

CIAA and Marcus Graham Project Launch 'D9 Campaign Clash' Workshop to Empower the Next Generation of Black Storytellers

*New Initiative Channels HBCU and Divine 9 Creativity
Into Real-World Sports Marketing Experience*

CHARLOTTE, NC, UNITED STATES, November 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association](#) (CIAA®), the nation's oldest historically Black athletic

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*Jacqie McWilliams Parker,
CIAA Commissioner*

conference, today announced a new partnership with the Marcus Graham Project (MGP) to launch “D9 Campaign Clash: A Battle of the Brands.” The hybrid creative workshop invites college students and recent graduates from Divine 9 Greek organizations to develop innovative marketing campaigns celebrating “Greek Night” at the 2026 Food Lion CIAA Men’s & Women’s Basketball Tournament. [Applications are now open](#) and will be accepted through November 21, 2025.

The Marcus Graham Project, a national network dedicated to developing diverse professionals in marketing, media, and entertainment, will unite students, alumni mentors, and D9 members for an immersive, hands-on learning

experience. Participants will engage in a series of virtual sessions led by MGP mentors and industry leaders, culminating in a creative challenge designed to celebrate culture, community, and brand innovation.

D9 Campaign Clash: A Battle of the Brands,” an initiative designed to provide real-world experiences in marketing, media and community engagement, is the latest initiative offered in collaboration with the CIAA’s recently launched Youth Leadership Academy.

“The Marcus Graham Project and our 'D9 Campaign Clash: A Battle of the Brands' campaign underscore the CIAA Youth Leadership Academy's mission to educate and empower our student-athletes,” said Jacqie McWilliams Parker, CIAA Commissioner. “We’re building a bridge between the classroom, the court, and the community by nurturing the next generation of young talent to lead with purpose and creativity.”

Eligible Divine 9 members can apply to represent their fraternity or sorority in this friendly competition, where teams will conceptualize and produce social media content promoting CIAA's annual Greek Night. Guided by MGP industry mentors, each team will channel HBCU and Divine 9 creativity into a real-world sports marketing experience, crafting culturally resonant campaigns through storytelling, digital design, and social strategy.

A scholarship donation will be made to the winning CIAA Panhellenic chapter, and the top-performing team will receive VIP recognition during Greek Night along with professional exposure through CIAA and MGP platforms.

"This initiative is designed to elevate Black creative talent and provide a unique opportunity to learn and grow through mentorship," said Larry Yarrell II, Co-Founder and Chief Development Officer of the Marcus Graham Project. "In partnership with the CIAA, we're cultivating the next generation of innovators who will shape how our stories are told. As a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and the Divine 9, I understand the legacy we carry and the responsibility to open doors for those coming behind us. We're giving our community's creative minds the tools, the access, and the confidence to lead both the industry and the culture forward."

A cornerstone of the Food Lion 2026 CIAA Basketball Tournament, Greek Night unites Divine 9 fraternities and sororities in a high-energy celebration of culture, leadership, and legacy on Wednesday, February 25. The evening will feature live performances, in-arena activations, and a presentation recognizing the winners of "D9 Campaign Clash: A Battle of the Brands."

For 2026 Food Lion CIAA Men's & Women's Basketball Tournament tickets, hotel bookings, and the latest updates, visit CIAATournament.org or follow the CIAA on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram.

About the CIAA

Founded in 1912, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) is the first, and longest running, African American athletic conference in the U.S. and one of the most recognized conferences in Division II. The CIAA conducts 14 championships attended by more than 150,000 fans from around the country. The Basketball Tournament has been honored as a 2019 Champion of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism by Sports Destination Management, the



leading publication with the largest circulation of sports event planners and tournament directors in the sports tourism market, for both 2018 and 2019.

Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, the CIAA is governed by the Presidents and Chancellors of its 12 member institutions: Bowie State University, Bluefield State University, Claflin University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, Livingstone College, Shaw University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University, and Winston-Salem State University. For more information on the CIAA, visit theciaa.com, like us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

About the Marcus Graham Project

The Marcus Graham Project (MGP) is a national network of diverse professionals in advertising, media, marketing, and entertainment. Its mission is to identify, train, and develop the next generation of diverse leaders in the industry through immersive programs and workshops. Learn more at marcusgrahamproject.org.

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