

Dear SAIGE members,

As many of you are aware, ACA announced in October that they will continue their plans to hold the 2025 ACA Conference & Expo in Orlando, Florida (read ACA's related FAQ page here). With the *2024 ACA Conference & Expo* quickly approaching, your SAIGE leadership wants to provide an update on our plans for 2025. As a reminder, SAIGE distributed a survey several months ago to gather your feedback about the ACA Conference & Expo in Orlando. We received responses from roughly 10% of SAIGE membership and we can't thank you enough for sharing your insights with us. Your collective voices help us as leaders to represent the larger division of SAIGE.

As we reviewed the data, we found a range of perspectives representing a variety of lenses and experiences. Themes from the data included: a) concerns for personal safety related to traveling to and within Florida; b) reluctance to provide financial support to organizations and Florida as a state; c) motivation to use attendance at the conference to advocate and educate; and d) interest in supporting LGBTGEQIAP+ individuals and organizations who are based in Florida. To be clear, the safety of our members is our priority and it is not our desire to put anyone in harm's way for any professional event. This is especially true considering Florida's record-breaking number of anti-LGBTQ and anti-DEI policies and legislation (e.g., [SB 1580](#), [HB 1521](#)), which have broad-reaching impacts in areas such as the delivery of evidence-based care, the work of school counselors in creating affirming educational environments, and the research of counselor educators across lines of inquiry, and have prompted national organizations (e.g., [NAACP](#), [HRC](#)) to issue travel advisories for the state of Florida.

Your SAIGE Board, including your Presidential Trio, reviewed and discussed this situation and our survey data on multiple occasions to inform our path forward. Decisions related to this event are very complex with many factors to consider and have not been taken lightly. Considering the broad range of opinions related to SAIGE's possible directions, we believe it is important to both support the interests of our members of all identities, within all geographic regions, as well as the broader counseling profession. To meet needs of as many SAIGE members as possible, and in alignment with [Equality Florida's](#) call to "make your presence in Florida, or lack thereof, a statement of support for marginalized communities on the ground," the SAIGE leadership team has decided to take the steps articulated below.

- Work with the SAIGE Education Committee to either review possible existing educational content or build educational content that can be virtually shared with members in April of 2025. It is our hope that such content will allow our members, who may have historically relied on the *ACA Conference & Expo* to meet their professional CE requirements, to earn CEs without the need for attendance at this event. This content will be offered free of charge with the option to submit donations, of which 100% of proceeds will be donated to select Florida-based advocacy organizations.
- Host all of our SAIGE meetings typically held at the *ACA Conference & Expo* virtually, with no in-person attendance option. These meetings include our SAIGE business meeting, QTPOC meeting, as well as any social gatherings. We are confident that we can lean into technology to both conduct the business of SAIGE and enter into community with one another during the *2025 ACA Conference & Expo*.
- Utilize ACA-sponsored division session(s) as a platform to engage in dialogue and education related to the concerns of our members, including but not limited to, the conference location. This will include:
  - Offering these spaces to our Florida-SAIGE chapter leaders in order to elevate the voices of Florida-based counselors, leaders, and related LGBTGEQIAP+ professionals;
  - Providing these spaces as supports for all SAIGE members in attendance that have already indicated to us that they are going;
  - Promoting our overall mission: Advocate for the voice, equity, and inclusion of LGBTGEQIAP+ persons within the counseling profession and beyond and to promote the professional development of counselors and related professionals to ensure that all LGBTGEQIAP+ individuals receive ethical, culturally-inclusive, liberating services that attend to all aspects of their intersectional identities. Within this, we can.

We know that this is a deeply personal issue for many of our members. If you'd like to continue this conversation, please don't hesitate to contact our current President, Dr. Rob McKinney, at [President@SAIGECounseling.org](mailto:President@SAIGECounseling.org) and/or our President-Elect, Dr. Stacy Pinto, at [President-Elect@SAIGECounseling.org](mailto:President-Elect@SAIGECounseling.org). Additionally, if you will be attending *ACA's 2024 Conference & Expo* in New Orleans next month, please consider stopping by our booth on Friday, April 12th, between 11:30am CST and 1:30pm CST to connect with Rob and Stacy in person. We will be there ready to welcome you at our SAIGE booth!

In Solidarity,

Dr. Rob McKinney  
2023-2024 SAIGE President

Dr. Stacy Pinto  
2023-2024 SAIGE President-Elect

Dr. Tamekia Bell  
2023-2024 SAIGE Past-President