



Candidate Biography - Darwin Mills

Dr. Darwin E. Mills is an accomplished educator and leader whose career spans more than three decades of distinguished service in public education and higher education. I am a very proud 1991 graduate of North Carolina Central University, Dr. Mills earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Magna Cum Laude, and was recognized with two departmental honors: the Alphonso L. Elder Award for Outstanding New Mathematics Major and the W.G. Pearson Prize for the Senior Mathematics Student with Highest GPA—distinctions that reflect both the promise with which he began his NCCU journey and the excellence with which he completed it.

Dr. Mills currently serves as Assistant Professor and Program Director at Regent University's School of Education, where he oversees graduate programs in Educational Leadership, Advanced Educational Leadership, and Leadership in Mathematics Education. His 31-year public school career included roles as a high school mathematics teacher, grant director for an NSF-funded professional development project, district-level mathematics instructional supervisor, district supervisor of school leadership, high school assistant principal, and principal of an alternative school.

His professional service includes leadership within the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics, where he has served as NCTM representative and Editor-in-Chief of the *Virginia Mathematics Teacher* journal. His scholarship focuses on educational leadership, data literacy, and culturally responsive practice.

Dr. Mills holds a Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Mathematics from Christopher Newport University and a Doctor of Education in School Administration and Supervision from the University of Virginia.

His commitment to NCCU extends well beyond the classroom. Since 2015, Dr. Mills has served continuously in chapter, regional, or national alumni leadership — a decade of uninterrupted service that reflects both his dedication and his deepening investment in the association's mission. His roles have included one year as Hampton Roads Chapter Treasurer, three years as Chapter Vice President, six years as Chapter President, more than two years as Region One Treasurer, three years as At-Large Executive Council Member, and service on the Membership and Memorial & Awards Committees. He brings to this national candidacy a record of faithful, hands-on engagement with the association at every level.

Personal Statement

North Carolina Central University gave me a foundation — intellectually, professionally, and personally — that has shaped every chapter of my career. As I consider this candidacy for Vice President of the National Alumni Association, I am motivated not by title, but by responsibility: the responsibility to give back to an institution that invested in me, and to strengthen the bonds that connect Eagles across every generation and geography.

I bring to this role the experience of a practitioner and scholar who has led programs, mentored emerging professionals, navigated complex institutional environments, and built bridges between communities. Equally important, I bring the perspective of someone who has served this association from the chapter level up — as treasurer, vice president, chapter president, regional treasurer, and executive council member. Most recently, I was appointed to serve as National Vice President following a mid-term leadership transition, and I have been honored to serve in that capacity. I understand this work from the inside, and I am now asking the membership for the opportunity to continue it with their full confidence and support.

The NCCU Alumni Association thrives when its leaders prioritize collaboration, communication, and accountability. The Vice President must be a connector who supports chapter and regional leaders, a communicator who ensures clarity of expectations and consistency of practice, and a coach who helps the association fulfill its full purpose — promoting the university, giving philanthropically, and creating genuine community among Eagles everywhere.

I am prepared to serve in that capacity. I respectfully ask for your support.

Dr. James E. Shepard, our founder, reminded us that "the Eagle is no common, ordinary barnyard fowl — and while a sparrow clings to its flock, an Eagle soars alone." I carry that conviction into this candidacy — and into every responsibility this association entrusts to me.

— Dr. Darwin E. Mills, Ed.D.

Responses to the Questions:

1. What motivates you to serve on the alumni executive committee at this time?

The timing of this candidacy reflects where I am in my journey with this association.

After a decade of service at every level, seeking this office is less about ambition and more about commitment — a commitment to NCCU and to the Eagles who make this association what it is.

My motivation is rooted in a sense of reciprocity. NCCU prepared me for a career that has allowed me to lead graduate programs, mentor doctoral students, and contribute to my field at a national level. I owe that trajectory, in part, to the education and community I found at NCCU. Serving on the executive committee is an opportunity to repay that investment in a meaningful, structural way — not through a one-time gesture, but through sustained, engaged leadership.

I am also motivated by experience. Having served at the chapter, regional, and executive council levels, I have seen what works, where gaps exist, and where intentional leadership can make a real difference. This is the right time for me to bring that accumulated experience to the national table.

2. What do you see as the biggest opportunity for our alumni community over the next 2–3 years?

The mission of the NCCU Alumni Association calls us to create a lifelong network through meaningful opportunities that promote pride and philanthropy. That mission is our compass, and over the next two to three years, our greatest opportunity lies in living it out more fully and consistently across every chapter and region.

As chapter president, I organized our work around three themes — Promote, Philanthropy, and Commune — because I believed then, as I do now, that a healthy alumni association must do all three. We promote the university through advocacy and

visibility. We raise funds to invest in its future. And we commune — we gather, we reconnect, and we remind one another what it means to be an Eagle. When those three things are happening in balance, the mission is being fulfilled.

The opportunity before us nationally is to ensure that alignment exists at every level — that chapters feel connected to the national vision, that members see themselves in the work, and that our collective energy is focused on what matters most.

3. What specific impact would you like to have if elected?

More than any single initiative, I hope to contribute to a culture of collaboration, communication, and accountability across the association.

The Vice President's role is fundamentally one of support — supporting the President, supporting regional and chapter leaders, and helping ensure that the association's structures and practices are functioning as they should. That means being present, being accessible, and being willing to have honest, constructive conversations when alignment is needed.

I am drawn to a coaching approach in leadership. Rather than arriving with a list of programs to implement, I would rather listen first — to chapter leaders, to regional officers, to members who have been doing this work faithfully for years — and ask: What is working? Where are the gaps? What do you need? From there, the work becomes collaborative rather than top-down, and sustainable rather than seasonal.

I also want to contribute to stronger compliance and consistency across the association's governance — not as an enforcement posture, but because clarity and accountability are what allow chapters to function well and members to trust the institution they belong to. When people understand expectations and feel supported in meeting them, the association fulfills its purpose more fully: promoting NCCU, supporting it philanthropically, and creating the kind of community that makes being an Eagle mean something long after graduation.

That is the kind of impact I am aiming for — steady, collaborative, and rooted in truth and service.