



The Southern Conference Commissioner

About the Southern Conference

The Southern Conference is one of the nation's oldest collegiate athletic conferences, with a rich tradition of academic and athletic excellence. Founded in 1921, the Southern Conference is committed to providing student-athletes with an exceptional collegiate experience while promoting sportsmanship, integrity, leadership, and competitive excellence.

Headquartered in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the Southern Conference currently comprises 11 member institutions across the Southeast. The Conference sponsors championships in a broad range of NCAA sports and serves its member institutions through championship administration, governance, compliance, revenue generation, communications, marketing, officiating, and other conference-wide initiatives.

About the Position

The Commissioner serves as the chief executive officer of the Conference and provides strategic, administrative, and external leadership on behalf of its member institutions. Reporting to the Conference's Council of Presidents, the Commissioner works collaboratively with presidents and chancellors, athletics directors, faculty athletics representatives, senior woman administrators, coaches, student-athletes, and other campus leaders to advance the Conference's mission and strengthen its competitive and institutional position.

The Commissioner provides leadership in developing and implementing the Conference's strategic direction, particularly as intercollegiate athletics experiences significant financial, regulatory, legal, technological, and competitive change. The Commissioner advises member presidents on emerging issues, builds consensus around Conference priorities, and represents the collective interests of member institutions within the NCAA and the broader landscape of intercollegiate athletics. Attention is given to positioning the Conference effectively within Division I, including the evolving role and competitive strength of FCS football, mid-major basketball, changes in NCAA governance, postseason opportunities, and emerging revenue-distribution models.

The Commissioner oversees Conference operations, including staff leadership, financial management, budgeting, governance, compliance, scheduling, officiating, championships, awards, and implementation of Conference policies. The Commissioner ensures that Conference activities reflect high standards of integrity, sportsmanship, competitive fairness, and student-athlete well-being.

As the Conference's principal spokesperson and external representative, the Commissioner leads efforts to strengthen the Conference's brand, visibility, and financial position. This includes developing media and broadcast strategies, maximizing the value and distribution of Conference content, cultivating corporate sponsorships and strategic partnerships, identifying new revenue opportunities, and building relationships with media organizations, sponsors, and other external stakeholders.

Above all, the Commissioner serves as a trusted strategic partner to member institutions—balancing individual and collective interests, anticipating challenges and opportunities, fostering collaboration and trust, and positioning the Conference and its members for sustained competitive and financial success in a rapidly evolving intercollegiate athletics environment.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. **Provide strategic leadership for the Conference**, working with the Council of Presidents to establish and execute a clear vision, strategic priorities, and long-term plans that advance the Conference and its member institutions.
2. **Advise and support the Council of Presidents**, serving as its principal executive resource on intercollegiate athletics and facilitating effective governance, informed decision-making, communication, and consensus among member institutions, and ensuring that the perspectives and operational realities of athletics directors and other key constituencies appropriately inform presidential decision-making.
3. **Position and advocate for the Conference within the evolving Division I landscape**, anticipating changes in NCAA governance, legislation, revenue distribution, postseason competition, membership structures, and the future of FCS football and mid-major basketball, representing the Conference's interests accordingly, and working with member institutions to establish appropriate competitive aspirations, performance standards, and institutional investment expectations necessary to advance the Conference's collective goals.
4. **Serve as the Conference's chief executive officer**, providing leadership and oversight for all Conference operations, staff, programs, policies, contracts, and administrative functions.
5. **Build and maintain a culture of trust, transparency, and alignment among member institutions**, working collaboratively with presidents and chancellors, athletics directors, faculty athletics representatives, senior woman administrators, coaches, student-athletes, and other campus constituencies while ensuring clear communication regarding Conference priorities, strategies, finances, and major decisions.
6. **Strengthen the Conference's financial position and develop new revenue opportunities**, including corporate sponsorships, strategic partnerships, media rights, licensing, championship revenues, and other commercial opportunities.
7. **Develop and execute the Conference's media, communications, branding, and public-relations strategy**, increasing the visibility and value of the Conference, its championships, member institutions, and student-athletes across traditional, digital, streaming, and emerging media platforms.
8. **Represent the Conference nationally and externally**, serving as its principal spokesperson and advocate with the NCAA and its various committees, the Collegiate Commissioners Association, other conferences, media organizations, corporate partners, governmental entities, and other organizations affecting intercollegiate athletics.
9. **Provide sound financial stewardship**, developing and administering the Conference budget, managing financial assets and investments, monitoring revenues and expenditures, and ensuring appropriate financial controls and long-term fiscal sustainability.
10. **Oversee Conference governance and policy administration**, organizing meetings and committee processes, interpreting and implementing Conference policies and bylaws, maintaining appropriate records, and ensuring that decisions of the Council of Presidents are effectively executed.

11. **Ensure compliance with Conference and NCAA rules and policies**, serving as the Conference's principal enforcement officer, overseeing disciplinary matters and appropriate sanctions, providing leadership on regulatory matters, educating member institutions, monitoring compliance, and promoting integrity, competitive fairness, and institutional accountability.
12. **Oversee Conference competition and championships**, including scheduling, championship administration, officiating programs, awards, sport administration, and related operational matters, with an emphasis on high-quality competitive experiences.
13. **Promote student-athlete well-being and the student-athlete experience**, encouraging academic achievement, leadership development, sportsmanship, health and safety, and meaningful engagement in Conference governance and initiatives.
14. **Recruit, develop, and lead an effective Conference staff**, establishing a high-performance organizational culture, appropriately allocating responsibilities and resources, and ensuring that the Conference office provides excellent service to member institutions.
15. **Protect and enhance the Conference's long-term strength and membership**, monitoring national and regional trends, assessing potential risks and opportunities, cultivating relationships with current and prospective members, and recommending strategies that strengthen the Conference's competitive position, reputation, stability, and institutional alignment.

Minimum Qualifications:

1. **Substantial senior-level leadership experience in intercollegiate athletics, higher education, or a comparably complex organization**, with a demonstrated record of progressively increasing executive responsibility. Experience as a conference commissioner or senior conference administrator, Division I athletics director, or comparable executive leadership.
2. **Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution required; advanced degree preferred.** A master's degree, doctorate, J.D., or other relevant advanced degree would be advantageous but should not substitute for significant executive leadership experience.
3. **Deep understanding of NCAA Division I athletics and its rapidly evolving environment**, including governance, legislation, compliance, postseason competition, financial and revenue-distribution models, media rights, and issues affecting FCS football and mid-major basketball.

Preferred Qualifications:

1. **Demonstrated strategic leadership and vision**, including the ability to anticipate changes affecting intercollegiate athletics, develop effective organizational strategies, manage change, establish priorities, mobilize multiple institutions around shared objectives, and a demonstrated ability to influence without direct authority, build support for change, and translate strategic priorities into action.
2. **Exceptional listening, relationship-building, and consensus-building skills, coupled with a service-oriented leadership approach**, with demonstrated ability to work effectively with presidents and chancellors, athletics directors, faculty athletic representatives, senior woman administrators, coaches, student-athletes, NCAA officials, media, corporate partners, and other constituencies, including an appreciation for the differing missions, governance structures, resources, and priorities represented by the Conference's public, private, and military institutions.

3. **Outstanding executive communication and public leadership skills**, including the ability to serve credibly as the public face and principal advocate of the Conference, communicate effectively in writing and public settings, manage sensitive issues, and represent member institutions nationally.
4. **Demonstrated business and financial acumen**, including experience with budgeting, fiscal management, contract negotiation, resource allocation, and organizational financial stewardship.
5. **Demonstrated ability to generate and enhance revenue**, preferably through media and broadcast agreements, corporate sponsorships, licensing, strategic partnerships, championship opportunities, or other commercial activities. Experience with media strategy, television, streaming, digital platforms, and related negotiations is highly desirable.
6. **Proven organizational and personnel leadership**, including experience recruiting, supervising, developing, and evaluating professional staff and creating an organizational culture characterized by accountability, collaboration, responsiveness, and high performance.
7. **Demonstrated integrity, sound judgment, and commitment to the educational values of intercollegiate athletics**, including academic achievement, student-athlete well-being, sportsmanship, competitive fairness, institutional integrity, and a commitment to providing equitable opportunities and an outstanding experience for all student-athletes.

Application Process

The Southern Conference invites letters of nomination, applications or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the Conference. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted to Parker Executive Search's [website](#) by **October 16, 2026**. For additional information, please contact:

Daniel Parker, Vice President and Managing Director

Grant Higgison, Principal

Gray McGee, Associate

Wade Jones, Executive Recruiting Coordinator

danielparker@parkersearch.com | ghiggison@parkersearch.com | gmcgee@parkersearch.com |
wjones@parkersearch.com

770-804-1996 ext. 116 | 770-804-1996 ext. 118 | 770-804-1996 ext. 132

The Southern Conference is an equal opportunity employer.