Rackham Student Government
Board Meeting: May 22, 2013

Agenda

I. Call To Order

II. Approval of Agenda

III. Approval of Previous Minutes
   a. May 15, 2013

IV. Officer Reports
   a. Graduate Student Body President/Treasurer, Phil
      i. Executive Order: Creation of the Communications Committee
   b. Graduate Student Body Vice President, Kaitlin

V. Committee Assignments, Committee Priorities, and Meeting Schedule (VP Flynn)
   a. Communications                               d. COSAC/Student Life
   b. Academic Affairs                             e. Legislative Affairs
   c. Budgetary

VI. Committee Budgets

VII. CSG Session update and JCOM

VIII. Revamping of RSG Schedule—Fall

IX. SAGE Update (Michael Benson)

X. Open Discussion

XI. Adjournment

Included in packet:
Minutes
Committee Assignments
Executive Order: Comm. Committee
Spring/Summer RSG Goals
Committee Budget Documents
SAGE Newsletter
SAGE White Papers
RSG Spring/Summer contact list
CALL TO ORDER: 7:34pm

Present: Michael Lang, Chris Tom, Kaitlin Flynn, Michael Benson, Phil Saccone, Ryan Roberts, Michael Lang, Brooke Horton, David Malewski, Julian Bahr, Yiting Zhang, David Barton, Chuky Mbagwu, Chris Tom, visitor Mike Hand

Absent: Eugene

Excused: Ram Balachandran, Alex Gutierrez

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda by Michael Lang and seconded by Yiting. Approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES, 4/23/13

Motion by Michael Benson and seconded by Chuky. Approved unanimously.

Update attendance

OFFICER REPORTS

President Phil Saccone. Thank you all for coming. Phil gives a rundown of Roberts Rules of Order to the new board members. Phil would like to appoint Ryan Roberts to a Division II seat. Phil nominates Ryan to a half-term seat, that is, his term will expire in the Fall. Michael Benson motions to confirm Ryan’s appointment by unanimous approval. Phil has been meeting with Natalie at Rackham about the fall picnic and the annual summer Tiger’s game. Phil gives a treasurer update, and we have $19,590 in the account. We are seeking a new treasurer and applications have been sent out and applications will be accepted until next Friday.

Vice President Kaitlin Flynn. There’s lots to do this summer. We’re looking forward to the consolidation and creation of committees in order to streamline the board’s operations. Also Kaitlin serves as the copy editor of RSG and oversees all advertisements and announcements that go out from the RSG account. If anyone has anything they would like advertised, please feel free to contact her.

RSG Logistics

Representative Expectations
i. Board meetings: allowed 3 unexcused absences before you are removed from the board.

ii. Committees: serve on at least one, ideally two committees.

iii. Events: must attend at least 2 non-board meeting events and help out every year.

iv. Constituent contact: office hours? Are they effective? Phil asks how many people have had visitors at their office hours. Michael Lang and Chris Tom have had a lot of success, mostly with people in their program. Kaitlin mentions that we’ve been brainstorming ways that we can interact more fully with our constituency, including monthly coffee hours or opening the RSG office in Rackham. David M asks if we have a schedule for town halls and announcements. Chris Tom mentions that we have 2 per semester. David M mentions that we should try to engage with the Division IV people by having a specific town hall or events to recruit them. Mike H suggests advertising more about how to get involved with RSG to target the students who have previously been in leadership roles.

b. Committee Membership

i. Communications Committee: many people are concerned with the communications presence of RSG. Phil would like to create an ad-hoc committee for Communications and to create a communication infrastructure. Kaitlin mentions that there was previously a communications committee and it focused mostly on advertising and branding. Hopefully the creation of this ad-hoc committee will allow for delegation of some of these responsibilities and an additional focus on the website. Julian is highly supportive and interested in helping work on the website, as he ideas but admittedly less experience with web development.

ii. COSAC/Student Life merger: These two committees both focus on student engagement and putting on events for students. Phil feels that it is best to merge the committees at least for the summer in order to get more participation. Michael Lang as a COSAC co-chair is highly supportive of the merger and the summer will be an active time for COSAC. Phil gives more explanation for the events of the summer. Chris Tom mentions that student life isn’t just social events but also registering student group registration. Kaitlin mentions that this process has started to be in place and it might be best to have the student group registration go through the budgetary and communications committees as putting this online will be crucial. Kaitlin also mentions that consolidating the committees is also to encourage attendance. Michael mentions that at least trying for the summer is worth it and David M concurs. Michael Benson moves that the person selected to be a chair of the student life committee also becomes the COSAC chair and that COSAC be required to meet concurrently with student life and that they be allowed to submit one set of minutes for that meeting. Seconded by Michael Lang. Approved with one abstention.

iii. LAC/Bylaw review Committee: Kaitlin explains the history of the usually ad-hoc bylaw review committee and it’s challenges in the past. We hope to task the process of bylaw review to the LAC as it is a somewhat less-
packed legislative agenda in the summer. Phil mentions that even if you aren’t on the committee you are welcome to review the bylaws and submit changes as necessary.

c. **Treasurer/Budgets:** still looking for a new treasurer. Please submit your applications soon. We will also be asking committees for budgets as soon as they’re slated.

d. **RSG email list**

**VII. Summer Goal Setting Session:** breakout into groups for goal setting for the summer. Discussion ensues about how tasks will be assigned to committees, how committees function, etc.

**VIII. Resolutions:** resolutions that were pending last semester—if you have one that you introduced last semester and still want to carry over. Please send to Phil for discussion as to the best time to introduce them. For instance, the issue on fossil fuel divestment, Phil feels that we should ensure that we get all board members opinions (including those currently elsewhere/Master’s students) and engagement with the Development office at the U. Resolution templates will be sent out soon too.

**IX. Open Discussion:** Although we will generally meet biweekly we will have a meeting next week to organize committees and get budgets flushed out. Chris asks about committee structure and how the meetings will be organized next week. Kaitlin explains how we will move forward. Phil mentions we will be addressing further issues next week. Board happy hour after next week’s meeting at Arena per Michael Lang’s request.

**X. Adjournment:** Motion by Chris to adjourn and seconded by Ryan. Adjourned at 8:22pm.
Rackham Student Government Summer 2013
Representative Committee Assignments

**Academic Affairs**
Kaitlin Flynn
Phil Saccone
1. Chris Tom (I)
2. Brooke Horton (I)
3. Ram Balachandran (II)
4. Alex Gutierrez (II)
5. Erin Sullivan (III)

**Budgetary**
Treasurer (Chair)
Kaitlin Flynn
Phil Saccone
1. Yiting Zhang (II)
2. Dave Malewski (I)
3. Ram Balachandran (II)

**Legislative Affairs**
Michael Benson (Co-Chair)
Phil Saccone (Chair)
1. David Barton (II)
2. Julian Bahr (I)
3. Michael Lang (I)
4. Mike Hand (II)
5. Dave Malewski (I)

**Student Life**
Phil Saccone (chair)
Kaitlin Flynn
1. Michael Lang (I)
2. Chuky Mbagwu (II)
3. Ryan Roberts (II)
4. Yiting Zhang (II)

**Communications**
Kaitlin Flynn (chair)
1. Julian Bahr (I)
2. Ryan Roberts (II)
3. Michael Benson (II)
4. Chris Tom (I)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Issues</th>
<th>Communications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grad. Student’s Bill of Rights</td>
<td>Website rebuild</td>
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<td>(Dean’s Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Coordinate with other School’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate with SACUA</td>
<td>event/social calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Intra-RSG communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitting your first paper</td>
<td>Increase FB/Twitter presence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pamphlet—(a guide to advise students through the</td>
<td>FAQ for student groups</td>
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<td>authorship process, resolution of grievances,</td>
<td>Determine what each RSG committee</td>
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<td>switching labs, etc.)</td>
<td>needs on the website</td>
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| Student Services (non-academic)                     |                                 |
| Housing Forums                                      |                                 |
| Resolution for Non-discrim. Policy                 |                                 |
| Joint Committee for Secession                       |                                 |
| SAPAC—Brooke to explain                             |                                 |

| Federal/State/Local Issues                         |                                 |
| 401K/Payroll reform                                |                                 |
| SAGE priorities                                    |                                 |
| Public safety                                      |                                 |

| Social Events/Community Service                    |                                 |
| Running Club (health and fitness promotion)        |                                 |
| Cedar point trip                                   |                                 |
| Tiger’s game                                       |                                 |
| Fall picnic                                        |                                 |
| Tour of botanical gardens/arb                      |                                 |
| Day at the horse races                             |                                 |
| Family pool day                                    |                                 |
| RSG trivia events/fundraiser                       |                                 |
| RSG speed dating                                   |                                 |
AN EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, Members of the Rackham Student Government, want to improve communication with the graduate student body AND

WHEREAS, Article 4, section A, subsection 1i explicitly grants the President the power to “create, charge, and oversee Ad-Hoc committees for special projects and interests”; NOW THEREFORE I, PHILLIP A. SACCONE, AS THE DULY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT BODY OF THE ANN ARBOR CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND THE BYLAWS OF THE RACKHAM STUDENT GOVERNMENT DO HEREBY ORDER THE FOLLOWING:

Section 1. That a Communications Committee be created, effective immediately.

Section 2. That the Communications Committee composition, leadership, charge, and operating procedure shall comply with the RSG bylaws as well as section 3 of this order.

Section 3. Communications Committee

A. Composition. The Communications Committee shall be composed of no less than four (4) members of the RSG Board, including Vice President Kaitlin Flynn who shall serve as the chair of this committee. Any member of the Rackham Student Body may join the Communications Committee and shall have voting rights, subject to the conditions outlined in subsection C.

B. Quorum. A quorum shall exist when half plus one of the committee members are present as determined by the chair.

C. Voting Rights. All members of the Rackham student body are eligible to vote on this committee. Voting rights may be obtained and retained at any point in time, following the committee’s formation by:

1) Notifying the chair of their intent to serve on the committee.
2) Attending a minimum of 50% of the committee meetings and discussions.

After meeting both requirements listed above, a member of the student body shall have voting rights on the Communications Committee. Maintenance of voting rights shall be pursuant on continued compliance with the requirements listed above.

D. Committee Operations. The Communications Committee shall meet no less than once every two weeks through the spring/summer session of RSG. Votes to approve recommendations and to send a final recommendation package to the Board must be taken in person with a quorum present.

E. Charge. The Communications Committee shall improve the clarity of public information published by RSG. This includes, but is not limited to, the RSG website, newsletter, Facebook account, Twitter account, and email advertisements. The committee will design and implement new and innovative ways to communicate with graduate student body about issues that are central to RSG’s mission: graduate students’ advocacy, funding student organizations, and promoting socialization within the graduate student body. This committee will be in effect until the last day of Spring/Summer session. Before the final board meeting of the Spring/Summer term the Communications Committee will prepare an oral and written summary of their progress. The Committee is hereby charged with the following duties:

1) Update the RSG website
   - Remove old and outdated information
   - Make sure the current information on the website is accurate
   - Communicate with RSG committees about their website needs

2) Create a simple and effective way for the graduate student body to provide comments/suggestions/complaints to the RSG board

3) Increase RSG’s web presence

F. Reports. The Communications Committee will submit regular reports to the Board on its progress and will seek feedback from the same.

G. Modification. The committee may, by a simple majority vote recommend an extension of its timeline or an expansion of its charge to the President. An amendment to this order shall not be necessary to affect either such change, as a memorandum from the President to the chair shall suffice. Further, the Board may, by a simple majority vote extend the timeline for the Communications Committee up to the end of the Fall 2013 semester. Any
motion to extend the timeline of the board must include a new dissolution date.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Phillip A. Saccone  
President, Rackham Student Government
Memorandum

From: RSG Executive Board

To: RSG Committee Members

RE: Instructions for completing Committee Budget Request forms

Date: January 29, 2013

Please prepare your budget requests using the attached form and submit to the RSG executive board no later than 6/3/13 at 5pm. We understand that certain details in the budget may need revision as planning for the event evolves. The Treasurer is committed to resolving these issues as they arise. Please do your best to produce an inclusive budget, but please don’t hesitate to contact the Treasurer if an issue arises.

As for the justification of different budget items, we want to balance everyone’s desire for a simple and streamlined process with our fiduciary responsibility. There is no need to provide extensive justification for common sense items. We recommend that committees focus on providing justification for items that are of significant monetary size and/or for items that might not have a clear purpose from an outside-of-the-committee perspective.

Please feel free to contact Phil with any questions at sacconep@umich.edu
Committee Name:

Committee Chair (Please include contact information):

Total Amount of Funding Requested:

For each event, please address the following:
(Note: It is not necessary to physically/electronically duplicate this form for each event. Please format the budget request in the following manner: Event 1, response to prompts 1-5, Event 2, response to prompts 1-5, etc.)

1) Approximate date of the event.

2) Very briefly, how does the event fit the mission of your committee as defined by the RSG by-laws?

3) Detail the specific items that the committee is requesting, the dollar amount, and provide a brief justification for the expenditure.

4) Event co-sponsors and an estimation of their financial contribution, if any.

5) Is this the first time you are holding the event?
The Sequester Will Stifle Innovation and Job Creation

The effects of the sequester are already being felt at many of the top federal agencies that fund graduate student research. NIH is planning on decreasing or eliminating 25% of their grants. The NSF will cut 1,600 research and education grants translating to 19,300 fewer student research hires and technical support personnel. NASA has suspended all public outreach and will cut research awards by 5%. If the sequester proceeds as planned, these cuts will have a detrimental effect on the productivity of graduate students and their professors over the next 9 years. The President's proposed FY2014 Budget eliminates the sequester and restores the funding of most federal agencies to their FY2012 levels. SAGE supports any legislation that maintains or increases federal funding to these agencies. At this critical time in our nation's economy, we must foster innovation and creativity at our preeminent research institutions. Federal funding to public universities through research grants is guaranteed to produce novel technologies and cures to diseases, which create new job opportunities for U.S. workers.
Controlling Graduate Student Debt & Taxation

Student loans are the single greatest debt by dollar amount in the United States, with 69.6% of graduate students holding loans with an average debt of $47,503. This debt is delaying the contribution of advanced degree recipients to the growth of our nation’s economy. Reforming current loan payment programs, bankruptcy discharge and tax policy will not only control the debt burden but also enable recent graduates to contribute to our national economy, sustaining our global competitiveness. By reviewing the current guidelines for Income Based Repayment (IBR), the “Pay as You Earn” program can be expanded to include more loans and get more students on structured loan repayment plan. Considering regional cost of living differences in IBR and improving education on the program’s benefits will make IBR a more pragmatic program for loan repayment. Furthermore, amending policy regarding bankruptcy discharge to include private student loans will allow current legislation to serve more struggling students. Finally, as the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 approaches, SAGE recommends applying the HEA’s definition for “Cost of Attendance” to current tax law which omits books, supplies, and housing from the definition of ‘Qualified Higher Education Expenses’.

Critical Visa Reform for U.S. Competitiveness

Current restrictive visa policies in the United States inhibit our ability to attract and retain the world’s best students, high-skill workers, and economic innovators. These individuals are vital for the nation to remain competitive in the global economy, with non-citizens responsible for an estimated 25% of new engineering and technology companies as well as 25% of all new patents in the U.S. It is in our best interest to incentivize these individuals to both come and stay in the U.S. by removing the barriers to entry. To achieve this, SAGE recommends reforming visas for highly-skilled foreign workers by implementing a moving cap based on industry demand for non-immigrant H-1B visas and exempting U.S. educated non-citizens from numerical limitations on employment-based immigrant visas. These changes would ensure that that the U.S. economy has access to the number of highly skilled individuals it requires while providing a route to permanent residency and a solution to long term knowledge retention. In addition, SAGE recommends reforming the F-1 student visa to allow for dual-intent such that students educated in the U.S. be able to apply for permanent residency. Finally, it is SAGE’s view that expediting visas and removing work restrictions for spouses of these critical individuals creates a more favorable environment for visa holders, thus encouraging them to remain in the U.S.

SAGE travels to Chapel Hill for Fall Coalition Meeting

As voted by the coalition during the spring Day on the Hill, SAGE will be holding the 2013 Fall Coalition Meeting at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Set to take place in October, the four day conference will allow the participating institutions to share best practices for leading their Graduate Student Associations as well as discussing national issues in graduate education. This is the first time SAGE has held its fall meeting at UNCCH.
**Graduate Education Policy Update**

**The President’s Budget**

The President’s Budget eliminates the sequester for FY2014 and restores most federal agency’s funding to their FY2012 levels. SAGE supports retaining or increasing federal funding for research agencies. The President’s Budget also called to extend the Income Based Repayment program to all student loans, regardless of when they were dispersed. SAGE has suggested legislation regarding the extension of IBR in our White Papers. SAGE is concerned about the President’s proposal to tie the student loan interest rate to the Treasury rate for bonds. This proposal does not place a cap on these interest rates, which have been as high as 15.3% in 1981 and as low as 2% in 1941. SAGE recommends placing a cap on the interest rate that is equivalent to the current rates for subsidized or unsubsidized loans (3.4% or 6.8%).

**Protecting Against Growing Student Debt**

Bills H.R. 532, the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act of 2013, and S.114, the Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2013, would extend bankruptcy forgiveness to include private student loans. SAGE has recommended legislation of this nature for a number of years to counteract the rising levels of student debt post graduation.

**Managing Student Loan Repayment**

Bill H.R. 1330, the Student Loan Fairness Act, was recently introduced and would cap the interest rate on federal and some private loans at 3.4%. It would also forgive federal loan debt after ten years, under a new 10/10 Loan Repayment Plan. SAGE has always been a strong supporter of initiatives to address the ever growing burden of student debt.

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Efforts**

The bipartisan group of senators known as the ‘Gang of Eight’ has released its long awaited plan for comprehensive immigration reform. The bill, S. 744, attempts to address wide ranging immigration issues in the United States, including among other things: border security, pathways to legal residency for undocumented immigrants, and changes favoring work related and merit based visas. SAGE fully supports comprehensive immigration reform, and in particular, has advocated for a number of changes to both immigrant and non-immigrant visas for highly-skilled individuals, which have been included in the bill. Debates on the bill are currently ongoing and SAGE expects to release an official statement on the bill in coming weeks.

**SAGE Alumni Spotlight: David Croom**

David earned his Master of Public Policy from the Goldman School at the University of California Berkeley in 2012 and served two years as a SAGE delegate during his time there. He is currently an analyst at the nonprofit organization ACT in Washington D.C., where he specialized in education policy development. David remains active as an adviser to SAGE and his experience as a former congressional staffer and his policy background have proved invaluable to SAGE’s development.
SAGE Federal Legislative Priorities

Student Debt and Taxation

Student Debt: A Growing Obstacle for Attaining a Graduate Education: The outstanding student loan balance—$1 trillion according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—surpasses credit card debt.¹ 69.6% of graduate students hold student loans with an average cumulative debt of $47,503.² The reduction in many student aid programs in addition to the increase in the cost of education is making the financial burden of an advanced education overwhelming.

SAGE Recommends:
• Amend the new Income Based Repayment rules to apply to all outstanding federal student loans, make Income Based Repayment installments regionally sensitive to cost of living, and exclude forgiven student loan debt from taxable income.

“Qualified Higher Education Expenses” Not Defined as Originally Intended: The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) defines the cost of attendance for higher education as the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, housing, etc. In 1986, changes in tax law uniquely disadvantaged graduate students, making portions of fellowship and student aid, such as room and board, taxable income.

SAGE Recommends:
• Amend the tax code to define “Qualified Higher Education Expenses” and “Qualified Tuition and Related Expenses” to match the definition of “Cost of Attendance” in section 472 of the HEA.

Research Funding

Funding Federal Research is Crucial to Our Country’s Economy: The U.S. economy is dependent on groundbreaking research at leading research universities. If the U.S. is to remain a global leader in innovation and technology development, Congress should maintain or increase federal funding of graduate research, which produces cures to diseases, new technology, and a more powerful workforce.

SAGE Recommends:
• Congress should maintain, if not increase, federal funding of research.

Immigration

Visa Reform: Allow World’s Brightest to Create American Jobs: Domestic universities are global leaders that attract the best and brightest international students in pursuit of graduate and professional degrees. SAGE fully supports ongoing efforts for comprehensive immigration reform, and believes that these students play a critical role in US economic growth as well as the retention and advancement of our intellectual property. SAGE believes that changes to our visa system should be enacted to lower the barriers to permanent residency and incentivize these students to stay in the United States permanently.

SAGE Recommends:
• Reforms to establish a moving cap based on demand for H1-B visas, grant work permits for spouses of visa holders, exempt students earning a masters or higher degree in a STEM field in the U.S. from the numerical limits on EB visas.
• F-1 visa reforms to include the lifting of work restrictions and authorization of dual intent.

Student Debt and Taxation Policies
Stifle Job Creation and Economic Growth

Student Debt: A Growing Obstacle for Obtaining a Graduate Education
The outstanding student loan balance—$1 trillion according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—surpasses credit card debt.\(^1\) 69.6% of graduate students hold student loans with an average cumulative debt of $47,503.\(^2\) This growing burden has a tangible effect on the number of students who apply to graduate school and the time it takes them to complete their degrees. The reduction in many student aid programs in addition to the increase in the cost of education is making the financial burden of an advanced education overwhelming.

SAGE Recommends:
• Amend the new Income Based Repayment (IBR) rules to apply to all outstanding federal student loans, and improve the outreach and servicing of IBR so it is accessible and helpful to borrowers.
• Make Income Based Repayment installments regionally sensitive to the cost of living.
• Pass H.R. 532: Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act of 2013 and S. 114: Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2013, which extend bankruptcy discharge to private student loans.

‘Qualified Higher Education Expenses’ Not Defined as Originally Intended
The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) defines the cost of attendance for higher education as the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, housing, and other education-related expenses. This definition determines the amount of student financial aid and higher education incentives, such as subsidized student loans and tax deductions, for which a student is eligible. In 1986, changes in tax law limited this definition disadvantages graduate students, making portions of fellowship and student aid ineligible for higher education tax incentives. These include the lifetime learning credit and tax deductions on scholarship and fellowship monies.

SAGE Recommends:
• Amend the tax code to define “Qualified Higher Education Expenses” and “Qualified Tuition and Related Expenses” to match the definition of “Cost of Attendance” in section 472 of the HEA.

Background: Student Financial Burden is Overwhelming
Elimination of Federal Programs Add to Student Debt
Subsidized Student Loans. Effective July 2012 graduate students are no longer eligible for subsidized student loans. The elimination of the in-school and the after-graduation grace period subsidy has added to the overwhelming debt graduate students face. This loss has created a disincentive for prospective students to pursue advanced degrees.

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\(^1\) The Project on Student Debt (2011). Student Debt and the Class of 2010. Washington, DC, The Institute for College Access and Success.
Graduate Student Aid is in Decline. Graduate students face cuts and elimination of funding in multiple need-based programs and a narrowing of benefits for those that do still exist. Indeed, the merit-based Javits Fellowship program (awarded to some of the highest achieving graduate students) has been suspended due to congressional cuts ($9.7 million), while awards for existing Javits Fellows will now be shared with the $31 million Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) fund.

Addressing Student Debt: Loan Forgiveness Programs

Income based repayment (IBR) is an important mechanism for graduate students to make student debt manageable. In 1994 Congress implemented a series of loan repayment options based on an individual’s income. These programs cap monthly payments on student loans and forgive remaining debt after the student has made a set number of payments. The monthly installment amount is a percentage of an individual’s “disposable income,” currently defined as the difference between Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and 150% of the federal poverty line for the family size.

The Problem: IBR Programs Are Too Restrictive. The new IBR programs are an excellent first step at addressing the increasing debt of students, but do not help many graduate students or current borrowers. For instance, to be eligible for the current “Pay as You Earn” program, students must not hold student loans from before 2008 and must receive federal loans after 2011. Additionally, forgiven debt under IBR is treated as taxable income, resulting in a strenuous tax liability on individuals who have qualified for IBR precisely because they are unable to pay more.

In addition, the monthly payment amount under IBR does not account for the differences in cost of living faced at various regions of the country. Other federal programs use metrics, including the HUD Fair Market Housing Rate and the Department of Defense Basic Allowance for Housing, to account for regional cost of living adjustments in benefits. Students would greatly benefit if IBR allowed for regional sensitivity and defined disposable income to better represent the ability to repay student loans.

Approve the Expansion of new Income Based Repayment Rules for Everyone. President Obama’s 2014 budget proposes the expansion of the “Pay as you Earn” rules to apply to all student federal loan holders. The SAGE recommendation encourages this change.

Addressing Affordability: Qualified Higher Education Expenses

Current tax law limits “qualified higher education expenses” to tuition and registration fees only. By excluding income used for basic living expenses such as room and board from a qualified educational deduction, this limitation has a direct impact on the affordability of graduate education. The SAGE recommendation makes the definition of “qualified higher education expenses” consistent across all forms of federal education assistance.

Taxation of Fellowships and Scholarships. Education expenses paid with fellowship and scholarship monies can be deducted from gross income. The current definition excluding room and board reduces the benefit by 1 to 1.5 months’ worth of scholarship funds. Notably, education awards do not take this tax burden into account.

Lifetime Learning Credit. The Lifetime Learning Credit is equal to 20% of the taxpayer’s out-of-pocket education related expenses up to a maximum of $10,000 in expenses (that is, $2,000 in benefits). However, because of the narrow “qualified higher education expenses” definition, most graduate students do not qualify.

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3 We use “Income Based Repayment” (IBR) as the general term for all income based programs including the 2009 and 2014 versions of IBR, Income Contingent Repayment (ICR), and Pay as You Earn.
Cuts to Research Funding Put America’s Future at Risk

The U.S. economy depends on groundbreaking research conducted at top research universities to remain a world leader in innovative technology development and application. With the federal budget cuts under the sequester, our situation is critical; these short-term savings will have long-term consequences on job development, economic growth, and the U.S. university. To remain globally competitive, Congress should expand federal funding of graduate student research, which produces cures to diseases, new technology, and a more powerful workforce.

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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2013 w/ sequester</th>
<th>SAGE recommendations</th>
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<td>NSF R&amp;RA</td>
<td>$5.7 billion</td>
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<td>NIH</td>
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<td>$2.1 billion</td>
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<td>$2.9 billion</td>
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National Science Foundation (NSF)

NSF funds research and supports science, math, and engineering education across the country, in all 50 states. NSF funded the graduate student-driven project that grew to be Google, currently worth an estimated $250 billion and employing 54,000 people. At the estimated sequester funding levels, the NSF would fund 1,600 fewer research and education grants. This translates to 19,300 fewer student research positions and technical support personnel than FY 2012.

SAGE Recommends: Fund NSF at the President’s FY2014 $6.2 billion budget request level.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

NIH is the nation’s primary agency for supporting cutting-edge biomedical research with the goals of improving health and saving lives through medical discovery and scientific leadership. The NIH-funded Human Genome Project has accrued over $796 billion since its inception, a 141:1 return on investment. At the estimated sequester funding levels, 25% of grants are decreased or eliminated.

SAGE Recommends: Fund NIH at the President’s FY2014 $31 billion budget request level.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Science Mission Directorate

The NASA Science Mission Directorate outlines specific, unanswered questions concerning the Earth, Solar System and Universe that can be answered through the utilization of NASA resources and capabilities. NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory developed a Global Positioning System to track satellite positions in real time that is now utilized in our phones and other navigation devices. At the estimated sequester funding levels, NASA is suspending all public outreach, releasing 5% fewer University research awards and at least 10% fewer missions.

1 AAAS sequester estimates from FY 2013 apply percentage cuts provided by the Office of Management and Budget’s March 1 report to Congress.
SAGE Recommends: Fund Science Mission Directorate at the President’s FY2014 $5.0 billion budget.

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

NEH is the lead federal agency focused on the dissemination of knowledge and how it relates to social, economic, and political challenges facing the world today. NEH funding supports important historical projects such as the publication of the papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. and an exhibit concerning the American Revolution on the Frontier. The preservation and interpretation of this and other primary historical documents allow us to pass on cornerstones of our nation’s past to future generations.

SAGE Recommends: Fund NEH at the President’s FY2014 $154 million budget.

Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science

The DOE Office of Science funds scientific research for energy production and supports the development and operation of open-access scientific facilities. Funding from the DOE Office of Science enabled the path of carbon in photosynthesis to be mapped, which has direct application in solar energy research. At the estimated sequester funding levels, the DOE is canceling the FastForward initiative for an energy efficient computing project; this termination will threaten our energy independence and national security.

SAGE Recommends: Fund DOE Office of Science at the President’s FY2014 $5.0 billion budget request level.

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA conducts crucial science related to our oceans and atmosphere that provide federal and local decision-makers with important services that enhance the nation’s economy, security, and environmental understanding. Particularly, the Sea Grant program is a nationwide network of 30 university-based programs that work with coastal communities on research and outreach to promote better understanding, conservation, and use of our coastal resources. At the estimated sequester funding levels, 2,500 jobs will be furloughed and 2,700 jobs will remain unfilled further increasing unemployment. In addition these cuts also decrease NOAA flight time for hurricane reconnaissance and coastal surveying, thus prolonging disaster-reaction time and decreasing the likelihood for successful victim rescue.

SAGE Recommends: Fund NOAA Office at the President’s FY2014 $733 million budget request level.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

Pentagon officials recognize and hail the importance of basic research to keep our military armed with cutting edge technology and to provide our soldiers with the tools necessary to succeed on the battlefield. DARPA has played an important role in funding high-risk, high-reward research, which has led to many significant defense technologies, such as air-force tactical fighters, as well as civilian technologies, such as the Internet and Siri voice-recognition system. At the estimated sequester funding levels, DARPA funded university projects will be decreased by 10%, including research for advancing military communication efforts.

SAGE Recommends: Fund DARPA at the President’s FY2014 $2.9 billion budget request.
Student Immigration Reform Will Keep World’s Best in U.S.

As the U.S. economy globalizes and high tech industries continue to grow, restrictive visa policies limit our ability to retain the level of high-skill workers and innovators that such an economy demands. SAGE supports comprehensive immigration reform, and believes that changes to high skill occupation and student visas are critical for U.S. economic advancement and intellectual property retention. The export of some of the best and brightest American educated and often federally funded students is a wasted investment and hampers our economy and our standing as global leaders.

- More than half of Ph.D.s in many STEM fields are awarded to foreign students
- In 2013 the number of H1-B visa applications exceeded the yearly limit of 65,000 in a single week
- An estimated 25% of all U.S. patent applications are submitted by non-citizens
- Between 1995 and 2005 25% of new engineering and technology companies in the U.S. were founded by immigrants, many of whom were educated in the U.S.

I. Highly-Skilled Visa Reform: Allow World’s Brightest to Fill and Create American Jobs

High skill temporary H-1B visas are heavily dependent on the business cycle and their cap should be adjusted to meet demand. On the other hand, employment-based (EB) visas offer permanent residency and provide a long term solution to knowledge retention. Employment based immigrant visas should be the route of choice for international students by exempting them from numerical limits.

SAGE Recommends:

Include the following provisions in any comprehensive visa reform:

- **Non-Immigrant visas:**
  - Establish a moving cap for H-1B visas based on demand
  - Grant work permits to spouses of H-1B visa holders

- **Employment-based Immigrant visas:**
  - Exempt students earning a master’s or higher degree from an accredited institution in a STEM field in the U.S. from numerical limitation

II. F-1 Visa Reform: Remove Work Restrictions and Authorize Dual Intent

The F-1 visa is the primary visa for foreign, full-time students in the U.S. To continue attracting the world’s best students in the face of rising tuition costs, it’s particularly important to allow international students to hold jobs to help support themselves and their families. In an effort to retain these students, it is also important to allow dual intent status so that they may apply for immigrant visas upon graduation.

SAGE Recommends:

- Authorize dual intent for F-1 student visas
- Remove off-campus work restrictions for F-1 visa holders
- Authorize employment for spouses of F-1 visa holders (F-2 visa holders)
MISSION—“Dedicated to creating a community of student leaders from the preeminent public research universities in the United States that is committed to bettering their own student bodies and promoting educational access, quality, and opportunity nationally.”
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