



Five Greek Organizations Share NIC Laurel Wreath Award

INDIANAPOLIS (5/15/10) – Five fraternal organizations were honored with the 2010 North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) Laurel Wreath Award for their role in supporting the University Learning Outcomes Assessment (UniLOA) research that resulted in industry altering data on the role fraternities play in the overall college experience. The award was presented in April at the NIC Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. to Alpha Tau Omega, Delta Sigma Phi, Delta Upsilon, Phi Kappa Tau, and Zeta Tau Alpha.

The five fraternal organizations became interested in this research when all realized that from the UniLOA they also could measure how fraternity involvement impacts a member's overall student and membership development. "Thanks to this partnership we are better able to speak with scientific certainty about the impact of fraternity or sorority membership on student development and growth," said Peter D. Smithhisler, NIC president and CEO.

The UniLOA was conceived and developed in response to the pressing need for an assessment instrument that would measure holistic student growth within domains considered critical by educators, accrediting bodies, employers, legislators, students, and other constituents of higher education. Drs. Mark Frederick and William Barratt, of Indiana State University, led the research that resulted in statistically significant findings that unequivocally demonstrate that fraternity membership has a positive impact on overall student development.

The findings reveal that fraternity members' aptitude in each of seven measured areas – critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, diversity, citizenship, membership and leadership relationships – was higher than that of their non-fraternity peers. Also revealing was the data-supported conclusion that the time at which a man joins a fraternity has a direct impact on his development in each area.

The research better positions the NIC to collaborate with external partners to build and maintain environments conducive to the success of member fraternities. It also allows the NIC to better advocate for the fraternity experience by further educating stakeholders about the positive impact fraternities have on a campus and in the lives of members. Specifically, the NIC is utilizing UniLOA data to address deferred recruitment policies that are counter to NIC Standards and violate students' right to freedom of association.

Each year the NIC accepts nominations for the Laurel Wreath Award. Recipients are chosen by the NIC Awards Committee chaired by the immediate past chairman of the conference. The Laurel Wreath is presented during the annual luncheon named for the award.

Founded in 1909, the NIC, through advocacy, collaboration and education, works to ensure that fraternities can operate in an environment conducive to their success.