



Council of Graduate Schools

Statement on the Reauthorization of H.R. 5116, the “America COMPETES Act”

January 12, 2011

The Council of Graduate Schools applauds Congress for passing and President Obama for signing H.R. 5116, the “America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010,” into law. This legislation authorizes increases in spending for agencies and programs that are critically important to maintaining American competitiveness and innovation in the 21st century global economy.

The law reauthorizes many programs that respond to recommendations offered by the National Academies’ *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* report, with the goal of increasing investment in research, expanding opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, and building the infrastructure necessary to drive innovation. While recognizing the fiscal constraints on government spending, it also invests strategically in the scientific and technological enterprise necessary to sustain U.S. prosperity and security.

CGS especially appreciates the bill’s recognition of the role that graduate education plays in our nation’s ability to maintain a highly-skilled workforce. Key provisions in support of graduate education include:

- Authorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF) to offer grants to “implement or expand research-based reforms in master’s and doctoral level STEM education that emphasize preparation for diverse careers” through the 21st Century Graduate Education provision.
- Increasing NSF’s budget and tying increased funding for the Graduate Research Fellowships (GRF) and Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training (IGERT) programs together to ensure balance between the programs.
- Reauthorizing the Protecting America’s Competitive Edge (PACE) competitive fellowship program at the Department of Energy (DoE) for students pursuing doctoral degrees in math and engineering, as well as increased funding for DoE’s Office of Science.
- Reauthorizing funds for the Department of Education to support competitive partnerships to develop and implement part-time Master’s degree programs in math, science, or critical foreign language education for current teachers and one-year Master’s degree programs in teaching for current STEM field professionals.
- Mandating a study of the scientific workforce in the areas of oceanic and atmospheric research and development to investigate whether there is a shortage in the number of individuals with advanced degrees in oceanic and atmospheric sciences with the ability to conduct high quality scientific research in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) related fields.
- Mandating a study of our nation’s “Economic Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity” and development of a national economic competitiveness strategy.

CGS congratulates Congress and the President for their work in reauthorizing this important law to maintain U.S. leadership in the global economy.

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