

## PRESS RELEASE

**EMBARGOED UNTIL:**

Thursday, February 9, 2017, 12:01 am EST

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### **Rate of First-Time Enrollment Holds Steady at 5% for International Graduate Students at U.S. Institutions**

#### **Declining Applications from Key Countries Contribute to Slowed Growth in Prospective Student Interest**

Washington, DC —New data from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reveal that first-time international graduate enrollment increased by 5% in Fall 2016, the same rate of growth seen last year. Yet U.S. institutions saw a lag in growth in the total number of international graduate applications, from 3% in 2015 to 1% in 2016.

The slow-down in application growth occurred despite a 4% increase in the number of applications from prospective Chinese graduate students, who constitute the largest subgroup of international students both in terms of applications and enrollments. The overall decrease in application growth was due to the combined effect of decreases in applications from important sending countries and regions: India (-1%), the Middle East and North Africa (-5%), South Korea (-5%), and Brazil (-11%).

While application counts of prospective European graduate students to U.S. institutions remained consistent with last year, first-time enrollment of European graduate students at U.S. institutions rose by 8%, ending the recent streak of declining enrollment growth rates from this region.

“The continued increase in enrollments is good news for U.S. universities,” said CGS President Suzanne Ortega, “but we can’t take that position for granted. Universities in the U.S. and around the world are waiting to see the potential impact of the uncertain policy environment on the mobility patterns of international graduate students.” Dr. Ortega added that the recent executive order that bars entry or return of U.S. visa holders from specific countries poses a concern. “We must ensure that the U.S. remains an attractive and viable place for the world’s most talented students to pursue education and research.”

The report also includes data on trends by field of study. In terms of total applications and first-time enrollments, Business (17% and 20% respectively), Engineering (30% and 26% respectively), and Mathematics and Computer Sciences (21% and 20% respectively) continue to be the most popular fields of study. Sixty-eight percent of total international graduate applications and 78% of first-time graduate enrollments were to master’s and certificate programs, suggesting that U.S. master’s programs continue to be viewed as good investments by international students.

As the only report of its kind to offer data on the current academic year, *International Graduate Applications and Enrollment: Fall 2016* reports applications, admissions, and enrollments of international master’s, certificate, and doctoral students at U.S. colleges and universities. Additional report findings can be found in the attached page of highlights.

#### **About the survey and report**

Conducted since 2004, the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey tracks the applications and enrollments of international students seeking U.S. master’s and doctoral degrees. In Fall 2016 the survey was redesigned to collect data by degree objective (master’s and graduate certificate vs. doctorate), and for all seven regions of origin, eight countries of origin, and all eleven broad fields of study, yielding the only degree-level data currently available for graduate admissions and enrollments. 395 U.S. graduate institutions who are members of CGS or its regional affiliates responded to the 2016 survey.

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*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.*