Getting Started

I. Introductions
   A. Introducing new officers to Administrators
   B. Introducing VPs to their staff/committees/BOD
   C. Announcing new council members to their units

II. Executive Committee Orientation
   A. Orientation to AGS Offices
   B. Review of responsibilities and division of labor

III. Council Orientation
   A. Review of meeting schedule and procedures
   B. Review of activities from the previous year
   C. Review of council responsibilities
   D. Review of Exec responsibilities

IV. Leadership and Goal Setting
   A. Leadership development
   B. Goal setting/strategic planning
I. Introductions

A. Introduce new officers to campus administration

Immediately following AGS elections, the outgoing President should provide a copy of the results of the election to the Executive Director for Student Government. In addition, ideally, the outgoing President will draft an email, followed by a hard copy, to the administrators listed below, introducing the new officers. This letter should be sent as soon as possible following the Vice President elections. An example is included at the end of the “getting started” section.

Once the outgoing President sends the message, the incoming President can follow up with an introductory message and request an introductory meeting between the executive officers and the appropriate administrators. If the outgoing President did not send a message before exiting AGS, then the incoming President can use this message to make first introductions. Following is a list of administrators who should receive both emails. A star follows each administrator who should also be invited to meet with the executive committee. In a given year there may also be other administrators who should receive notification and/or an invitation to meet. The executive committee should draft a list of administrators AGS will need to work closely with over the course of the year. The list will depend on the issues the executive committee anticipates focusing on over the course of the year. An expanded list could, for example, include the Director of Government Relations, the Chair of the Academic Senate, the Chair of the Graduate Council, etc. It is very important that this be a full executive committee effort. Working together at this early juncture will send the message to the administrators that AGS works as a team and not a hierarchy. Finally, if possible, invite the new President to the final Student Government lunch and be sure to make personal introductions to each of the administrators. If this is not possible, it may be useful to have the outgoing President set up introductory meetings for the new President to make those introductions. This may be especially useful if the outgoing President has a positive relationship with the administration.

Making personal introductions provides the opportunity to pass along those positive feelings to the incoming President.

Send introductory emails to the following and request meetings with starred individuals

- Chancellor*
- Executive Vice Chancellor*
- Vice Chancellor Student Services*
- Graduate Dean*
- Vice Chancellor for Business Services
- Vice Chancellor for Research
- Assistant Graduate Dean
- Associate Graduate Dean
- Dean of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUICK REFERENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Executive Director of Student Government notified of new officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Outgoing President sends message to administrators introducing new officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Incoming President sends message to administrators requesting introductory meeting</td>
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<td>✓ Outgoing President makes personal introductions if appropriate</td>
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B. Introduce incoming VPs to their appropriate staff/committees/board

The outgoing VPs should also send official notification to the appropriate individuals introducing the new VPs. Specifically, the outgoing VP Internal should send a message to the GSHIP committee introducing the new VP Internal. If possible and desirable (i.e.: the outgoing VP Internal had good relations with the GSHIP committee members), the outgoing VP Internal may invite the incoming VP Internal to a GSHIP committee meeting and make the introductions in person.

Similarly, the VP External should send an email to the UCSA Board of Directors introducing the newly elected VP External to the Board. Again, if possible and desirable, the outgoing VP External should attend the transition retreat with the new VP External to make personal introductions.

Finally, the outgoing VP Financial should make every effort to personally introduce the incoming VP Financial. Uncertainty and transition are stressful for employees and personal introductions provide the appearance of a smooth transition between officers.

C. Announce new Council members

At a minimum newly elected council members should be listed on the AGS website as soon as election results are ratified. However, AGS may also assist council members by making a formal announcement to each unit introducing the unit’s new representatives and providing an outline of what constituents should expect from their representatives including appropriate representative contact information. This could be accomplished through a blast email message, a unit-specific email message, or a “meet your representatives” event. If AGS does not choose to make the introductions, each council member should be instructed to send a message to their constituents introducing themselves, providing appropriate contact information, information about how all graduate students can get involved in AGS, and providing a description of council member responsibilities. [A side note for this year’s exec… Because there is no set job description for council members besides providing representation, it might be useful to ask this year’s council members to develop a description of what they think an optimum council member should do for their constituents. Then that description could be amended to the bylaws. Otherwise, a given council member could argue that the only requirement they have is to show up to meetings and vote.]

New council members should also be introduced to their outgoing counterparts in case they don’t otherwise know each other. This is most likely to happen at
the joint council meeting, but could also be accomplished during a transition retreat. Many non-profits utilize transition retreats to help provide continuity for the organization. The retreat could be an afternoon or a day-long event. The outgoing council members are given an opportunity to tell incoming council members what was accomplished the preceding year and to suggest directions for the coming year. Goal setting could be accomplished during a day long retreat. (See Section IV Leadership and Goal Setting for more information.) No matter the structure, incoming and outgoing council members should be encouraged to exchange contact information so that they can check-in with each other when new issues arise during the year.
II. Executive Officer Orientation

A. Office Orientation

At the beginning of the summer the new officers should be given a brief orientation to the AGS offices. The orientation might begin with an introduction to the Student Government staff. The Executive Director can coordinate this element. During the introduction to the staff execs should be provided a description of each staff person’s responsibilities and a short description of the types of services AGS has requested from each staff person in the past. The latter is necessary because the staff job descriptions are framed for ASUCI and may not always make it obvious how AGS interacts with a particular staff person.

Office keys should be distributed at this time, if they haven’t been already and offices may be assigned. Each year, the Executive officers may wish to evaluate how much time each officer anticipates spending in the office to determine how best to allocate space. The office space has been distributed in almost every possible combination amongst the executive officers. Some years the President has had his/her own office, while other years the President has shared with another executive officer. These decisions have usually been based on an effort to minimize overcrowding in any one office. Once the Student Center is expanded there will be more offices and it may be possible for each executive officer to have his/her own office. Though, other office space uses might be worth considering. For instance, if executive officers are not planning to make consistent use of an office, the space might be allocated to the staff (COD, CCD, Web, Systems Administrator), the committee chairs, etc. Because space is at such a premium, it’s worth assessing the most efficient use at the beginning of the year.

It may also be useful to discuss usage of AGS equipment at this time. There are no standing policies about AGS equipment. Each year the Execs come to an agreement amongst themselves about how/if items will be checked out or permanently assigned to particular officers. This is most applicable to the laptop and digital camera. The laptop is most often assigned to the VP External since he/she travels frequently. But usually, he/she is required to have the laptop at each council meeting for minute-taking. The digital camera is usually stored in the locked cabinet and checked out by executive officers. It might be useful to have a sign-out sheet so that everyone knows where it is at a quick glance. Discussing and agreeing to standards in the beginning will help to minimize misunderstandings and frustration when equipment is not where it’s expected to be.

This may also be a good time to assess office supplies and create a list of supplies to be purchased. The responsibility for ordering office supplies falls under the VP Financial job description in the bylaws. However, the VP Financial has not done so in more than ten years for a variety of reasons. It is most impor-
tant that someone agrees to do it and that everyone knows who to go to when they need new supplies. Most often, in the past ten years, the VP Admin has taken on the responsibility of ordering supplies, though occasionally officers have agreed to each have a certain dollar amount for office supplies and then been responsible for purchasing their own supplies. This still leaves general supplies to be purchased by one individual and reduces the savings associated with buying in bulk, but can serve to reduce the pressure on any one individual if executive officers spend a great deal of time in the office and thus use supplies at a rapid rate.

B. Review Responsibilities

At the first Executive Officer meeting the responsibilities outlined in the bylaws should be reviewed both for the executive committee and for each officer. At this time, the committee may wish to discuss officer preferences. If all officers are willing to consider trading responsibilities, it can be possible to re-distribute and provide a more positive working environment amongst the Execs. This has worked very well in the past, but should be done with caution as it can be frustrating if it appears that any single officer has shirked more responsibilities than he/she has taken on.

The committee may also want to discuss accountability measures to ensure that each officer continues to perform his/her responsibilities. In the past, officers have been evaluated mid-year. This is time consuming and can serve to derail other important work. It may be useful to discuss conducting reviews if the majority of the committee agrees that they’re necessary. Otherwise, thorough reporting by each officer at exec meetings may be sufficient to keep everyone focused. The officers may also wish to discuss periodic meetings with the President to check-in in more detail and discuss any trouble spots, etc. It’s important that this not be a top-down decision, but that it be a decision of the committee. AGS Executive Officers tend to be independent workers and may not welcome interference from the President if they believe they have their responsibilities under control.

The executive committee may also wish to discuss and assign tasks that do not appear in the bylaws or constitution. Being trained for and requesting food permits for council meetings is one such task. This could fall loosely into the VP Internal job description under item 2 if you assume that a council meeting is an “AGS entertainment or cultural event” and would make sense if the VP Internal plans to coordinate such events and thus needs to complete the food safety training for those events anyway.

Exec should also carefully review the list of council responsibilities. It will fall to the executive committee to ensure that council responsibilities are being fulfilled. Each officer should also be assigned to a standing committee at this time. The officer will serve as the facilitator for his/her committee. Each officer should be held accountable for seeing that his/her committee is meeting regularly and
moving toward achieving the goals the committee sets for itself. A report on committee status should be part of each officer’s report to the Executive Committee. Ideally committee facilitation will be as simple as ensuring that a good chair is elected. However, historically, committees have required more attention from the executive officers to keep them on track and meeting regularly.
III. Orienting new council members

A. Meeting schedules and procedures

New council members should receive a paper copy of the meeting schedule (with meeting location when available) for the year. Virtually every year someone asks whether council meetings can be re-scheduled. The technical answer is, yes they can if council votes to do so. The practical answer is that in ten years time they’ve always remained every other Tuesday evening. The exact time has shifted over the years. At one time council met from 6pm to 8pm. More recently council meetings have been scheduled from 5pm to 7pm. However, any council member can make a motion to move the meeting time. The motion is heard like any other motion. A majority affirmative vote passes the motion. The only exception is the summer schedule. The summer schedule is set at the beginning of the summer each year. Council meets monthly and those meetings are scheduled in an effort to maximize attendance, but are also approved by the council at their first meeting.

Council members should be informed that they will be expected to sit on at least one standing committee. Those meetings are scheduled by the committee members. It may be useful to ask the committees to determine their meeting schedule for the year, or the quarter, at their first meeting. These schedules can be posted on the website to facilitate participation by non-council members. Currently committee meeting attendance is not a requirement outlined in the bylaws. Several efforts have been made to amend the bylaws to include language similar to the “Failure to provide representation” section applying to regular council meetings. So far those efforts have failed to achieve the 2/3 vote required to amend the bylaws.

Council may require a short primer on Robert’s Rules of Order. Technically council meetings are run according to Robert’s Rules. Practically it depends a great deal on the nature of a particular council and the President’s knowledge of the rules. Nonetheless, a basic knowledge of the rules will help to empower council members to keep the meetings moving efficiently. At the very least council members should be versed in making motions, making amendments, and calling the question. Over the years executive officers have used a variety of techniques to convey this information to council members. The most entertaining was a skit enacted by the officers. Robert’s Rules are very dry and boring. Any effort to make them more entertaining is likely to be received well by council.

B. Review Previous Year’s Activities

If a transition retreat is scheduled, this activity may take place during the retreat. If not, council should be informed verbally about the previous year’s activities during the joint council meeting. This is in addition to the written end of the year report. The verbal information will ensure that the cur-
rent council has a vague notion about what came before. This will be very helpful when it comes time to have the committees set their goals. If possible, the outgoing committee chairs should be asked to provide a brief description of the items their committee worked on and the current status of each. The outgoing chair could also provide advice about future directions for his/her committee.

C. Review Council Responsibilities

The Executive Committee should do some preparation prior to the orientation. This is difficult because of the current structure of VP Elections. They are usually conducted following new council member orientation. To remedy this, execs could schedule a second orientation for the first summer council meeting providing the time necessary for the execs to meet and discuss the best methods for communicating council responsibilities which include more activities than are currently reflected in the governing documents.

At this time, the attendance requirements should be reviewed from the constitution and council members should be informed that they can appoint a substitute for a quarter at a time. Council members should be directed to inform the VP Admin when they can not make it to a meeting to prevent removal for failure to provide representation.

D. Review Executive Officer Responsibilities

Executive officer responsibilities should be reviewed with Council and members should be encouraged to ensure that officers are doing their jobs. Council members should be reminded that they hold fiduciary responsibility for the organization and since officers receive stipends it is council’s responsibility to ensure that those dollars are being spent wisely. This is not to say that they should micro-manage officers, but that they should pay attention when officers make their reports and ask questions to ensure that they’re aware of what officers are and are not doing. Any concerns should be taken to the President (or to the VP Internal if those concerns are regarding the President.)
IV.  Leadership Development and Goal Setting

A. Leadership Development

One of the values of participating in AGS is that each person has the opportunity to develop their skills as a leader. This is as true for each council member as it is for each Executive Officer. Depending on the personality of the council and officers, leadership development may be a useful summer activity. Leadership development can be especially useful for smoothing out conflict within the executive committee by providing an opportunity to discuss more general topics of leadership instead of specific people who may be creating challenges for the committee. Attached to this section you will find several activities and references for other resources that council and officers may find useful when discussing leadership style and approach.

Quick Reference

✓ DETERMINE WHETHER LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES ARE NECESSARY AND/OR DESIRABLE
✓ SELECT APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

B. Goal Setting/Planning

AGS can tend to take on a reactionary approach because issues are constantly emerging. However, the most productive council years have begun with goal setting during the summer months. Though all goals were not achieved and were frequently amended or dropped altogether, the plans helped to keep committees and individual officers on track as they moved through the year even in the midst of the chaos of emergent issues.

There is a wide variety of methods for creating plans and goals. The most elaborate is a strategic plan. Strategic planning requires a substantial organizational investment and can drain resources from other important activities. However, a good strategic plan can provide direction for years to come and thereby increase organizational productivity over time. For an organization like AGS, strategic planning every five years is probably sufficient. AGS could be due for a strategic plan as it appears from the archives that no planning has been attempted since the origination of the association. The executive committee should assess the sense of interest and investment amongst council members. When the last strategic plan was undertaken, the existence of overwhelming issues (such as fee increases) that are likely to require a great deal of attention during the year, and their own interest in the planning process to determine whether strategic planning is feasible in a given year. Strategic planning can take place at any time during the year. So a council finding that it has exhausted its agenda items before their terms are up might consider an end-of-year strategic planning session. But be sure that there is enough time to write the plan. It would be a shame if a council went through the process and then lacked the time to document it for future councils to come.

If a council votes to undertake a strategic planning process, the executive
officers may wish to consider advising that a consultant be hired to manage the process. Strategic planning consultants are very useful for facilitating the process and ensuring that things stay on track. Depending on the contract with the consultant, he/she may also be responsible for drafting the plan. That takes a great deal of responsibility off of the executive officers and helps to ensure that the process will be maximally productive. If AGS decides to hire a consultant be sure that it's someone who works with non-profits and not business planning. Also, interview potential candidates beforehand and look for someone who is willing to learn about AGS prior to initiating the process. The ideal candidate would be someone who specializes in representative and/or working associations. That would mean someone who works with city councils, unions, or something of the like. It's important to stress that AGS is not just a policy making body, but also does the work to implement those policy positions. Planning takes on a very different shape for a working council than it does for a policy making council.

Though a professional will ease responsibilities for the execs, working with a professional can prove frustrating if an officer or two have a particular vision for the planning process. Thus, if there are willing executive officers, it is possible for AGS to facilitate its own process. Detailed discussions and planning prior to starting the process will minimize complications during the planning process. Materials and references for strategic planning are attached to this section.

On a year to year basis, committees and officers may wish to take some time during the summer months to set some goals for themselves. A goal setting process might include brainstorming all possible goals and then selecting three or four to focus on for the year. Then the committee or individual might define a timeline for each goal and list the steps necessary for completion. If goal setting is done, it's important to return to those goals during each council meeting to get an update on progress toward the goals. Goal setting materials and references are attached to this section.
AGS
Fundamentals

I. Budget/Reserves
   A. Income
   B. Expenses
      1. Stipends
      2. Office Expenses
      3. Student Government Staff Salaries/
         Office Rental
      4. External Representation
      5. Council Expenses
      6. Special Projects

II. AGS Governing Documents
   A. Constitution
   B. Bylaws
      1. President's job description
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         b. Facilitation of the Executive Com-
            mittee
         c. General Facilitation
         d. Other Responsibilities
      2. Vice President Internal Affairs
         a. GSHIP
         b. Liaison with Other Campus Groups
         c. AGS Entertainment and Cultural
            Events
d. AGS Newsletter and Publicity

e. Assumes the duties of the President

f. Issues and Committees

3. Vice President of Administrative Affairs

a. Follows up on all Council Action and Legislation

b. On-campus Appointments and Maintenance

c. Record Keeping
d. Chairs the Constitution Revision Committee

4. Vice President of Financial Affairs

5. Vice President of External Affairs

a. Represents AGS to UCSA Board of Directors

b. Represents AGS to NAGPS
c. Issues and Committees

III. Facilitating Council Meetings

IV. Communication Structures

A. Contact Sheets

B. Email Lists

C. Blast List Messages

D. Issue Based Listservs

V. AGS Standing Committees

VI. Student Government Lunches

VII. The Pub

VIII. AGS Elections

IX. Travel
I. Budget/Reserves

A. Income

Before July 1 of each year, the incoming council must approve a budget for the coming fiscal year. As of the 2003-2004 academic year, AGS income consists of fee dollars paid by each graduate student in the amount of $9 per quarter ($4.50 per quarter for GSM and Medical students) and profits from the pub. The total fee income is estimated based on expected enrollments for the year. The pub profit has been estimated in a variety of ways in the past. Some years pub profit was set based upon the VP Financial's expected profit for the year. Other years it was set at $5,000 somewhat arbitrarily. More recently, instead of counting on pub profits from the current fiscal year, the budget includes the profit from the previous year which provides a known figure and prevents AGS from overspending in the event of a lower than expected pub profit.

The Constitution encourages Council to develop additional means of financial support in order to reduce dependence on student fee dollars. For this reason, the Business Enterprises and Social Activities committee is charged with developing proposals for new business enterprises that AGS might undertake to both serve graduate students and produce income to fund other services for graduate students.

Council should be cautious when considering new business ventures. AGS' initial effort to run a business, Pietro's Pub and Grille, ended in a $250,000 debt to ASUCI. It took AGS six years [Mark is six correct?] to pay off the debt to ASUCI hampering other activities. So any new venture should be thoroughly evaluated for feasibility and estimates should be made regarding any initial losses likely to occur during start-up. If AGS does not have the funds to cover those losses in reserves it may be preferable to wait a year or two until the necessary funds can be saved.

A second area of consideration when evaluating potential new ventures is AGS' 501c3 (non-profit) status. Currently we share that status with ASUCI under the heading Student Government. So, likely we would have to take in a great deal of unrelated business income (see UBIT on the IRS website) before our tax status would be in jeopardy. However, it is possible to structure many businesses so that they do not count against AGS when assessing unrelated business income. [This section can be expanded based on the advice we receive from the lawyer.]

AGS also receives $1,000 each year from Graduate Studies to help fund a welcome week party for all graduate students. To maintain good form, the VP Financial usually sends a letter to the Graduate Dean in August thanking him for his continued support of this important opportunity to welcome new and returning graduate students to campus. The letter usually includes information about the day and time of the party and an invitation to anyone from graduate studies who would like to participate.

Finally, AGS may also solicit contributions from administrators for specific projects and/or activities. For instance, AGS often solicits funds toward travel expenses for
those participating in the California Higher Education Student Summit (CHESS). (See the VP Externals job description for more information about making this request.)

B. Expenses

The expense side of the budget generally includes officer/staff stipends (broken down by officer), a set of office expenses, the AGS contribution toward student government staff salaries, an external representation section (including membership dues and travel), a council expenses line item and a special projects line item.

AGS EXPENSES

1. STIPENDS

Stipends are set during the joint council meeting. They have ranged dramatically over the years. About ten years ago stipends were $500 per month for the President and $400 per month for each Vice President. The next year's Council believed AGS was spending too much of its budget on overhead and not enough on programs and activities so they slashed officer stipends to $200 per month for all officers. After years of incrementally raising stipends they are $500 per month for all of the officers (as of 2003-2004).

2. PRESIDENT DISCRETIONARY FUND

3. OFFICE EXPENSES

4. STUDENT GOVERNMENT STAFF SALARIES AND OFFICE RENTAL

5. EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION

6. COUNCIL EXPENSES

7. SPECIAL PROJECTS

There are a number of mind-sets about stipend levels. On the one hand, previous council members have been adamant about maintaining a reasonable proportion between "overhead", the largest element of which is officer stipends, and actual dollars going out to fund real activities and programs for graduate students. After all, AGS does not exist to fund a few graduate students through their graduate careers.

On the other hand, other council members have been interested in working toward providing full TA/RA-level compensation for each officer. By doing so, AGS would free the officers from having to maintain other employment so they could spend more time on their AGS responsibilities. In addition, council would be able to make more demands on officers and call them to greater accountability than is currently possible. Under such a system officers could be required to hold regular office hours, do more research, coordinate more activities, etc.

Council members are often interested in how AGS stipends compare to other graduate student associations around the UC system. At this time, AGS is in the mid to high range. At the low end, UCSF provides a minimal quarterly stipend in the $100 to $200 range. At the high end, Berkeley provides a TA-equivalent for its President and Vice President External. Most of the other associations fall in the $400 to $500 per month range.

For the past three years, AGS officer stipends have remained at $500 per month. There seems to be a consensus that $500 per month, though not necessarily reflecting
any one officer's contributions, reflects an average contribution across officers. Previous Councils have also expressed the belief that the $500 stipend reflects about the maximum time commitment we might expect from an officer who also has a TA or RA.

Occasionally Council also considers differential stipends for particular executive officers to reflect the different workloads. This system has been used in the past. However, experience suggests that workload has more to do with the individual holding a position than the actual job description for each position. In addition, the bylaws have been amended over the years to create more of a collective management approach to the executive committee reducing any sense of hierarchy and freeing each officer to accomplish his/her tasks without interference from other officers. The collective management model supports equivalent stipends for all of the officers. For this reason, council has set all officer stipends at the same rate each year for the past 6 years.

Of course, exceptions occur during the course of the year. In the past ten years council has occasionally chosen to reduce or increase individual officer stipends to better reflect individual officer contributions. Usually these changes are recommended by the executive committee.

Staff stipends (for COD, CCD, web, etc.) are also set by council during the budget approval process. These stipends are generally minimal and have ranged from $100 to $200 per month since the creation of staff positions in 1997.

Office Expenses

There isn't much to say about office expenses. They are set based on previous usage, but may vary depending on how much time the officers spend in the office. Over the past few years a number of investments have been made to create a more inviting office space and encourage officers to spend more time in their offices. Council may wish to suspend new investments until after the Student Center expansion is complete as AGS will be moved, temporarily, to a much smaller space.

Student Government Staff Salaries and Office Rental

For at least the last 10 years AGS has contributed $15,000 per year toward the student government staff salaries and office rental. Occasionally, the Executive Director has approached AGS requesting to re-negotiate for more money. Most often this occurs as ASUCI considers hiring new staff. Each time the issue has been dropped prior to council consideration as it has become clear that AGS will receive little benefit from the new staff.

In fairness, renegotiation should occur at some point. However, Council should hesitate to approve an increase that is more than the percentage of wage increases accrued by the staff since AGS' utilization of staff resources has not increased substantially over the past 10 years. The only area of minimal change is that the pub accounting may be more time consuming due to increased profits. The VP financial will be in the best position to make an assessment of the dollar value of those increased services.

External Representation

The external representation section of the budget is designated for the expenses related to AGS participation in other associations. Thus, this section includes membership dues and travel/conference line items. Historically, AGS has maintained membership in
the UC Student Association (UCSA) and the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) most years. The UCSA contribution has been set at $1 per student for more than the past ten years. Thus the total contribution increases as enrollments increase. UCSA is working to encourage associations to increase their contribution levels. Council may wish to consider an increase based upon the recommendations of the VP External.

NAGPS has a standard dues schedule. Basic membership is $300 per year. AGS has not paid basic membership in more than five years. Generally NAGPS dues are budgeted at $400 and then amended, if needed, based on advice from the VP External. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year AGS increased dues to $1,000 for the year in an effort to help NAGPS move beyond some difficult fiscal times. However, the year prior AGS did not pay NAGPS membership dues based upon the poor performance of the NAGPS Board of Directors the previous year. Overall, however, AGS has tended to be a strong supporter of NAGPS. In the past AGS consistently elects officers to the NAGPS Board of Directors. This has often led to an additional line item in the AGS budget providing office support for the AGS member who has been elected to the Board. This additional line item is necessary because most often the elected NAGPS board member is not an AGS officer and will need access to office space, phone, photocopies, etc.

Also included in the external representation section of the budget is the conference/travel line item. Over the past few years AGS has increased this line item substantially to accommodate greater participation in external organizations. AGS has sent graduate students to Washington, D.C. to lobby for the tax exemption campaign, to Sacramento for the UCSA lobby day, and to countless conferences and Board meetings. It is not uncommon for the VP External to come back to Council to ask for additional funding for particular travel opportunities.

Council Expenses

The Council Expenses section of the budget includes an allocation for the cost of food at the regular council meetings. The amount has ranged from $40.00 to $60.00 per meeting depending on how many people regularly attend the meetings. In addition, historically, this area of the budget has included a line item for committees including the GSHIP committee. These committee line items have been used for a variety of things including provision of food at committee meetings and to purchase supplies to support committee activities.

Special Projects Funding

(Mark— do you want to do this section?)
AGS Governing Documents

The Constitution

The AGS Constitution is technically the ultimate AGS governing document. It was passed originally by a general vote of the AGS membership and thus provides the strongest connection between council and all AGS constituents. Unfortunately, amendments to the Constitution must be passed through a general ballot with at least a 20% voter turnout. AGS has never managed a 20% turnout since original ratification of the Constitution. A good election turnout is 10% and we’ve elected Presidents with as little as a 3% turnout. Thus, the Constitution exists in its original form from 1974.

Because the Constitution has never been amended there are numerous items that contradict AGS current practices and contract with language in the bylaws. Technically, the Constitution trumps current practice and the bylaws and were a graduate student to take a question to the Judicial Committee it would be difficult for them to find otherwise. However, Council has chosen to operate in violation of the Constitution until such time as amendments can be made.

The contradictions include Article 111, Section 2 which indicates that all council members shall be elected during the Spring quarter for terms that begin on July 1 and continue through June 30 of the following calendar year. Because GSM, Education, and Medical students are on campus for such a short time their elections are conducted in the fall of each year to allow first year students to run. Their terms are from fall election to fall election.

The Bylaws

The AGS bylaws are much more malleable as they can be amended by a 2/3 vote of sitting council members. Unfortunately, previous officers have not been diligent about recording bylaw amendments and thus the bylaws do not reflect all amendments that have been made. At some point it may be useful to review the minutes from 1999 through 2002 to determine whether any amendments have failed to be included in the bylaws.

In addition, the AGS bylaws are overdue for review. A small committee of council members could be useful to develop a set of recommended amendments to the bylaws to bring them up to date with current practices. The executive officers may also wish to review officer job descriptions for consistency and balance.

Job Descriptions in the Governing Documents

President

The position of AGS President is a complex role. It is not like being President of other organizations. In reality, the President has little unilateral power. All power is ultimately vested in the AGS Council. Absent Council authority, the next level of authority rests with the Executive Committee as a collective. Though AGS does not have a formal interim decision-making policy, traditionally, interim decisions have been made by the Executive Committee. The President is strongly advised against unilateral interim decisions except under extreme circumstances.

That said the President does set the tone for the Association. A strong President will lead from knowledge and by example. The President has little, if any, role delegating duties. Council is the official delegation authority. The President should work as a facilitator, facilitating the responsibilities of other Executive officers, of council committees, and council more generally. The President sets the bar for all other Officers and Council members. A hard working
President will, likely, solicit hard work from others. A President who shirks responsibility will likely be frustrated throughout the year. Likewise, however, a President who picks up all of the slack and does everything will likely find that others will tend to do less. After all, they don’t have to worry because they can always rely upon the President to take care of things. Striking a balance between the two is not an exact science and most Presidents will find that it is a constant challenge throughout the year.

In the AGS structure it is vitally important that the President respect the charges of the other Executive officers. Again the President should be supportive and help to facilitate the other Executive officers, but the President should always defer to other Executive Officers according to their areas of expertise. This is especially important when it comes to working with the Administration. The Administrators are accustomed to a very hierarchical structure. So their default is always to go to the President on every issue. The way AGS is set up, however, each VP has an area of expertise and authority. To keep the Execs engaged and to prevent AGS from looking unprofessional, the President should be sure to, at the very least, keep the appropriate VP informed and better yet, direct the Administrator to the appropriate VP. Ideally, a system will be developed amongst the execs at the beginning of the year. [See Executive Committee for more information about developing standard operating procedures.]

Because AGS elections do not solicit campaign speeches and well developed agendas, a new AGS President often arrives in office without much sense of purpose. The President’s charge in the constitution is very diffuse and provides little direction for the new President. Ideally, the President will assess the interests of other officers and council members and create a personal agenda that fills in the gaps left by others. Though the President does not have any specifically outlined areas of responsibility, as the other officer positions do, having an identifiable set of issues for which the President is responsible helps to create a teamwork environment.

**Specific Presidential Responsibilities**

1) The President is a communication conduit between AGS and campus administrators. The AGS President is responsible for facilitating communication with campus administrators. In this role, the President takes care of requesting and scheduling meetings with particular administrators. The President also collects and creates an agenda for each meeting, transmitting it to each of the meeting participants, including the appropriate administrators. The President also signs most correspondence with the administration, though the appropriate VP may draft the letter and may sign correspondence when appropriate. Though the President coordinates, AGS practice has always been to include all interested executive officers in any administrative meeting. This practice provides back-up in a number of ways. First, the officers present can back each other
up with information and provide various approaches to persuade a particular adminis-
trator. Second, multiple participants provide multiple witnesses to any commitments
made by a particular administrator should said administrator forget what he/she
agreed to do. And, finally, including all officers ensures that everyone knows what has
been discussed in the timeliest fashion. (For a more detailed discussion of meeting
strategies see the Executive Committee section of this binder.)

2. The President is responsible for scheduling all Executive Committee meetings and for treat-
ing an agenda for each meeting.

The Executive committee is vital to the smooth functioning of AGS. An Executive
committee that works well together will almost undoubtedly ensure a good year for
AGS. A regular meeting schedule helps to facilitate strong relations amongst executive
officers. However, the meetings should be well-planned and expeditious. Nothing
drags a group down like a meeting that lasts too long and exhausts everyone. Execu-
tive committee meetings should include the following agenda items as a baseline, how-
ever, depending on how often exec meets, each of these items may not need to be on
every meeting agenda. The President should assess the optimum schedule for each
item that ensure forward motion without boring officers with repetition of the same
information.

**Executive Committee Meeting Agenda Items**

a) updates from each executive officer

Each officer’s update should include a progress report regarding on-going
issues and a laundry list of arising issues. Arising issues should be listed
and assigned to executive officer/committees as appropriate. That does
not mean that the assigned individual does all of the work him/herself.
Ideally, most things are accomplished through teamwork. It simply means
that the assigned individual is responsible for ensuring that others contrib-
ute to successful resolution of each issue. The President should have
notes from prior executive committee meetings to inquire about specific
tasks agreed to previously by each executive officer. In this way, the Presi-
dent can insure week to week accountability.

b) Construction of the next council agenda

Some thought to the next council agenda is important not just for generat-
ing agenda items, but for ensuring the smooth running of the meeting.
During this discussion execs should consider how best to expedite agenda
items (including considering what kinds of materials could be distributed
prior to the meeting, whether particular agenda items should be delegated
to committee prior to council consideration, how best to order agenda
items, etc.) This is also the time to raise any concerns about how the meet-
ings are running. Smoothly run council meetings help to maintain council
member attendance. A more engaged council will contribute to a more
productive association.

c) Updates on committee work/planning for committees

The committee structure in AGS will succeed or fail based on the invest-
ment of the executive officers. Each executive officer should be assigned
to a committee at the beginning of the year. Though ideally each com-
committee will have an active committee chair, it is the responsibility of the executive committee member to ensure that the committee meets and is functional. This can be done working with a committee chair or without one. The committee updates should include mention of progress on the goals the committee set for itself during the summer, delegation of any new issues to particular committees, and exec assessment of efficiency of each committee to determine whether a change of direction might make a particular committee more successful.

d) Update of AGS calendar, including exec meeting schedule, council meetings, committee meetings, GSHIP meetings, UCSA meetings, administrative meetings, etc.

Ideally this calendar will be maintained and updated on the web so that everyone can reference it easily. Unfortunately, that does not replace the need for email reminders prior to every meeting. But it will help empower others to take responsibility for themselves by providing them with a place to check if they’ve forgotten when a particular meeting is scheduled to take place.

3) Facilitation

The President’s role as facilitator is a tricky one. As mentioned above, there is a fine line that a President walks and it often becomes difficult to find that line as the year progresses. In addition, the actual practice of facilitation will vary depending on the council and officers in a given year.

Basically, the facilitator role requires getting to know the council and officers and learning how each individual responds best. Listening and observation are key to successful facilitation. Trust is also a key element of the President’s relations with council and the other officers. If a certain level of trust exists many otherwise monumental misunderstandings can be overcome. Proceeding without trust is one of the most common errors made by incoming AGS Presidents. This has been an especially critical issue for Presidents who have not held an officer position prior, and even more so for those who have not been on council prior to being elected President. In each of these cases, it will take time and patience to develop trust. Listening to your Officers, especially those with prior experience, is key to developing strong working relations.

If you enter the President role having developed some experience with AGS as an executive officer your challenge is the opposite. It will likely be easy for others to defer to you. In this case, your executive committee will be much stronger if you can set your experience aside and encourage other officers to learn for themselves offering gentle guidance and not strict direction. This can be very challenging when it seems more expedient to give direction than to take the time for someone else to figure things out for themselves. In those moments it is important to remember that allowing others to the time to figure things out is an investment in the future. After all, you won’t be around forever and other officers will need to be able to develop their own strategies.

Regardless of your experience level prior to being elected President, facilitation is by far the most difficult element of the position. It requires constant flexibility in
relating to other officers. Each officer brings with him a personal style and the faster the President learns that style and how to deal best with it, the more productive the year. AGS has had VPs who are very rule-oriented requiring a certain level of order. It has usually been productive to give these individuals control of revising and maintaining the rules as necessary. This keeps them busy and they have the sense of control that a rule orientation seems to demand. Other officers have had volatile personalities. Sometimes it is necessary to let them vent before they can speak calmly and productively. Still other officers will slack off. These are, perhaps, the most difficult to deal with. Slackers tend to bring the entire executive committee down. It's important that the President identify slackers early on and develop a plan to deal with them. In the past, weekly meetings between the President and the slacker officer have helped to get some officers back on track. In other cases, it was best to encourage the officer to resign so that another individual could take over.

No manual can provide an exact recipe for success. Beyond the styles of each individual officer, the President must consider how all of the divergent styles interact with each other and help to ease any rough edges between officers. Maintaining order and a sense of respect within the executive committee and council more generally will go a long way to facilitating healthy interactions. Open honest communication is another path to success.

4) Other responsibilities

Chairing Council Meetings – See section on “Facilitating AGS council meetings.”

Annual report – The president does not have to write the entire thing, but must ensure that others make contributions, format, and print the report for presentation at the Joint Council meeting.

Budgetary responsibilities – The President is responsible for oversight, but does not necessarily need to be involved in the daily processing performed by the VP Financial. Except in years when there have been concerns about the VP Financial’s performance, the President has reviewed monthly financial reports, but not been involved in the VP Financial’s daily activities. It may be useful to talk to the VP Financial and negotiate a set of expectations regarding how you will work together. Some years the President shares responsibility for signing check requests. This is especially useful when the VP Financial does not spend much time in the office and thus delays reimbursement. However, the drawback is that, if the VP Financial is keeping track of expenditures, it will be necessary to ensure that the President is consistent in recording the check requests she signs.

Fundraising – Historically, the President has done little fundraising beyond requesting funds from the Administration. One President, many years ago, made an agreement with graduate studies to contribute $1,000 toward the welcome week party. The President should be sure to make this request each year in July. Beyond the party money, AGS has occasionally successfully requested money for specific events and activities. The most successful strategy has been to start with either the Executive Vice Chancellor’s office through Mike Arias or through the Vice Chancellor of Student Services office directly.
through Manuel to make an initial request. In the request the President should indicate that she is asking for 1/3 of the cost from each office including the EVC's, the Vice Chancellor Student Services, and the Graduate Dean. Each time this method has been used it has been successful. In the past several years this process has been used to fund conference travel (Sacramento and DC lobby trips, and participation in the Council of Graduate Schools annual conference), and dinner at a UCSA Congress hosted on the UCI campus. Additional administrative funding was received as an outcome of negotiations associated with the controversy over housing policy changes. According to the agreement RGS funded an AGS staff position to do research on graduate housing. During lean budgetary times administrative funding will be limited, but AGS should keep asking to ensure that when the budget turns around these are still activities the administration is positively disposed toward funding.

AGS has done virtually no outside fundraising in the past ten years. The Business Enterprises committee might be charged with investigating potential areas of fundraising that might be useful to AGS. In addition, the President might investigate any grant funding opportunities that would benefit graduate students. There are several national programs that fund graduate education. AGS could potentially facilitate UCI's application to and participation in these programs. The VP External is in an excellent position to collect information about these programs through NAGPS and contacts with other GSAs nationally. Such federally funded programs include the Preparing Future Faculty program, funded by the Pew Charitable Trust and The Woodrow Wilson Foundation's revisioning the Ph.D. program. There are infinitely more department-specific programs that may improve graduate education at UCI.

Another fundraising idea that has been discussed periodically over the years is to set up scholarship programs for grads for things like childcare, medical expenses, etc. and then fundraise amongst the faculty and greater community to fund those awards. University of Nevada, Reno has an excellent scholarship program, though they fund theirs out of their GSA budget.

Preparing and conducting elections – see elections section.

**Vice President of Internal Affairs**

The VP Internal's responsibilities encompass virtually anything that happens on the campus. All academic, housing, childcare, etc. concerns are under the purview of the VP Internal. The most complicated element of the VPI’s job is navigating AGS’ relationship with the TA Union. Any concerns about TA employment should be directed to the Union. However, concerns about RA employment are in a gray area. As long as relations are reasonable between AGS and the Union, it is advisable that the VPI contact the Union when RA concerns are raised.

There are a number of issues that cross the boundary between working condition issues and issues of concern to all graduate students. Office space, GSHIP, individual student funding, and computer access are just a few issues that can be framed as employment issues, but that area also of general concern to all graduate students.

1. **GSHIP**

The single most important job for the VP Internal is to ensure that the GSHIP proc-
ess runs smoothly and produces the best possible outcome for graduate students at UCI. There have been several binders over the years which have been lost. It would be useful to produce a set of resources stored on the server (and backed up) that would be available for years to come. The VP Internal should be sure to keep in touch with the previous year’s VP Internal and GSHIP Chair. Almost every year there will be latent issues that carry over from the year prior. The VP Internal will benefit from consulting with old officers.

AGS has a long history of doing an exceptional job negotiating the GSHIP plan. UCI also has the strongest policies ensuring graduate student participation in selection of the coverage. Maintaining those things requires diligence from everyone associated with GSHIP.

Almost every year there are administrators involved with the process who have their own interests running contrary to the interests of graduate students. It is vital that the VP Internal and the GSHIP chair learn all that they can and not take anything for granted. It can be difficult to stand up to administrators who have been around for years, but it is critical that the GSHIP chair be empowered to run the committee free from administrative interference.

2. Liaison with other on campus groups
   This responsibility falls under the description for VP Internal, but historically this function usually falls to the President. This might be one area for discussion at the beginning of the year. For more information on relations with other on-campus groups see the “Campus administration and structure section of this binder.”

3. Coordinates AGS Entertainment and Cultural Activities
   In the past ten years there haven’t been any AGS initiated entertainment or cultural events except those events scheduled in the Pub by the VP Financial and/or the Pub manager. This is an area that might be expanded now that the GSHIP chair responsibilities have been split from the VP Internal description. One idea that has been tossed around over the years is to bring back activities in Aldrich Park. It could be a jazz band at lunch time one Thursday per month or the VP Internal might work with a couple of MFA students to hold a dance or dramatic performance. There are endless options.

   The VP Internal should work with the Business and Social committee on any events he/she plans for assistance with publicity, logistics, and to mine any opportunities for fundraising or sales that might be available associated with the event. For instance, AGS might host a hot dog cart or something of the like in the park during any AGS sponsored events. Any specific idea should be carefully evaluated for profitability by the business and social committee.

   Entertainment and cultural activities may also provide opportunity to combat the sense of isolation reported by graduate students across the campus. Consistently, over the years, in surveys and during town halls and focus groups graduate students have reported a desire to meet other grads beyond their departments. Efforts have been made periodically to address this concern with limited success. However, as it is a continuing concern, the VP Internal, along with the business and social committee, should continue to develop strategies for bringing grads together across departments.
4. Coordinates publication of the AGS newspaper and all publicity

Communication with constituents is an area that has been overlooked for years. It remains surprising how many graduate students have not heard of AGS. Though the description in the bylaws is narrow, as GSHIP responsibilities are shifted to the GSHIP Chair, this is an area that has a great deal of potential for expansion. The VP Internal, and the President if so inclined, could work to create a marketing scheme for AGS. Limited attempts have been made in the past, some more successful than others.

If efforts move in this direction a newsletter will only be a very small part. At this point, AGS distributes a newsletter that is read by a small fraction of the graduate student population. More interest will need to be generated in AGS before the newsletter will develop any true usefulness as a means of communication. AGS has to convince its constituents that the newsletter is worth reading. When a newsletter is distributed, The newsletter is edited by the VP Internal, or overseen by the VP Internal and edited by the CCD. However, all executive officers and committee chairs should be expected to contribute articles. Start well before the target distribution date and expect to do a great deal of babysitting to actually get those articles.

Distribution generally consists of a combination of a blast list message, posting to the web page, and paper copies. The current newsletter can be part of the array of materials taken to every AGS event. This is especially effective if the event requires graduate students to stand in line or sit around. Last year's President brought a stack to a Trailer Park event and you could look around the Park and see people reading the newsletter. The fact is that they didn’t have anything better to do at that exact moment.

The second thing necessary to encourage grads to read the AGS newsletter is to ensure that there is useful information included. This means that ideally, the newsletter will include more than simple reports about what AGS is doing. The Office of Graduate Studies funds publication of the Graduate Voice. Today it is used mainly for promotional purposes. The publication used to include helpful tips like where to look for fellowship opportunities or a list of resources to consult if you’re having difficulties with your advisor. The AGS newsletter could take up this function to provide an incentive for grads to open and read it. If this route is considered AGS may want to contact RGS and request access to the Grad Voice archives which would provide template articles that could be updated and printed without a huge time investment.

Another tool that has been used in the past to publicize AGS was a tri-fold pamphlet with basic AGS information. The pamphlet was used for several years, though information became outdated, as a quick reference that could be distributed at every departmental orientation (we sent them to the graduate counselors in every unit) and at every AGS event. If any council member is graphically inclined, it would be worth having them create a nice cover for the pamphlet. Inside, the pamphlet should include basic information about AGS including a list of council members for each unit and contact information, the web address, a list of the goals for the year, and most important, a list of AGS’ accomplishments (ie: what AGS has been doing for your $27/ year.)

In addition to the pamphlet, each committee and/or executive officer might create a specialized pamphlet or flyer recruiting in their area. So, for instance, the VP Admin might have a flyer recruiting for campus-wide committees. The VP External/
External Committee might have a pamphlet or two recruiting for systemwide committee, a legislative alert listserv, etc. The VP Financial/Business and Finance could create a pub flyer with a calendar of bands and a schedule of AGS parties. This could be developed in such a way that students will keep it, such as lamination or magnets.

Finally, AGS could invest in items with the AGS logo, website, email, and phone number. There are a broad array of such items from pens to mugs and mouse pads. The information exchange at the NAGPS National Conference is a great place to get ideas. T-shirts, of course, are a mainstay. AGS had a t-shirt again for the first time in years this past year. Having council members wear them during AGS events also contributes to getting the word out.

Once AGS has the materials, the VP Internal will need to develop a strategy for getting those materials, not only into the hands of graduate students at UCI, but to the top of the stack of things every graduate student has somewhere waiting to be read. Several activities that have been attempted in the past include, sending an AGS representative to as many departmental new student orientations as possible, hosting an AGS new student orientation the first week of school, unit lunches with the executive officers, Saturday recreational activities, etc. The success rate has varied widely, sometimes for the same event depending on the department, time of day, or particular year the event was attempted. Effective advertising is one factor predicting success. Flyers and a blast email message are the standard methods for AGS. The main thing to keep in mind is that graduate students need reminders. So staggering means of advertisement seems to be more effective than distributing all materials at the same time.

The method that has seemed to work best, though no scientific assessment has been done, is to distribute paper advertisements between a week and two weeks out. That is followed by a blast message that is targeted to go out the day before the event. Once graduate students are introduced to AGS and convinced that AGS does important things for them they'll be much more likely to read a newsletter, show up at events, and pay attention to AGS activities.

5. Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the President in the President's absence

See the Presidents description above.

6. Issues and Committees

Generally the VP Internal facilitates the Internal Committee. This is not a requirement, but seems to make sense because the VP Internal is ultimately responsible for all issues that arise on campus.

The VP Internal should be well-versed on the campus structure and the pertinent issues impacting graduate students' lives on campus. The VP Internal and/or the President are the ideal individuals to assist individual graduate students with grievances as they should be the individuals with the most knowledge about how best to work with campus administrators. The VP Internal might consider maintaining a laundry list of the challenges facing graduate students. It would be impossible to address all of the issues in one term, but the list could be passed from VP Internal to VP Internal and provide a starting point for incoming VPs.
Vice President of Administrative Affairs

The VP Admin is the nuts and bolts of AGS. A strong VP Admin will keep everyone organized and on-track. The VP Admin position is often referred to as the least taxing, but that's mainly because as long as the individual takes minutes at the meetings the rest of the responsibilities are fairly easily overlooked. That's not necessarily a bad thing, however, because there may be other, more pressing issues, falling under other VP's, but requiring additional assistance. The great thing about the VP Admin position is that it's possible for this VP to be flexible and pitch in on other tasks as needed.

1. Follows up on all council action and legislation

The VP Admin is responsible for making sure that everyone does what they say they're going to do from basic resolutions passed during council meetings to those things agreed to by officers during executive committee meetings. This is a challenging job since it can make the VP Admin feel like they're constantly babysitting and/or nagging others. Unfortunately, this is a vital role and makes a huge difference in the efficiency of the organization. A discussion at the beginning of the year both with council and amongst the execs reminding them to expect reminders from the VP Admin may help to diffuse any frustration that might otherwise build up.

2. On campus appointments and maintenance

The VP Admin is responsible for recruiting, appointing, and monitoring all graduate students sitting on any on-campus committee. Recruitment should begin in the spring as many committees meet over the summer. Generally there will be a spring application period after which initial appointments are made. After the initial application period individuals are appointed as they apply. In the Fall, the TAC training is a good place to recruit as each TAC is required to sit on a committee at some point. Recruitment should also be done at every AGS event and in every piece of printed material possible to maximize exposure. It is always a challenge to fill all of the seats.

It is also the VP Admin's job to monitor performance. This can be done in several ways. First, the VP Admin might contact the committee chair or staff once per quarter to ensure that our reps are showing up to the meetings regularly. The VP Admin should also request that any electronic minutes from each meeting be forwarded to him/her. AGS used to receive paper copies of the minutes for all committees. This made it easier to scan for any graduate student issues of interest. Now that things are electronic the VP Admin will need to be more diligent in tracking them down to ensure that AGS isn't surprised by an issue like we were with the change in housing policy increasing the priority slots and slowing down the waiting list. A final method for monitoring performance is to require each committee rep to attend one AGS council meeting at the end of each quarter to give a quick report on the kinds of issues considered by the committee, especially any issues that graduate students might be interested in. Alternatively, a written quarterly report could be required, but historically it has been virtually impossible to get the reps to write them.

3. Record Keeping

The VP Admin is responsible for maintaining all AGS records, including minute taking, maintaining official copies of the governing documents (reflecting all amend-
ments), maintaining an accurate roster of council members, maintaining an AGS calendar, etc. In addition, the VP Admin has taken over responsibility for overseeing the web site and ensuring that all materials on the site are up to date. This responsibility also includes the preparation and distribution of all council meeting materials. Materials will include, but are not limited to, the Agenda, the previous meeting's minutes, and resolutions and any supporting documents. However, the VP Admin is well within his/her rights to establish a deadline for submitting such documentation, after which time it is the author's responsibility to prepare and copy particular materials. Things will run most smoothly if the deadline is negotiated and agreed to at the beginning of the year.

4. Chairs the Constitution Revision Committee
AGS has not had a constitution revision committee in many years. This is because a change to the constitution requires a 20% voter turnout which has never happened since original ratification of the constitution. There is really no point in having a revision committee unless strategies are developed to increase voter turnout. Execs once jokingly considered running a referendum to raise the AGS fee substantially so that grads would come out in large numbers to vote that down, but hopefully vote in favor of proposed constitution revisions.

Vice President Financial Affairs
[Mark, do you want to do this section? I have never held this position. It's probably better done by someone who has. Also, you can reference any pub documents that might be of assistance to the VP Financial.]

Vice President of External Affairs
The VP External's two main responsibilities are to sit on the University of California Student Association (UCSA) Board of Directors and to represent AGS to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS). These responsibilities require a great deal of travel (at least once and many months twice or more a month.) The biggest challenge to the VP External is balancing time investments in each of the external organizations with on-campus work. It is very easy to get caught up in UCSA or NAGPS and forget that there are things to be done on campus, not the least of which is to keep UCI graduate students informed about the activities of each of those organizations. The VP External further needs to be engaged on-campus, in addition to statewide and nationally, in order to transfer information back to campus that might help with specific campus concerns. This helps to keep UCSA and NAGPS relevant to UCI grads and facilitates continued AGS participation in these organizations.

1. Represent AGS to the UCSA Board of Directors (UCSA)
The UCSA Board meets one weekend every month. The VP External is expected to attend these meetings and to participate in UCSA activities. It is vital that the VP External keep AGS informed about his/her activities on the UCSA Board. Being part of a coalition is very challenging and the responsibility for smooth relations rests solely on the shoulders of the VP External. If, for some reason, the VP External can not attend a UCSA meeting it is his/her responsibility to find a substitute. If there is a COD, she would be the obvious candidate. The VP External is also responsible for ensuring that the substi-
tute has a letter of proxy to guarantee voting privileges and that the proxy has all of the pertinent meeting information including the agenda, directions, and travel information. (See section on UCSA.)

2. Represent AGS to the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) NAGPS responsibilities can be as simple as signing up for the NAGPS listserv and attending the National Conference which is in the fall. However, AGS has a strong history of electing people to the NAGPS Board of Directors. The VP External is strongly urged AGAINST running him/herself. UCSA and campus responsibilities will make it very difficult to maintain the responsibilities associated with NAGPS. However, the COD, a council member, or any graduate student who expresses interest should be encouraged to run. Having an individual involved in NAGPS gives AGS a much stronger national presence and has resulted in many concrete benefits to graduate students at UCI. (See section on NAGPS.)

3. Issues and Committees Generally the VP External facilitates the work of the external committee. The more the VP External can keep the committee in the loop the more likely the committee will be active. It is always a challenge to translate UCSA activities into things that appeal to graduate students at UCI, but the effort is worth it if the VPE can get the external committee motivated to contribute. There are many issues at the state and national levels with the potential to impact graduate student's lives. Because the decision-making process is removed from graduate students’ daily lives, it is often necessary to first educate grads about these issues before you can expect them to take action. These issues include fee levels, grad funding, grad tax law, etc.
Council Meeting Facilitation

Most years, AGS meetings are fairly informal. Many council members will not know Robert’s Rules (RR) and will have no great desire to learn them. There are at least two reasons to use, at minimum, a modified version of RR. The first is that RR provide some order for the minutes. By ensuring that motions are made and seconded and votes are taken in some order the minutes will be comprehensible by others who were not present at a particular meeting.

The second is that RR provide a method for minimizing conflict if Council faces a particularly controversial issue. In this way, speaker’s lists can be taken, council members can exercise some influence or control over procedure by calling the question or moving amendments, and the Chair does not have to worry about appearing to exercise favoritism. By using some form of RR during less contentious meetings council members will have experience with the process when it is needed during more contentious meetings. In years past when RR was not used regularly, except during agenda items requiring debate council members became very frustrated by the cumbersome procedures required by RR.

Generally, council meetings are not controversial and a more free-form flow is adequate to keep things moving. When using the free-form flow, as chair, it is necessary to be conscious of several challenges. First, a free-form meeting can occasionally become hampered by one or two council members dominating discussion. Because there is not a speakers list, other council members may not feel that they can get a word in edgewise. If this is the case, the Chair may wish to interrupt the back and forth to ask if anyone else has questions or comments about a particular agenda item. In addition, if a speakers list is kept, it is well within RR to move those who have not yet spoken to the top of the list before others speak again. The only exception is if one of those individuals wishes to call the question. Before the question can be called each person who would otherwise have preceded that individual on the speakers list must be offered the opportunity to speak before the question is called. It may also be useful to institute speakers limits if you find that there are one or two council members who tend to lapse into soliloquies during the course of a meeting.

Every so often one or two council members are elected who know RR well and will force Council to follow the rules. If this is the case, it is vital that the chair either know RR well or that he select a parliamentarian. Ideally the parliamentarian will be someone the chair can trust and, ideally, the RR aficionados respect. Then any disputes have a quick outlet and resolution. Other Council members should also be encouraged to become versed enough in RR to be able to contribute to controlling those who might otherwise use the rules to manipulate the process. If other council members are not willing, this responsibility may fall to executive officers who also hold council seats. It should be made clear to council, either way, that the Chair’s ability to control the flow of a meeting is extremely limited and that it is each council member’s responsibility to assist by making motions and calling the question.

That brings us to the limits on chairing a meeting. Technically, according to RR, the
Chair is not allowed to venture any opinions during debate. The Chair may offer informational clarifications, but only when absolutely necessary for the continuation of the discussion. The ideal role for the Chair is an unbiased facilitator. Any comments which may be construed as opinions should be avoided. As mentioned above, generally, AGS does not operate under strict RR. During informal periods, the Chair may offer opinions, but should do so sparingly and be cautious about appearing to manipulate the process.

In addition, to maintain credibility with council, the President should be well versed in all agenda items prior to the Council meeting. Regardless, however, the President should hesitate to ask questions during a council meeting. Questions by the President can appear biased and/or can slow down the progress of the meeting. Generally, the President should assume that if Council members are not asking questions that they don’t have any to ask. In rare circumstances the President may feel that the Council has missed an important point. A well-placed question may raise the information. In an ideal situation, the other executive officers will be cognizant of the situation and will ask the question or make the clarification for council members. In the rare event that the agenda item appears to be coming to resolution without mention of important details, the President may choose to ask a clarifying question or make a short statement to raise the information. Questions can be a useful tool to raise information without stating opinion. A particular President’s flexibility to do so will depend on the nature of the Council over which she presides.

The individual chairing any meeting, whether the President or not, does not vote, except to break a tie. If the President has relinquished the Chair, the President may vote under certain conditions. Those conditions are outlined in the AGS governing documents. Ideally, the President will hesitate to cast a vote, even when not chairing a meeting, to maintain a sense of fairness.

Though in some associations the chair of the meeting is also responsible for the agenda for the meeting, in AGS Exec, as a unit, oversees agenda items and the VP Admin is responsible for preparing and printing the agenda. The President only influences the agenda in as much as any other officer influences the agenda. As in other associations, the agenda can be amended at the beginning of, or during, any meeting with a simple majority vote of council members.

Overall, the best rule of thumb is to observe a given council and attempt to chair the meeting to best facilitate productivity with that particular group of people. It’s always a challenge with a diverse group of people, and it’s unlikely that everyone will ever be satisfied, but an assessment of personal styles may help to guide the chair to a style that will be most efficient. With graduate students efficiency seems to be the most important criteria when assessing a council meeting.

A confident chair may also solicit suggestions from council for expediting meetings. However, the chair may wish to be cautious because asking for input may be overwhelming when you find that virtually every council member has an opinion and they are often contradictory. Opening the door to suggestions can also lead to less productive meeting time as some council members will then feel free to critique meeting style during meetings. This can lead to unnecessary council debate over process when the focus should be on issues and activities.

The President should also be sure that a person is selected to provide food at the next meeting. If this is listed on the agenda, as it has been historically, it’s not hard to remember. The VP Financial then usually works with the volunteer to ensure that food is delivered and that the person is reimbursed.
AGS Communication Structures

1. Contact Sheets
   As soon as elections are ratified a new contact sheet should be created with as much information for each of the new council members as possible. This information should be updated at the first new council meeting and then periodically over the course of the year. The sheet should include email and phone at a minimum. Council members should provide the most expedient phone numbers. Some may be hesitant, but the VP Admin can assure them that the numbers will not be made public and will only be used for Council business. If any council members still hesitate they should be encouraged to provide the information to the VP Admin who will not include it on the contact sheet, but will keep it in case any urgent issues arise. The VP Admin may want to send around a copy of the contact sheet at every council meeting requesting any changes. Keeping accurate contact information for council members helps prevent council members from disappearing or failing to complete the tasks they commit to either during council meetings or during committee meetings.

2. Email lists
   AGS has a number of email listservs used for council business. The council list is the basic communication tool. It includes all council members and officers. As the council turns over each year, a new list may be made with new council members during the transition period. In addition to the council list there are lists for each committee including Exec and several GSHIP committee lists. Some years there are also listservs set up for all of the graduate students sitting on campus-wide committees. Email lists are an expedient way to communicate with groups of people as long as they are kept up to date and not overloaded with messages. With the new mailman software keeping lists up to day should be relatively easy. With the mailman software different individuals can manage each list. For example, the chairs of the committees can manage their respective committee lists. The VP Admin, in consultation with the systems administrator should keep track of who is moderating which lists and should ensure that lists are being updated regularly.

3. Blast Messages
   AGS can send blast messages through graduate studies to all graduate students. Originally, an AGS officer created the list and AGS controlled it. Over time NACS (then OAC) became uncomfortable with our unilateral access so now access is controlled by graduate studies (currently DeWayne Green). No message has ever been denied, though problems have occasionally occurred. Frequently there are problems with getting the message out. It's a tricky procedure because the message goes through graduate studies and then to NACS. For some reason only one individual in each unit can handle the messages so if one of them leaves early or is out of town our access to blast messages is interrupted. AGS may want to negotiate with grad studies and NACS to determine whether more people can be trained to take care of blast messages or whether AGS can have more autonomy to send the messages directly to NACS or directly to the blast list. At a minimum the VP Admin should maintain the names and contact information for the RGS and NACS contacts. In addition, the VP Admin or President may want to contact RGS and NACS as soon as possible to give them advance warning regarding future blast list messages. That will give the administrators an opportunity to mention any planned vacations or other problems AGS might encounter.
with getting a particular message out to the all graduate students.

Another problem we’ve run into with blast messages is that DeWayne will occasionally edit a message. Originally, any executive officer could send a blast message. To ensure that our messages go out efficiently and without edits, the President has taken charge of sending all messages to DeWayne for posting. The President can then exercise some authority when dealing with DeWayne and develop some expectations about how messages will be sent. DeWayne seems to respond better to some Presidents than others. It may be worthwhile to switch officers during the year if DeWayne seems not to be responding well to the current President. The VP Admin might be a reasonable alternative.

Each time a blast list message goes out graduate students will respond to the message asking to be removed from the list. Most often DeWayne responds to them directly and AGS never hears about the messages. Occasionally, those messages will be forwarded with a warning to reduce the frequency and/or length of the messages to the blast list. This is an important issue to keep in mind when planning messages. Some graduate students consider AGS messages to be junk e-mail. It is possible to unsubscribe individual students from the listserv, however, the administration uses the same list to distribute messages to all grads. So, a student who chooses to unsubscribe will also miss out on administrative messages.

4. Issue Based Lists
Some years AGS sets up issue-based lists. These lists are open to all graduate students. Students interested in particular issues are encouraged to subscribe to the appropriate lists. In the past there have been legislative alert lists for students interested in staying abreast of state and federal legislation impacting grads, a housing list for students interested in remaining informed about the developments in the on-campus housing issues, etc. Issue lists are a great way to communicate more information to concerned students. These lists of students can also provide a source of additional volunteer power as students subscribed to these lists are more likely, than the average student, to be willing to pitch in for issue-related activities.

As the year winds down the out-going VP Admin should make a list of all active listservs and pass that on to the next VP Admin. The incoming VP Admin should inform the appropriate officer and/or committee of the existence of a list in their area. If the officer or committee wishes to continue maintaining the particular list an individual should be identified as the moderator of the list and a “welcome to the new year” email should go out to the listserv introducing the new leadership. If a list has become defunct either the VP Admin or appropriate executive officer should send a message to the list informing participants that the list will no longer be used. Ideally the message will include a summary of the current status of the issue covered by the listserv and some explanation of why the list is no longer needed along with direction for whom to contact should subscribers have additional questions.
AGS Standing Committees

AGS changed the standing committees in 2000. Originally there were three standing committees: Graduate Student Life and Concerns, Academic Affairs, and the Social Committee. The problem with these committees was that issues often overlapped between the Life and Concerns Committee and Academic Affairs. Additionally, with recognition of the Union the areas available for advocacy for the Academic Affairs committee became narrower. In addition, there were several areas missing from the committee agendas including external issues and potential business ventures. So, a new structure was developed and tested. Though still not perfect, the new structure provides expanded opportunities for advocacy. The new structure includes an Internal Committee, an External Committee, and a Business Enterprises and Social Activities Committee.

The Internal Committee has absorbed all of the old life and concerns and academic affairs issues. Generally, the Internal Committee is responsible for any issues facing graduate students on campus. Over the past several years the Internal Committee has worked on housing, grievance procedures for graduate students, faculty mentoring of graduate students, department-specific issues such as an issue regarding the funding of education MA students, and campus policies governing student behavior. The mission of the Internal Committee is to improve the daily lives of graduate students on campus.

The External Committee created a new focus for AGS by charging the committee with advocating on behalf of graduate students system-wide, state-wide, and nationally. The External Committee has worked extensively with UCSA on issues such as the no fee increase campaign and with NAGPS on the tax exempt status campaign. More generally the committee has worked on improving the perception of graduate education in the state. This effort was stalled when the economy tanked, but should be resumed as soon as the state economy turns around.

The Business and Social Committee is charged with overseeing all social activities sponsored by AGS. Generally this includes a host of events at the Pub, but could also include other activities according to the committee's interests and ideas. The committee is also charged with developing ideas for new AGS business ventures. Thus far, this element of the charge has not been pursued. Hopefully future committees will take this charge seriously and begin developing proposals for council consideration. Because it is virtually impossible to increase the AGS fee, AGS will need to become increasingly creative about generating funds to support AGS programs. The association has been fortunate to have the Pub profits to subsidize the budget, but eventually these profits will plateau and as the years pass those dollars will buy less. Developing a single business enterprise proposal is a multi-year project and it is likely that the committee will need to develop a few ideas to find one that is likely to succeed. The committee could look into working with GSM students to develop ideas and proposals. Each GSM student has to do a project to graduate. If a student or two could be persuaded to make AGS their project it may be possible to get professional help from GSM faculty without cost to AGS. A GSM connection may also help to improve GSM students' perception of AGS.
Student Government Lunches

At the beginning of each month the AGS and ASUCI Executive Officers have lunch with the upper level administrators, including the Chancellor. The purpose of the lunches is to give students and administrators a regular opportunity to discuss issues and share information. Prior to Chancellor Cicerone's tenure the lunches were used as an opportunity to call administrators to accountability regarding particular issues of concern to students. With Chancellor Cicerone's appointment the tone of the lunches shifted. Chancellor Cicerone does not like confrontation. So he has made requirements of the lunches, including that the agenda be submitted in advance, to ensure that he is never caught off guard. He also refuses to make any commitments to issues or action during the lunches.

AGS has historically used the lunches as an opportunity to have quick side conversations with administrators and to increase the Association's credibility by showing up and playing the game by Cicerone's rules. There was one major exception and that was during the protests around the 2000 change in graduate student housing policy. At that time, AGS used one of the lunches to include impacted students and provide them an opportunity to voice their concerns directly to the Chancellor. This was relatively successful because everyone was respectful and we agreed to do the concrete negotiating with Manuel Gomez and Chuck Pieper behind closed doors. The undergrads have occasionally taken a more demanding approach with Cicerone and held a full-blown protest at one of the lunches demanding Tagalog classes. Cicerone was not pleased and both Presidents were called in to the Vice Chancellor Student Services' office to remind them that protest is not an appropriate use of the lunches. The undergrads did eventually get certain concessions following the protest. However, it remains unclear which approach produces the best results. It seems that both avenues produce limited results.

In the event that AGS decides to institute a new strategy, one of the major elements necessary for success is that the Executive Officers have done their homework on the issue. For instance, it could be possible to use a Student Government lunch to make demands on behalf of the students displaced by the housing policy change. To do so productively, the Execs will need to know all of the information, have the research materials to back up their point, and be willing to agree to accept a less than definitive answer from the Chancellor as long as a less public negotiation meeting is scheduled. In addition, the efficacy will need to be re-assessed with a new Chancellor.

Practically, the AGS and ASUCI Presidents take turns submitting the agendas and chairing the student government lunches. It's up to the President to determine the order of the agenda. Agendas will be more likely to keep the attention of those present if AS and AGS issues are dispersed throughout the agenda. In addition, it's useful to schedule the quick items (those that will not take too much time) first and save the more complex items till the end. But the individual chairing the lunch will need to keep things moving to ensure that the longer items are not short-changed because half the meeting time was spent talking about the shorter items.

Agenda items can also tend to drag on if the Chair doesn't take firm control. Suggesting that the appropriate individuals schedule a meeting following the lunch to further discuss an issue will usually move things along. If that doesn't work, the chair might remind the participants that while the issue they are discussing is important that there are others on the agenda that are equally important. The lunches could also be made more productive if AS and AGS worked together strategically (See section AS/AGS relations).
The Pub

[Mark: You'll be contributing this section, right?]
Elections

See attachment for an example elections timeline. The important deadlines listed in the constitution include the following:

- Council must approve the elections timeline at least four weeks before the election.
- Nominations must be closed no later than five days before the elections begin.
- There must be at least three days allowed for voting.

Council elections take place each spring for all but GSM, Med, and Education. In GSM and Med, the respective unit student government (GSMSA and MSA) conduct in-unit elections during the fall. AGS ratifies these election results and seats the individuals elected in each unit. The only time AGS might not ratify the results is if an individual from the unit challenges them based on bias or violation of the election procedures defined in each unit’s governing documents. AGS should be very cautious challenging the results of either unit student government as they are free-standing student governments and are not required to answer to AGS. Prior to any decision by AGS, aggrieved students should be instructed to challenge the election results within their unit. The AGS President should be in close communication with the unit President to ensure that every effort is made to resolve the issue within the unit. AGS should only intervene under extreme circumstances and then, the only intervention available to AGS is for council not to ratify the unit elections outcome.

The AGS President runs the department of education elections in the fall. They should be run according to the elections procedure laid out in the constitution.

For the AGS spring elections, the highest ranking officer not running in the election is appointed the elections officer. AGS elections have evolved a great deal over the years. Once AGS elections were conducted via paper ballots stuffed into every graduate student’s mailbox. When this was the case, voter turnout tended to be higher. Now ballots are cast on the web. Every graduate student receives a blast list message with a link to the web ballot. Voter turnout has been further depressed in recent years due to a frequent lack of a presidential candidate. Council may want to consider methods for increasing voter interest and turnout. Though ideally AGS elections would turn out 20% or more of the student body, 10% is a reasonable initial goal as recent elections have failed to turnout even 5% of eligible voters.

In addition to the requirements defined in the bylaws, the elections officer may wish to follow the following recommendations. First, the elections officer should review the timeline set forth in the bylaws. This should be done no later than the end of winter quarter. The elections officer should create an elections timeline and have council pass the timeline no later than the first council meeting of the spring quarter. The minute the timeline is approved by council the elections officer needs to contact the student government executive director and NACS to schedule creation of the web elections form. Recently AGS has run the election without a login required. This is not a huge problem if positions are not highly contested. However, it is inevitable that there will be challenge at some point. A secure web form will reduce the likelihood that the election will be thrown out. So, it’s probably worth the elections officer’s time to ensure that there’s enough time for the web form to be created.

The second recommendation requires some serious work and consideration. Council and the officers may wish to give serious consideration to whom would make a good President. Because of AGS’ structure, those interested in VP positions are often evident by the beginning
of spring. It may be useful to consider what type of President would work well with the likely Vice Presidents. There is really no recipe for a successful President. In AGS' history previous council members, previous VPs, and those with no AGS experience provided reasonable to excellent leadership in the position of President. On the other hand, individuals coming from the same set of experiences failed to perform the duties well. A concerted effort by the officers to evaluate potential candidates and encourage those with promise to run provides the highest likelihood that the incoming President will be a good one.

The third recommendation is to expand advertising to increase voter turnout. All of council should be enlisted to help. AGS usually hosts an elections party with laptops set up at the end of the bar so that party participants can vote on the spot. This is a good gimmick, but increasing voter turnout will require more creativity. It might be worthwhile to consider stuffing mailboxes for a change of pace. It used to be that mailboxes were over-run with flyers and other materials making email a preferable route of delivery. Now that virtually everything is electronic, email inboxes have become cluttered while the flow of paper mail is greatly reduced. Of course, the reduced importance of mailboxes means that many students don't check them as often. So, likely, the best option is to do some combination of both.

Officer Stipends (See the budget section.)
Travel

Generally, the VP External is the main traveler amongst the executive officers. For this reason, traditionally, the travel budget has been managed by the VP External and all other officers consult with the VPE when they may have reason to access the travel budget. This does not override the VP Financial’s responsibility to oversee the budget. If the VP Financial feels that the travel budget is being abused he/she may discuss this with the VP External, the President, or the Executive Committee as appropriate.

The travel budget will need to cover all of the monthly UCSA board meetings, days at UCOP, the NAGPS national and regional conferences, DC and Sacramento lobby days (these are typically between 1 and 3 DC and Sacramento lobby days per year), the California Higher Education Student Summit (CHESS) and any other travel that arises. The Office of the President will cover some of this travel. Historically they cover transportation for one individual from each association to each BOD meeting. Recently they seem to have begun covering housing too, but this should not be assumed as it is likely, when the budget gets tight, that someone will realize that UCOP never committed to covering housing. UCOP will also cover all of the cost, including housing, for one person from each association to attend each day with UCOP. This includes housing for any association that cannot catch a flight home the same day. Irvine is almost always one of those campuses because of the curfew at the Orange County airport. It may also be possible to request funds from campus administrators to cover some amount of travel to conferences. CHESS is often fundable by the administration if you stress the education benefits to participants. (See example request letter attached.) The AGS travel budget must be stretched to cover everything else including per diem for all travel. However, it is to AGS’ benefit to send multiple representatives to NAGPS conferences and lobby days. If more than one person is attending any particular event, the VP External may bring a resolution to council requesting special funds to cover the cost of a particular trip. Traditionally, the NAGPS National Conference and DC Lobby days have required special projects funding. Occasionally Sacramento lobby days require extra funding too, if there are more than a couple of AGS representatives attending.

Historically VPEs have done everything they can to be frugal. Purchasing plane tickets well in advance, doing a little extra research on hotels, and joining a frequent car rental program are a few methods for reducing travel expenses. Below are some tips for finding the best rates:

When travel will be reimbursed by OP, the traveler should complete the OP travel reimbursement form (how to do this is in the UCSA binder). For most travelers, the form should be submitted directly to OP. In the case of the VPE, who will be traveling regularly and may be put in a financial hardship waiting for OP reimbursement, AGS may reimburse up front and then take the OP reimbursement check. To do this, the VPE should complete the OP reimbursement form, copy the OP reimbursement and all receipts, attach both to an AGS reimbursement form and submit to the VP Financial. The VP Financial and VPE should keep track of OP reimbursements and verify that they are received and deposited into the travel line item. The OP checks will be written to the VPE who will need to sign the check and give it to the accountant to be deposited. Ideally the OP check will be mailed to the VPE c/o of the VP Financial to avoid any confusion about AGS reimbursement. However, once an individual is in the OP system, it doesn’t matter what address you enter in the form. They send it to the original address submitted on the first reimbursement form for that individual.
General Tips

Check out Travelocity, Orbitz, Expedia, and Cheaptickets for a general sense of how much things will cost. Start checking about six weeks prior to travel, but don’t buy unless there’s an outstanding deal available. Check daily for the next two weeks and determine whether fares seem to be rising or falling. From here it’s gut instinct about when to buy.

If you’re a frequent flyer/renter/guest, check the websites for those companies individually. Sometimes they will make special offers to their frequent user participants.

Check-out all-inclusive packages. Generally there are too many limits to make this affordable, but every once in a while you’ll save a few hundred dollars if all of the details work out.

Air Specific Tips

When preparing to book flights, consider flying from an airport besides Orange County. OC is almost always the most expensive airport to fly out of in the area. Long Beach is often a good alternative. It only takes about 25 minutes (without traffic) to drive to the airport, parking at the airport is pretty cheap (last I was there it was $5/day), and the airport is so small that it’s really easy to use. LAX and Ontario are other alternatives, but your time and the cost of transportation and/or parking should be calculated in to the cost of the ticket to be sure that you’re really saving money. Shuttles to either airport will run about $40/person and can take up to 4 hours (that’s not a typo). Parking is about $10/day at each airport in satellite lots.

If you’re flying out of OC, it’s great if you can get a ride to the airport, but your friends will probably tire quickly with all of the travel the VPE does. You might consider asking for rides when AGS if footing the bill and taking a cab when OP is paying. If you’re coming from campus and traveling for more than one day, a cab is the most cost effective. It’s about $15 each way (including tip). Parking at OC is $12/day in the remote lot.

When flying in California Southwest is almost always the best deal. Be sure to join the Southwest frequent flyer program too. With as few as 4 round trips you can get a free trip anywhere southwest flies. Southwest also has the most generous refund and ticket change policies.

Unless there’s a specific fare sale, fares will generally stay the same or drop as you approach 21-day advance purchase. If traveling on a Friday or Sunday you should be sure to purchase by the 21-day advance purchase deadline or fares will be much higher. If you’re traveling on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday you can generally find reasonable fares up to 7-day advance purchase. The prime purchasing time for these fares is between the 21-day and 7-day advance purchase windows.

You’ll want to check the southwest and jet blue websites directly. They don’t participate in any of the general travel websites and often have very reasonable fares.

Once you’ve located low fares on travelocity or one of the other general travel sites, visit the airline’s website. It’s always best to purchase via the airline directly, if possible. These days, most internet fares are available directly from the airline. Purchasing through the airline means they will be more responsive to any problems you may have. It also guarantees that should you need to change your travel or if you miss a flight, you’ll be able to keep the credit with the airline and use it for future travel.

If you find a significantly better deal on one of the general travel sites be sure to check
policies on travel changes.
If you’re flying frequently in CA and OP isn’t covering the cost you may want to look into regaining access to the UC rate on Southwest. In the past, the only requirement was that you use a UC American Express and go through one of two off-campus travel agencies. You would get a half-price ticket that operated like a full-fare (ie: fully changeable and refundable.)

Hotel Specific Advice
When booking a hotel room, again, start with the general travel sites. That’ll give you a sense of where you’ll find the best rates. Then check the hotel site. Often, you will not be able to access the same rates via the hotel internet site. However, if you call the hotel reservation line you can sometimes talk them into giving a similar rate. It is always better to book directly with the hotel. Most general travel sites won’t guarantee bed-type or smoking preference. The hotel will. If you call the general reservation line and are told they can’t match the internet rate, try calling back and/or calling the hotel directly.
Join the frequent guest clubs at every hotel you stay in. They treat frequent guests better (even if you only stay there once or twice) and will sometimes offer special deals to frequent guests. Be sure to identify yourself as a frequent guest whenever you interact with the hotel (ie: when making reservations and when checking-in.)
When selecting a hotel, consider transportation costs when assessing affordability. For instance, when staying in Washington, D.C. you can often find very inexpensive rates on hotels that are not near the Metro. Unless whatever event you’re attending is near that hotel, you’ll likely exceed the difference between the cost of that hotel and one adjacent to the Metro in cab fare. Also ask about free shuttles too and from the airport. Depending on where you’re traveling this can be a major savings.
Attached is a list of the optimum hotels to book by campus. If the host campus waits too long to block rooms, they may be unable to get the best locations. You may want to try calling these hotels to see if they have any availability. When you call, ask for the UC rate. Most of the listed hotels will have one.

Rental Car Specific Advice
Over the years I have found that Budget has the best frequent renter program. You always get the best possible rates and they will often upgrade you for free if an upgrade is available. You’ll also save time because you don’t have to go to the counter in the airport. You go straight out to either the key pick-up or directly to your car. After spending time comparing rates for several different trips I found that budget was always cheapest. So I kept all of my business with them. If you’re traveling alone or with one other person consider renting a Ford Ranger. They go for as little as $20/day.
Whichever company you go with, check out their frequent renter benefits. Budget, for instance, will allow you to accrue Southwest frequent flyer credits.
When asked who your employer is, be sure to put UCI. If the rental company has a corporate account with UC (which Budget does) you’ll automatically gain access to those agreed upon rental rates. Generally, the only thing you need to verify your access to the corporate rate is a business card with the UC logo on it. (AGS business cards work fine.) Before purchasing extra rental car insurance check with your own insurance company to determine their policy regarding rental cars. AAA, for instance, covers you when you’re
driving a rental car. So you're paying for duplicate insurance if you purchase rental car insurance.
Navigating the Decision-Making Bureaucracy

Knowing who to talk to is half the battle when advocating for graduate students on the UCI Campus. A general rule of thumb is to be sure you’ve done your homework, which should include talking to the lowest level staff person who knows about your issues before taking them to higher level administrators. Nothing discredits efforts faster than going into a meeting unprepared.

Working with administrators requires a general knowledge of the styles and preferences of the particular administrator. The advice included below is most applicable to the current campus administrators. As administrators change this section should be re-written to reflect the particular personal preferences of new administrators. Before continuing it will be useful to describe the broader administrative forces impacting UCI graduate students.

There are basically six levels of influence over graduate student life at UCI. At the most local level a particular graduate student’s advisor has the most control over her daily life. This creates a definite challenge to AGS when trying to improve the daily lives of graduate students. AGS’ ability to influence individual faculty members is extremely limited. Generally, any disputes between a graduate student and her advisor will need to be facilitated through the Ombudsman’s office or RGS. AGS can act as an advocate for the student, but should be cautious about taking on individual student concerns because it is difficult to determine whether AGS really makes a difference and to determine where to draw the line and disengage. Every so often someone in AGS or RGS raises the idea of creating a staff position designed to provide advice and advocacy for individual graduate students. There are many technical challenges, but this is an idea that may warrant further consideration.

The second level of influence is the department and/or school depending on the school. Again, faculty have almost unilateral rule over their departments and schools making AGS intervention difficult, if not impossible. Here, also, the Ombudsman’s office or RGS will need to be involved. If a particular problem is department-wide or school-wide there is a stronger precedent for AGS to be involved. In the mid 1990s AGS took an active role in negotiating with the School of Social Ecology to provide office space to every Social Ecology graduate student. The effort ruffled a few feathers, but was overall successful at the time. The effort was executed through the school representatives with back-up from council and the executive officers.

The third level is the campus-wide administration which includes the administration and the Academic Senate. The Graduate Council of the Academic Senate spends the most time concerned with graduate student issues. However, the largest element of their agenda is approving new programs and degrees. This has made it difficult to keep graduate students engaged in sitting on the committee (AGS has three seats.) It is very important that at least one graduate student attend regularly to monitor the Graduate Council.

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is the administrative body most closely associated with the daily lives of graduate students. RGS handles all administrative elements of graduate student life including processing fellowship, TA-ships, etc. RGS is also the administrative oversight body responsible for ensuring that graduate students are being treated appropriately in their departments. Student Services also has some impact on graduate students, but that impact is often inadvertent as they are most focused on undergraduate student life.
Decisions made at the systemwide level are the next level of influence. In the past ten years, through the process of devolution, most decisions are delegated to the campuses. Even the purse-strings, which used to be stronger, have been weakened by the practice of block-granting to campuses. In this way, the campuses receive net amounts of money without ear-marking except in very specific cases, such as financial aid and outreach dollars. Otherwise, each campus receives a net sum of money with certain very broad and general expectations about the campus’ performance, but almost unilateral flexibility to spend the funds as the campus (in UCI’s case, the Executive Vice Chancellor) sees fit. The most powerful influence systemwide policy has on graduate students’ every day lives is in setting the fees and tuition for grads. The Regents have had varying degrees of familiarity with graduate student life over the years. For many years in the 1990s the Regents had no great interest in graduate education and allowed graduate student fees to be raised more than undergraduates. For a few years at the end of the decade, when the economy was good, the Regents took more interest in graduate education.

The next level up is the state level. Because the University of California, unlike the CSU and Community Colleges, is constitutionally autonomous, the only direct power the state has over the UC is through the budget. Some years the legislature chooses to use that power more than others. For instance, the threats of particular Legislators regarding the TA Union had a huge influence over the University’s ultimate decision to recognize the Union. AGS can, in concert with UCSA, use the Legislature to leverage influence over campus and systemwide decisions impacting grad education. The power relations are complex, however, and care should be taken because negative fall-out can have long-lasting consequences. UCSA spent about five years recovering from some poorly played politics around the Smith court decision.

The final, and most removed, level of influence is at the Federal level. For the most part, federal policy impacting grads comes in three areas. Most obvious, graduate programs are authorized in the Higher Education Act which is re-authorized every five years or so. The main graduate programs include the GANN, Javitz, and the currently un-funded Marshall Fellowship for law students. However, historically grads have been eligible for programs currently limited to undergrads. There could come a time when grads may wish to try and re-gain access to some or all of the undergrad financial aid programs.

In addition to HEA, there are many tax bills that have impacted grads. NAGPS has made its reputation through its careful monitoring of the tax committees in both houses. By doing so they were able to prevent the rescission of Section 117d, the article that makes grad fee remissions tax exempt. Other tax issues include the current fight to return grad stipends to tax exempt status.

Finally, grads are impacted by the funding levels for the NSF, NIH, DOD, DOE, etc. Any grant making federal agency is of interest to grads because some proportion of those funds trickle down to create grad research assistantships. In fact, in the past, NAGPS has joined with other higher education orgs to develop requirements attached to grants creating minimum numbers of grad fellowships required to receive a particular grant.

Occasionally, there are opportunities to leverage federal legislators or national organizations against campus or systemwide decision-makers. These opportunities are most likely to be realized if someone from AGS participates in the Board of Directors for NAGPS. For instance, the NAGPS Doctoral Survey was used to increase surveillance of departments in regard to how they allocate space to graduate students. Though there were few concrete changes in practice, the information may influence future space allocation as new building funds become available.
Below you will find specific information regarding working at each level of influence. Because working with faculty mentors, departments, and schools all revolves around working with faculty, the first section is addressed broadly toward developing strong working relationships with faculty. That section is followed by a section on campus administration, a section devoted to work at the state level, and finally a section on federal relations.

Working with Faculty

Because of academic freedom faculty are almost completely autonomous actors on the campus. The UCI culture is such that the administrators are very hesitant to confront the faculty. This makes working with faculty very challenging because there is never an instance when demands can be made. That said there are some very reasonable faculty members on the UCI campus. With those faculty members a logical, well-reasoned argument may be sufficient to improve graduate student life. However, for some reason, it is often the less reasonable faculty who get into leadership positions in departments, schools, and the Academic Senate. Dealing with these faculty members will require a great deal more care and strategy.

Regardless of whether or not your target faculty member is reasonable it is critical to maintain a sense of credibility with faculty members. To do so, is a challenge in itself because credibility is gauged so differently across the campus. For the science-based faculty research, numbers, and statistics are often the avenue to gain respect. On the humanities side of campus a well articulated argument may be the best method of persuasion. Often, you will be addressing both audiences simultaneously. In the past, AGS has made an effort to include graduate students from various locations on campus when making a case. Ideally, the breadth of students will provide the breadth of rationales to appeal to all or most of the faculty being addressed.

In addition, AGS has historically opted to make its case to individual faculty outside the context of a formal meeting. This has been most effective when AGS worked with the advisees of a particular faculty member when making their case. Most faculty are concerned that their advisees are happy. Having unhappy advisees talk to their advisors can be very powerful. This approach was used to some success during the debate over the change of housing policy to increase priority spots. Individual students were encouraged to talk to their advisors about the policy change and express their concern for continuing students who were being negatively impacted. The faculty response these individual conversations generated slowed the process down enough to give AGS time to develop a plan of action.

Working with Campus Administrators

Currently, UCI is organized in a relatively hierarchical fashion. In addition, each campus constituency has been assigned a designated entry point. Technically the designated entry point for graduate students is the Vice Chancellor for Student Services. Graduate students, however, do not fall neatly into the student category and thus have a bit more flexibility when approaching administrators. There are many issues which fall more naturally under the Graduate Dean’s purview and no one will be offended if you go straight to him. Most other Vice Chancellors will meet with graduate students without too much grumbling regarding issues under their purview, however, they may wish to have the Vice Chancellor for Student Services or the Graduate Dean present. Visit http://www.policies.uci.edu/resources/orgcharts.html To view the University’s organizational chart.
As a general rule of thumb, the appropriate Vice Chancellor should be consulted prior to raising any issue with the Chancellor. There may be strategic reasons for ignoring this rule of thumb, but it should be done with the knowledge that the Vice chancellor will not be happy because you went over their heads.

Campus Access Points

Point I
The staff person dealing directly with your issue
When you have an issue, the first thing to ask is who deals with it directly on a day to day basis. On the grad studies website there is a table describing each staff person’s responsibilities. If it’s not a grad studies issue you can usually discover the person closest to your issue after a few phone calls. Each AGS administration should make an effort to develop relationships with a few admin staff who’ve been around for a few years. Brent Yunek, in Financial Aid (also works for Manuel Gomez) has been very helpful in the past as has Mike Arias in EVC’s office. Both have been around for many years and know the ins and outs of the campus. The most important thing is to develop a comfortable relationship where you can pick up the phone and get quick answers.

Dennis Hampton can also be helpful. He will give you his take on things, but remember that Dennis, or any new Executive Director of Student Government, is employed by the University. So, be cautious about talking to Dennis if you’re hoping to have an element of surprise in your approach to the administration.

Point II
Vice Chancellor of Student Services and/or Graduate Dean
Once you’ve done your research and spoken to anyone dealing directly with your issue, your next stop will usually be either the Vice Chancellor Student Services or the Graduate Dean. These are your designated entry points as graduate students. Getting them in the loop early will avoid any embarrassing moments later. It is also occasionally possible to play one office against the other as there are already strained relations between the two offices. If an issue could conceivably fall under the purview of both student services and graduate studies it may be possible to broker an agreement between the two offices that will provide greater benefit to graduate students than would otherwise be realized by emphasizing each offices mutual responsibility.

Point III
The Vice Chancellor overseeing area of concern
The next place to go is to the Vice Chancellor overseeing the area of concern. This may be best accomplished with the participation of the Vice Chancellor Student Services or independently. That will depend on the reception you received from each at Point II. Ideally the issue will be resolved at this point. However, if an acceptable resolution is not reached, it is safe to proceed to Point IV: the Chancellor.

Point IV
The Chancellor
Your final campus access point is the Chancellor. Chancellor Cicerone does not like to intervene until all other avenues have been exhausted. Once you have done so, the best place
UCSA Board of Directors producing three finalists. If all goes well, the BOR Special Committee for the Selection of the Student Regent selects the student regent from the three finalists submitted by UCSA. In addition to the voting members, there are also two non-voting members of the BOR representing the Academic Senate.

The BOR meets every other month, most often at the UCSF Laurel Heights campus, though once or twice a year that meet at UCLA and may meet at one other Southern California campus if pressured to do so. The meetings are currently held Jan, March, May, July, September, and November. For a current meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes check the Regents website at www.ucop.edu and click on Regents. The site also contains bios and contact information for all of the Regents, a copy of the student regent application, and instructions for participating in public comment period.

UCSA has the right to send four whiteliners to each day of the Regents meetings. Whiteliners are students, selected by UCSA, who will be allowed into the backroom where Regents congregate when they're not at the meeting table. On the first meeting day whiteliners are also allowed to eat lunch with the Regents. (Generally, the second meeting day is only a half day without a formal lunch.) This can be an excellent opportunity to speak to Regents directly. One piece of advice… Most of the Regents are business people. They respond well to the business approach. As one Regent put it, “First you make a friend, then you make a sale.” So, it is advisable that you observe the social niceties and ask about the Regent before you launch into your own issues. Most of the Regents will return the favor and ask you where you study and what you study. That's usually your opening to mention your issue of concern.

In addition to whiteline spots, each Regents meeting has several public comment periods. Generally they occur first thing in the morning and just after lunch. All but one public comment period is designated for current agenda items. One public comment period during each meeting is designated for any University matters. Thus, if AGS were to have an issue not falling under any of a particular meeting’s agenda, it would be possible to sign-up for the generally University business public comment period. Each person signed-up for public comment gets between 90 seconds and 3 minutes depending on how many other people are signed up on the list. Thirty minutes is the time allotted for public comment. If there are too many people to fit into the time frame it is possible that not everyone will have an opportunity to speak. For this reason, it is useful to sign up well in advance of the meeting if you plan to attend and speak. [Note: it is often the case that the Regents pay limited attention to public speakers. For this reason it is strongly advised that any speakers bring written materials to be distributed to the Regents. Any materials to be distributed should be given to the Secretary of the Regents in advance. You will need to provide at least 26 copies and may want to provide more if you'd like administrators to have a copy. It is also advisable that you provide the Press copies of your materials with business cards attached. You will need to get your materials to one of the UCSA Whiteliners to be placed in the Press room as it is not accessible to the public.]

UCOP, Council of Chancellors, and the Academic Senate

The next level of authority is, theoretically, shared by the Office of the President, the Council of Chancellors, and the Academic Senate. This sharing of power is estimated by a complex array of systemwide committees. Like on the campuses, these committees are designed based upon the Academic Senate committee structure, the main difference is that certain campus and systemwide administrators participate on the committees. (On the campuses, the administrators do not, generally, sit on Senate Committees.)
In practice, the Council of Chancellors (COC) wield a great deal of power. If they come to a unanimous agreement about a particular issue, they are very likely to carry the day. This can be valuable information because working with even one or two Chancellors to prevent them from voting with the rest of the Chancellors can be enough to weaken the COC enough to leverage another body, such as the Academic Senate, against the COC to achieve your goal.

The Academic Senate will, almost always, be the definitive body when the issue comes to admissions or academic requirements. Because UC subscribes to the concept of Academic Freedom the Faculty at UC have a great deal of authority and independence when making decisions. This works more efficiently on the campuses than it does systemwide. The Academic Senate takes far too long to make decisions systemwide to produce a timely decision. If an issue is clearly within the purview of the Academic Senate, the University decision-making process will sometimes be delayed to wait for a Senate decision, but often, the Regents or UCOP will create a special Task Force or Working Group, with faculty participation, of course, to provide a “recommendation” to the President who will make the final decision.

Students and Staff

Students are at the bottom of the hierarchy along with the staff. In fact, students have a slight advantage over staff because they are a recognized unit (UCSA) in the University with the right to participate in University decision-making. The staff, on the other hand, do not have any recognized right to participate in the decision-making process. Even UCOP employees who often staff systemwide committees can provide information (which does give them some power), but they never have the option of stating an opinion nor do they ever vote on committees.

The Legislature

The Legislature is the invisible player in systemwide decision-making. Most often Legislators do not follow the University minutiae. However, when the Legislature takes an interest in an issue they trump virtually any University activity by threatening to cut UC funding if a satisfactory resolution is not achieved. Historically, it is rare for the Legislature to officially intervene. This has, in fact, only happened a few times in the history of the University, most recently over affirmative action policy. More frequently a few Legislators will make a few calls to the Regents encouraging them to take particular action before it comes to a fight over the budget. Recognition of the TA Union is one example of the power of well-placed Legislative letters and phone calls.

Systemwide Administrators

The above information is provided for AGS' general understanding of the process. Again, ideally, AGS would never advocate on its own behalf at the systemwide level. Instead, AGS would work through UCSA. However, if, for some reason, UCSA is not a viable option below you will find some quick tips for navigating the systemwide administration.

There is a small student services division at UCOP. If your concern is regarding student life generally, including application of the policies applying to students, student groups, and student governments, the student services unit will be your first contact. At this time (2003-2004), Clint Haden is the director of Student Affairs and Services. You can call him directly at Office of the President. He is a very helpful resource.
to approach the Chancellor is at the Student Government Lunch if time allows. The Chancellor is likely to try and direct the issue back to the appropriate Vice Chancellor. You will need to stand firm in your assurance that you have already exhausted that avenue and that the issue does require the Chancellor's intervention. This information is most applicable to the current Chancellor. Hopefully, future officers will update this material to apply to future Chancellors.

Taking Campus Issues Off-Campus

Should the issue remain unresolved, an assessment might be done to determine whether the issue is worth pursuing beyond the campus level. This is a serious step and can carry lasting repercussions. You should expect that the first call you make off campus will be relayed immediately to the Chancellor. So, be sure you have a compelling case. Historically, this last resort has been used to force a campus assessment of how graduate financial aid dollars are being used. Because the systemwide staffers making the request were convinced that the issue was serious and made that clear to the campus, there were no negative consequences for AGS.

An alternative to approaching the systemwide administration directly is to present the issue through UCSA. If the issue is pervasive on all of the campuses it may be possible to make it a Board issue. If the issue is solely campus specific, AGS can call the UCSA University Affairs Director to request that she make a few calls to the systemwide administration. The University Affairs Director may also be a good person to ask for advice regarding the best approach should an issue require off-campus attention.

Working with Systemwide Administrators

UCSA provides AGS' access to systemwide administrative decisions. The VP External should be the conduit between AGS and all systemwide structures. The players at the systemwide level are mirrors of the campus structure with the addition of the Board of Regents. The Academic Council, with a host of systemwide committees similar to the campus senate committees, represents the interests of the faculty at the systemwide level. Administrators are represented by a number of councils, the most powerful of which is the Council of Chancellors. The Board of Regents oversees all general policy issues and the Office of the President Staff implements all policies.

The official organizational structure can be found on the UCOP website at www.ucop.edu. Be sure you have an updated version as responsibilities and titles do change occasionally.

The Board of Regents

Generally, the Board of Regents (BOR) is the final authority on all matters. The Board is made up of 24 voting members. 16 of the members are appointed by the Governor to 12-year terms. Seven of the Regents are Ex-officio, voting members based on some other position they hold. These individuals include the President of the University, the Governor, Lt. Governor, the Speaker Pro Tem, the Secretary of Education, the President of either Berkeley or UCLA's Alumni Association (they rotate through in one year terms), and the President of one of the other UC Alumni Associations. Finally, one student is appointed through a three tier process coordinated by the Secretary of the Regents. The first tier is a resume review and first interview conducted by the AS and GSA Presidents, or their designates, producing nine semi-finalists. The second tier is an interview conducted by the
If your issues are in the area of financial aid there is a separate financial aid unit under student academic services. Currently Kate Jeffrey is in charge. She is great to work with and is especially receptive to graduate students who understand statistics. She will be retiring at the end of 2004.

If your concern is regarding graduate issues, specifically, those are overseen, systemwide, by the Provost most directly. Sandy Smith is Assistant Vice President to the Provost. She is an excellent resource for information and her office is outstanding at producing copies of virtually any report every published by her office. (Other UCOP offices are less capable of tracking their old reports.)

The Legislature

The main area of Legislative activity of concern to students is the budget process. However, there are occasionally bills introduced designed to assist graduate students. The most critical role that AGS will play is to make district contact with local Legislators. These visits will be most powerful if coordinated with ASUCI. Initial visits can simply be “meet and greets.” In fact, it can be very powerful to convince Legislators to visit campus. This tends to make the campus administration a little more cautious when dealing with student government because they know that you have done some work developing relationships with local Legislators. Be sure to give the Governmental Relations Director notice of any impending visits as a courtesy. It is important to remember that Legislators are very busy and that they are most interested in things they can affect at a statewide level. So, familiarizing them with the campus is useful, but should be tied to statewide interests, even if those are simply requests for additional funding.

While AGS will, again, most likely, work through UCSA to participate in the State Legislative process it is vital that you’re a familiar with the process and the players when interacting with Legislators. You can gain or lose a great deal of credibility based on what you know. The following information is provided for general understanding, but the VP External should do a great deal more research on local Legislators and the Legislative process prior to arranging a visit.

All government websites can be reached from www.ca.gov. From there you can access the Governor’s website, the Legislative websites, and the websites for all state government offices.

The State Budget

The budget process begins in the Spring one year in advance of adoption. During the Spring the University does some assessment amongst Regents, faculty, and administrators to develop a list of budget priorities. It is always challenging to get student input into this process. One avenue is through the Academic Planning Council, a systemwide committee that reviews and assesses the submissions of other committees. Another avenue is the systemwide Planning and Budget committee. Over the summer, UCOP develops a proposed UC budget, taking into account the budget priorities, and submits it to the Regents in the Fall. At this point students have an opportunity to comment on the budget during the Regents’ meeting. By the beginning of December the UC proposed budget is in the Governor’s office.

The Governor releases his budget on January 10th each year. It is posted to his website as soon as it is released. If students wish to influence the Governor’s budget they must do so prior to leaving for Christmas break. It is very unlikely that students will gain access to the Governor directly. Most often influence occurs through gubernatorial staffers.
Staffers can be approached at Regents meetings. They often attend even if the Governor does not attend the meeting.

Once the Governor's budget is released all work shifts to the Legislature. The timing varies each year depending on what other business is pressing, but usually, by about April budget hearings occur. UCSA generally has an opportunity to testify during the budget hearings, but by the time Legislators get to the hearings they've usually already made up their minds. The real work occurs in February and March through phone calls, office visits, and letter writing. The budget is supposed to be passed by June 30th, but if it is a bad budget year it may not pass till well into the fall. It is important to maintain contact with Legislative leadership throughout the process because student issues have been known to be traded out at the last minute to pass a budget. Maintaining a presence throughout the process makes it more difficult for a Legislator to give up on student issues.

The General Legislative Process
Occasionally UCSA will have a bill introduced by a Legislator. All new Legislation must be introduced by February (the actual date varies depending on the Legislative calendar.) Once a bill is introduced it is delegated to committee. Often bills die here because they never make it onto the necessary committee calendars. To have them heard requires a great deal of persistence with the Committee chair and his/her staff. The bill has to successfully pass through each committee it was delegated to. Then it has to be passed by whichever house it was introduced in. Once it makes its way through the entire process on one side it has to start in the other house. UCSA has been most successful introducing bills in the Assembly. Student bills often become hung up in the Senate.

Systemwide Allies
There are a number of groups that may be allies depending on the particular issue. Again, UCSA should be the main contact for AGS and the following is provided as background information.

Student Allies
There are several other systemwide student groups, in addition to UCSA. They include the California State Student Association (CSSA), and the California Student Association of Community Colleges (CalSACC). These systemwide student governments are similar to UCSA, but are organized differently and have varying interests and strengths making them good partners on some issues and bad partners on others.

CSSA is very strong in Sacramento. They have been a consistent presence in the Capital for almost ten years. They have developed very close relations with their systemwide administrators and thus have a great deal more access to Legislators, through their administrators, than UCSA does. When UCSA has strong relations with CSSA UCSA is able to gain more access to decision-makers.

CalSACC, on the other hand, is a very loosely organized group. They are almost exclusively volunteers, as they do not have the power to collect student fees on most community college campuses. They can, however, be counted upon to mobilize a strong grassroots force if an issue appeals to their constituency.

There are other student groups operating statewide including statewide MeCHA, the CalPIRG statewide organization, and others that come and go based on the emergence of particular issues. Most of these groups, however, are made up of undergraduates and most likely to be interested in alliances around undergraduate, or general student issues.
Other Statewide Allies

There are other groups working statewide that may be of assistance if interests overlap. The most powerful are the governmental relations directors from across the UC System. They meet regularly as a unit and are directed in their activities by the campus and the UC Sacramento Office. At UCI the role has been combined to become statewide local community relations making it more difficult to work with them on statewide issues. However, the VP External and the President should meet with the Director of Governmental Relations at the beginning of each year to determine how best to make use of that relationship. Occasionally, there will be funds available through that office for lobby visits (in affiliation with the alumni association lobby days) and voter registration/education drives. At the very least, it is useful to keep the Governmental Affairs director informed of any graduate issues being pursued at the state level.

The Sacramento office may also provide access to resources and contacts. If UC is behind an issue of concern to graduate students then working together with the Sacramento office will be very useful. They may be willing to coordinate Legislative appointments and they will provide a wealth of information about Chancellor’s and other campus representative’s schedules for visits to Sacramento. Knowing that schedule can help you to time your meetings with the Chancellor for best effect. If the issue is fresh in his mind, it’s more likely that he’ll remember to mention it during meetings with Legislators.
AGS Organizational Memberships

General Information
At this time, AGS is a member of two associations, the University of California Student Association (UCSA) and the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS). More information about each organization can be found below. This section is a general discussion regarding the value of maintaining these types of memberships.

The Preamble of the AGS Constitution indicates that AGS was formed to "...represent graduate student needs in the university community and elsewhere..." While elsewhere is an extremely broad reference it is safe to assume that elsewhere includes the systemwide, state and national levels. To that affect, AGS elects a Vice President of External Affairs each year to coordinate AGS' participation at these levels. However, it would be virtually impossible for a VP External to perform well at all of those levels without additional support. If you imagine how arduous it is to learn, monitor, and advocate within the campus structure and multiply that by at least three, you'll have some sense of the monumental task each VPE would be faced with were he/she not to have access to UCSA and NAGPS. In addition, imagine how, relatively, powerless AGS is in relation to other constituent groups on campus, and on campus AGS only competes within a limited spectrum. Then imagine adding 9 UC campus constituencies at the systemwide level, all of the citizens of the state at the state level, and all of the citizens of the nation at the national level and ask yourself whether AGS' small voice would have much likelihood of being heard at these levels were AGS to advocate alone. Thus, if AGS is to fulfill its responsibilities to its constituents, membership in a systemwide/state and national organization is difficult to avoid.

If we agree that membership is imperative, then the question becomes whether UCSA and NAGPS provide the optimum representation at those levels or whether there are other organizations out there worth investigating. At this time, UCSA is the only recognized systemwide student voice. At the statewide level, there are other student groups representing the Cal State students (California State Student Association) and Community College students (CalSAAC). However, neither is well positioned to pursue graduate student issues. At the national level the only other game in town is the United States Student Association (USSA). Though USSA has a graduate student caucus and purports to represent all college students nationally, their interest in and willingness to work on graduate issues has been non-existent in the past ten years. In fact, most years, the Chair of the graduate caucus has not even been a graduate student, but an undergraduate student who is interested in attending graduate school some day.

At this time, UCSA and NAGPS are the best vehicles available for pursuing graduate student interests at the systemwide/state and national levels respectively. Historically, AGS has taken a leadership role in both organizations. Three different members of AGS have served as Chair of the UCSA Board of Directors and many more have served on the executive committee and two
different members of AGS have served as President of NAGPS. By taking leadership roles in each organization AGS exerted significant influence on the operations of each association and benefited immeasurably from the greater access to information accorded leadership.

Any discussion of pulling out of either organization should be weighed against the likelihood and cost, to AGS, of working to create an alternate organization. More than ten years ago an AGS Council attempted to create an alternative to UCSA. Many hours were invested in meeting with other disgruntled associations and developing a proposal. In the end, the board members who created the agenda to which AGS objected moved on the next year and AGS returned, taking a leadership position on the Executive Committee to ensure that remnants of the old agenda were dropped altogether. However, it took UCSA several years to recover from the upheaval caused by the AGS proposal. Through the course of those years it was difficult for UCSA to focus on the important issues facing students in the UC because staff was busy traveling to campuses reassuring associations that UCSA was stable and efficient. This is a cautionary tale to anyone who imagines an alternative to UCSA. In the absence of an alternative AGS should work to address any problems in UCSA in the most expedient way possible so that UCSA can maintain focus on the issues and not on internal strife.

In good years, UCSA has done some extraordinary things. In the mid 1970s the UC Student Lobby (the pre-cursor to UCSA), was ranked the 12th most powerful lobby in the State (See the California Journal). UCSA has warded off fee increases, lobbied for fee rollbacks, ensured participation in systemwide task forces including a recent task force focused on improving graduate education, and generally maintained a strong student presence amidst what can be, at times, a very anti-student environment. The practical benefit to members of AGS far outweighs the annual contribution made to UCSA when looked at over time.

Though national issues may seem far removed from graduate student life, the Federal government makes numerous decision which can have monumental impacts on the daily lives of graduate students. The tax act of 1986 is one example. In the bill graduate student stipends were re-classified making them taxable income. By doing so, the Federal Government effectively cut graduate student annual income by about 20%. So a student who made $10,000 the previous year would only take home about $8,000 the next year. At the time, NAGPS did not exist and there was only a symbolic protest waged by the higher education community, a community focused much more on undergraduate issues than graduate student issues at the time. Fast forward ten years and the Federal Government again wages an attack against graduate students through the tax code. This time, there is a proposal in the tax package to remove Section 117d. Section 117d makes graduate student fee remissions tax-exempt. Were fees to become taxable income the average UC graduate student would lose more than $50 per month to withholdings to cover the tax liability associated with this year’s fees. And public school students are fortunate because fees are relatively low. Private school students would be virtually wiped out by the increased tax burden associated with an extra $20,000 in income. Fortunately, in
1997, NAGPS existed. A NAGPS board member noticed the language while reviewing the tax bill and alerted the entire higher education community. In an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, NAGPS is credited with sounding the alarm on this potentially harmful language and eventually leading the effort to defeat it. Without NAGPS the Federal Government would continue to whittle away at the limited income graduate students receive.

Because both UCSA and NAGPS provide invaluable representation, if AGS is unhappy with the performance of either Association, AGS may wish to consider making a larger investment, financially or time-wise, to contribute to improving the situation. Worst case, AGS may wish to wait until the Board of Directors turns-over in a given organization. Very often a new Board is all that's needed to turn things around.
UCSA is a systemwide coalition of the undergraduate and graduate student
governments on each of the campuses. UCSA is the only student organization
recognized by the University systemwide and is responsible for representing all
student concerns at the system and state levels.

The best way to learn about UCSA is to find a UCSA binder. There are old
binders in the AGS offices and you will receive a new binder at the UCSA
transition retreat or Congress. Be sure to request a binder from the UCSA office
if you don’t receive one automatically. The binders do not change dramatically
each year. So an old binder will be sufficient to get you started.

Based on the UCSA Charter, duly passed by the student governments in
the UC, all AS’ and GSAs are automatically members in UCSA. To alter AGS’
membership status AGS would need to pass an amendment to the Charter. (See
the UCSA Charter for more information.) However, each association is a member
in good standing or bad standing depending upon whether dues are paid in a
given year. A member in bad standing has all of the same rights and
responsibilities as a member in bad except that the member in bad standing does
not have a vote on the Board of Directors.

UCSA membership dues are usually passed as a line item in the budget in
June. Once the dues are passed they are paid automatically, on a quarterly
basis, by the VP Financial unless Council votes otherwise. AGS has chosen not
to pay dues several times over the course of UCSA’s existence, most recently
because the UCSA budget was passed by the Board of Directors with a $17,000
deficit. The AGS council can vote not to pay dues for any reason. However, great
careation should be exercised. Generally speaking, AGS exercises indirect control
over issues and activities through the VP External who sits on the Board of
Directors. The AGS Council exercises direct control over two narrow areas. First,
Council must vote to ratify any changes to the UCSA Charter and second Council
must vote to ratify the UCSA budget each year. The vote should occur at the
beginning of the fall quarter. Council members should ask their VPE if they have
not heard anything about the UCSA budget by the middle of the fall quarter. To
contribute to the maintenance of UCSA’s stability, which is desirable for reasons
discussed in greater detail above, AGS should be cautious about voting to
suspend dues payment. In fact, fiscal irresponsibility may be one of the only
situations where immediate suspension of dues is warranted. If AGS remains
committed to maintaining UCSA’s efficacy, Council may wish to make every
effort to resolve non-fiscal issues through the VP External prior to a vote to
suspend dues. During the course of any disputes, the executive committee
should be in close communication with the UCSA staff and Chair of the UCSA
BOD. Frequent communication will impress upon UCSA the importance of AGS' concerns and will ensure that concerns and requested remedies are clearly understood. If possible, members of AGS, in addition to the VPE, may wish to attend a UCSA BOD meeting to further convey concerns to other BOD members and to attempt to work toward resolution.
NAGPS is a voluntary membership association dedicated to advocating for graduate student interests at the national level. AGS has maintained membership in NAGPS, on and off, since 1995. NAGPS has been in existence since 1986 when a group of graduate students, meeting at a TA unionization meeting, created a national coalition to fight the taxation of graduate student stipends. Though they would eventually lose that battle, the group has since fought many successful challenges to protect graduate education.

In addition to tracking and advocacy regarding federal legislation, NAGPS also functions to connect graduate students with resources. NAGPS connects student government officials in a network providing the opportunity to share information and advice. AGS has made use of these networks in the past, taking advice from other associations regarding methods for connecting graduate student across departments, cautions against taking over any travel programs from graduate studies, and collecting ideas for additional services AGS might provide to graduate students. NAGPS also takes on national initiatives such as the doctoral program survey. The survey offered graduate students the opportunity to rate their degree programs. Thousands of graduate students took the survey around the nation. All NAGPS members have access to the results on the NAGPS website. Though AGS has not made use of the data, it remains available. More important than the data, however, the survey served to raise awareness about graduate education through the media attention drawn by the survey, funded by the Sloan Foundation.

NAGPS is also dedicated to providing benefits to graduate students at the individual level. In that effort, NAGPS established a national health insurance plan. Our students do not benefit since GSHIP is a better plan, but the NAGPS plan provides access to affordable health care for those who don't otherwise have access. NAGPS also provides access to discounts on car insurance through GEICO and access to the Student Advantage discount card. There are many local businesses in the Irvine area who take student advantage. Discounts range from a free soda to 20% discounts on services. One of the most popular elements used by graduate students is a 15% discount on all Amtrak tickets.

NAGPS, like UCSA and AGS, has better years and worse years. The question that one must always ask, when determining whether to fund NAGPS is whether it is easier to get involved and improve NAGPS or start from scratch to create a new organization. For AGS to do its job there must be a national association in place advocating at the national level. There is no way that AGS could single-handedly accomplish this task. The NAGPS name, though not as well-known as one might like, does carry some name recognition within the
higher education community. That name recognition is always available to be thrown behind initiatives begun at a grassroots level. The tax exemption campaign is a perfect example. An MD/PhD student at Carnegie Mellon came up with the idea to advocate for the return of graduate student stipends to tax exempt status. The estimated savings for UCI students is about $200 fewer dollars per month in tax withholdings. Though the net impact on annual income would be minimal since most graduate students get their withholdings back at the end of the year, the extra money monthly would mean less interest in student loans and credit card bills.

Initially, the student mobilized his own grassroots group nationally. The effort would likely have stalled, however, had he not prevailed upon NAGPS to join the battle. Now, with the NAGPS name behind the effort, gaining access to Senators and Representatives that a fledgling grassroots effort would not have been able to access, there is a real likelihood that the tax language will be passed this session.

NAGPS dues range from $300 for a regular membership through $1,000 at the highest level. AGS has usually contributed $400 per year. One year the association approved a $1,000 contribution to help to rebuild NAGPS following some difficult financial times. Contributions to NAGPS, however, should never be solely financial. To ensure that NAGPS is performing its responsibilities, the VP External or another designated member of AGS should be subscribed to the NAGPS listserv. Subscriptions can be made electronically from the nagps website at www.naaps.org.

It also advised that AGS attempt to place a member on the Board of Directors (BOD). NAGPS has a BOD of 14 individuals. Anyone from a member campus can run for office. The Executive officers and committee chairs are elected at the National Conference in the fall. The Regional Coordinators are elected in the spring at the Regional Conferences. It is unlikely that the VP External will have the time to fulfill NAGPS BOD responsibilities in addition to UCSA and AGS responsibilities. So, ideally, anyone interested in running for NAGPS BOD would be either a regular council member or another graduate student, not on council, but willing to keep in close contact with council.

Because NAGPS funding is so limited, member Associations with members on the NAGPS BOD are expected to contribute toward funding travel and office expenses. This is a reasonable exchange for the increase in opportunities and information available to associations with NAGPS BOD members. Previous NAGPS Presidents from AGS were able to access national leaders on graduate education for advice and support on issues facing UC and UCI grads more specifically. These informal networks provide priceless opportunities for applying pressure on campus.
AGS Calendar
(I need a copy of the latest gship deadlines to add those to this calendar)

June
Student government lunch (bring new officers if possible)
UCSA Transition Retreat (sometimes in July)
By June 30th
  Joint Council Meeting
  Budget Meeting
  Election of VPs

July
UC Regents Meeting
Committee/Exec Goal Setting
Begin planning fall activities (new student orientation?)
Request articles for AGS fall newsletter (including introduction of new council members and
  officers, advertisement of open council seats and open academic senate committee
  seats, introduction of AGS goals for the year)

August
Deadline for newsletter articles early August
Write newsletter
UCSA Congress
Continue planning fall council activities

September
UCSA BOD Meeting
UC Regents Meeting
Council approval of committee goals
Begin planning for Education Elections
Renewed advertising for any vacant campus wide committees
Around the beginning of the quarter distribute first newsletter

October
Student government lunch
UCSA BOD Meeting
NAGPS National Conference (sometimes in November)
Hold Education Elections
Request articles for AGS winter newsletter (including advertisement of open council seats, report on progress on council goals)

November
Student government lunch
UCSA BOD Meeting
UC Regents Meeting
Deadline for newsletter articles
Draft newsletter
VP presents budget actuals to council
VP Admin solicits reports from campus wide committee reps
Committee reports on goals

**December**

**January**
Student government lunch (?)
January 10th the Governor's Budget is released
Distribute winter newsletter
UCSA BOD Meeting
UC Regents Meeting

**February**
Student government lunch
Request spring newsletter articles (including advertisement for campus wide committees, teaser inviting people to run for AGS, nomination form for faculty mentor award and grad student service award)
UCSA BOD Meeting

**March**
Student Government lunch
Deadline for spring newsletter articles
Draft newsletter
UCSA BOD Meeting
UC Regents Meeting
Review elections procedures and begin developing elections timeline
Committees report on goals
Legislative Budget meetings begin
NAGPS Regional Conference (Either end of March or April)

**April**
Student government lunch
Distribute spring newsletter
UCSA BOD Meeting (Student Regent Selection)
Approve elections timeline
Begin advertising for following year's campus wide committee seats
April 15th GSHIP Report Deadline
California Higher Education Student Summit (CHESS)

**May**
Student government lunch
UCSA BOD Meeting
UC Regents Meeting
Draft end of the year report
Final report from committees on goals
Announce AGS Award Winners (present awards at the May or June Student Government Lunch)
Housing

Affordable housing for graduate students will always be an issue at UCI. The off-campus housing market is so impacted and over-priced that graduate students who do not get on-campus housing are often forced to share bedrooms or live a good distance away from campus.

Relative to other UC campuses, Irvine houses a high proportion of graduate students on-campus. In addition, rental rates, compared to the off-campus market, are still fairly low, in fact, the lowest in the system. This apparent generosity can make discussions about housing for graduate students at UCI difficult to sustain.

However, AGS has a responsibility to ensure that all graduate students have affordable, accessible housing and to defend graduate students when they are treated unfairly in regard to housing. The strongest argument on the UCI campus is that the cost of living associated with living in Orange County reduces UCI’s competitiveness for the top prospective graduate students. A survey of individuals who declined offers to UC graduate programs, done by UCOP, supported this contention. This line of argument resulted in an increase in the target for future graduate housing from the 50% of graduate students currently housed on campus to a target of 60%. When most UC campuses are focused on housing undergraduates, it was quite a victory to have the UCI Long Range Development Plan amended in such a way.

Unfortunately, the same argument that resulted in a higher grad housing target rate also resulted in a unilateral change in housing policy which negatively impacted continuing grads on the housing waiting list in 2002. In an effort to immediately improve UCI’s competitiveness the Graduate Council pressured Graduate Studies to increase the number of priority housing spots available to departments to offer to their top recruits. The change in policy cut the number of vacancies available to wait-listed students by about half.

AGS mobilized a Tent City in Aldrich Park to protest the policy change. The tent city was eventually removed after the administration agreed to fund an AGS staff position to research housing alternatives for grads. In addition, the protest prevented the Graduate Council from increasing the number of priority spots the following year (keeping them at the 2002 levels.) (See the 2001-2002 End of the Year Report for all of the details regarding the housing dispute including copies of news coverage and the agreement signed by the administration and AGS.)

Over the years there have been a variety of other housing disputes. In the 1980s Verano residents successfully rose up against the University when the University decided to increase Verano rents to subsidize construction of Palo Verde. In the early 1990s there were disputes in both Verano and Palo Verde regarding the housing staff’s access to occupied apartments. Unfortunately, the details of these disputes and their outcomes have been lost over time.
Housing Resources

The Verano Residents Council (VRC)
If a dispute is specific to Verano, the VRC technically has authority over the issue. Some years the VRC has been very strong needing no encouragement from AGS. Other years, the VRC seems like nothing more than a Housing puppet. While AGS should be cautious about superceding the VRC’s authority, it may be necessary to work with them to protect graduate students’ rights. In the mid-1990s the VP Admin, who happened to live in Verano, started attending VRC meetings regularly. If housing issues continue to grow, it may be worthwhile to re-institute a similar practice, though the VRC meeting representative could be an interested council member instead of an officer.

The Housing Task Force Report
In 1999 the Regents created a Housing Task Force with faculty, administrators, Regents, students, and state representative to attempt to address the housing crisis faced by the majority of campuses. Though the report is not ground-breaking, there are priorities set and bits of advice that will provide background and may provide ammunition for future fights over housing. A copy of the Report is available in the second binder in this set.

The Housing Survey
[Was this ever distributed?] Following the Tent City AGS hired a staff person to develop a survey of graduate students regarding their housing status. A copy of the survey and results is in the second binder in this set.

The AGS Housing Report
Also following the Tent City AGS hired a second staff person to investigate housing alternatives for graduate students at UCI. This report includes information about plans for future graduate housing on the campus and assessment of temporary housing options, such as on-campus, temporary trailers and rental of an off-campus apartment building by the University. A copy of this report is in the second binder in this set.
The Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan was instituted following a 1989 vote of UCI graduate students to implement mandatory health insurance. The original impetus was the unionization effort on the Berkeley campus. One of the demands was for health insurance. The University decided that giving in to this demand might slow down the unionization effort on other campuses. Of course, the University wasn’t going to pay for all graduate students to have health insurance. Thus, the cost of the insurance had to be added to fees. At the time, the only way to create campus-based fees was through a general vote of the student body.

This was very fortunate in the case of health insurance because, everyone assumed that an oversight committee would be established to review and approve the use of the student funds collected. So, just as there is a student center board, and ARC board, and Bren Board, a GSHIP committee was created. Rumor has it that the first committee had almost unilateral authority to negotiate the insurance coverage. (No official records of the first GSHIP Committee have been located.)

Over the next six years the authority of the GSHIP committee was eroded, not by policy, but by the participation of the Director and Health Insurance Coordinator at the Student Health Center. Their knowledge of the process gave them the power to control the negotiations. Graduate student on the committee knew little about insurance and deferred to them on most issues. The Director and Insurance Coordinator were able to bring in a Broker who worked with other campuses. The first few GSHIP committees who worked with the new Broker weren’t impressed, but could find no evidence to support changing Brokers.

The 1995 Committee collected materials during the course of their term suggesting that GSHIP students were paying much higher premiums than necessary because of the Broker’s use of out of state underwriters, which then required an in-state processor. As it happened, the in-state processing company was owned by his Sister. Later, it was also determined that, though no kick-backs were ever proven on the UCI Campus, the same Broker was giving the UCSD Health Center $20,000 per year in exchange for the GSHIP business.

The information was passed along to the 1996 GSHIP Committee. Because the Committee was concerned that there was collusion between the current Broker and the Student Health Center Staff, they began working with another Broker. The new Broker was able to produce quotes significantly lower than those of the old Broker. There was some political fall-out, but the Chancellor eventually signed the contract with Blue Cross saving $65 per student, per quarter on premiums and increasing benefit levels substantially.

There is a great deal of dispute over what happened next. The following year’s GSHIP Committee suspected that the Student Health Center began charging for services it did not charge the old Carrier for, though Student Health has always denied that. In any case, student health charged Blue Cross for every
single service sought by graduate students at Student Health. Student Health would also, technically, charge every undergraduate student for services; however, student health did not pursue the matter if a bill was not paid. So, in essence, GSHIP was supplementing undergraduate care.

This led the Student Fee Advisory Committee to investigate the Student Health Center to determine where the student fee dollars allocated to the Student Health Center were being spent, if not on care provided to students. The SFAC determined that there were accounting discrepancies, but that the Student Health was extremely under-funded (UCI's Student Health Center had the second lowest funding per student of all of the UC Campuses.) The question of billing practices was never answered, but policy was created ensuring that all bills were collected, whether grad or undergrad.

The net impact on GSHIP was that the losses with Blue Cross were sizable and premiums were raised considerably. GSHIP attempted to negotiate with Student Health to return to previous practices where students were treated for basic ailments, such as colds, without charge to the insurance carrier. Student Health insisted that they could not afford to do so. Thus the GSHIP committee contacted the Medical Plaza to determine whether they would be interested in bidding on the gate-keeper function for our insurance. They indicated interest and by the end of the year GSHIP had voted to move primary care to the Medical Plaza.

The process of changing carriers or gate-keepers is always wrought with confusion and frustration. Student Health, as they exited the process, blamed some of the confusion on the new Broker. So, the GSHIP committee created new standards for assessing Broker performance and opened the field to competitive brokering for the first time. It was during this process that Garnett-Powers were selected, mainly because they had hired Steve Johnson who had worked in UCI Administration and thus knew the University bureaucracy very well.

About this time the administration became concerned about all of the changes being made to GSHIP. The Chancellor instructed the Vice Chancellor Student Services to create some guidelines that would assert more control by the administration. So, a committee with students and administrators was created and drafted a new set of GSHIP guidelines. As with many guidelines, the language had many interpretations. The students were confident that the language maintained the GSHIP committee’s autonomy. The Administration, however, interpreted the language to more explicitly make the GSHIP committee advisory to the Chancellor providing the Chancellor more flexibility to disregard the Committee’s recommendations. That same year, the GSHIP Committee Chair submitted a report to the Chancellor proving the Chancellor the opportunity to exercise his authority to disregard GSHIP recommendations. The GSHIP Chair reported the committee’s decision in the report, but also strongly stated his own objections to the reports recommendations. The Chancellor was able to use the student division on the committee to follow the Chair’s advice as opposed to the committee’s.

Since then the administrators on the committee have taken a strong role in guiding and sometimes directing GSHIP committee activity. Unfortunately, also
AGS-UAW Relations

AGS has had tenuous relations with union organizers since the first union organizer set foot on the campus. Most years each group co-exists most peacefully without much interest in the other. However, there have been a few run-ins over the years. The earliest disputes stemmed from AGS’ hesitance to support the union. Eventually, the AGS council compromised and passed a resolution saying that they supported UCI graduate students right to choose to unionize and that AGS would, from then on, refrain from discussing any issues pertaining to working conditions with the University administration. There were several years of peace between AGS and the Union.

The next round of disputes stemmed from graduate student complaints about the tactics being used by union organizers to get cards signed. AGS representative attempted to talk to the Union representatives. Some productive discussions occurred and the union made an effort to ensure that the recruiters being sent out were better trained. However, AGS negative sentiment continued because of what AGS characterized as strong-handed tactics. For instance, there were reports that union organizers were harassing graduate students who had not signed cards showing up at their offices and classrooms repeatedly. In addition, there were claims that misinformation was being distributed by the Union.

Once the Union was recognized these disputes lessened, but were revived when AGS received several student complaints about the Union again providing misinformation and/or no information at all. There was also a sense of suspicion about the lack of advertisement of union meetings, especially those where representatives were elected. AGS Council decided not to take any official action, but an AGS committee did investigate the process of having the Union de-certified. In the end AGS did not take any action and those with complaints were encouraged to raise those complaints with Union leadership and not with AGS.

AGS’ most recent interaction with the Union came over the Federal effort to return graduate student stipends to tax exempt status. AGS worked with UCSA to attempt to get the Union to endorse the effort, or at least, not to stand in the way. It was very difficult to communicate clearly with the Union and the Union organizers were very suspicious of AGS efforts. The Union never officially took a position and the Federal effort continues. It is not unimaginable that this issue may arise again as the bill makes its way through the congressional process.

Resources

Old AGS Meeting Minutes
There are a variety of discussions of the Union during AGS meetings. They will provide a more detailed recount of how these relations have evolved.
UAW
The union has an office in Irvine. You can contact them to ask questions specific to the Union. It may also be useful to track down your unit rep and speak directly to him/her depending on your question. Generally, AGS members have had a limited understanding of the Union and how it works. Attending Union meetings may be another avenue for increasing understanding.
Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

In the mid-1990s, following the well-publicized suicide of a Harvard Chemistry graduate student, national discussions attempting to prevent future graduate student suicides, spawned the idea of creating a set of expectations for graduate students. These expectations would provide guidance to students, faculty, and administrators regarding minimum requirements for each group to successfully navigate graduate student life. On some campuses, nationally, graduate students took up the cause of drafting the document and taking it through the necessary course of administrative and faculty bodies to have it officially recognized as University policy. Over the course of the discussion, this document of expectations was named the graduate student bill of rights and responsibilities.

In the UC, the cause was taken up by Graduate Councils across the system with little or no student participation. On the UCI campus, the Graduate Council Chair contacted AGS, but no AGS officers, at the time, expressed any interest in working on the project. Instead, the Grad Council Chair convinced AGS to appoint two students, whom the Grad Chair located, to represent graduate student interests on a special committee charged with drafting the document.

The special committee began with copies of documents created by other UC campuses. The example documents included necessarily vague rights such as the right to “timely feedback on work submitted to faculty advisors.” It contained vague responsibilities, such as the responsibility to “complete work according to an agreed upon timeline.” The students on the committee expressed initial concern that the document would serve little true function since there were no specific targets for anyone’s behavior and thus Graduate Studies, the body that would need to enforce the document, would be hard pressed to call anyone to accountability.

Several committee meeting discussions ensued during which the issue of enforceability was discussed. The Graduate Studies representative eventually admitted that, even with specific targets, Graduate Studies would be hard pressed to intervene in graduate student/faculty or graduate student/department relations any more than it was already doing. This is because of the organizational structure favored by UCI. The departments are seen as, by and large, autonomous units. Each school receives a block grant of funds and has almost exhaustive flexibility to use those funds according to school interests. The current structure can be contrasted by the older university structure in which the departments received line-item budgets and had to meet certain standards set forth by the administration. If those standards were not met, the administration could cut funds in certain areas providing an incentive for the school to change its behavior. With block grants it is impossible to target cuts to departments and thus faculty are not overly concerned because they have the authority to allocate cuts as they see fit. Thus, they can protect the programs most important to them and cut those they are not so invested in (which usually means cutting student programs.)
After expressing their concerns about the veracity of the document being produced the students discontinued participation in the special committee. They advised AGS to review any document resulting from the efforts and approve or disapprove as council saw fit, but that it was a waste of AGS efforts to continue participating in the production of a meaningless document.

The special committee continued to meet until the Graduate Council Chair’s term was over. The document was never approved by graduate council.

Though the product being produced in this effort was useless, the issues being raised are important. There are always going to be faculty on campus who take advantage of their graduate students in any number of ways. There are also plenty of departments that are unclear about requirements and expectations. Providing some administrative requirements preventing these things from happening may indeed reduce graduate student distress. Before anything of the sort can be enforced, however, there will need to be some change in the relationship between the administration and the departments. AGS’ time may be better spent making efforts to change the relationship between Graduate Studies and the departments.

In the interim, AGS has taken action and developed ideas to address this situation. First, AGS created the Faculty Mentor Award to highlight the elements of a good mentor/mentee relationship in the hopes that this information will inform graduate students and give them a ruler to judge their own mentor relationship and educate faculty to give them the tools to assess their own performance.

Second, AGS created a plan for hiring a graduate student, employed by Graduate Studies, to perform the role of student advocate. This staff position would be a TA/RA equivalent and the student filling the position would be responsible for advertising his position, responding to calls from graduate students with questions, concerns, or complaints about their treatment, and connecting those students to the appropriate resources. Graduate Studies has declined to fund such a position each time the issue has been raised. For one year, the Graduate Student Ambassadors, a group of graduate students organized through Graduate Studies, worked with AGS to host a graduate student hotline. The hotline had a very low call volume, but the accompanying email address had a higher utilization rate. The students who submitted concerns, most often, only needed direction to the appropriate administrative body. In the cases where true disputes existed the outcome was less promising. The students running the hotline were very limited in their ability to research particular situations. More than once the students were told by administrators that they were not aware of all of the details of a particular situation and were they aware of the details they would understand why the student was being treated the way he/she was being treated. Limited to the student’s version of the story, it was very difficult to advocate on the students’ behalf. Were such an effort to be undertaken again, it would be advisable to have legal assistance to put more pressure on the University to release the details, from their perspective, so that AGS could make a better assessment of the student’s case and how best to assist him/her.
Resources

Draft of UCI Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities
This will have to be located in the AGS archives or requested from the Graduate Council.

Carol Sokolov (or current Grad Council staff person)
Carol was the staff person in charge of the special committee. She should have copies of the various drafts filed away. Though, given the recent concern over the confidentiality of Graduate Council affairs she may be less forthcoming.
since then, a binder with all of this history detailed and with strong advice from previous GSHIP Chairs has been lost. So, it will be up to future GSHIP Committees to rebuild the information to provide future GSHIP Committees with the information and background to stand up to administrators to accomplish the ultimate goal of the GSHIP Committee which is to provide the best, least expensive, most accessible health insurance plan for graduate students at UCI.

The GSHIP Guidelines require review of the gatekeeper and competitive brokering on a regular schedule. It is important to start the GSHIP process as early as possible to allow time for these important activities. These reviews ensure that all elements of GSHIP are operating optimally. The next competitive brokering process should include solicitation of bids from Consultants who will work according to contract and not receive a commission on the premium. It is possible that GSHIP can save money working with a consultant. In addition, the responsibilities of the consultant will be outlined in detail so that the GSHIP committee knows what to expect from them throughout the year. On the other hand, a consultant is less likely to problem-solve in the same way a Broker does forcing the GSHIP Coordinator to do more direct work with the carrier.

GSHIP Resources

GSHIP Committee Binder
The current binder is created by the Brokers. It generally includes the GSHIP Guidelines, the current year's plan, and copies of old GSHIP recommendations.

GSHIP Data Reports
For the past several years it has been like pulling teeth to get accurate, detailed numbers from the carrier. The level of difficulty has increased because of HIPPA requirements. Each GSHIP committee should familiarize themselves with HIPPA at the beginning of the year so that you can dispute assertions by the Broker and the GSHIP coordinator regarding limits on the data available to the Committee in order to request future bids.

RFP
The GSHIP Committee should request copies of all communication between the Brokers and the carriers contacted for quotes. Some questions have been raised about the current Broker's efficacy based upon RFPs that were incomplete and over-stated the losses experience by the plan. Careful review of all correspondence will help the committee to assess the performance of the Brokers.

Other Consultants/Brokers
When contacting other consultants or brokers it is important to remember that they may be interested in getting UCI's business and thus have their own self-interests. However, other consultants and brokers, contacted informally, can be an excellent source of information regarding general trends in the student health insurance industry and general rules of thumb regarding negotiations.
GSHIP Programs on other UC Campuses
UCI's GSHIP has been the example aspired to by other campuses because we have the most control over the process compared to other GSHIP Committees. However, contact with other committees can be beneficial. It was only in talking to the Chair of GSHIP at UCSD that the kick-back from the old Broker was discovered. It's also useful to compare premiums and services provided by student health centers, etc.

UCOP Report on Graduate Student Health Insurance
Just before the Union card drives on the UCR and UCI campuses UCOP created a Graduate Student Health Insurance Committee to assess the current status of the GSHIP program and to determine the feasibility of uniting the plan across the system and/or providing dependent coverage. The report is somewhat dated now, but there is a full comparison of levels of coverage and premiums at the time. The following were the main recommendations of the report:

1. Student Health Centers should be reviewed and minimum standards of care should be established in exchange for the student fee dollars they receive.
2. Each campus not currently self-funded should evaluate the possibility of creating a self-funded insurance program.
3. The drawbacks of combining GSHIP programs across the system seem to far outweigh the benefits.
4. More work is necessary on dependent care. There was an effort to examine the possibility of creating a regional or systemwide dependent plan. Work on this has since stalled.
Student Government Autonomy

Berkeley’s ASUC was the original student government in the UC system. They are incorporated and have all sorts of exemptions from systemwide policy allowing them to operate more autonomously than any other UC student government. The ASUC owns their building (Eschelman Hall) and hire and fire their own staff (i.e., their staff members are not University employees.) Their activities are occasionally challenged by the University. For instance, most recently, funds were allocated to a Graduate Assembly (equivalent to AGS) committee to fight the Racial Privacy Initiative. The University froze the funds for the program claiming that it was political activity the University could not engage in. The GA hired a lawyer and a few letters later the funds were released.

Every other AS and GSA has somewhere in its charter or constitution a few words that call into question its autonomy. They all say something to the effect of “with recognition by the Chancellor” or “authorized by the Chancellor.” These words give the Chancellor on each campus the theoretical power to create or dissolve a particular association. Students have been fighting this fact since well before the Free Speech Movement in the 1960s.

The main issue at question is whether student governments are units of the University or separate affiliated organizations. The University, of course, claims that student governments are units of the University and must, thus, follow all rules applying to the University. There are many instances where that distinction can be disputed, not the least of which is the 1997 ASUCR v Regents court case. ASUCR sewed the University over its rights to engage in political activity. Calling on an earlier case, establishing ASUCR’s right to sue the University (an entity can’t sue itself, thus if ASUCR were a unit of the University the judge in the case would have had to throw the case out. Instead, the just in the earlier ASUCR case determined that ASUCR had separate legal standing and could, indeed sue the campus) ASUCR accused the University of impinging on its first amendment right to lobby in Sacramento. The case was settled in favor of ASUCR.

AGS, itself, holds further evidence disputing student government’s status as a unit of the University. AGS’ liquor license established AGS as a separate entity from the University because a State institution cannot hold a liquor license. (The University is a state institution.) There are many other examples of evidence disputing the University’s assertion.

However, the University has student government over something of a barrel because they threaten to stop collecting student government fees if they’re forced to change policy to acknowledge that student governments are not units of the University. Thus, a sort of stalemate has been established whereby the University maintains its assertion and student governments basically do as they please, suing the University when it violates their right to autonomy.

Following naturally from the assertion that student governments are units of the University is the assertion that student government fees are University dollars and are thus State dollars. Designation as state dollars creates a whole host of limits on how those funds can be used. Student governments assert that the dollars are membership dollars only collected by the University similar to
The Center for Campus Free Speech
This association’s staff specializes in protecting the free speech rights of students around the nation. They were very involved in the fall out of the Southworth Decision (a case in Wisconsin decided in 2000). They may not be able to answer specific questions, but they can almost always direct you to more resources.

CalPIRG
CalPIRG has a great deal of organizational experience with autonomy issues having been forced from UC campuses in the early 1990s. It’s important to remember that they have a set of interests that sometimes compete with student government interests, but they have done an excellent job of maintaining the history of autonomy battles in the UC.
union dues collected by an employer. Again, student governments find themselves in a catch-22 because the University threatens not to collect the dollars.

There are other student government funds remaining in an even grayer area. Those are funds generated by student government business enterprises, such as the Anthill Pub. To this point, systemwide University Counsel has chosen to ignore the existence of these funds. In fact, David Burnbaum, the Assistant General Council as of 2004, has threatened that raising the issue will force the University into a deeper consideration of student governments’ authority to own business. And, if you believe student governments to be units of the University, they would, of course, not have the right to own businesses. Instead, all student government businesses would really be property of the University.

From the student government perspective, as separate entities, the businesses are owned by the student government, and any funds generated by businesses have no limits on their use, except those governing 501c3 organizations. AGS has undertaken to solicit legal advice regarding funds generated by the Anthill Pub. Creating a strong legal standing in advance will protect AGS should the University decide, at some later date, to evaluate student government business enterprises. If AGS takes certain actions we may be able to create a protected status such as that enjoyed by ASUC.

Resources

Policies applying to students, student groups, and student governments
These policies have been in the process of being reviewed and amended for almost five years now. Knowing the rules, as the University sees them, can be helpful. At least then you’ll be able to anticipate when you’re stepping into a hornet’s nest, though AGS is rarely noticed on the UCI Campus and thus, consistently violates the “official” policies and never raises any challenge. In any case, it’s important to keep in mind that the University policies are not necessarily consistent with the law.

Lawyer’s Advice
In 2003 AGS sought legal advice on a number of issues. The resulting documentation should be available in a locked cabinet in the office. AGS worked with Michael Sorgen, located in San Francisco. He was selected because of his experience with the ASUCR case and his continued work with UC student government association, including UCSA.

UCSA
Though any given UCSA administration may not recall, UCSA has a lengthy file in the old file cabinets outlining the history of the student government battle for autonomy. There are also detailed files on the Smith challenge to student government autonomy that almost succeeded in dissolving UCSA. In addition, UCSA usually has some current knowledge based on immediate challenges.
Grievance Procedures for Grads

Currently (as of 2003-2004), graduate students are subject to a number of grievance procedures depending on the particulars of their grievance. Most basically, there is a student grievance procedure, an employee grievance procedure (in the Union contract), and there are numerous administrative grievance procedures. There are numerous problems with the multiplicity of grievance procedures, not the least of which is that it is virtually impossible for graduate students to figure out which procedure is applicable. Further, even if they make an educated guess, if their issue falls into a gray area, of which there are many, the student is likely to get the run-around.

The clearest area of grievance procedures is the employee grievance procedure. If any issue is related at all to employee matters, the student should be directed to the union for assistance. The only complication is if a grievance occurs during the course of activities which could be deemed work-related or could be deemed student related. One example is an instance where a student was accused of stealing items form a department. The student was employed, at the time, as a TA. However, the University insisted on using the student policy to discipline the student, and thus, the resulting grievance had to be adjudicated according to student policy. The best rule of thumb is to send a student to the union first if there's a possibility that the grievance is an employment related issue. The student is likely to receive the best protections in that process.

Beyond the union grievance process, the next most likely grievance process to be applied to graduate students is the student policy. The student policy is designed with undergraduate grievances in mind and is rarely appropriate to graduate students. Inherent in the student grievance procedure is adherence to the policies governing students. There are several policies governing student behavior that may not be legally enforceable against graduate students. See the section on the “legality of student policies for graduate students.”

Then there are a host of administrative grievance procedures governing certain kinds of grievances. For example there is a particular grievance procedure if a graduate student is accusing a faculty member of a research-based conflict of interest. There are specific grievance procedures in place if a student is accusing anyone of discrimination or sexual harassment. Because a given grievance is likely to be complex and unlikely to fit neatly into any one procedure, students end up making endless trips around campus trying to determine the appropriate process for airing their grievances.

AGS has made on advance in this area. Originally, it was virtually impossible to even determine what all of the grievance procedures were. Procedures appeared haphazardly in a variety of policies hosted on a variety of administrative websites. AGS worked with Graduate Studies to develop a somewhat comprehensive list of grievance procedures with a short description of the kinds of things appropriate in a particular procedure. In addition, the page includes contact information for a Graduate Studies staff person to be contacted if you’re unsure about where your grievance falls. This provides a vast
improvement for graduate students currently pursuing grievances and a necessary precursor for further action on this item.

Further pursuit of this item would be appealing to streamline the grievance procedures and develop a standard set of protections for all involved in a grievance procedure. (Currently each process has varying degrees of protection for the various parties to the grievance.) In addition, further attention to the item should include consideration of the most productive role of the Ombudsman's office. Currently the office acts solely as a mediator of disputes between parties. They have no authority to impose outcomes of disputes. And, in previous interactions with the office, it has been clear, that they have a very limited handle on the variety of grievance procedures available beyond seeking mediation.

Resources

RGS Grievance Procedure website
www.rgs.uci.edu/~graduatetstudies
See this site for a laundry list of current grievance procedures. Review of these procedures will be necessary should AGS choose to take on the task of drafting a more uniform procedure for graduate students.

Notes from the Internal Committee
[The Internal Committee has done some work on this issue. It would helpful to include a summary of those activities here.]
Legality of “Student Policies” for Graduate Students

The current UCI Policies Applying to Students, Student Governments, and Student Groups was designed with undergraduates in mind. However, according to University policy, they all apply equally to graduate students. While some elements are clearly applicable to graduate students, a graduate student's multiple roles on campus make some student policies inappropriate and, perhaps, illegal.

The most obviously problematic element of the policy is the section pertaining to inappropriate behavior off-campus. According to the policies, the University may choose to act against a student for activities, such as public drunkenness, that occurred off-campus. As employees of the University, it is inappropriate, and may be illegal, for the University to police off-campus behavior. More legal research is necessary to determine the legality. However, the issue could be argued based on appropriateness and whether such actions would be pursued against a staff person, faculty member, or administrator. If the University's answer is no, then there is a strong case for changing the policies altogether or creating separate policies governing graduate student behavior.

So far, there have been no instances where such policies have been applied to graduate students. Thus, AGS has not taken a major interest in the issue. Original interest was raised when the policies were being revised systemwide. AGS wrote a letter objecting to particular sections of the policies, but those sections were not being amended and thus AGS' complaints were not addressed.

Future attention to this item will require legal evaluation. In addition, careful consideration of the policies applying to other groups on campus may provide a framework from which to advocate for changes in the policies applying to graduate students. Some of the policies may also be illegal when applied to undergraduates. If this is the case, it may be beneficial for AGS to join forces with ASUCI. However, caution should be exercised if AGS' ultimate goal is to create separate graduate student policies. Should AGS consider this issue as an agenda item for the year it should be expected that this will be a multi-year project. Perhaps the first year's goal could be simply to get the University to agree that a new policy is necessary for graduate students. Then the following year's council could be charged with negotiating the details of the policy. Were AGS to pursue new policies, this may also be the opportunity to include a graduate student specific grievance procedure.

Resources

Notes from Internal Committee Discussion
[Again, any notes available from when the Internal Committee last discussed this issue would be useful.]
Graduate Student Fees

The Fees Grads Pay

Fees are a complex issue. There are various types of fees paid by graduate students. First, there is the basic, university-wide fee charged to each graduate student. This fee is divided into a registration fee and an education fee. Registration fees can technically only be used for student services. Education fees are, according to the State Master Plan for Higher Education, technically illegal. They were first imposed during budget shortfalls in the early 1970s. These fees were supposed to only go to fund auxiliary academic serves and not to fund general teaching activities. However, over the years, the education fee has become part of the general University fund and is part of the block grant to each campus. It is impossible to determine what those funds are used to fund on each campus. Registration fees, on the other hand, are kept separate from education fees and the spending of these fees is governed by Student or Registration Fee Advisory Committees (SFAC) on each campus. Unfortunately, the commitment to only funding student services has eroded amongst SFACs over the years and now most campus SFACs also fund some academic auxiliary services, such as academic counseling in departments.

Over the years, when fee increases are calculated the percentage increase is assessed on the entire fee (both reg and ed fees), but the new funds are all collected as education fees. Thus, while education fee funds have grown substantially over the years, registration fee funds have been almost completely stagnant making funding student services very difficult.

In addition to registration and education fees, each student pays mandatory campus fees. Almost all of the mandatory campus fees were approved by a general vote of the student body. These fees fund things like the Student Center, the ARC, and Bren, and they include the GSHIP and AGS fees. Disputes have arisen in recent years regarding the requirements for passing referendum imposed fees. General UCI policy states that a 20% voter turnout is required and that a majority must vote in favor to pass a new fee. There is no mention of graduate student voters versus undergraduate voters. Thus, even if all graduate student voters vote against a referendum, the undergraduates could still pass it. This was especially evident during the student center expansion referendum. AGS has occasionally attempted to argue for a separate referendum process so that grads can choose to approve a particular referendum or not depending on graduate student interests, but the administration has remained unconvinced.

The University claims that, if grads will have equal access to a facility or resource, then they must pay whether they voted in favor or not. So, for instance, with the student center expansion referendum the administration argued that since they could not limit access to the new facilities to exclude grads, it wouldn’t be fair to exclude them from paying the fee. AGS’ counterargument was that grads are not the only group that would have access to the facility without paying the fee. Staff and administrators probably use the facility just about as much as
grads do and yet they are afforded free access. Though the argument seemed very reasonable to AGS, the administration was not convinced.

So, in this instance, AGS shifted energy to ensuring that some reasonable proportion of the space would be graduate student specific. The negotiations resulted in the agreement that AGS would receive considerably more space in the addition and some proportion of that space would be designed to be a graduate student lounge, accessible to all graduate students using a special key access.

In addition to campus-based and university-wide fees, some graduate students also pay additional fees. All professional students (Med and GSM at UCI) pay professional fees. These fees are in addition to the base fee paid by all graduate students.

Finally, out of state students pay tuition on top of all of the other fees. American students from out of state can gain in-state-status after one year. However, international students never gain in-state-status and are thus forced to pay tuition throughout their careers. The only break they get is that tuition is reduced by 75% following advancement to candidacy. Tuition can become a terrible burden for international students who were originally lured to the campus because their department covered tuition the first year, but who then became responsible for paying tuition which now costs more than an individual student may make in a year.

Who Pays the Fees?

Graduate students are ultimately responsible for any fees they are assessed. However, if a graduate student is a TA or RA their fees are covered through their employment. This tends to make most students apathetic when it comes to discussions of fee increases. However there is a growing proportion of graduate students who are responsible for some or all of their fees. As fees and tuition continue to increase at alarming rates, some of these students will be forced out, often during the course of writing their dissertations. In addition, there are no guarantees that the University will continue to fully fund graduate student fee remissions. There are many Universities around the country that only partially fund fee remissions leaving grads responsible for some proportion of their fees each term.

The one ace in the hole that grads have is that the University will always be concerned about its competitiveness to attract the “best and the brightest” new graduate students. Because California has virtually no chance of being competitive when cost of living is assessed (see UCSA’s cost of attendance report) the UCs have traditionally maintained competitiveness by ensuring that fees are low and that they are covered by fee waivers. Over the years, however, the faculty perception of who is the best and brightest has shifted so that they are no longer concerned with funding all of their students. Instead, they select a handful of students they feel are truly extraordinary and offer them full funding. The rest of the graduate students are not as highly desired and so faculty are not as inclined to worry about how their funded. This may open the door to a shift in the waiver program providing only partial remissions, the departments knowing
they can supplement the waivers for the students they’re truly interested in having come to UCI. AGS and graduate students systemwide will need to be diligent to ensure that such a change in policy does not occur. The first step will be in convincing the average graduate student that they should be concerned.

Resources

UCSA Cost of Attendance Report
(copies of this report are in the office)
Though this report is already dated, the situation has become worse and not better. So the data can be cited with the ominous allusion to how much worse conditions may be already.

Financial Aid Report on the Graduate Student Take-Rate
(A copy of this report is in the office or available from Financial Aid office at UCOP)
UCOP conducted a survey of prospective UC graduate students who declined admission. The results, of course, listed funding as the most common reason across the system. However, the UCI data indicated that while funding was important, housing was more important. As it turns out, UCI has done an excellent job of creating very attractive funding packages competitive with institutions of higher rank (helped largely by the Chancellor’s allocation of $1 million of the rental income from University Research Park to graduate fellowships.) However, this is in the context of full fee remissions. A new study will be necessary should the fee remission level change.
International Student Concerns
[I could write a general approach to this section, but I think it'd be much stronger if an international student wrote it. Perhaps Sandrine or Armando might take a stab?]

Resources

UCLA GSA Report on International Students Contribution to California
(A copy of this report is in the office)
This report was created by the UCLA GSA several years ago. It outlines the research demonstrating that international students tend to remain in the US in high numbers and thus make substantial contributions to the economy. In addition, those who return to their native countries tend to act as ambassadors for the U.S. in their native homes.

UCI International Student Services Center
This is an on-campus unit under student services which handles visa requirements for students and provides advice and assistance to international students. The director is also extremely knowledgeable about international student concerns, including the new reporting requirements in the Patriot Act. When doing research on international student issues a call to the center may save a great deal of time and energy doing independent research.

NAGPS
NAGPS has an international student concerns committee that monitors and takes action national issues concerning international students. The website contains some information about emergent issues.
Saving 117d of the Tax Code
This is an item that AGS can continue to tout as a major victory. AGS was integral in the efforts to retain this section of the tax code in 1997 when Congressman Archer (R-Texas) introduced an amendment to remove the section. Section 117d is the section of the tax code that makes fee remission/waivers tax exempt. Were the section to be removed every dollar a student receives as a remission or waiver would have become taxable income. For graduate students at UCI that would have meant about $5,000 more in taxable income each year. Though tax laws have changed since, including the creation of the lifetime learning credit, NAGPS estimated that retention of section 117 saved UCI grads about $250 per year.

The situation was all the more remarkable because NAGPS was the first to notice the amendment and blow the whistle mobilizing the higher education community nationally. At the time the NAGPS President and Western Regional Coordinator were UCI graduate students putting UCI right in the center of the action.
Domestic Partnership in Graduate Housing

This is another AGS victory (working in concert with UCSA.) Originally, each campus created their own housing policies regarding domestic partners. Thus, some campuses included domestic partners and some did not. When the issue of domestic partnership benefits for UC employees was raised that thrust UC Housing policy into the spotlight also. UCSA initially worked in concert with the staff and faculty groups working to achieve parity and thus the Regents agenda included both a benefits item and a graduate student housing item. However, the Regents, while opting to pass the benefits resolution, decided to delegate the housing matter back to the President of the University.

Unfortunately, the political climate was such at the time that the President (having recently been reprimanded for attempting to delay implementation of SP-1, the anti-affirmative action resolution) chose not to deal with the question for several years. Initially, he charged the campuses with developing a draft policy that would include domestic partners, but the process was put on the back burner. It was only after efforts on the campuses and through UCSA systemwide that the issue was considered again and finally resulted in new housing policies providing access to domestic partners in the same manner that married couples are afforded access.

AGS may want to audit housing at some point to ensure that domestic partners are, indeed, receiving equal access to on-campus housing and that the process for proving domestic partnership status is not overly arduous. However, as of 2002-2003 no complaints have been lodged against housing on this issue.

Resources

UCI Housing Policy
www.housing.uci.edu
Career Planning for Graduate Students

It has long been assumed, by the administration and faculty, that departments are responsible for graduate student career planning. After all, who better to guide a graduate student toward an academic career than a faculty member already in the field? However, there are two flaws to this rationale. First, unfortunately, many departments leave career planning to the individual faculty mentors who vary widely in their interest and commitment to working with their advisees. And, second, there is the assumption that all grads are looking for academic jobs when in fact, we know that about 50% of our students will not go into academia.

To address these concerns, AGS teamed up with the Career Counseling Center to propose additional funding to provide graduate student specific services. Though Career counseling did not receive as much money as it hoped, some funds were provided to create some graduate student specific services. These services include workshops co-hosted by IRC and the Career Counseling Center and assistance preparing a CV. Unfortunately, resources remain limited for students pursuing non-academic jobs.

Should AGS choose to pursue this issue in the future, there are models on other campuses nationwide and a reasonable model on the UCSB campus. Research should be done to develop a vision of the ideal programming and then funds should be sought for specific programming instead of graduate student career counseling generally. One idea that was considered and discarded and may warrant further consideration is to put the Career Counseling Center in charge of developing an Industry Internship program for graduate students. It may be that the Career Counseling Center would simply develop a model agreement and then monitor relations, but that students would be responsible for approaching companies to find a place. However, the initial impetus for this idea was to generate more graduate funding by partnering with industry to develop paid internships. That may be a job for graduate studies and not career counseling.

Resources

Re-envisioning the Ph.D. Website
www.reenvisioning.washington.edu
The re-envisioning project was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and brought together graduate students, administrators, private sector representatives, K-12 representatives, and unfortunately only a few faculty members to examine the current state of graduate education nationally and to chart a future course. The project continues to produce materials to assist in the pursuit of the project goals. One area of concern was career preparation for non-academic jobs. The Best Practices section of the website will connect you to career centers on other campuses with good programs for graduate students.

Berkeley study of Ph.D. graduates ten years after their degrees
[I need to find this study. I think it’s in the office, but if not, I can make a few calls and get a copy.]

UC Berkeley conducted a study of Ph.D. graduates, nationally, from several targeted fields ten years following graduation to find out what they were doing and whether they were satisfied with their lives. The shocking results were that a higher proportion, than expected, were working outside academia. In addition, when looking at English graduates specifically, those outside academia were making more money and were slightly more satisfied with their jobs than those inside academia. This study provides excellent evidence for the fact that many of our students will be leaving academia after they graduate.

NAGPS Doctoral Program Survey
www.nagps.org

NAGPS received a grant from the Sloan Foundation to survey grads nationally to collect information about specific campuses and departments. One section of the survey asked questions about access to career counseling services. The survey can be accessed online and can be sampled in a variety of ways to provide national statistics and/or campus-based statistics.
**Financial Aid Audit**

While undergraduate financial aid is carefully monitored because of the very specific formulas developed by UCOP to determine financial aid packages, graduate financial aid is block granted to the campus and the only requirement is that it be distributed to needy grads according to the federal financial aid guidelines.

At some point, graduate aid was going under-utilized. The Council of Graduate Deans (systemwide) proposed that graduate financial aid dollars be made available for distribution as fellowships. UCOP approved this request as long as each campus ensured that the proportion of financial aid dollars used as fellowships matched the proportion of fellowship recipients meeting the financial need criteria. At the time UCOP committed to an audit after the program had time to work out the kinks. Six years later the audit had still not occurred.

As the financial aid dollars were shifted to graduate studies, graduate financial aid awards became almost entirely loan-based. So now, graduate aid is not distributed with larger proportions going to the neediest. Instead, funds are distributed based on merit and matching of need is done after the awards are made.

AGS attempted to address this issue, but attention shifted prematurely with the advent of the increase in priority housing spots and the need for immediate action on that front.

Were AGS to return to this issue, some effort could be made to change the proportion of funds remaining with financial aid for need-based awards. Also, AGS may want to work with Financial Aid to do a more exhaustive study of graduate student need.

**Resources**

Financial Aid File
[this is in the office]

Director of Financial Aid
The Director of Financial aid has access to the FAFSA data which must be filed by every graduate student receiving a fellowship in addition to those filing to receive need-based aid from Financial Aid directly. This data set is rich with information to help AGS determine whether the current policy of block granting financial aid dollars to graduate studies is serving the graduate population well.

Financial Aid Office at UCOP
The Financial Aid unit was in the process of surveying graduate students to determine the true cost of attendance a little more than a year ago. The data from that study should be available. Visit the website to find current contact information ([www.ucop.edu](http://www.ucop.edu), click on student academic services and then on financial aid.)
Improving the Perception of Graduate Education in the State

Over the years the State Legislature and the Regents have had varying degrees of understanding of what graduate education is all about and how it fits into the context of University education. The situation improved substantially with the advent of union mobilization. The union did an excellent job of conveying the true array of responsibilities carried by graduate students in the UC. So, the Legislative understanding of graduate students went from a vision of young people hanging out in coffee houses reading some esoteric book and driving around in their BMWs pursuing their education for their own intellectual edification to a vision of graduate students carrying a great deal of the University workload while still pursuing important research intellectual pursuits ultimately of value to the state economy.

UCSA and Office of the President further enhanced understanding and appreciation of graduate education represented most potently in the Regents’ creation of the Regents’ Commission on Graduate Education. The Commission was one of the most forward thinking and productive groups to be appointed by the Board of Regents in years. The ultimate report published by the Commission includes an outstanding array of goals and tools for improving graduate education in California.

Unfortunately, graduate education is still viewed as a luxury and once the economy tanked graduate education was once again relegated to obscurity. The Governor’s 2004 budget proposal provides ample evidence of this in his call for a 40% increase in graduate fees.

AGS must continue to beat this drum both on campus and systemwide. UCSA can often become focused on undergraduate concerns to the exclusion of graduate student concerns, especially if graduate students give up on the association and stop attending Board meetings regularly. Currently, UCSA is the most effective avenue to exercise this agenda and it may come to the AGS VP External to bring the issue to UCSA and to rally grads across the system to continue full participation in UCSA in order to pursue the agenda most effectively.

Resources

Report of the Regents Commission on Graduate Education
[There is a copy in the office.]
New AGS Programs for Grads

Each year AGS should generate new ideas for programs benefiting graduate students. Funding should be a secondary consideration because it may be that a particular program can be a product of fundraising or joint funding with another administrative unit on campus. Over the years the following program ideas have been considered.

Every so often Graduate Studies approaches AGS about funding a travel grant program. Other GSAs across the nation coordinate the travel grant program for grads on campus. To date, AGS has declined the opportunity. On the one hand, a centralized travel grant program would reduce the imbalance between schools in travel funds available to graduate students. Currently, some schools provide very reasonable access to travel funds for conference travel while others provide virtually nothing. In addition, some GSAs have used the travel fund to reward GSA participation by requiring that a department council seat must be filled in order for the students in that unit to have access to the travel grant program. On the other hand, however, overseeing a travel grant program is extremely time-intensive and would necessarily detract from other AGS activities. With the overwhelming responsibility of GSHIP already under the aegis of AGS, it is difficult to imagine how AGS might find the resources to coordinate a travel fund.

Another idea that has surfaced occasionally is for AGS to provide small scholarship awards. There may be a chance to work with Financial Aid on such program. The Scholarships could be need-based and help to defray the cost of things like childcare. UNR has a model program that AGS should if considering the creation of a scholarship program. Again, the administrative burden would be considerable, but this could be a service that would attract the attention of more graduate students.

Social activity programming is another idea that has been attempted occasionally over the years. One of the most common complaints AGS hears from graduate students is that they'd like to interact with more grads across department lines. To facilitate such interactions AGS has tried scheduling one a month Saturday activities like mountain biking and beach trips. Another year AGS planned evening outings to bars, the movies, etc. Each attempt resulted in limited participation. But as the graduate population changes the same activities may be more popular. Or perhaps new councils will come up with more appealing ideas for activities. Another suggestion that was made to serve this function and be a fundraiser for AGS was to create day trips to Disneyland or San Diego, etc. and to charge a fee for participation. AGS would rent a bus and deliver participants to the agreed upon destination in exchange for the fee. This may be an area for the Business Enterprises and Social Activities Committee to delve further.
New AGS Business Enterprises
AGS has made an incredible success of the Anthill Pub. Profits have become integral to the AGS budget. As the $27 per year fee that each graduate student pays shrinks in its purchasing power, AGS will need to continue to search for ways to supplement its income, unless of course, AGS chooses to try to pass a new referendum raising the AGS fee.

Ideas have been generated, but no research has begun to date. It may be useful if the Business Enterprises committee generates a laundry list of ideas at the beginning of the year and then spends the rest of the year investigating the feasibility of one or two of the ideas. The ideas that have been suggested to date include organizing some sort of afternoon events in Aldrich Park and then having food carts at the event. Events could include live music, political events, theater or dance performances by local student groups or the theater or dance departments on campus, etc.

Another idea, as mentioned above, is to create day, or even, overnight student trips and charge a fee for participation. Trips could be planned to places like Disneyland, San Diego, Las Vegas, etc. A variation of this idea is to work with ASUCI to run shuttles to Newport Beach and the Irvine Spectrum for students without cars or who want to be able to go out and drink and not have to worry about driving back to campus. If AGS took some leadership it may be possible to either share profits with ASUCI or to at least get a cut of the profits.

All of these ideas, and any others that are raised, will need to be evaluated carefully for their business sensibility and for their impact on AGS. Things like AGS' 501c3 status in relation to tax liability and general liability insurance requirements would need to be carefully considered before AGS attempted to implement any new business enterprise.

Outside assistance of some kind should be solicited. AGS is fortunate to have access to the business school through GSM students. So, it may be possible to have a GSM professor assess the feasibility of a particular plan. If not, outside consultation should be solicited.
Office of the President
May 10, 1972

TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE:

ITEM FOR ACTION

For Meeting of May 18, 1972

Re: Status of Associated Students

The President recommends that the Committee on Finance recommend to The Regents:

1. That The Regents reaffirm that the Associated Students on the several campuses of the University are official units of the University exercising authorities concerning student affairs by delegations from The Regents, the President, and the Chancellors; and

2. That the President continue to take all administrative action which is necessary or appropriate to treat the Associated Students and all of their activities as integral parts of the University, including, in particular, steps necessary to secure exemption from taxes on property administered by ASUCs and from government permits and fees for their activities and actions to confirm that employees of the Associated Students are employees of the University.