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PRESS RELEASE

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CGS Announces Multi-University Project to Understand Career Pathways of STEM PhD Students and Alumni Project will Join Humanities Initiative, Expanding Project to All Broad Fields of Study

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Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has been awarded a major grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF #1661272) to help universities collect data on the career pathways of PhDs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Through a competitive sub-award process, CGS will select doctoral institutions to implement surveys of STEM PhD students and alumni, gathering information about their professional aspirations, career pathways, and career preparation. The project complements a [parallel endeavor](#) to collect and analyze data on humanities PhDs through a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The project builds upon two earlier phases of CGS research: a [feasibility study](#) supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and a [survey development](#) phase supported by the Mellon, Sloan, and National Science Foundations (NSF #1534620). In the most recent phase, CGS developed two surveys—one for current PhD students and one for PhD alumni— by gathering input from senior university leaders, research funders, disciplinary societies, researchers, PhD students, and alumni.

The two surveys address important workforce questions not currently answered by existing national data-collection efforts. For example, the surveys will help faculty and university leaders understand whether participation in professional development activities is associated with certain career preferences and career pathways. Because universities will be collecting their own data, the project will ultimately allow them to conduct program-level analyses of data with the intention of improving programs.

CGS President Suzanne Ortega believes the project will assist universities in assessing their students' career outcomes and enhancing graduate training for the next generation STEM workforce. "As we work to improve the career preparation of our students, we need to understand how the professional development experiences of PhDs align with the demands of the 21st century workforce. This project promises to provide universities with this critical information."

(more)

CGS has issued a [Request-For-Proposals \(RFP\)](#) to CGS member institutions to participate in the project as funded partners. The RFP is accompanied by the survey instruments and an Implementation Guide that offers guidance on incorporating the survey administration into existing university processes. To support broad institutional adoption of the instruments, universities that are eligible to apply for both humanities and STEM funding are encouraged to submit a combined proposal.

The initiative complements other CGS endeavors to support career diversity for PhDs, such as a recently-completed [project](#) to understand the professional development needs of graduate students in STEM fields. Through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), CGS has also established the *Next Generation Humanities PhD Consortium*, a collaborative learning community for the 28 NEH [Next Generation PhD](#) grant awardees.

About CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.