



SSAC APPROVES MAJOR EXPANSION TO 16 INSTITUTIONS

(Monday, Sept. 28, 2009) Dr. Paul Conn, Chair of the Southern States Athletic Conference Board of Presidents, announced today that the conference has agreed to expand its membership and restructure its conference play to take effect for the 2010-11 academic year. Joining the conference are Belhaven College, Loyola University New Orleans, Spring Hill College, University of Mobile, and William Carey University. These institutions join recently announced Truett-McConnell College increasing the SSAC membership to 16. With the quality of these new institutions, the numerous sports they sponsor and their past regional and national successes, are strong indicators of the Southern States' commitment to being a premier NAIA conference in the country.

President Conn expressed, "It is a genuine pleasure to welcome these five fine institutions to our conference. Each of them provides top-quality education to students, and each institution is committed to the student-athlete as a part of the total educational enterprise. These are schools which understand the priority of academic life for student athletes. They will be a great fit for our conference."

This new membership allows the SSAC to restructure of its conference into two divisions. Belhaven, Loyola, Spring Hill, Mobile, and William Carey will join Auburn University Montgomery and Faulkner University to make up the Western division. The remaining Southern States schools along with Truett-McConnell will make up the Eastern division. Each team will play their regular season conference games within their division with season-ending championships in each sport bringing together qualifying teams from both divisions. A listing of the membership and the sports they sponsorships is provided below.

One advantage to the expansion is that it increases championship opportunities in 13 sports and ensures automatic qualifiers for each. There will be enough teams competing that each sport in Southern States competition will have at least one automatic bid to the NAIA national tournament and multiple bids in most team sports.

SSAC Commissioner Kurt Patberg agreed with Conn about the quality of these institutions and discussed other major benefits of this 16-member, two-divisional version of the conference. "We have been able to create unique divisional-play opportunities, generate a conference membership that, combined, should elevate the exposure of our institutions regionally and nationally through sports competition and increased marketing opportunities. Furthermore, this expansion enhances the quality of our 13 championships. Exciting times for the Southern States are on the horizon, with signs pointing toward great future success for our league," Patberg said.

For further information, contact Kurt Patberg at commissioner@ssacsports.com or by calling 404-434-5146.

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ABOUT THE SOUTHERN STATES ATHLETIC CONFERENCE:

The SSAC, traditionally a highly competitive conference in the NAIA, was incorporated under the name Georgia Alabama Carolina Conference, Inc. in 1999 and renamed the Southern States Athletic Conference, Inc. in June 2005. The current member institutions of higher learning are located in the southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee. There are more than 35,000 active students at its 16 schools and close to 3,500 student-athletes. SSAC schools have more than 125,000 alumni still residing in this same southern-state geography. The SSAC, which has offices in Norcross, Georgia, has won 14 national championships since 1999, with 114 NAIA All-Americans and 192 NAIA Scholar-Athletes.

ABOUT THESE NEW MEMBERS:

Belhaven College, founded in 1883, is a contemporary institution built on the timeless principles of service and excellence in higher education. Belhaven College prepares students academically and spiritually to serve Christ Jesus in their careers, in human relationships, and in the world of ideas. Belhaven is home to nearly 3,000 students on campuses in Jackson, Memphis, Houston and Orlando, as well as a Virtual campus. BC also well known for its commitment to the arts, and it is one of only 25 schools in the U.S. to be nationally accredited in all arts programs: dance, music, theatre and visual arts. With students from 44 states and 19 countries, Belhaven College certainly has a national appeal, and the media agrees. *U.S. News and World Report* has listed Belhaven College in their rankings of "America's Best Colleges" and *The Templeton Guide: Colleges That Encourage Character Development* has recognized Belhaven for leadership in the field of student character development for spiritual growth programs. Belhaven fields thirteen NAIA varsity sports and has won two NAIA national championships in men's tennis (1983) and men's soccer (1992) in addition to numerous other national and conference awards.

Spring Hill College, founded in 1830, is the first Catholic college in the Southeast, the third oldest Jesuit and the fifth oldest Catholic college in the United States. The College is ranked 14th among the best Southern colleges and universities offering master's degrees in *U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Colleges"*, and is also listed eighth among "Great Schools, Great Prices." Spring Hill College faculty and staff are committed to the Jesuit tradition of "cura personalis," that is, a care for the spiritual, social and intellectual growth of each individual. Spring Hill College prepares students for professional excellence and to become responsible leaders in service to others. The campus is home to approximately 1,400 students and 13 varsity athletic teams which includes men's and women's golf that competes on its own course located on its 400-acre campus.

Loyola University New Orleans, the largest Catholic, Jesuit university in the South, combines the academic excellence of its faculty and programs with an ideal class size that fosters individual student success. Loyola develops students into a new generation of leaders who possess a love for truth, the critical intelligence to pursue it, and the courage to articulate it. The hallmark of a Loyola education can be summed up in a simple phrase: we produced citizens of the world. Loyola seeks to prepare its students to be active participants on the global stage. Students are taught how to think, not what to think. These critical distinctions are at the very heart of what it means to receive a Jesuit education at Loyola. Chartered in 1912, Loyola University is ranked as the 6th Best Master's University in the South in the 2010 edition of America's Best Colleges by U.S. News & World Report and second in U.S. News & World Report's Great Schools, Great Prices category. Located on the famous St. Charles Avenue in Uptown New Orleans, Loyola is home to 4,585 students and currently sponsors 11 sports, with plans to add men's tennis in 2010.

University of Mobile was founded in 1961 and currently has 1,646 students enrolled. The private, Christian university is affiliated with the Alabama Baptist State Convention and offers undergraduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business, Christian Studies, Education, Nursing, and the Center for Performing Arts and Center for Adult Programs. The University of Mobile has been named one of "America's Best Christian Colleges" for 13 consecutive years. The University began the intercollegiate athletic program in 1985 and currently fields thirteen teams while competing in the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference and the NAIA. The Rams compete in thirteen sports; seven women's and six men's. Mobile has won eight NAIA National Championships in the sports of men's tennis (1993, 1997), women's tennis (1994), men's golf (1997), women's soccer (1997), women's golf (1998), men's soccer (2002) and softball (2006), and won 75 Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC) Championships and 18 Thomas Howell Cups, awarded annually to the top overall program in the GCAC.

William Carey University, owned and operated by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was founded in 1906. The institution operated for decades as Mississippi Woman's College until being renamed William Carey College in 1954, when the school became coeducational. The name was selected in honor of the eighteenth century English cobbler-linguist whose decades of missionary activity in India earned him international recognition as the "Father of Modern Missions". The Carey Creed is "Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God" and the environment on campus reflects this belief. In 2006, the Board of Trustees voted to change to University status to honor its growth and enhance its potential in an increasingly global environment. Located on three campuses with a total enrollment of 3,200, the main campus is located in Hattiesburg (MS) and sits on 120 acres. Carey on the Coast is located at Traditions in Gulfport, and the School of Nursing has a site on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Carey offers bachelor and master programs in many areas, a specialist program in elementary education, and a doctoral program in the College of Osteopathic Medicine will begin in the fall of 2010. In 2008 WCU was named one of America's Best College Buys ® by the *Institutional Research and Evaluation, Inc.* William Carey fields nine athletic teams that have been quite competitive in the NAIA having been or currently nationally ranked over this past year in baseball, softball, and men and women's soccer.

SCHOOLS OF THE SSAC BY SPORT

Women's Basketball (16, 3 AQ's)

Brenau University
 Brewton-Parker College
 Columbia College
 Emmanuel College
 Lee University
 Shorter College
 Southern Poly State University
 Southern Wesleyan University
 Truett-McConnell College

 Auburn University-Montgomery
 Belhaven College
 Faulkner University*
 Loyola University New Orleans
 Spring Hill College
 University of Mobile
 William Carey University

Women's Soccer (14, 2 AQ's)

Brenau University
 Brewton Parker College
 Columbia College
 Emmanuel College
 Lee University
 Shorter College
 Southern Wesleyan University
 Truett-McConnell College

 Auburn University-Montgomery
 Belhaven College
 Faulkner University

Men's Basketball (14, 2 AQ's)

Brewton-Parker College
 Emmanuel College
 Lee University
 Shorter College
 Southern Poly State University
 Southern Wesleyan University
 Truett-McConnell College *proposed adding sport

 Auburn University-Montgomery
 Belhaven College
 Faulkner University
 Loyola University New Orleans
 Spring Hill College
 University of Mobile
 William Carey University

Men's Soccer (13, 2AQ's)

Brewton Parker College
 Emmanuel College
 Lee University
 Shorter College
 Southern Poly State University
 Southern Wesleyan University
 Truett-McConnell College

 Auburn University-Montgomery
 Belhaven College
 Faulkner University

Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Baseball (14, 2 AQ's)

Brewton Parker College
Emmanuel College
Lee University
Shorter College
Southern Poly State University
Southern Wesleyan University
Truett-McConnell College

Auburn University-Montgomery
Belhaven College
Faulkner University
Loyola University New Orleans
Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Volleyball (11, 1 AQ's)

Brenau University
Brewton Parker College
Columbia College
Lee University
Shorter College
Southern Wesleyan University

Women's X Country (10, AQ/DQ)

Belhaven College
Brenau University
Brewton Parker College
Lee University
Loyola University New Orleans
Shorter College
Southern Wesleyan University
Spring Hill College
Truett-McConnell College
University of Mobile

Women's Tennis (10, AQ/DQ)

Auburn-Montgomery
Belhaven College
Brenau University
Columbia University
Emmanuel College
Lee University
Shorter College
Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Women's Golf (6, AQ/DQ)

Faulkner University
Lee University
Shorter College
Spring Hill College
Truett-McConnell College
University of Mobile

Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Softball (14, 2AQ's)

Brenau Univeristy
Brewton Parker College
Columbia College
Emmanuel College
Lee University
Shorter College
Southern Wesleyan University
Truett-McConnell College

Auburn University-Montgomery
Belhaven College
Faulkner University
Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Belhaven College
Faulkner University
Loyola University New Orleans
Spring Hill College
University of Mobile

Men's X Country (9, AQ/DQ)

Belhaven College
Brewton Parker College
Lee University
Loyola University New Orleans
Shorter College
Southern Wesleyan University
Spring Hill College
Truett-McConnell College
University of Mobile

Men's Tennis (9, AQ/DQ)

Auburn-Montgomery
Belhaven College
Emmanuel College
Lee University
Loyola University New Orleans
Shorter College
Spring Hill College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

Men's Golf (9, AQ/DQ)

Belhaven College
Faulkner University
Lee University
Shorter College
Southern Wesleyan University
Spring Hill College
Truett-McConnell College
University of Mobile
William Carey University

AQ = Automatic Qualifier
DQ = Direct Qualifier