

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CGS Expands Research & Partnership Network to Support PhD Career Pathways**

*Project Will Deepen Knowledge of Career Transitions Across All Broad Fields of Study*

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has announced a new phase in its efforts to understand and support diverse PhD career pathways. A significant grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF #2000750) will allow CGS to examine factors likely to impact retention and persistence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers, particularly for underrepresented students. Meanwhile, a previously-announced grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will seek to uncover both challenges and decision-making factors at points of career transition for Humanities PhDs.

“The new grants from NSF and Mellon will give us the opportunity to delve deeper into experiences of students and alumni in STEM and Humanities fields,” said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. “Our broader goal is to allow member universities to use data about PhD careers with greater nuance and awareness of challenges that students and alumni face at critical points of transition—in particular, from graduate school to career and in the years immediately following graduation. In 2021, we will launch a research hub for doctoral institutions as they seek to better understand and use PhD career data to improve programs.”

These projects build upon three earlier phases of CGS research: a [feasibility study](#) supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; a [survey development](#) phase supported by the Mellon, Sloan, and National Science Foundations (NSF #1534620); and a [survey implementation](#) phase supported by the Mellon Foundation and NSF (#1661272). In the most recent phase, CGS developed a network of 75 U.S. doctoral institutions through a competitive award process to collect data from STEM PhD students and alumni about their professional aspirations, career pathways, and career preparation.

Ortega believes the NSF-funded project will assist universities and scientific agencies in deploying investments and strategies that more effectively support STEM career trajectories. “Better understanding PhD career pathways has been a CGS research priority for nearly a decade, and this project takes the next step from understanding aspirations and experiences to bolstering career success. This work also has the potential to help funders and institutions refine their strategies for supporting graduate students and alumni pursuing careers in STEM fields.”

*The Humanities Coalition*, the new Mellon-funded effort, will further enhance the graduate education community’s understanding of humanities PhDs and their careers and to refine humanities-specific strategies for curricular change and program improvement. Additional research to better understand the nature of early career transitions for humanists is a primary component of the new initiative. CGS recently announced sub-awards for five institutions (Iowa State University, Purdue University, The University of Southern Mississippi, The University of Texas at El Paso, and University of Rochester) to join the data collection efforts. Additional sub-awardees will be identified in 2021 to support projects designed to develop and assess initiatives for better supporting humanities PhD students transitioning from graduate school.

#### **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.*