Informational Packet
2019-2020 Operational Year
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I. History and Overview

The Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE) is a coalition of graduate and professional students from the graduate student organizations of public, R1 research universities across the United States. We advocate for federal policy to improve the academic, professional, and personal welfare of all graduate and professional students across the country.

SAGE was founded in 2008 at the University of Texas at Austin. The goal was to provide a voice for graduate and professional student directly by those current students. Our motto is “Access, Affordability, Opportunity” which we seek to bring about for graduate students through advocacy at the federal level and sharing of best practices within our coalition.

We engage in monthly coalition calls, quarterly presidents’ round-tables, and two in person meetings. In October, our two-day conference is called Fall Summit. We discuss federal policies affecting graduate students as well as any gaps in that policy. We group these issues into research topics and assign them to Working Groups, led by a Working Group Chair, and together we produce white papers to take to Washington, D.C. This second conference is called Day on the Hill and occurs for four days in the spring. We meet, discuss our legislative platform, practice advocacy techniques, and then meet with Congressional Legislators and their Staff to advocate for graduate and professional students’ needs.

In 2018, SAGE alumni formed our partner/alumni organization, the Council for the Promotion of American Graduate Education, or CPAGE. This is for all graduate student alumni, but particularly SAGE graduate student alumni, who wish to continue advocacy work. They set their own agenda and strategic plan. CPAGE operates as a 501(c)(3) and manages collected SAGE registration fees and our airline mileage collection program. This organization is still new and growing, so more programs with SAGE will occur with time.
II. Organizational Structure

Overview:
SAGE is managed by an Executive Board comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, Policy Director, Internal Affairs Director, and Communications Director. These positions are elected at the previous year’s Spring Conference, Day on the Hill. Working Group Chairs lead working groups researching and writing reports on individual topics. Working group chairs are elected at the fall conference, Fall Summit, and report to the Policy Director. The Internal Affairs Director has their own working group which specifically focuses on best practices at the institution and state level regarding GSO budgets, management, communications, student fees, relationships with administrators, etc. All of our governance and activities are subject to our Bylaws.

Each member institution has a primary voting representative who attends meetings and votes on behalf of the school. This is the highest-ranking member of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), plus any member that is designated to exercise the vote. Each school typically has at least one alternate representative in case of absence. These representatives are responsible for sharing meeting updates with the rest of their school and school’s GSO. All other SAGE institution members are delegates who join on the coalition calls, attend in person meetings, work in the working groups, and share best practices. There are no limits on the number of students a school can have actively within the coalition.

Organization Chart:

Executive Board:
The Executive Board are subject to the Bylaws, which can be reviewed for further detail. All officers are required to produce annual reports and transition documents for next year’s board. Any general questions can be directed to sagecoalition@gmail.com
Chairperson – The Chair’s responsibilities are to lead the organization through monthly coalition and executive board calls and conferences. The Chair manages the strategic vision of SAGE and recruits new institutions. The Chair serves as the spokesperson of the organization.

Contact: chair.sage@gmail.com

Vice Chairperson – The Vice Chair serves as the parliamentarian, ensuring SAGE follows the governing bylaws. Vice Chair also serves as Secretary of the coalition by scheduling the coalition calls, taking meeting minutes, and distributing agendas and minutes. Vice Chair organizes and schedules President’s Round-tables. Vice Chair communicates between SAGE and CPAGE. Vice Chair also assists the Chair with responsibilities, such as planning in person meetings, and leads meetings in the Chair’s absence.

Contact: vicechair.sage@gmail.com

Communications Director – The Communications Director manages all communication between SAGE and external entities, include managing press releases, action alerts, all social media accounts, the SAGE website, and the general SAGE coalition email. The Communications Director also creates and publishes a newsletter twice per year.

Contact: communications.sage@gmail.com

Internal Affairs Director – The Internal Affairs manages the internal communication of the executive board and member institutions, focusing on best practices and facilitating communication. Internal Affairs Director leads the Internal Affairs Working group which collects information regarding best practices for all schools. The director manages the archives of all of SAGE activities and documents. Internal Affairs also oversees finances in conjunction with the Chair and when liaising with CPAGE.

Contact: internalaffairs.sage@gmail.com

Political Director – The Political Director creates the advocacy strategy of the SAGE Coalition for each year. The Political Director monitors federal legislative and executive policy that could significantly affect graduate and professional students and reports back on updates to the coalition. The Political Director works with the Communications Director to organize any press releases or action alerts are in line with the strategic interest of SAGE. The Political Director organizes all Day on the Hill SAGE Day advocacy efforts and meetings with legislative offices.

Contact: policy.sage@gmail.com

Executive Board Eligibility and Elections:
Any delegate enrolled in an active SAGE Institution is eligible for an officer position. The Chair and Vice Chair cannot be from the same institution, and at least two states have to be represented on the board. Elections take place at the SAGE Day on the Hill conference. A delegate is nominated with a motion and a second, with the acceptance of the nominated person. Nominations are open for at least 12 hours. The election process is managed by the Vice Chair. Starting from the Chair position, each nominated candidate separately presents their reasoning for serving in a particular position, their relevant experience and education, and answers questions from the coalition. Then, each candidate for a particular position is removed and the coalition enters a closed debate. Voting is cast by secret ballot with one vote per institution. Each incoming officer has a transition with the outgoing officer to provide transition documents, archived information, and answer questions. Terms last from June through the following May.

Coalition for the Promotion of American Graduate Education – CPAGE:
CPAGE is our partner/alumni organization. This is for all graduate student alumni, but particularly SAGE graduate student alumni, who wish to continue advocacy work. They set their own agenda and strategic plan. We work together based upon a Memorandum of Understanding that espouses the responsibilities and rights of each side of the partnership. CPAGE operates as a 501(c)(3), whereas SAGE has no standing with the IRS. Therefore, CPAGE manages collected SAGE registration fees and our airline mileage collection program. This organization is still new and growing, so more programs with SAGE will occur with time.
III. Membership

Membership Requirements:
A University may join the SAGE coalition if they are 1) Public, 2) an R1 Research Institution, and 3) Will meet all membership responsibilities. Memberships are sent out by invitation from the Chair after a vote by the coalition. Any school interested in joining the coalition can email the Chair (chair.sage@gmail.com) or general email (sagecoalition@gmail.com). A new institution has to be voted in by a 2/3 majority of the coalition at the Spring Day on the Hill conference.

Membership Responsibilities:
SAGE is run entirely by volunteer efforts. We do not collect membership fees and the board is not paid for their work. In order to ensure collective group representation and active growth, schools must abide by membership responsibilities to remain an active voting member of the coalition. To maintain our minimum costs, there is a registration fee per person for in person meetings.

To be considered an active SAGE institution, at least one delegate must 1) attend monthly coalition calls with no more than two absences per school, 2) be present at Fall Summit, and 3) be present at Day on the Hill. Only one delegate per school may make motions and vote at meetings, but all delegates may be heard by the coalition. At least one delegate per institution must participate in a working group. Typically, each University appoints a primary and an alternate representative delegate in case of absences. There is no maximum on the number of delegates who can attend calls or participate in working groups or conferences, but each school still only has one vote.

Status – Active/Inactive/Dormant:
A school once joined is indefinitely a SAGE member, but will have different rights within the organization depending on activity. A school may be declared inactive by the Chair after failing to satisfy one of the membership requirements. The school has one month to appeal this decision and may be reactivated upon the discretion of the Chair. If a school has been inactive for longer than one month and wants to return to active status, they must petition the coalition to return, typically by stating the cause of their absence and their intention to participate upon their return. The coalition then votes by simple majority on whether to reactivate the institution. This vote can occur on a coalition call or at one of the conferences. Any delegates from an inactive institution may still attend calls and meetings but will not have voting rights until the school is reactivated. A school that has remained inactive for over 12 months can be considered dormant by a simple majority vote of the institution. The SAGE public roster lists Active and Inactive institutions and their status.

Current Membership (As of July 2019):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Story Brook</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Name</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ohio State University</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M University</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Arizona</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Berkeley</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Davis</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Irvine</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-Los Angeles</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California-San Diego</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Kansas</td>
<td>Dormant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas at Austin</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>Inactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 Active, 9 Inactive, 1 Dormant</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. Our Work

Coalition Calls:
The coalition meets by conference call at least once per month to receive updates from the SAGE Executive Board on current relevant federal policy, SAGE governance, and general communications. The Chair may call additional meetings depending on the needs of the organization, such as additional meetings on white paper revisions. Each meeting ends with an open forum for any participants to bring up questions or issues. Each school is required to have no more than two absences from coalition calls to remain active. For any binding decision, the coalition must have quorum, which is 50% of the active institutions rounded up. As of the July 2019, conference calls are scheduled for the second Monday of every month from 9-10pm EDT, 6-7pm PDT.

Presidents’ Round-tables:
The coalition has four quarterly Presidents’ round-tables, where the Presidents of each institution’s graduate and professional student governing body engage in discussion on a specific topic related to student governance. All school delegates are still welcome to attend, but speaking priority is granted to the presidents. Past calls have involved best practices on voter mobilization, tax reform, and student finance, as well as invited speakers from professional organizations. The Vice Chair is responsible for organizing, setting the agenda, and scheduling these calls.

Working Groups:
Working groups research and write about advocacy issues that can be turned into a White Paper to be presented to our Congressional Representatives. This definition has recently expanded to include additional research that is highly relevant to the SAGE coalition at a national level, but may result in a report or provide general information for potential pursuit in the future. Working group topics are proposed, debated, and voted on by simple majority at Fall Summit under the guidance of the Political Director to determine the Advocacy Agenda. Working group chairs are nominated and elected at Fall Summit. Each working group chair checks in regularly with the Political Director to report progress and issues, and the policy director provides further information about relevant policy. The coalition recruits delegates from various schools to research and write on each topic. Each group then meets according to the schedule set by the working group chair to accomplish the scheduled goals set by the coalition. The general timeline is to recruit members through November, have an initial meetings in November and December to discuss research, meet in January to decide if a white paper or a report is a better product, produce a draft by February, and have a final white paper by March. This allows for the coalition to review papers and come to a final draft before the Day on the Hill Summit at the end of March/early April.

Conferences:
Fall Summit
The yearly Fall Summit is a two-day conference in Fall hosted on a rotating basis at different institutions. The conference provides a welcome and introduction for all new members of the coalition. Each Executive Board member gives an update on their work over the summer and plans for the year. Any SAGE business, including proposed bylaws amendments and our
Legislator of the Year award, are debated and voted on. This meeting serves to provide in depth
communications to the formation of Working Groups, which focus on a particular policy area

\textbf{Spring Day on the Hill}
The second in person meeting is the culmination of our work: Day on the Hill. This four-day
advocacy conference occurs in Washington, D.C. towards the end of March and beginning of
April, depending on the Congressional schedule. The purpose is to advocate for graduate
education to members of the federal government and elect SAGE offices for the next year.

On the first day, we review the final approved White Papers from working groups. We debate the
merits of each paper and select which ones to present to our legislators. Any other papers can be
added to our overall legislative platform and uploaded to our website or added to printed
materials we distribute to different offices. We also have advocacy training and practice to get
everyone prepared on the topics. On the second day, we hold elections for the next year’s
Executive Board. We also discuss the membership of the organization, if there are any new
institutions seeking to join the coalition, and any votes on change of status.

On the last two days, we divide into groups to meet with Legislators and their staffers to
advocate for the welfare of graduate students with our white papers. The first day is SAGE day,
where institutions are broken up and distributed to groups lead by an experienced SAGE member
to speak to congresspeople who do not necessarily represent our states, but who sit on key
committees, such as the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. The
second day is State Day, where each institution speaks to the representatives of their state. Group
leaders on each day take notes for the policy director to compile about how receptive certain
members were, or if they wanted more information SAGE can provide. The Executive Board
finalizes all conversations with offices and transitions to the newly elected board starting in June.