

Stronger together: How can Graduate Student Associations and Graduate Deans jointly advocate most effectively?

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Association of Texas Graduate Schools meeting, September 30, 2021



What if your GSO were a strong partner in institutional advocacy?

- UC Davis examples:
 - Joint fundraising with graduate school for graduate student food pantry
 - Jointly lobbied to change graduate student pay timing policy to address a critical gap
 - Inequalities arising from quarter system; delayed start to grad pay
 - Successful budget-neutral solution to adjust timing of pay



The problem

- University advocacy on graduate education issues is most effective when working with strong input from *both* graduate students and administrators.
- Graduate student organizations (GSOs) are best positioned to channel student input into effective advocacy alongside graduate deans....
- ...but local GSOs are frequently plagued by insufficient leadership development, high turnover, poor continuity, and a general lack of organizational resources that undermines their mission.
- How can these groups be strengthened while also offering meaningful career development opportunities for aspiring leaders? (They need to graduate!)



A solution: learn from others

- GSOs could learn from successful GSOs at other universities, but often do not have inter-university contacts or access to organizational history.
- National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS)—a volunteer organization led by current students—provides this by organizing events for members to share best practices, develop relationships with one another, and participate in workshops and working groups with peers across the country.
- NAGPS organizational membership dues are only \$577.50/year for the entire GSO.



A few examples of NAGPS resources and events



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FOR GRAD STUDENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 | 7PM EST
ZOOM | FREE

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Southcentral NAGPS
presents

Regional
Conference

Professional Practice: Reimagine your path to the future

Professional Practice Focus | Zoom | Networking

April 17-18

Hosted by:
Arkansas State University

This advertisement features a dark blue background with white and light blue text. It includes three circular icons representing professional practice, Zoom, and networking.



University of Kentucky example

“I went [to the NAGPS national conference], and it changed the course of our GSC and my life. I learned so many things about ways that we could interact with the students we represented, with university administration, and with other organizations on campus. I learned how to structure our organization to be more effective at our mission. And I learned that we were not alone in our efforts to fight for graduate students.”

– Kaylynne M. Glover, PhD Candidate in Biology, University of Kentucky



How can you get started?

- Email Gwen about your GSO joining NAGPS (president@nagps.org). It'll be the best \$600 you spend all year.
- Circulate NAGPS materials to local GSO leaders and other graduate students who may be interested to participate (Gwen can provide these).
- If you're going to join, it's ideal to do so before the November 2021 virtual conference so your GSO can participate in business sessions and be represented in national leadership positions.

