



Fraternity/Sorority Leaders Prepared to Make an IMPACT

INDIANAPOLIS (3/8/10) – Twelve colleges and universities around the U.S. hosted an IMPACT Greek Leadership Institute in 2009-10 for student leaders of the fraternity/sorority community on their campus. An intense two-and-a-half-day living/learning experience, IMPACT involves fraternity/sorority professionals, working as facilitators with as many as 80 students, helping each focus on:

- practicing exemplary leadership,
- creating credibility and congruence within the fraternity/sorority community by aligning actions and fraternal values, and
- developing an individual action plan grounded in the principles of their organization, as well as the shared fraternal values of their campus community.

“Positive progress within any campus fraternity/sorority community is only possible through individual action,” said Will Foran, director of education and leadership development for the North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), the developer of IMPACT. “The curriculum is based upon the ***Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*** in the book ‘The Leadership Challenge,’ by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.

“To launch the program, participants complete the Student Leadership Practices Inventory, developed by Kouzes and Posner, that helps them identify their personal leadership skill set,” Foran said. “Then participants assess the current state of affairs of their fraternity/sorority community, and for the rest of their weekend together they create a collective vision of what their campus fraternity and sorority community can and should be.”

IMPACT is targeted to benefit first-year through senior-year students from throughout the fraternity/sorority community. It is held off-campus to help participants focus solely on problem solving, leadership development, values-based decision making, effective communication, and community development. The expectation is that positive change will result after participants work through the process of the institute to determine what that change should be.

The 12 schools hosting an IMPACT Institute this academic year included University of Wyoming, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, Marshall University, Culver-Stockton College, Northeastern University, Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, University of Connecticut, Western Carolina University, University of Tampa, Michigan State University, and Johnson and Wales University.

Colleges and universities around the U.S. host IMPACT as a way to develop leadership within the fraternity/sorority community. “Some see it as a leadership training opportunity,” Foran said. “Other schools see it as a progression of leadership training already taking place on the campus, and they leverage the benefits of IMPACT to create energy or motivation in identifying current challenges and strategies to address them.”

The program results with a personal, written plan each participant creates to address “What I can do to make my fraternity/sorority community and chapter better.” It encourages each student to start a movement by finding individuals who share the goals of their plan, then build a coalition from that.

A workbook helps guide students through the step-by-step curriculum, which asks them to identify who should be in their coalition, what they will do to elevate their fraternity/sorority community, what tenets and values they live by, and what beliefs and values they want to be known for. It concludes with each participant writing a personal vision to act upon.

With a nearly 1:5 facilitator:student ratio, IMPACT engages student affairs professionals, chapter advisors, volunteers, graduate students and others in providing focus and direction during the small-group sessions of the program. Approximately half of the facilitators come from the host campus. The balance are off-campus volunteers and professionals. All participate in a day-long training session, and all are focused on appropriately challenging and questioning the participants as they build teams and identify their own personal values and beliefs.

Founded in 1909, the NIC is the trade association representing 73 international and national men’s fraternities. Through advocacy, collaboration, and education, the NIC works to ensure that fraternities can operate in an environment conducive to their success.