

NEW UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 16 | CIRCULATION 10,000

SERVING THE UCI COMMUNITY SINCE 1968

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2005

The SAGE Experience at UCI

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NEW UNIVERSITY STAFF WRITER

The Student Achievement Guided by Experience program at UC Irvine has been granting students the opportunity to earn paid internships at Orange County businesses while receiving financial assistance in the form of scholarships.

Founded at UCI in 1999 by SAGE director Karina Hamilton and Assistant Vice Chancellor Juan Francisco Lara, SAGE primarily serves low-income, first generation college students with an academic standing of at least a 3.0 GPA.

In what Hamilton deems a "competitive application process," undergraduates are invited to apply for a two-year paid internship with one of SAGE's corporate sponsors.

Some of the sponsors include Allergan, Bank of America, Beckman Coulter, Broadcom and Conexant.

If selected, the student also receives up to \$4,000 in financial assistance from the sponsor.

"Our program is aimed at identifying and supporting talented, motivated and deserving students throughout their college years so they can become outstanding business and community leaders," Hamilton said.

Students who are selected to participate in SAGE are required to participate in two complementary seminars at UCI that focus on leadership, teamwork, ethics and community service.

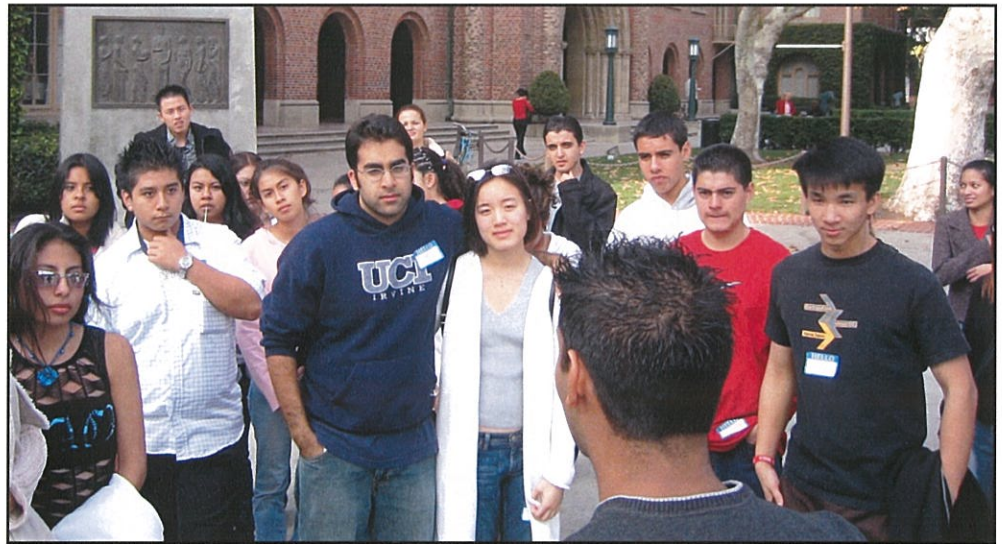
Elaine Lipiz, a former UCI student and assistant director of SAGE, is responsible for recruitment, teaching the seminars and guiding students through their desired career paths.

"This program bridges the academic knowledge students gain at the university with the professional skills they acquire in the workplace," Lipiz said. "[These] students graduate with professional and leadership skills that make them valuable assets to the companies they are hired to work for."

SAGE also has a separate service club called Sage Scholars for Scholars, which was established by SAGE scholars approximately four years ago.

According to Hamilton, SS4S is dedicated to helping and encouraging economically disadvantaged high school students through mentoring.

SS4S currently mentors students at Estancia High School in Santa Ana.



SAGE students in SS4S participate in a mentoring program, traveling to economically disadvantaged high schools.

According to Anas Chaudry, president of SS4S, this organization consists of four committees dedicated to building a strong program with the high school students. They include: mentoring, activities, fundraising and public relations.

The mentoring committee makes frequent visits to the high school to meet their mentees and help them deal with academic and personal issues.

The activities committee arranges and coordinates events, such as trips to the Getty Museum and the California Science Center, for SS4S and the high school students.

Chaudry outlined the organization's goals for this year, which include increasing the amount of scholarships given to students from the high school.

This year, SS4S acquired grants up to \$10,000.

"For the rest of the year we plan on seeking out SAGE students who have shown outstanding resolve and prepare them for next year's executive body," Chaudry said. "We are also looking at strengthening our alumni body so they can be fully utilized as a valuable resource for our current SAGE scholars."

Aside from being the president of SS4S, Chaudry is currently a data strategies intern at Edwards Lifesciences in Irvine.

Nader Mikhail, vice president of SS4S, is pleased with the familial aspect of SAGE.

"Everyone in SAGE knows everyone else and we usually have a great turnout for all our events," Mikhail said. "Although there are four committees in the program, there is intentional overlap within all of them to ensure that we all get a chance to interact with each other."

Next fall, Arroyo Vista will be the site of a SAGE Scholars theme house.

SAGE scholar Rainier Prioroda, who is currently a technical engineer intern at Parker Aerospace, was pleased about the experience he was gaining.

"One of the major attributes companies look for in recent graduates is experience," Prioroda said. "I don't have the greatest GPA for engineering, but I have been getting interviews ... because of my experience with Parker [Aerospace] and SAGE."

Many current and former SAGE students have been recognized for their achievements both on and off campus. According to Hamilton, seven students were elected Phi Beta Kappa while many of them are in the Campus wide Honors Program and Regent Scholars.

For more information, visit the SAGE Web site at www.sagescholars.uci.edu.