, NIC president and CEO. “We hope this partnership can be a catalyst for more collaboration among higher education and our member fraternities.”

The group has committed to equal and timely communication through annual meetings and strategic planning and will support the annual SEC Fraternity & Sorority Student Leader Best Practice Summit each year. The inaugural summit is planned for January 2020.

**Auburn University** was established in 1856 as the East Alabama Male College, 20 years after the city of Auburn's founding. In 1872, under the Morrill Act, the school became the first land-grant college in the South and was renamed the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama. In 1899 the name again was changed, to the Alabama Polytechnic Institute. Finally, in 1960 the name of the school was changed to Auburn University, a title more in keeping with its location and expressing the varied academic programs and larger curriculum of a major university.

For more than 160 years, an Auburn degree has prepared and inspired a new generation of students to lead and innovate in their professions, their communities and the world. Auburn is a place where dreams become reality through hard work, supportive professors and an encouraging community. As a top 100 research university, we're among the nation's elite, but we're also known for our "Auburn Family" - a quarter-of-a-million alumni around the globe, ranked among the 50 most powerful alumni networks in the world, or what we call the Auburn Advantage.

**About the Southeastern Conference:** A pioneer in the integration of higher education and athletic competition, the Southeastern Conference (SEC) is a leader on the national landscape for intercollegiate athletics in the 21st century. Since its formation in 1933, the SEC has achieved stature and stability by designating governing/voting power to the presidents of the member institutions. These university leaders determine the policies of the conference and through the years this involvement has been the principal source of strength in the evolution of the SEC. Throughout its 82-year history, the SEC has provided leadership on the vital issues facing intercollegiate competition.

Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Mississippi, Mississippi State, Tennessee and Vanderbilt have been in the SEC since its formation in 1933. The league has expanded twice, adding Arkansas and South Carolina in 1991, then Missouri and Texas A&M in 2012. [www.secsports.com](http://www.secsports.com)

**About the North American Interfraternity Conference:** The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) is a trade association representing 66 inter/national men's fraternities. The current member organizations have 6,100 chapters located on 800 campuses, with 380,000 undergraduate members and 4.2 million alumni. NIC member organizations also represent a diverse range of fraternity men and interfraternal interests, including fraternities founded for leadership and business interests as well as faith-based, multicultural, historically black, and new or emerging fraternities. [www.nicfraternity.org](http://www.nicfraternity.org)

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**A Coalition Between the Senior Student Affairs Officers of the  
Southeastern Conference and the Executive Directors/Chief Executive  
Officers of the North American Interfraternity Conference Member  
Organizations on SEC Campuses**

**September 2019**

*Preamble*

The representative members of the coalition affirm the importance of the fraternal experience in the academic success and personal development of the individual student. Additionally, we strongly believe in developing lifetime allegiances to both alma mater and member organization.

*Commitments*

We, the representative members of the coalition, commit to open and transparent communication among the collective group as well as individual member institutions and member organizations. While recognizing potential unique attributes of member institutions and member organizations, we are committed to the following:

1. Recognizing the hierarchical equivalence between the Senior Student Affairs Officer of a Southeastern Conference member institution and the Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers of the North American Interfraternity Conference Member Organizations and our commitment to appropriate and timely communication between the parties.
2. The Senior Student Affairs Officers of the Southeastern Conference member institutions and the Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers of the North American Interfraternity Conference Member Organizations agree to meet annually and electronically conference quarterly. A sub-committee of coalition partners has been developed to set and arrange annual meetings/calls, establish agendas, etc.

3. Creating alignments between immediate past initiatives/efforts for a collaborative path forward relative to strategic and master planning.
4. Support, as appropriate, the future Southeastern Conference Student Fraternity & Sorority Student Leader Best Practice Summit. The summit will draw upon student leaders from the Southeastern Conference campuses who will highlight individual campus best practices and develop next best practices for adoption across conference member institutions.