**NIC Resolutions**

**Resolutions of the NIC House of Delegates**
**(re-affirmed and amended at the 2009 NIC House of Delegates)**[**Statement of Position Supporting the Constitutional Rights of Students**](http://www.nicindy.org/about/resolutions/#Constitutional%20Rights%20of%20Students)
[**Statement of Position Regarding Single-Gender Membership**](http://www.nicindy.org/about/resolutions/#Single%20Gender%20Membership)[**Statement of Position on Fostering Academic Achievement**](http://www.nicindy.org/about/resolutions/#Academic%20Achievement)
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[**Statement of Position on Hazing and Behavior**](http://www.nicindy.org/about/resolutions/#Hazing)
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**Statement of Position Supporting the Constitutional Rights of Students**

Free speech, free thought and the right of open association are American ideals to be nurtured and cultivated, especially in the college environment. The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) values the rights provided in the First Amendment of the Constitution and encourages college and university students to freely associate and to responsibly and properly exercise their freedom of speech.

Among many principles North-American Interfraternity Conference member fraternities share, the right to determine both membership and the practices and procedures by which membership is conferred is central.  Guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution and reaffirmed in exemptions from Title IX by the Education Amendments of 1972 as it applies to fraternal organizations, the right to determine and offer membership is an essential component in the heritage and tradition of the fraternal movement, grounded in the history of American freedom of association and speech.

The NIC has a strong record of supporting legislative efforts to protect the rights of freedom of association and freedom of speech at all college and university campuses.  The Conference acknowledges that colleges and universities have the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations applicable to all student organizations seeking to receive and maintain recognition.  The Conference asserts, however, that colleges and universities do not have the right to infringe on an organization's right to recruit members, or on a student's right to associate with an organization, if selected by the organization, on such terms and conditions as the student and the organization exclusively may agree.  The Conference continually affirms its support for the right of students to assemble into fraternal and other organizations, and to associate with each other in those organizations, free of restriction in their decision.

**Statement of Position Regarding Single-Gender Membership**

Fraternities and sororities have the right under the United States Constitution and civil rights laws to exist as single-gender organizations and to maintain that status, especially under the First and Fourteenth Amendments.  Further, Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972 provides that sexual discrimination shall not apply to membership practices of a social fraternity or social sorority that is exempt from taxation under section 501 of the IRS Code of 1954, the active membership of which consists primarily of students in attendance at an institution of higher education.

Beyond this, the North-American Interfraternity Conference affirms that men's and women's fraternities offer excellent opportunities for men and women to share a fraternal experience, and it supports the National Panhellenic Conference in its Resolution on Single-Sex Fraternities.  The NIC believes single-gender organizations develop the character of an individual by

* Providing students with campus communities that provide an intimate, family-like structure;
* Providing a focus on scholarship, personal development, trust, mutual assistance and friendships;
* Offering full membership to men and women in their respective single-gender organizations;
* Opening membership with no discriminatory clauses related to race, creed or national origin;
* Allowing the chapter and candidate an opportunity for mutual agreement on membership; and
* Allowing the members of these private organizations to identify their friends without restraint.

The Conference believes strongly in single-gender membership and the acceptance of entirely male or female members, and it asserts the rights of every member fraternity to confine membership to men and to exist as single-gender organizations.

**Statement of Position on Fostering Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement and the cultivation of intellect are perhaps the greatest values institutions of higher education and fraternal organizations share.  North-American Interfraternity Conference members provide leadership in supporting the academic achievement of student members, with the goal of encouraging the successful accomplishment of an undergraduate degree and the ongoing pursuit of learning.  Two Standards of the NIC call for member fraternities to have a chapter annual cumulative GPA at 2.5 or higher, and a new-member GPA of 2.3 or higher.  Additional Standards state that member organizations are to communicate to undergraduate members the importance of participating in educational programming, campus, inter/national fraternity, or independently led, covering academic achievement, alcohol consumption, career preparation, civic engagement, hazing, leadership development, sexual assault awareness/prevention, and values and ethics.

While the creeds and mottos of fraternities reflect a commitment to assisting members in gaining a sound education and to becoming learned individuals, they do not outline the tutorial services, informal counseling, structured study labs, academic mentoring programs, faculty advising, or group study and support sessions that define today's brotherhoods and support the missions of today's colleges and universities.

The NIC's *Basic Expectations of Fraternity Membership* outlines how individual members, chapters, Interfraternity Councils and member fraternities should strive for academic achievement and practice academic integrity.  The NIC, in actively demonstrating how to go about that pursuit, offers educational resources and programming to members and to campus Interfraternity Councils.  To monitor progress, one of the Standards of the NIC states that host campuses are to provide fraternity inter/national staff with all-men's Greek and chapter GPA by semester, as well as the graduation rate of fraternity men compared to all men on campus.  To further demonstrate the priority it places on leadership in academic achievement, the NIC supports and provides a leadership role in the national Greek academic honorary organizations Gamma Sigma Alpha and the Order of Omega.  The NIC Standards for host institutions include that a for-credit leadership class for new members be offered and that faculty advisors for chapters be recruited through the provision of incentives; and the Conference annually recognizes and promotes the achievements of Interfraternity Councils and individual chapters with outstanding growth and maintenance of academic performance and excellence, leveraging those as examples for all Greek men, chapters, IFCs, and fraternities.

**Statement of Position on Recruitment**

The North-American Interfraternity Conference and its member fraternities believe friendship leads to membership.  To effectively employ that as a strategy, NIC-member fraternities pursue a recruitment model based on an unrestricted, year-round commitment to actively seek prospective members who share a commitment to the fraternal values of scholarship, leadership and service.

The NIC and member fraternities have long advocated a year-round model of unrestricted recruitment - discouraging campuses and fraternity chapters from recruiting new members during limited times throughout the year and from using the term "rush"  to label a time-specific effort to attract new members to a fraternity chapter.

Recruitment is the life blood of every chapter, and in addition to year-round opportunities to seek new members the Standards of the NIC state that host institutions and campus IFCs will not prohibit NIC member fraternities from recruiting.  To prohibit a group from recruiting is communicating to the organization that there is no support for the group to improve, grow, or even continue to survive.  The NIC is opposed to this prohibition in ANY and ALL situations.

To encourage effective implementation of, and active engagement in, a year-round recruitment strategy, the NIC and member fraternities provide resources and educational forums for undergraduates and alumni.  The NIC also offers Strategic Consultations on campus, as well as the annual IFC Academy.  Open to any council officer or advisor who wishes to attend, the Academy exists to advance NIC Standards implementation and support both fledgling and veteran councils.

**Statement of Position on Expansion**

The fraternities of the North-American Interfraternity Conference believe the best interests of higher education and of the fraternity movement are served through the establishment of new chapters that provide a fraternal experience for an increasing number of college men. Expansion gives men more choices; it brings new influence and direction to a campus fraternal community; it provides new leadership and renewed motivation.  Additional choices for students lead to healthy and creative competition for membership and provide encouragement for chapters to improve their operations and their offerings in order to meet the needs of prospective members.

Further, as part of the Standards of the NIC, member fraternities and local chapters, councils, and communities are expected to support those groups seeking to form a fraternity on a given campus.  Specifically, the expectation is that the host institution IFC will not deter expansion by withholding membership in the IFC of any NIC member organization.  The Standards make clear that no NIC member organization is prohibited from selecting undergraduates for the purpose of establishing a chapter, and supporting this is one of the most important responsibilities for an Interfraternity Council (IFC) because its priority is to ensure the success of all fraternities on the campus.  Because an IFC is the chief advocate for the fraternity movement on campus, supporting students trying to start a new fraternity is considered a primary responsibility.

The NIC believes each fraternity chapter is a small business whose products should be the development of lifelong friendships, the development of leadership qualities and experience, the achievement of high academic accomplishments, and the development of philanthropic and community service activities.  For chapters fulfilling those promises, business will be good.  Those who fall short stand to learn great lessons in competition - meeting the demands of the market with the consequences of great success, as well as potential bankruptcy and foreclosure - within a safe and supported environment.  The NIC believes the fraternity experience is uniquely positioned to provide students with opportunities through expansion - lifelong lessons in competition, and in growth and progress.

To provide students with context for the benefits and lessons of expansion, the members of the Conference agree to:

* Educate their undergraduate chapters, the Interfraternity Council leaders and interested alumni about the overall benefits and responsibilities of expansion and to foster ongoing support for the growth of the fraternity movement;
* Offer only those statements and promises in expansion discussions which accurately reflect capabilities;
* Encourage the highest academic, social, and moral standards among all interested students in all expansion endeavors;
* Make every reasonable attempt to coordinate expansion efforts with the administration and with the Interfraternity Council of colleges and universities at which they are pursuing expansion opportunities;
* Recognize that the size of a member fraternity is not indicative of that member fraternity's ability to administer an expansion project at an institution;
* Respect the right of any organized collegiate group to seek a member fraternity of its choice in an effort to affiliate with that general fraternity; and
* Request approval of the appropriate college or university official before granting colony status.

**Statement of Position on Hazing and Behavior**

The North-American Interfraternity Conference shares the concern of colleges, universities and educational associations regarding inappropriate, insensitive and sometimes violent behavior on campus.  Traditionally, fraternities have provided an education of current social mores within the chapter itself, with the expectation that positive change results as undergraduate men learn standards of gentlemanly conduct through the ideals of their individual fraternity - one of the core values that distinguishes fraternities from each other.  Negative behavior is a contradiction of the principles and ideals of all fraternal organizations, and the NIC unequivocally supports a legal, responsible, and safe lifestyle for undergraduate fraternity members and believes that pre-initiation and initiation practices must support the underlying principles for which each member fraternity stands.  In fact, the Standards of the NIC oblige every member fraternity to have well-communicated risk management policies that address alcohol use, fire safety, hazing and sexual assault/abuse.  Further, the Standards call for each member organization to communicate the importance for its undergraduate members to participate in educational programming - campus, inter/national fraternity, or independently led - covering academic achievement, alcohol consumption, career preparation, civic engagement, hazing, leadership development, sexual assault awareness/prevention, and values and ethics. Practices antithetical to each fraternity's values, mission and goals have no place in the fraternity world, or in any chapter's programming, and the Conference continues its active, long-standing repudiation and disapproval of hazing, sexism, and racism. It also encourages each member fraternity to continually intensify efforts to educate members in fraternal principles and ideals regarding positive human interaction.

**Statement of Position Regarding Little Sister Groups**

The North-American Interfraternity Conference believes sororities and women's fraternities offer excellent opportunities for women to share a fraternal experience and that auxiliary women's groups organized by some men's fraternity chapters, commonly referred to as "little sisters," are inconsistent with the concept and philosophy of separate and equal women's fraternities.  The Conference joins the Fraternity Executives Association and several member fraternities in strongly discouraging "little sister" groups as inappropriate adjuncts to the collegiate chapters of men's fraternities.  One of the Standards of the NIC calls for member fraternities to work with their chapters to eliminate these programs.

**Statement of Position on Alcohol Education, Partnerships and Increased Dialogue**

North-American Interfraternity Conference member fraternities strive to provide a values-based setting for the development of lifelong friendships, scholarship, leadership skills, and a commitment to community.  Membership in these fraternities is a privilege conditioned on a commitment to high standards of conduct and personal responsibility, and the misuse of alcohol by college students detracts from the goals of fraternalism, as well as the mission of higher education.  The North-American Interfraternity Conference encourages its member fraternities to continue to focus on their principles, objectives and standards as ritual- and values-based organizations. It strongly encourages member fraternities to communicate their values through ritual at least annually and to pursue alcohol-free chapter facilities, as well as other programs designed to address the misuse of alcohol, especially at campuses where the college or university supports such an initiative.  The Standards of the NIC call for member fraternities to use language that allows for immediate chapter emergency and/or temporary suspension by the fraternity as a tool to address practices or situations not in compliance with this member standard.  Further, the Conference commits its support to members in this effort, and it requests and will actively seek the cooperation, support, staff involvement and resource commitment from institutions of higher education.

Responding to that, fraternities consistently demonstrate their leadership and concern regarding student use of alcohol through significant time, effort and monetary investment in education and the prevention of inappropriate use.  Additional NIC-member standards call for alcohol-free recruitment events and alcohol-free new member/pledge/associate member programs.  In cooperation with each other, fraternity staffs have created action plans addressing the key issues of confronting under-aged drinking, combating the perception of entertainment-based organizations, and encouraging the development of partnerships with host institutions and alcohol education programs and resources.

The North-American Interfraternity Conference, in collaboration with the National Panhellenic Conference and the National Pan-Hellenic Council, will continue to focus efforts and resources on programs designed to address the misuse of alcohol. However, alcohol misuse can be addressed successfully only with the commitment of each college and university, in concert with surrounding communities, and the Conference and its member fraternities are prepared to be a partner in discussing, educating and addressing alcohol and other issues that impact student life. The Standards of the NIC call for host institutions to provide campus programming for all students designed to inhibit/prevent problem behaviors, programming that will not single out Greek organizations from other campus organizations for mandatory participation.