

**Division of Student Affairs High Impact Practices (HIP)  
Cover Sheet 2013**

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**Name of HIP:** COSGA Executive Staff Experience

**Approximate # of TAMU students involved in the HIP:** 8

**Please check the TAMU learning outcome(s) associated with this HIP:**

- Bachelor's:
- Master the depth of knowledge required of a degree
  - Demonstrate critical thinking
  - Communicate effectively
  - Practice personal and social responsibility
  - Demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence
  - Prepare to engage in lifelong learning
  - Work collaboratively
- Master's:
- Master the degree program requirements
  - Apply subject matter knowledge
  - Communicate effectively
  - Use appropriate technologies
  - Develop clear research plans
  - Choose ethical course of action
- Doctoral:
- Master the degree program requirements
  - Apply a variety of strategies and tools
  - Communicate effectively
  - Develop clear research plans
  - Use appropriate technologies
  - Teach and explain the subject matter

**Please check the QEP learning outcome(s) associated with this HIP:**

- Improve student learning by developing habits and skills for lifelong learning — Curiosity, Initiative, Independence, Transfer, Reflection
- Improve student learning by developing habits and skills for integrative learning — Connections to experience, Connections to discipline, Transfer, Integrated communication, Reflection and self-assessment

## Abstract

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The COSGA exec team is an 8 person unit charged with the year-long planning and coordination of the Conference on Student Government Associations, the largest student-run, student government conference in the United States. With roles that are designed to cover all of the logistical, content, and programming needs of conference planning and execution, as well as the management and development of 135 committee members, COSGA execs undertake a year-long commitment to personal and positional learning and development, and are pushed to utilize the skills and knowledge learned in the classroom in their role within the organization, and vice versa.

## Description of the activity

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**a) Invest time and effort to purposeful tasks. Please describe the length of time of the experience.**

Extensive time and effort is necessary for 8 students to successfully to plan and execute the conference, but they also invest time in individual and team development to improve the personal transferrable and leadership skills of all execs, members, and hosts in the organization.

Retreats – COSGA Execs attend 2 executive retreats planned by the Director and Assistant Director along with the advisors. Additionally, they all work together to plan and execute two general committee retreats, one in fall and one in spring, to educate members about the organization, the conference, and student government in general. Everyone involved in COSGA is expected to have a moderate understanding of SGA and how student government works in order to serve as a resource to delegates.

Weekly Exec Meetings – Execs meet once per week to review all of the progress they have made in conference planning during the previous week. Additionally, weekly meets are the time for leadership development and team building throughout the year.

Weekly Advisor Meetings – Execs also meet weekly with the advisor and/or director to discuss issues that the individual might be facing related to his or her particular tasks.

Weekly Committee Meetings – Execs lead weekly meetings for the whole committee (35 people) through the fall and hosts (additional 65 people) in the spring, teaching them necessary information about conference responsibilities, teamwork, and knowledge of SGA.

Conference Weekend – During the weekend of the conference, Execs are onsite from Friday through Tuesday managing logistics, executing their plans, and hosting delegates, and delegating and managing the committee and hosts to complete their assigned shifts.

**b) Interact with staff, advisors, and/or faculty about substantive matters usually over extended periods of time.**

Execs meet weekly with an advisor to discuss issues related to the individual's position, as well as more substantive matters influencing the student, such as work, school, and life issues. These conversations are intentionally cultivated to develop trust and assist the student's success in drawing on all resources in order to integrate learning.

**c) Interact with peers about substantive matters usually over extended periods of time.**

Execs meet weekly with the Director or Associate Director in order to receive peer feedback and support in the process of planning the conference. Advisors also work with the Director and/or Assistant Director to utilize these meetings for constructive feedback or conversations related to holding execs accountable during these times.

**d) Experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves**

Through the nature of coordinating a conference for delegates from across the globe, they are exposed to and challenged to accommodate the abilities and values of various cultures (non-prioritization of time, accessibility issues, differing interpretations of respect, etc). Additionally, in training the committee and hosts comprised of 120 fellow Aggies, they also interact with and learn to manage and delegate to a wide variety of their peers.

**e) Receive frequent feedback about their performance – both formal and informal – in settings that allow them to respond to that feedback**

Through weekly meetings with advisors and peers, semester 360 feedback, and pre and post interviews and assessments, the execs receive constant and varied feedback through the term of their position.

**f) Are provided opportunities to integrate synthesize and apply knowledge gained from their classroom/discipline to their co-curricular experience and vice versa. Students are provided opportunities to discover the relevance of learning through application and practice in a range of contexts.**

Planning for COSGA is a very broad effort so through intentional questions and activities conducted with the execs, efforts are made to connect classroom learning with organizational activities. Additionally, as a tenet of troubleshooting, the students are charged with researching their challenges and using the skills and information gathered in class to achieve success in COSGA.

- g) Are provided opportunities to become aware of their values and beliefs and thus to better understand themselves in relation to others and the larger world.**

The students are faced with decision-making challenges around issues of access, accountability, social and economic difference, and privilege. Through dialogue with advisors and their peers, students increase individual congruence between perceptions, values and actions.

### **Assessment**

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COSGA execs participate in pre and post interviews with advisors, engage in assessments throughout the year related to integrating learning in the organization and the classroom , engage in weekly leadership moment activities during exec meetings, and perform 360\* mid-semester evaluations for their fellow execs and the advisors.