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PRESS RELEASE

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CGS Announces Multi-University Project to Collect Data on Career Pathways of Humanities PhDs

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Washington, D.C. — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) announced today that it has been awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to help universities collect data on the career pathways of humanities PhDs. Through a competitive sub-award process, CGS will select 15 doctoral institutions to pilot surveys of humanities PhD students and alumni, gathering information about their professional aspirations, career pathways, and career preparation.

The project builds upon two earlier phases of CGS research: a [feasibility study](#) supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and a [survey development](#) phase supported by Mellon, Sloan, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). In the most recent phase, CGS developed two surveys—one for current PhD students and one for PhD alumni— by gathering input from senior university leaders, research funders, disciplinary societies, researchers, PhD students, and alumni.

While recent data exist on the first jobs obtained by PhDs in the humanities, relatively little is known about the longer career trajectories of these degree-holders. The survey pilot will be the first large-scale effort to collect data on the long-term career pathways of humanities PhDs since 1996, when the National Science Foundation’s Survey of Doctoral Recipients (SDR) eliminated the humanities from its data-collection efforts. While the main purpose of the project is to enable institutions to collect data about their own PhD alumni, it will also provide an opportunity to analyze patterns across the 15 partner institutions.

CGS President Suzanne Ortega noted that the initiative has the potential to improve the preparation of humanities PhDs for a more diverse range of careers. “Information on the full range of careers that humanities PhDs follow will allow graduate schools to improve curricula, professional development opportunities and career counseling services,” she said. “By offering a more complete picture of PhD holders’ career options, it will also enable current and prospective students to make more informed decisions when selecting degree programs and planning their careers.”

(more)

In the coming months, CGS will issue a Request-For-Proposals (RFP) to CGS member institutions to participate in the project as funded partners. The RFP will be accompanied by the survey instruments and an Implementation Guide that offers a framework for successful implementation. In addition to collecting aggregate data from partners, CGS will gather information about the implementation process with a view to developing recommended practices for data collection and analysis.

CGS's career tracking project will complement its recently-announced effort to support career diversity for humanities PhDs. Through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), CGS has established the *Next Generation Humanities PhD Consortium* (Next Gen Consortium), a collaborative learning community for the 28 NEH [Next Generation PhD](#) grant awardees. These universities, all of which are CGS member institutions, will seek to broaden the career preparation of PhD students in the humanities.

About CGS

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.

About the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Founded in 1969, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.