Since the release of last year's landmark report, *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States*, CGS, graduate deans, and others have been using the findings and recommendations in the report in various ways. Deans have been particularly active in using the report to engage with a variety of internal and external stakeholders about the importance of graduate education and its relationship to discovery, innovation and competitiveness. At the 2011 CGS annual legislative forum, a paper titled *Steps Taken on the Path Forward* was released. The paper describes and reviews the impact of *The Path Forward* one year later and outlines ongoing issues and challenges confronting graduate education now and into the future. This article provides an overview of the *Steps Taken* paper and the April 5 Annual CGS Legislative Forum.

*Steps Taken* Paper

President Obama has called for the US to out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world while taking responsibility for our federal budget deficit and reforming government. He has also proposed making strategic investments in education and research which are critical to our nation's future economic and social prosperity. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2018 more jobs will require people with advanced degrees, specifically an 18% increase in jobs requiring a master's degree and a 17% increase for those requiring a doctoral degree. Our competitiveness in the global economy hinges on our ability to produce sufficient numbers of graduate degree holders—people with the advanced knowledge and critical thinking abilities to address current challenges we currently face as well as those to come.

The *Steps Taken* paper discusses the connection between a strong graduate education system and the nation's continued competitiveness and prosperity. It also highlights how the *Path Forward* findings and recommendations have been used and discussed in a wide array of venues. Graduate deans and other senior officials in higher education have used the report findings and recommendations to discuss the role and importance of graduate education with a variety of audiences ranging from university trustees to general faculty meetings. The report has also been used as the centerpiece of various statewide and regional meetings of graduate deans.

In January 2011, CGS conducted a survey of its college and university membership to learn more about outcomes and impacts from *The Path Forward*. The results fell into five broad areas:

**Influencing Critical Decision Processes**

Actions in this category include helping to shape the strategic plan for graduate education within the university and creating structures to implement the university's graduate education aspirations.

**Changing Priorities**

When utilized in strategic planning processes, *Path Forward* analyses and recommendations may set or even change priorities for the university; after reviewing the report, at least one institution of higher education made graduate fellowships the top priority in fundraising.

**Creating New Communication Channels**

The report has been used to facilitate conversations on change and, in one case, resulted in an open letter from the dean to faculty inviting discussion about graduate education issues.

**Shaping Evaluation Metrics**

The report recommendations for universities affirmed commitments to developing and using outcome measures and to establishing initiatives focused on persistence and completion. Graduate schools are also pursuing policies to enhance transparency in offering prospective and current students information related to career outcomes.

**Introducing New Programs**

Several institutions have launched new degree programs and new professional development programs for graduate students. Some institutions are also pursuing increased international recruitment as well as establishing dual and joint degree programs.
Business and industry leaders have also been utilizing the Path Forward report as part of ongoing discussions related to the development of a highly skilled workforce.

In a recent op-ed, Stanley S. Litow, President, IBM International Foundation and a member of the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education, noted that “companies want to hire employees who have broad, advanced education, can learn quickly as they are trained in specific jobs and have a hunger for continuous education and skill development.” He added, “We also need deep thinkers who can help address business and societal problems and build solutions for a smarter planet,” and urged the nation to invest in developing the competent workforce we need to make us more competitive and spur a sustained economic recovery.

Recent public policy initiatives also reflect the relevance and impact of The Path Forward. The recently enacted America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 recognizes the role of graduate education in maintaining well trained personnel. Among other things, it includes a provision that authorizes the National Science Foundation 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.

2011 CGS Legislative Forum

CGS was pleased to have an outstanding array of speakers to discuss the impact of the Path Forward report one year later. The day began with remarks from three federal policymakers.

US Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia discussed the need to explain the benefits of federal investments in higher education to policymakers and the general public particularly in the current budget climate. He referenced a recent trip he made to India, noting that America’s system of higher education is still viewed as different from any other system in the world. Since everything is currently on the table for budget cuts, he said it is critical to demonstrate the benefits of graduate education to maintain support for the enterprise.

Congressman Tim Bishop of New York noted that the Path Forward report highlighted potential challenges to graduate enrollment due to changing demographics in the US and he underscored the importance of undergraduate education as the prerequisite for pursuing graduate study. He cited several statistics to illustrate challenges with college entry and completion—the US has fallen from 1st to 6th in the proportion with college degrees. From 1st to 12th in the proportion with college degrees. Simultaneously, college tuition is rising and public policy support for higher education is stretched thin in the current fiscal climate. Mr. Bishop stated that if fewer people graduate from college, the pool of potential graduate students will be smaller at the very time that we need to be encouraging more domestic students to pursue graduate studies. Congressman Bishop suggested increased efforts to demonstrate the value-added of higher education along with the public benefits of an educated populace. He expressed concern that higher education is increasingly seen as an elitist pursuit and thus the increased need to demonstrate the value added to society by those with advanced degrees.

Martha Kanter, Under Secretary of the US Department of Education, shared her personal pride in her graduate education and discussed the national need for more scientists, poets, artists and other highly skilled individuals. She emphasized the pressures associated with the current budget environment and the need to make tough choices. She expressed a willingness to listen to innovative ideas about ways to continue to support graduate students via the federal student loan programs as federal budget discussions and negotiations continue. In accord with the other policymakers she also emphasized the need to demonstrate the value of graduate education to society and the workforce using data and personal stories.

Additional perspectives on the impact of the Path Forward report were shared by corporate leaders and graduate deans. Kurt Landgraf, President and CEO of ETS, expressed his organization’s delight in partnering with CGS on development and production of the Path Forward report. His remarks noted that state funding for higher education is also down, in addition to the federal situation, and that the combined effects of reduced support for higher education is very serious. He also suggested the need for closer alignment between industry and graduate education leaders with a focus on producing graduates for 21st century jobs. Additionally, Mr. Landgraf discussed the importance of US graduate education from a global perspective, noting that it is still viewed as being of excellent quality around the world.

Stan Litow, Senior Vice President of Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs at IBM and President of IBM’s Foundation, discussed the importance of research and development. These two areas are vitally important to IBM’s future and they are supported accordingly. He also noted the importance of investing in talent and the role of graduate education as an engine for developing talent and promoting economic development. He urged enhanced collaboration between industry and graduate education and increased public-private partnerships.

Ron Townsend, Executive Vice President for Global Laboratory Operations at Battelle Memorial Institute, discussed strategic relationships with the academic community and specifically mentioned two new initiatives undertaken by Battelle. The first is a distinguished postdoctoral fellowship program designed to groom future leaders and the second is a new partnership with the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, which among other things, features a new PhD program. Both of these programs exemplify ways to leverage partnerships with universities.

A panel of graduate deans discussed local and state initiatives that support graduate education. James Wimbush, Dean of The University Graduate School, Indiana University, discussed the New Academic Directions Committee that has
been established at his institution. This committee is working to ensure that the right mix of programs is in place to provide the highly skilled talent needed for the workforce. He also discussed efforts underway to enhance recruitment, retention and completion in accord with findings and recommendations in the Path Forward report.

Robert Augustine, Dean of the Graduate School, Eastern Illinois University, discussed the state-wide summit held at his university last fall. This summit was organized by the Illinois Association of Graduate Schools and featured policymakers, business leaders and university leaders in Illinois. These three sectors came together to explore the role of graduate education in developing highly skilled talent in the state and the need to collaborate in support of the enterprise going forward.

Lisa Tedesco, Vice Provost and Dean, Laney Graduate School, Emory University, discussed the impact of the Path Forward report at her institution, noting the implementation of a new opportunity for students called “Beyond the Professoriate.” The series is focused on providing students with information about additional pathways for their job search and utilizes alumni who have had successful careers outside of academia. She also shared her personal story in pursuing higher education and the importance of federal funding, specifically through the NDEA and noted how crucial such support is for today's graduate students.

The forum concluded with remarks by Patrick Osmer, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School at The Ohio State University and Chair of the CGS Board of Directors. He thanked all the speakers for their insightful remarks noting the need to continue the ongoing discussions and collaborations between graduate education leaders, policymakers and business leaders.

Attendees at the 6th CGS Annual Legislative Forum included Congressional and federal agency staff as well as representatives from universities, businesses, and higher education and scientific associations. Two members of the press were also in attendance and the release of the Steps Taken on the Path Forward paper was cited in both Inside Higher Ed and the Chronicle of Higher Education on April 5.

Continuing Steps Taken on the Path Forward

There is much opportunity to continue taking steps on The Path Forward through utilization of the findings and recommendations in the original Path Forward report and as part of future research endeavors. In many ways, the need to do so is even greater than it was a year ago. While The Path Forward and Steps Taken on the Path Forward have illuminated many issues related to graduate education, there are also outstanding issues that require further research and public policy attention.

One such area is the need to develop a better understanding of student aspirations associated with pursuit of graduate education and what types of policies and practices would help support and actualize such aspirations. Another very topical issue concerns financial support for graduate students and the need to develop innovative proposals to provide such support for aspiring graduate students. A major challenge confronting the graduate education enterprise in the future is the lack of information about the eventual careers of people with graduate degrees. These issues as well as others will form the basis of future policy research efforts by CGS.

Contact: Patricia H. McAllister, Vice President, Government Relations

### Nominations for CGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Awards Due July 22

Nominations for the 2011 CGS/University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Awards are due no later than July 22. This year's competitions are in the fields of 1) Biological and Life Sciences and 2) Humanities and Fine Arts. More information on the award, nomination procedures, and criteria can be found at the CGS website at http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=131. Questions should be addressed to Cheryl Flagg at cflagg@cgs.nche.edu
Graduate deans report that their top pressing issues in 2011 are about recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management, according to the Council of Graduate Schools’ (CGS) annual Pressing Issues Survey. Each year, CGS asks graduate deans at member institutions to identify the three most important or “pressing” issues or challenges they currently face. The findings from this Pressing Issues Survey inform CGS about the concerns of graduate deans and help to shape sessions at the Summer Workshop, Annual Meeting, and other forums, as well as future best practices projects. The survey has been conducted annually as part of the CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase I: Applications since 2004 and through the CGS membership survey and other surveys in prior years.

The 2011 Phase I survey was sent to 494 US colleges and universities that were members of CGS as of January 2011. A total of 230 institutions responded to the survey, for a response rate of 47% (Bell, 2011). About 93% (213) of the Phase I survey respondents wrote in one or more pressing issues in response to this open-ended question, and the analyses below are limited to these 213 respondents. They included 155 doctoral institutions, 48 master’s-focused institutions, and 10 institutions classified as baccalaureate or specialized in the 2010 basic Carnegie Classifications. Sixty-two private, not-for-profit institutions responded to the Pressing Issues Survey, along with 151 public institutions. By geographic region, 54 of the responding institutions were in the Midwest, 42 were in the Northeast, 36 in the West, and 81 in the South. Responses to the Pressing Issues Survey were coded into broad categories. Since respondents were able to write in up to three pressing issues, the percentages sum to more than 100%.

Pressing Issues in 2011

The top pressing issue identified by graduate deans was recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management, mentioned by more than two-thirds (68%) of all respondents (see Table 1). Within this category, respondents mentioned competition for prospective graduate students, challenges in attracting a diverse applicant pool, recruiting international students, and recruiting quality graduate students, among other concerns. Respondents from master’s and specialized institutions were more likely to mention recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management than graduate deans from doctoral institutions (74% vs. 65%), and respondents from private, not-for-profit institutions were more likely to indicate that this was a pressing issue than those at public institutions (71% vs. 66%).

Graduate student financial support was the second most commonly mentioned pressing issue, with 54% of all respondents saying this was a concern. This category includes health insurance for graduate students, as well as direct support through assistantships, fellowships, etc. Graduate deans from doctoral institutions and master’s and specialized institutions were nearly equally as likely to indicate that graduate student financial support was a concern (54% vs. 52%). Respondents from public institutions, however, were more likely to note graduate student financial support as a pressing issue than respondents at private, not-for-profit institutions (56% vs. 48%).

Graduate program financing, dealing with budget cuts, and issues related to the economy ranked third (40%). Respondents from doctoral institutions were more likely to mention this issue than respondents from master’s and specialized institutions (43% vs. 34%), and respondents from public institutions were more likely to indicate that this issue was a concern than those from private, not-for-profit institutions (42% vs. 37%).

Student support and services was ranked as the fourth most pressing issue this year (28%). Within this category, respondents mentioned advising and mentoring, professional development for graduate students, career advice, and job placement assistance, among other concerns. Respondents from doctoral institutions were more likely to mention student support and services than graduate deans from master’s and specialized institutions (32% vs. 19%), and respondents from private, not-for-profit institutions were more likely to indicate that this was a pressing issue than those at public institutions (40% vs. 23%).

The percentages of respondents who mentioned the remaining pressing issues are shown in Table 1. General management and administration (21%) includes a wide variety of issues focused on areas such as policies and procedures, data management, and communications. All issues related to program quality; the evaluation, assessment,
or review of graduate programs; accreditation; and student learning outcomes were grouped together as program quality, evaluation, assessment, and review (17%). The category of faculty and staff issues (17%) mainly includes responses about the challenges of dealing with faculty and staff shortages, primarily due to budget cuts. The category of leadership and advocacy (14%) includes responses related to promoting graduate education and communicating the value of graduate education to internal and external stakeholders, among other related issues. All responses related to developing or eliminating programs were grouped as program development/elimination (9%), but the vast majority of responses in this category concerned program development rather than program elimination. Issues surrounding retention, completion, attrition, and time-to-degree (7%) are also grouped together. Finally, all responses related to program delivery, including the delivery of online, distance, interdisciplinary, and joint and dual programs are grouped as program delivery (6%).

**Pressing Issues by Carnegie Classification and Institutional Control**

The rank order of the top three pressing issues was the same for respondents from doctoral institutions as it was for respondents from master's and specialized institutions (see Table 1). In both cases recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management was the top issue (65% and 74%, respectively), graduate student financial support was ranked second (54% and 52%, respectively), and graduate program financing, dealing with budget cuts, and issues related to the economy ranked third (43% and 34%, respectively). Respondents from doctoral institutions were more likely than respondents from master's and specialized institutions to mention student support and services (32% vs. 19%), but they were less likely to mention faculty and staff issues (14% vs. 26%).

The findings for respondents from public institutions mirror the overall findings, with recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management; graduate student financial support; and graduate program financing, dealing with budget cuts, and issues related to the economy as the first, second, and third most pressing issues, respectively (see Table 1). At private, not-for-profit institutions, recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management and graduate student financial support were also the first and second most pressing issues, but the third most pressing issue was student support and services.

**Pressing Issues by Geographic Region**

Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management was the top pressing issue identified by graduate deans at institutions located in all four regions of the United States (see Table 2). The percentage of respondents indicating this area as a pressing issue ranged from a low of 64% of respondents in the West to a high of 71% of respondents in the Northeast. The second and third most pressing issues varied by the geographic region of the responding institutions. Among respondents in the Northeast and South, graduate student financial support was the second most pressing issue and graduate program financing/budget/economy was the third most pressing issue. In contrast, among respondents in the Midwest and West, graduate program financing/budget/economy was the second most pressing issue and graduate student financial support was the third most pressing issue. Respondents from institutions in the Northeast and South were more likely to mention faculty and staff issues than respondents from the Midwest and West. Respondents from the Midwest and South were more likely to indicate that leadership and advocacy was a pressing issue than respondents from the Northeast and West.

**Historical Comparison of Pressing Issues**

Articles in previous years about the Pressing Issues Survey have provided an examination of the changes in pressing issues over time. Over the past several years, however, there have been variations in coding among researchers, as well as variations in the broad categories used to group issues, meaning that such an examination of changes over time is inexact. Rather than presenting rankings of pressing issues categories over time, it is better to simply touch on the issues that remain among the top concerns of graduate deans each year.

Two broad topics in particular have been mentioned frequently by graduate deans over the past five years: graduate student financial support and recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management. In most recent years, these have been among the two most pressing issues faced by graduate deans. Issues related to graduate program financing, dealing with budget cuts, and the economy have also been mentioned frequently by graduate deans, particularly in the last three years. General management and administration issues have also been cited as concerns in recent years, but given the wide variety of issues that are typically grouped within this category, the specific challenges have varied from year to year.

**Conclusion**

The results of this year's Pressing Issues Survey reveal that the majority of graduate deans view recruitment, admissions, and

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**Table 2. Pressing Issues by Geographic Region, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressing Issue</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment/Admissions/Enrollment Mgmt.</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Financial Support</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Program Financing/Budget/Economy</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support and Services</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management and Administration</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Quality/Evaluation/Assessment/Review</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and Staff Issues</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Advocacy</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development/Elimination</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention/Completion/Attrition/Time-to-Degree</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Delivery</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 CGS Pressing Issues Survey
Data Sources

enrollment management as their top concern, as they face issues related to competition for prospective graduate students, challenges in attracting a diverse applicant pool, recruiting international students, and recruiting quality graduate students, among other concerns. They also remain concerned about graduate student financial support and about graduate program financing, dealing with budget cuts, and issues related to the economy. The latter is often reflected in other broad categories as well, with respondents mentioning concerns about the effect of budget cuts and the economy on other aspects of graduate education, including recruiting budgets, personnel, and program delivery. Overall, the results of the Pressing Issues Survey reveal the continued focus of graduate deans on recruiting, enrolling, and supporting high quality graduate students; on offering high quality graduate programs that produce graduates ready to meet the demands of the 21st century global economy; and on communicating the role and value of graduate education.

By Nathan E. Bell, Director, Research and Policy Analysis

References:

Nominations for CGS Board of Directors Due July 1

Nominations are being accepted for election to the CGS Board of Directors.

If you are interested, or if you would like to nominate a colleague, please contact:

Jeffery Gibeling
Chair of the CGS Nomination Committee
c/o Cheryl Flagg at cflagg@cgs.nche.edu
on or before July 1, 2011

New Deans and Titles

Christine Brems is Interim Vice Provost for Research and Acting Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She replaces Douglas Causey.

Sharon Brown-Welty is Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies at California State University, Fresno. She replaces Karen Carey.

David A. Crouse is Interim Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Dean, Graduate Studies at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. He replaces Rubens Pamies.

Sister Donna Innes is Dean of Professional Adult and Continuing Education at Marian University. She replaces J. Randall Koetting.

Jennifer Keane-Dawes is Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Frank Lazarus is Provost at Assumption College. He replaces Mary Lou Anderson.

Zebulon Kendrick is Vice Provost, Graduate School at Temple University. He replaces Aquiles Iglesias.

Steven Lerman is Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at George Washington University. He replaces Donald R. Lehman.

Alan M. Levine is Academic Vice President at Marywood University. He replaces Peter Cimbolic.

Gerald M. Mara is Dean, Graduate School at Georgetown University. He replaces Timothy A. Barbari.

Brenda McComb is Dean of the Graduate School at Oregon State University. She replaces Martin Fisk.

Susan Porter is Dean pro tem, Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of British Columbia. She replaces Barbara Evans.

Wayne Quirk is Dean, Graduate Studies and Research at Central Washington University. He replaces Roger Fouts.
GRADUATE SCHOOL AND YOU (2010)

Graduate School and You provides practical, straightforward advice about graduate education for prospective students. One of the most popular CGS publications since the first edition in 1989, this booklet includes essential information about: making the decision to go to graduate school, preparing for graduate school, choosing and applying to graduate programs, financing a degree and accepting offers of financial assistance, and caring for yourself while in graduate school. This newly revised, 2010 edition updates information on master’s and doctoral study, the application and admissions process, and sources of financial support for graduate study.

ITEM NUMBER: GRASCH | MEMBER PRICE: $12 | NON-MEMBER PRICE: $17
*Bulk pricing available to members only

PHD COMPLETION AND ATTRITION: POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS (2010)

This is the fourth in a series of monographs from the CGS PhD Completion Project. This monograph reports on policies and practices at participating institutions that aim to improve PhD completion rates and reduce attrition in doctoral programs. These policies and practices are categorized into six broad institutional and programmatic categories: selection and admissions; mentoring and advising; financial support; research mode of the field; curricular and administrative processes and procedures; and program environment.

ITEM NUMBER: PHDCOMPIV | MEMBER PRICE: $27 | NON-MEMBER PRICE: $30
*Bulk pricing available to members only

RESEARCH STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR (2009)

This popular publication, revised and newly updated, provides guidelines for supervision at each stage of graduate study and highlights ways to make graduate students and supervisors more aware of their respective responsibilities in the PhD process. Includes a checklist of good supervisory practice. Also includes a “Hall of Scholars” featuring reflections of the CGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award winners and their supervisors on key factors in doctoral degree completion.

ITEM NUMBER: RESSTU | MEMBER PRICE: $15 | NON-MEMBER PRICE: $18
*Bulk pricing available to members only


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The Role and Status of the Master's Degree in STEM (2010)  
Joint Degrees, Dual Degrees, and International Research Collaborations (2010)  
CGS FLYERS: $1 each  
Open Doors with a Doctorate (2009)  
Why Should I Get a Master's Degree? (Updated 2010)  
Financing Graduate Education (2010)

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