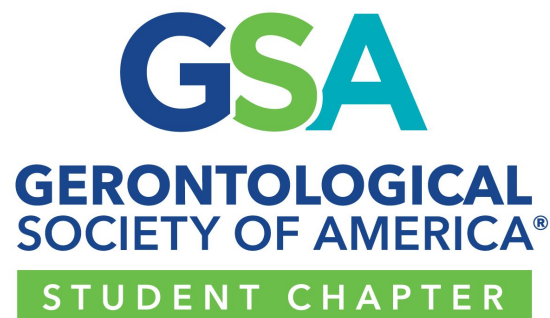




GSA STUDENT CHAPTER HANDBOOK

AUGUST 2025



Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

Student Chapter Handbook

Welcome

Our society thrives when people of all ages share their creativity, skills, and energy. Each generation adds new ideas that help us solve problems and build stronger communities. As we live longer and healthier lives, we gather momentum, adding experience and insight that power progress. This momentum fuels innovation, leadership, and collaboration, helping us move forward together.

By forming a Gerontological Society of America (GSA) student chapter at your institution, you join peers who are shaping this momentum into action. Together, you can advance research, influence policy, and celebrate the dynamic contributions of older adults.

This handbook provides everything you need to launch and operate a chapter and to be part of a movement that sees aging not as decline, but as a source of knowledge, innovation, and possibility.

We are excited to welcome you as a GSA Student Chapter! If you have questions or need assistance, email membership@geron.org.

**Gerontological Society of America
Student Chapter Handbook
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Gerontological Society of America Student Chapter Handbook

I. About the Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) has provided visionary leadership in the field of aging for over 80 years, while maintaining a commitment to providing resources and opportunities for its members. Since 1945, GSA has promoted education, research, and advocacy in the field of aging for professionals, recent graduates, and students. In 2018, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, formally a sister organization of the GSA, merged with GSA and became the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), the education member group of GSA. AGHE is an international leader in advancing gerontology and geriatrics education in academic institutions and providing leadership and support of gerontology and geriatrics education to faculty and students.

Faced with an accelerated growing older adult population, the demand for aging-related professionals is paramount. The design and implementation of GSA student chapters at higher education institutions (HEIs) globally is one vehicle to nurture and support emerging professionals in the field of aging as they embark on their degree programs in health professions education, gerontology, the social and biomedical sciences, human services, and any profession that has people at its core. After all, aging is universal, and gerontology has something to offer students pursuing any discipline or field of study. The fact remains that no matter the sector in which one plans to work in the future, it is likely that it will include issues on aging and older people in some way.

GSA is proud to continue supporting students studying in the field of aging, emerging professionals, and members through the creation of GSA student chapters nationally and globally.

1. GSA Mission and Vision

- GSA Mission: Foster excellence, innovation, and collaboration to advance aging research, education, practice, and policy.
- GSA Vision: Meaningful Lives As We Age

2. GSA Member Groups

GSA is composed of six member groups, also known as sections: (1) Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education-AGHE; (2) Health Sciences-HS; (3) Biological Sciences-BioSci; (4) Behavioral and Social Sciences-BSS; (5) Social Research, Policy, and Practice-SRPP; and (6) the Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization-ESPO (See Appendix A: Common GSA Organization Terms and Acronyms).

3. GSA Strategic Plan

GSA's Board of Directors created and approved GSA's recent strategic plan in 2024. The plan contains the strategic goals, organizational values, and the objectives associated with each strategic goal (See Appendix B: GSA Strategic Plan).

4. GSA Facts

- The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. The principal mission of the Society — and its 6,000+ members — is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public.
- Founded in 1945, GSA is the driving force behind advancing innovation in aging — both domestically and internationally. Its members come from more than 50 countries. The Society's headquarters is in Washington, DC. Its staff, Board of Directors, and many volunteer leaders manage all the activities of the organization.
- Through networking and mentorship opportunities, GSA provides a professional “home” for career gerontologists and students at all levels. GSA fosters collaboration between physicians, nurses, biologists, behavioral and social scientists, psychologists, social workers, economists, policy experts, those who study the humanities and the arts, and many other scholars, researchers, and students with interest in the field of aging. This stems from the belief that the intersection of research from diverse areas is the best way to achieve the greatest impact and promote healthy aging.
- GSA publishes the longest-running and most widely cited peer-reviewed journals in its field: *The Gerontologist*; *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*; *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*; and *Innovation in Aging*. The Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education's official journal is *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*. GSA has a monthly newsletter, *Gerontology News*, and a semi-monthly e-newsletter, GSA Announcements.
- GSA convenes an Annual Scientific Meeting, which showcases the latest advancements in gerontological/geriatrics research. This event attracts approximately 4,000 professionals each year, and the program consists of nearly 500 peer-reviewed scientific sessions featuring new research.
- GSA has six member groups/sections: the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education [AGHE]; Behavioral and Social Sciences [BSS]; Biological Sciences [BioSci]; the Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization [ESPO] (for undergraduate through doctoral students and post-doctoral, recent graduates or emerging faculty); Health Sciences [HS]; and Social Research, Policy, and Practice [SRPP].
- GSA's non-partisan public policy institute, the National Academy on an Aging Society, conducts and compiles research on issues related to population aging

and provides information to the public, the press, policymakers, and the academic community. It publishes the quarterly journal *Public Policy & Aging Report*, as well as a public policy e-newsletter.

- GSA has guided the study of aging for 80+ years. It was instrumental in establishing the National Institute on Aging [NIA] and has helped shape the agenda for every White House Conference on Aging. The Society also is a founding member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations and plays prominent roles in many other coalitions.
- GSA has established itself as a convener of multi-stakeholder collaborations in the field of aging. These have resulted in such initiatives as the GSA KAER Toolkit for Brain Health and the GSA KAER Toolkit for the Management of Obesity in Older Adults; the Age Inclusivity in Higher Education Workgroup; and the National Adult Vaccination Program.
- GSA is the home of the National Center to Reframe Aging, a long-term social change endeavor designed to improve the public's understanding of what aging means and what contributions older people bring to society. Ultimately, this understanding will counter ageism and guide our nation's approach to ensuring healthy and productive aging for all people across the life course.
- GSA provides many other benefits to its members and the gerontological community at large. Among them, it oversees Careers in Aging Month, which cultivates awareness of the many professional opportunities in the field; AgeWork, an online resource with job listings; and an awards program considered to be the field's most prestigious. Members have exclusive access to GSA Connect, an online networking platform that features discussion communities, resource libraries, and a searchable directory. Increasingly popular are the GSA Interest Groups that have been formed around specific topics that cut across disciplines. And the GSA Innovation Fund, sustained by contributions, supports the development of programs, products, and services for members.

II. Why Create a GSA Student Chapter and Benefits to Students

A GSA student chapter offered at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) serves as a gateway to further a student's professional development in education, research, advocacy, policy, and the sciences within the field of aging. A GSA student chapter may accomplish this by having its chapter members organize various events, forums, panel discussions, and community outreach efforts. Such engagement also builds confidence and competence to advance students' academic and technical expertise to work with older adults and improve care models. Establishing a GSA student chapter provides opportunities for networking within and beyond your institution, including working with other chapters and GSA members.

Additionally, GSA student chapter members will learn about GSA's Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO). GSA offers "Undergraduate" and "Graduate Student/Post Doc" memberships that provide full access to GSA membership privileges at significant discounts (the "Undergraduate" membership is free). All "Undergraduate" and "Graduate Student/Post Doc" members are automatically part of ESPO.

Since 1960, GSA's ESPO has provided students with opportunities to be actively involved in the field of aging. Approximately one-quarter of GSA's members are student or early career members.

1. Benefits of joining a GSA Student Chapter

Students who join an institution's GSA student chapter will gain professional development opportunities provided by the GSA student chapter leadership team. The chapter members will have the opportunity to engage in all institutional and community related GSA student chapter activities, programs, and community events, etc. The prospects for gaining life-long skills that support professional growth are endless. These include but are not limited to:

- a) Leadership: Gaining practical/professional translational leadership skills (e.g., facilitating meetings, programming, recruitment/retention, and generating new ideas to advance the GSA student chapter mission).
- b) Personal Networks: Strengthening each student member's personal network in order to advance professionally and serve a growing aging population.
- c) Advocacy: Advocating for/being a champion for aging adults with a range of needs and abilities and those that support them.

2. Benefits for Chapter members who are also GSA members

The following list provides a sample of the benefits for students who become GSA "Undergraduate" or "Graduate Student/Post Doc" members:

- a) Relationship with an international organization dedicated to advancing education, research, advocacy, and policy in the field of aging.
- b) Contact with national and world-renowned scholars, researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and educators in gerontology, geriatrics, and aging studies.
- c) Mentorship from GSA members (above and beyond each chapter's faculty advisors and based on special interests of the chapter members) to advance research

- opportunities, education, advocacy, and professional development nationally and internationally.
- d) Guidance in learning how to submit and review abstracts for GSA presentations and review manuscripts for publication in GSA journals.
 - e) Opportunity to join an unlimited number of GSA's 60+ interest groups.
 - f) Support to advance learning about careers in aging.
 - g) Networking opportunities with other students interested in gerontology/geriatrics from around the world.
 - h) Prospects for special awards through ESPO and GSA Sections.
 - i) Member discounts for GSA resources and registrations for the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and other GSA events.
 - j) A citation for students' *Curriculum Vitae* or resume. A *Curriculum Vitae (course of life)* is an account of a person's education, qualifications, and previous experience, typically sent with a job application.

III. Forming a GSA Student Chapter

1. Eligibility to be a Recognized GSA Student Chapter

- a) Undergraduate, graduate, or post-doctoral students enrolled at any higher education institution (HEI) are eligible to form a group and apply to be recognized as a GSA student chapter.
- b) Those interested in being members of the GSA student chapter must be enrolled as either full-time or part-time students or enrolled in a student research, education, or health professions trainee fellowship.
- c) HEIs with multiple campuses or multiple colleges may decide to have more than one GSA student chapter (defined as electing in a separate board of officers for each additional student chapter and paying a chapter fee for each chapter).
- d) Student chapters can also include students from other institutions if it is allowed by their university and there is not already a student chapter at the other institution.
- e) In order to determine if your institution currently has a recognized GSA student chapter, email GSA membership services: membership@geron.org. Subject Line: GSA Student Chapter. Then provide the name of your institution, city, and state in the body of the email. Should there be a current GSA student chapter, the name of the advisor will be provided.

2. Steps to Forming a GSA Student Chapter

- a) Interested students may form a group of other interested students within a program, department, college, etc. who want to advance in the field of aging and in their abilities to work with older adults.
- b) Find a faculty member with expertise in the field of aging to be the chapter faculty advisor (See Faculty Advisor Selection & Responsibilities, p. 12).
- c) Formalize the group by adhering to your institution's procedures to become an officially sanctioned student organization (usually through the student affairs office).
- d) Adopt the GSA mission and vision (See p. 4) and establish "Action Goals" for your GSA student chapter (See GSA Student Chapter Guiding Principles, p. 12).
- e) Elect or appoint charter officers of the GSA student chapter (See pp. 14-15).
- f) Complete and submit the online [GSA Student Chapter Application](#) that includes: uploading a letter from the educational institution stating that the student group is a sanctioned student organization of the institution, the list of the officers, and (if available) a student roster with emails.

3. GSA Student Chapter Year

- a) The chapter year runs from August 1 – July 31.
- b) In recognition that some chapters may operate on a different schedule based on their school calendar, individual chapters' years may be different. However, payment of the annual chapter fee (see item #4) and the annual report deadline will be based on the GSA chapter year.

4. GSA Student Chapter Fee Structure

The GSA Student Chapter fee is \$200.00/year.

a) The student chapter fee includes:

- Two complimentary GSA “Graduate Student/Post Doc” memberships (for masters, doctoral and, post-doctoral students) which may be used by GSA student chapter officers.
- Access to templates and samples for marketing, program ideas, etc.
- Support for chapter advisor(s) including access to mentoring/coaching from a GSA “Ambassador” advisor, opportunities to network and share ideas with other chapter advisors, and twice-a-year “touch base” meetings.
- Access to an online networking community for chapter officers and a separate community for faculty advisors.
- Note: GSA provides undergraduate students free membership in the Society. All undergraduate student chapter members are encouraged to take advantage of this complimentary membership and join GSA.

b) The chapter will be notified by GSA staff of its GSA student chapter designation

5. GSA Branding for GSA Student Chapters

a) Student chapters recognized by GSA will have the use of the designated GSA logo for their marketing and mailings. The official GSA logo will be sent to approved chapters. The GSA logo may not be used until the chapter has been recognized by GSA headquarters and it may not be modified.

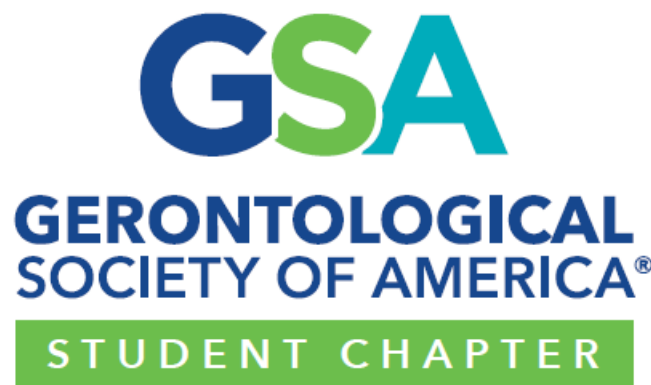


Figure 1: GSA STUDENT CHAPTER OFFICIAL LOGO

b) Following are guidelines for using the GSA logo. Consistent adherence to the standards set forth here for the chapter logo and accompanying text will ensure uniform recognition of the Society’s brand. Formats outside these guidelines are not permitted.

Thank you for your cooperation and you are welcome to contact GSA staff if you need further assistance.

In general:

- 1) The registered trademark symbol should always accompany the logo and should not be moved or altered.
- 2) The primary GSA Chapter logo should be used across all materials whenever possible. The local/HEI name may be used directly underneath the logo.
- 3) The rules for maintaining the integrity of the logo are to not compromise the overall look. Misuses include rotating, skewing, distorting, manipulating, or otherwise altering either the full logo or any of its elements:
 - i. Do not rotate or skew.
 - ii. Do not squeeze or condense.
 - iii. Do not stretch.
 - iv. Do not resize any of the elements.
 - v. Do not rearrange any parts or create compositions that are not already approved.
 - vi. Do not use off brand colors or combinations that are not already approved. Reference the Color Usage and Color Palette sections.
 - vii. Do not place elements in the logo clear space that have not been established or approved.
 - viii. Do not place on a background that competes with the visual integrity of the logo.
 - ix. Do not add drop shadows or any other effects.
- 4) GSA student chapters must also fully comply with the higher education institution's policies and procedures regarding branding of an outside organization.

IV. Requirements of the GSA Student Chapter

1. Faculty Advisor Selection

- a) Member in good standing of the Gerontological Society of America.
- b) Either a full time or part time faculty member of the Higher Education Institution.
- c) Co-Advisors may be selected by the student chapter members or offered by faculty interested in working with the GSA student chapter.
- d) In the event of co-advisors, only the primary faculty advisor needs to be a GSA member.

2. Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

- a) Liaise between the student chapter officers and the Gerontological Society of America.
- b) Ensure the chapter is functioning in compliance with the policies and procedures set forth by GSA for student chapters as well as their institutions for clubs and organizations.
- c) Serve as the Chapter's main point of contact to GSA and ensure that the annual Chapter Fee is paid by December 31 of the chapter year.
- d) Monitor the performance of the GSA student chapter to include (but not limited to):
 - 1) Assisting students in planning, organizing, and conducting chapter programs, activities, and business.
 - 2) Approving all chapter disbursement vouchers and ensuring adherence to the financial guidelines for the institution.
 - 3) Attending or monitoring student chapter meetings.
 - 4) Monitoring student chapter elections.
 - 5) Providing support to student chapter officers.
 - 6) Obtaining and providing information that could enhance the careers of student members.
 - 7) Discussing with graduating students (if applicable) the benefits of a GSA professional affiliation as part of their career path.
 - 8) Encouraging student chapter members to attend GSA sponsored events and ESPO programs whenever practical.

3. GSA Membership Requirements

The primary faculty advisor, chapter president and vice president must be GSA members. All other student chapter officers and members are encouraged to join GSA.

4. GSA Student Chapter Mission and Vision

Each GSA student chapter will adopt the GSA mission and vision statements (See p. 4, GSA Mission and Vision).

5. GSA Student Chapter Guiding Principles

Each GSA student chapter will write its own Guiding Principles, which are a set of broad statements meant to showcase the chapter's values and outline its action goals.

Importantly, the Guiding Principles of GSA student chapters must be consistent with the vision and mission statements of GSA, and thus should be geared toward promoting aging

well through multi-disciplinary research, education, and applied practice with implications for communities and public policy. Guiding Principles, therefore, should include attainable action goals, such as building a community for students interested in aging through education, research and/or advocacy, raising public/community awareness of aging, and/or networking with professionals and researchers in the field of aging. Each chapter should initially include at least three Guiding Principles that support an action plan for the student chapter. These may be revised over time as the chapter evolves.

V. GSA Student Chapter Officer Elections and Officer Responsibilities

The GSA student chapter's organizational structure will be determined by its size and specific needs. However, three officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer) are necessary for every chapter, regardless of size. Most student chapters may feature four officers, following the format suggested below. For a model in which three officers are elected, a Secretary/Treasurer would perform the duties of both positions (noted below), with the exception that the Vice President should handle publicizing meetings and other chapter activities. Provided below are suggestions for the duties and responsibilities of student chapter officers, which should coincide with the size and nature of your chapter and in accordance with any policies of the higher education institution (HEI).

1. Roles and Responsibilities of GSA Student Chapter Officers

Each student chapter officer is an ambassador for their institution as well as for GSA. As such, each officer will uphold the policies and procedures for their institution and GSA. As ambassadors, officers are in an excellent position to recruit new members to the student chapter.

a) President

- Leads and manages the student chapter affairs.
- Presides at meetings, convenes special meetings, and appoints committees as needed.
- Disseminates material received from the GSA to the student members.
- Coordinates with the faculty advisor on chapter governance and leadership.
- Is a member of GSA.

b) Vice President

- Performs the duties of the President in their absence or at their request.
- Coordinates arrangements for meetings and special programs, including reserving rooms and equipment, booking speakers, and ordering refreshments.
- Attends committee meetings as a representative of the chapter officers.
- Is a member of GSA.

c) Secretary

- Keeps records on each chapter activity, including the names of participants, tasks performed, time and date, and samples of publicity used.
- Takes minutes at chapter meetings and distributes them following the meeting for review and approval by members.
- Requests needed materials from the national office.
- Provides updates or changes within the student chapter leadership to GSA as they occur.
- Holds primary responsibility for the completion of the student chapter's Annual Report for GSA.

d) Treasurer

- Maintains a complete and up-to-date account of chapter income and expenditures in compliance with the policies of their institution.
- Prepares an operating budget for chapter programs.
- Reports current balance at each chapter business meeting.
- Works with faculty advisor and officers to complete the student chapter [Annual Report](#).

2. Student Officers Duration of Service

- a) Duration of service and time of election of these officers may be decided by the student chapters on an individual basis, although the duration of service should not be less than one semester or two terms/quarters under normal circumstances. The typical student chapter will have one set of officers for a single academic year. In that case, the officers are usually elected in the spring of the academic year. Some student chapters find it more convenient to have a change in officers between the fall and spring semesters, which is also considered acceptable.
- b) The student chapter should follow an election structure that features nominations in the meeting prior to election, followed by a posting of nominations, and then holding an election. Upon election of officers, the faculty advisor will work with the student chapter president to update GSA on the new officers' names and contact information.

VI. Optional Elected/Appointed Student Chapter Chairpersons

Depending on the size of the GSA student chapter, there are options for additional elected or appointed positions. These positions can expand the professional experience of students filling these roles and should be cited in their Curriculum Vitae/Resume. Examples of potential committee leadership roles that can complement the chapter's efforts may include:

1. Program Committee Chairperson

- Coordinates the monthly meeting programs.
- Selects programs that will provide professional enrichment to the members.
- Selects topics that are in line with HEI/college/department/classroom topics, thus enabling the members to interact with the speaker during the question-and-answer session of the program.
- Plans social and service activities, keeping in mind that the primary purpose of the chapter is to create professionalism.
- Conducts tours of the institution for prospective members.
- Welcomes new members to the chapter.
- Performs other program duties as assigned by the President.

2. Membership Committee Chairperson

- Provides a direct link to the GSA ESPO Member Group.
- Shares information from GSA and ESPO with the student chapter members.
- Assists students with signing up for GSA membership.
- Recognizes new GSA members at the regular meeting.
- Directs and coordinates GSA membership drives with the GSA student chapter members.
- Promotes the student chapter by publicizing student presentations at the Gerontological Society of America's Annual Scientific Meeting or in GSA Webinars within the marketing vehicles used at the HEI (Office of Research, Facebook/Social Media platforms, Newsletters, Community Announcements, etc.)

3. Education Committee Chairperson

- Encourages the student chapter membership to speak at regular meetings or externally as opportunities arise.
- Suggests and assists with planning, and/or disseminating educational programs to advance student competence and professionalism. GSA and its Academy for Higher Education in Gerontology offer a number of education sessions that should be included.
- Organizes a tutorial service for students using the student chapter members as tutors.
- Identifies scholarship/fellowship/research opportunities for students interested in the field of aging. Such opportunities need to be vetted with the faculty advisor(s) and officers prior to posting the announcements.
- Encourages participation in seminars offered by the GSA student chapter.

- Plans seminars internally and externally (in the community), considering some as possible fundraisers.

4. Public Relations Committee Chairperson

- Displays meeting and special event announcements prominently prior to each event.
- Creates a GSA student chapter newsletter or provides periodic postings of chapter activities/accomplishments in other HEI newsletters/marketing venues.
- Provides periodic postings and/or brief articles for the GSA ESPO member group as well as the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education AGHExchange newsletter.

VII. Minimum Responsibilities for a GSA Student Chapter

It is important to establish and maintain the organizational integrity of the GSA student chapter. Below is a guide to assist in preserving chapter information to support the student chapter function over time and be helpful when completing the GSA Student Chapter Annual Report (See: Appendix D: GSA Student Chapter Annual Report Template).

Student Chapter Records May Include:

1. Chapter Calendar

This consists of a summary of the planned programs, events, or activities for the reporting year. Changes may result and should be noted on the calendar throughout the year. A chapter calendar, provided by the student chapter officers and members is a good organizational tool that can be adapted and adjusted as needed.

2. Roster of Chapter Members

Maintain a list of student chapter members, including contact information.

Student chapter membership growth and retention requires continuous recruitment of new members and the retention of current members. Planned recruitment should begin each new academic term and continue throughout the term. Open meetings to orient prospective members and promote incentive programs and social events can identify interested students. Retaining current members and reactivating student members who return are ongoing responsibilities of the membership chairperson, the chapter officers, and all members. Chapters should, through committee work and projects, obtain ongoing, active involvement from as many members as possible because engagement in activities creates teamwork, purpose, skill development, professional advancement, and camaraderie.

3. Chapter Meeting Minutes

The purpose of taking minutes (a description of a meeting as it happens) is to record the attendance as well as the business that was discussed, ideas that were suggested, and items that were reviewed at officer meetings and organizational gatherings. The Secretary's notes are the formal record of all GSA student chapter meetings. A copy of the minutes may be posted or distributed so that the student membership and the faculty advisor(s) have access. The Secretary is responsible for these duties.

4. Evaluation of Student Chapter Events

Evaluating chapter sponsored programs, events, or activities is essential for documenting successes and opportunities for improvement that will assist future officers/members in deciding which activities to conduct. Student chapters are encouraged to complete an Event/Program Evaluation Form at the completion of each activity. This will aid in the completion of the GSA student chapter Annual Report. (See Appendix C: Sample Program/Event Evaluation Form)

The Program/Event Evaluation Form should be completed either by the chapter secretary or the committee chairperson overseeing the program/event. Important information such as a general description of the project, the resources needed to complete the project (students, finances, publicity), and an evaluation of the success of the activity should be included. A breakdown of the number of students, faculty, community, and/or HEI leadership in attendance would be helpful to include with this material. Also, copies of any promotional items associated with the activity such as letters, fliers, or other publicity items should be included in this section. This record will provide a solid reference for future officers in their planning of chapter activities. Each GSA student chapter will need to decide where these records are stored. Some higher education institutions provide space for such records; others suggest that the advisor be the keeper of the records. This decision is important to make early in the establishment of the GSA student chapter.

5. Student Chapter Annual Report

The [GSA Student Chapter Annual Report](#) is submitted online to GSA at the end of the academic year (usually April-May) of each year. The annual report includes information about the student chapter and their record of activities (See Appendix D: GSA Student Chapter Annual Report Template). Student chapters may upload additional documentation within the GSA student chapter template. One reminder will be sent by GSA staff if a chapter has not submitted the annual report.

6. Maintaining Student Chapter Status

Each GSA student chapter will maintain its chapter status when they pay their yearly chapter fee, which is due by August 1. An invoice will be sent in the spring by GSA staff each year to the chapter faculty advisor. Should the chapter fee not be paid, a reminder notice will be sent to the chapter faculty advisor. If the student chapter fee is not paid by December 31st of the current chapter year, the student chapter will be deemed to be inactive resulting in removal from the GSA student chapter list. Should this occur, the institution's GSA student chapter may be either re-established or a new chapter formed (See: Forming a GSA Student Chapter, p. 9).

VIII. Networking/Collaboration Opportunities

Networking is the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. Collaboration is a practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve a defined mutual goal. The GSA student chapters are encouraged to build relationships that can lead to networking and collaboration with other GSA chapters, student organizations, and student clubs within your institution, as well as other national or international student chapters/organizations.

While it is important to maintain a unique institutional chapter identity, the GSA student chapter is designed to work collaboratively with any other established chapter or club that focuses on the field of aging within a Higher Education Institution. Partnering with an honor society, such as Sigma Phi Omega, or an existing student group, such as a Gerontology or Aging Club, would be beneficial in expanding learning, exploring new ideas, building professional connections, creating new or innovative projects, and gaining insights to other opportunities for professional and personal growth of the student GSA chapter members.

1. GSA Student Chapter Collaboration: An Example

Some Higher Education Institutions have an established chapter of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO), the International Academic & Professional Honor Society. The information below provides some guidance on how to create a collaboration of the GSA student chapter with the SPO chapter.

What is Sigma Phi Omega (SPO)?

SPO is the International Academic and Professional Honor Society in Gerontology that provides a link between (Faculty) educators, practitioners, and administrators in various settings where older persons are served.

- a) SPO Mission: Established in 1980, SPO recognizes excellence of those who study gerontology and aging and the outstanding service of professionals who work with or on behalf of older persons.
- b) SPO Eligibility: In short, undergraduates require a 3.3 or higher GPA; graduate students a 3.5 or higher GPA – See SPO Membership Eligibility web page for details:
[Membership Eligibility - Sigma Phi Omega](#)
- c) For more information about SPO, visit <https://www.sigmaphiomega.org/>

a) GSA/SPO Student Chapter Collaboration

A GSA and SPO student chapter collaboration must first address that SPO membership requires a certain GPA for eligibility, as noted above. However, forming joint GSA and SPO student chapter activities are possible with events, officers, and faculty advisors could overlap thereby creating collaborative chapter activities while honoring each group's requirements. For those student members who either do not meet the SPO GPA requirement or prefer to serve only as a GSA student chapter member, then the GSA student chapter

membership would be included on their resume/curriculum vitae and not the SPO student chapter membership.

- i. The GSA/SPO student chapter mission, educational experiences, internal and community events could be congruent.
- ii. The faculty advisor(s) and student leadership could fulfill their roles for both chapters simultaneously.

b) GSA/SPO Chapter Collaboration

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with multiple campuses or multiple colleges may have several GSA and SPO student chapters. If this is the case then:

- i. Each Chapter would establish their mission, educational experiences, internal and community events to meet the needs of their constituents.
- ii. The advisor and student leadership would be specific to each chapter.
- iii. It would be beneficial for the GSA and SPO student chapters to coordinate efforts and partner on events that jointly meet the needs of their respective constituents.
- iv. Chapter leaders may want to discuss combining some or all of the various chapters.

2. Networking within an Institution:

If there is more than one GSA student chapter at an institution (defined as paying dues for each chapter, having different set of officers and having different names), networking events between chapters is encouraged to support interdisciplinary/inter-professional interactions as they pertain to the field of aging.

3. Networking with Chapters at Other Institutions (National and Global)

Networking events with other US or global institutions is highly encouraged to exchange information and establish relationships. Networking events also support learning from and about other cultures, connecting disciplines, advancing educational and professional opportunities, and establishing travel opportunities and partnerships on projects to advance the field of aging. GSA student chapter officers may learn about other chapters across the US and globally by checking the GSA Student Chapter webpage that lists the chapters at these institutions. Reaching out via email and then meeting via videoconferencing or at the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting with chapter officers or members from other institutions is a first step to determining areas of partnership and support.

IX. Fundraising Policies as a GSA Student Chapter

Fundraising can take many forms, such as selling items (e.g., pins, baked goods, t-shirts) or charging for internal and external community productions such as a murder mystery dinner, movie night, or speaker event. There are many creative options for fundraising to support your GSA student chapter. Of importance is to adhere to your institution's fundraising policies for selling items or tickets to events and for attaining grant funding or donations (e.g., silent auctions, raffles).

1. GSA Fundraising Policies for Student Chapters

- a) Chapters will utilize chapter funds for regular chapter activities and to encourage membership growth and the advancement of GSA. Chapters may raise funds in their designated geographic area.
- b) The chapter may only use the official GSA chapter name and logo.
- c) No chapter may publicly endorse any candidate for political office at any level, whether local, state, or national.
- d) To comply with federal fundraising regulations, the following statement must be stated: "Contributions of gifts and donations to the GSA student chapter are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes."
- e) Suitable acknowledgment in newsletters, and elsewhere as appropriate, will be made of all donations and grants received.
- f) A chapter may make no representation, utterance, or commitment in the name of GSA through its fundraising efforts or in general. Nor shall any representation, utterance, or commitment of the chapter obligate or purport to obligate GSA, unless such representation, utterance, or commitment first has been approved by the GSA Chief Financial Officer.
- g) No fundraising or financial support will be solicited or accepted if the student chapter or GSA shall be in any way obligated to produce, develop, or furnish to any person any report, recommendation, or statement, except such as GSA shall deem appropriate.

2. Higher Education Institutions Potential Guidelines

- a) At some higher education institutions, funds may be disbursed to clubs and organizations by the student government association at the school. Additionally, funds can be raised through fundraising events. Each GSA student chapter must adhere to the policies and procedures at their institution. Usually, this information is provided to the chapter once it is approved by the college or institution.
- b) Fundraising may be conducted to support non-profit community organizations, chapter events, supplement conference travel for students, or any number of other options. Adhering to the rules of the higher education institution is paramount.

- c) Higher education institutions have policies in place to ensure clubs, organizations, or chapters do not compete with campus auxiliary services. For example, a chapter may not be able to sell textbooks to fellow students at a price below what the campus bookstore sells the book so as to not unfairly undercut the business of an establishment contracted by the institution. GSA student chapters must be familiar with the institutional policies in relation to auxiliary services contracted with the institution.
- d) Fundraising efforts to solicit products, services or monetary donations from off campus entities should have a fundraising plan and a potential donor list that is approved by the higher education institutional advancement office. This includes any grant funding applications. Approval by the institution's advancement or research and scholarship offices avoids conflicts with any institutional applications to the same entity or organization.

3. GSA Student Chapter Fundraising Considerations

- a) Each GSA student chapter has a mission and vision. It is important to ensure that any fundraising plans for the chapter adheres to the mission and vision of the chapter.
- b) Do your research. Make a list of the items to be purchased, confirm the items fit with the market/audience that they will be sold to, and consider how many items need to be purchased. This includes the cost of each item including the art charge, the customization charge (if applicable), and the shipping charges. Check on the institution's tax-exempt status and procedures prior to purchasing items.
- c) Know how much money is in your club account. Your chapter account needs to cover the cost of your fundraiser. If there are not enough funds in your chapter account, a fundraising plan to generate funds is needed before an order can be placed. Each institution has set policies on chapter funds, accounts, and payment procedures when planning to purchase items from the chapter account.
- d) Fundraiser events require planning: Depending on the institution's policies and procedures, it can take multiple days-sometimes up to two weeks-to get the signatures required to move forward. A fundraising plan needs to factor in the time for event approval, purchasing items and shipping time (if applicable), artwork or flyers, contracts associated with the fundraiser, securing space (if applicable), marketing/advertising, and a backup plan should a challenge arise.
- e) At many institutions, before an order can be submitted the following may be required: Company address, W-9, contact name, and quote for items being purchased. Knowing the institutions policies for fundraising will make the process efficient and manageable.

X. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Common GSA Organizational Terms and Acronyms

Appendix B: GSA Strategic Plan Schematic

Appendix C: Sample Program/Event Evaluation Form

Appendix D: GSA Student Chapter Annual Report Template

Appendix E: Sample Resume or *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) Citation

APPENDIX A

Common GSA Organizational Acronyms and Terms

Acronym	Organization	Brief Description	Website Link
GSA	Gerontological Society of America	Parent organization. GSA is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging	https://www.geron.org
AGHE	Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education	Member group of GSA dedicated to gerontology and health professions education	https://www.geron.org/academy-for-gerontology-in-higher-education-aghe
BioSci	Biological Sciences Section	Member Group of GSA whose members are researchers and professionals with interests in the biological processes that underlie aging	https://www.geron.org/member-groups/biological-sciences-section
BSS	Behavioral and Social Sciences Section	Member group of GSA whose members include behavioral and social science researchers, educators, policy makers, and practitioners from many disciplines	https://www.geron.org/member-groups/behavioral-and-social-sciences-section
ESPO	Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization	GSA member group focused on students and emerging professionals. All GSA student members are automatically part of ESPO.	https://www.geron.org/Membership/Member-Center/Member-Groups/Emerging-Scholar-and-Professional-Organization-ESPO
HS	Health Sciences Section	Member group of GSA whose membership is multidisciplinary and includes physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists, and other	https://www.geron.org/member-groups/health-sciences-section

		allied health professionals.	
SRPP	Social Research, Policy, and Practice Section	Member group of GSA comprised of educators, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers committed to improving policies and services for older adults and their families.	https://www.geron.org/member-groups/social-research-policy-and-practice-section
SPO	Sigma Phi Omega International (not GSA)	Academic Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology	https://www.sigmaphiomega.org

GSA Resources	Website
GSA Interest Groups	https://www.geron.org/membership/interest-groups
Membership Benefits & Join	https://www.geron.org/membership/membership-benefits-join
New Members Get Started Information	https://www.geron.org/Membership/Member-Center/New-Members-Get-Started

APPENDIX B

GSA STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision

Meaningful Lives As We Age

Mission

Foster excellence, innovation, and collaboration to advance aging research, education, practice, and policy.

Strategic Plan

More detailed information is available on the [GSA website](#).



APPENDIX C

Sample GSA Student Chapter Program/Event Evaluation Form

This form is a sample to evaluate GSA Student Chapter events, activities, and/or programs to report financial impact, assess successes/challenges, and make recommendations for future improvement.

Event pictures, sign-in sheets, survey results, or other documents can be part of the event evaluation.

Person completing this evaluation:
Role within the GSA Student Chapter:
Email:
Event Name/Title:
Day/Date of the Event:
Location of the Event:
Student names who organized this event:
Number of Attendees:
How many attendees were GSA Student Chapter members:
Did the event accomplish what you wanted it to?
Event Successes:
Event Improvements Suggested:
MARKETING
What tools did you use to market this event?

Provide key points on how well the marketing plan worked and your suggestions for such an event in the future.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Total Budget planned for this event.

Total Actual Cost:

Expenditures:

☐ Advertisement Materials (flyers, banners, etc.)

\$

☐ Decorations

\$

☐ DJ or other music

\$

☐ Entertainment

\$

☐ Food/drink

\$

☐ Movie copyrights

\$

☐ Prizes

\$

☐ Supplies

\$

OTHER (List):

\$

APPENDIX D

GSA STUDENT CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

The annual report from GSA Student Chapters is to be submitted online to the GSA must be submitted by May 31st. [GSA Student Chapter Annual Report Template](#)

Name of Institution:	
Person Completing the Annual Report:	
Role (e.g., Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary):	
Academic year for this annual report:	
Faculty Advisor(s):	
Have you combined the GSA and Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) Student Chapters?	Yes No
Date Report was completed:	
List Student Chapter Officers and their roles:	
How many members are there in your GSA Student Chapter? (If combined with SPO include total number)	
Number of new members this year:	
Number of Events and Programs:	

1. Provide a Brief Summary of the Student Chapter Goals for this year:
2. List of Program/Events/Activities for this year (please include a summary of the evaluations for these programs):

3. List any notable successes from this past year
4. List initiatives by the Chapter to attract new members and/or to retain members
5. List interesting information or notable accomplishments about specific members or about the GSA Student Chapter that can be included in ESPO or GSA news
6. Optional: Please include any photos, fliers, or marketing information you would like to share with GSA (up to 3)

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE RESUME/*CURRICULUM VITAE* (CV) CITATION

Resume/CV Header: **ACTIVITIES/CLUBS**

Option 1: If there is only a GSA student chapter then use this option; formatting the citation and font to the Resume/CV style.

Name of Institution, City, State

Gerontological Society of America Student Chapter

- *President* (or Officer Position if applicable), 6/20XX – 5/20XX
 - *Member*, 9/20XX-Present
- Bulleted description of the Chapter events or focus can be added

Option 2: If the GSA student chapter is integrated within another institutional club, then use this option; formatting the citation and font to the Resume/CV style.

Name of Institution, City, State

Aging Studies Interdisciplinary Group (ASIG); a Chapter of the Gerontological Society of America

- *President* (or Officer Position if applicable), 6/20XX – 5/20XX
 - *Member*, 9/20XX-Present
- Bulleted description of the Chapter events or focus can be added

Option 3: If the GSA student chapter is combined with another national or international student chapter then use this option; formatting the citation and font to the Resume/CV style.

Name of Institution, City, State

Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) and the Gerontological Society of America Student Chapters

- *President* (or Officer Position if applicable), 6/20XX – 5/20XX
 - *Member*, 9/20XX-Present
- SPO is the International Academic Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology

Bulleted description of the Chapter events or focus can be added

NOTE: If a student is a member of the Gerontological Society of America, include the following citation:

Header: **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- Gerontological Society of America, *Member*, X/20XX-Present