



# Council of Graduate Schools

June 25, 2009

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
United States Senate  
455 Dirkson Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bart Gordon  
United States House of Representatives  
2306 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
United States Senate  
503 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ralph Hall  
United States House of Representatives  
2405 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Mikulski and Alexander, and Representatives Gordon and Hall:

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) thanks you for requesting the National Academies undertake a study of American research universities to ensure our national competitiveness, prosperity, and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

As the only national organization dedicated solely to the advancement of graduate education and research, CGS is particularly appreciative of the request's specific inclusion of doctoral education. For decades, U.S. doctoral education has been considered the best in the world. It plays a vital role in our nation's ability to maintain a highly-skilled workforce, capable of remaining on the cutting edge of discovery.

CGS has made a major commitment to improving the quality and outcomes of doctoral education through our ongoing Ph.D. Completion Project. The goal of the project is to identify effective strategies for improving doctoral outcomes with particular attention to completion rates. I offer our research and expertise from this important project as well as other research we are engaged in to you and your colleagues.

We applaud your recognition of graduate education as a key part of our national efforts to maintain our global leadership in research and innovation. Strengthening graduate education at the doctoral level is fundamental to enhancing our research enterprise and to developing the talent we need to address current and future opportunities and challenges.

We look forward to working with you and with the Academies. Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra W. Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debra W. Stewart  
President

**Council of Graduate Schools**

One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 230 • Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 223-3791 • [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org)