



# Council of Graduate Schools

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Report Urges Renewed Commitment to Graduate Education**

#### **Support vital to American competitiveness**

Google, considered the world's largest internet search engine, was developed as a research project by two graduate students. Genentech, a leading biotechnology company, grew out of the collaboration between a university researcher and the private sector.

These two examples highlight the value of graduate education and research at U.S. universities.

A blue-ribbon panel assembled by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) released a report today that calls for a renewed commitment to American graduate education, recognizing its critical role in enhancing the nation's economic competitiveness and innovation.

The Advisory Committee on Graduate Education and American Competitiveness, comprised of university presidents, corporate leaders and graduate school deans, called for increased collaboration between government, higher education, and the business community to strengthen U.S. competitiveness and national security through increased support for graduate education.

At a forum held at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, Members of Congress and other stakeholders discussed their perspectives on the issues raised in the report, *Graduate Education: The Backbone of American Competitiveness and Innovation*, which contains findings and action items for three targeted sectors: universities, business leaders, and policymakers.

The report's release comes against the backdrop of growing evidence that other nations' higher education systems are quickly catching up to the United States in terms of the number of graduate degrees awarded and increased emphasis on research.

"U.S. scientific and technological leadership has until now been assured by the combination of graduate programs, unparalleled in excellence, and the steady supply of the nation's and the world's most talented students," said Debra W. Stewart, CGS president. "However, other countries have already increased their investment in graduate education, and as a result are beginning to attract top domestic and international students who would otherwise study here."

"We need to do more to expand and replenish the academic pipeline, both by developing our domestic talent pool and by making it easier for the world's best and brightest to pursue their graduate education at American universities," Stewart added.

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Several of the report's policy recommendations have already been incorporated into legislation under consideration in Congress that addresses strengthening U.S. competitiveness in the global economy.

"I urge all stakeholders to act upon the reports' recommendations soon," Dr. Stewart said. "Graduate education is a vital part of the U.S. education system and must be strengthened."

Irving Wladawsky-Berger, Vice President of Technical Strategy and Innovation at IBM and a member of the Advisory Committee, said that committee members are extremely concerned about maintaining a highly-skilled workforce. "We must ensure that America's graduate schools continue to produce the next generation of scientists, researchers, and experts in fields critical to promoting economic competitiveness and innovation," he said.

Recommendations the report calls for include:

- Collaboration among leaders in government, business, and higher education to develop a highly-educated workforce and encourage entrepreneurship in graduate education.
- Creating incentives for students, particularly from underrepresented groups, to pursue graduate education in STEM fields, the social sciences, and humanities, and identify "best practices" to reduce attrition and shorten the time required to complete a degree.
- Support for innovative graduate education programs, such as professional master's degrees, which respond to workforce needs in such critical fields as science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM), as well as in social sciences and the humanities.
- Expanding opportunities for graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study at the frontier of knowledge creation, using models such as those pioneered by the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.
- Continuing to improve and reform the visa process so that the world's top international talent can pursue graduate study in the U.S. and contribute to our nation's research and innovation.
- Increasing federal funds for graduate education programs by at least 10% at every agency.
- Enhancing the quality of graduate education through ongoing evaluation and research, and supporting risk-taking research programs that prepare highly-trained professionals for a knowledge-based global economy.

The full report is available on the CGS website at [www.cgsnet.org](http://www.cgsnet.org).

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*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 480 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. CGS member institutions award more than 90% of the doctoral degrees and over 75% of the master's degrees in the U.S. 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.*