



PRESS RELEASE

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Joseph Oppong Wins Assistant and Associate Dean's Leadership Award *Geographer known for work on CGS Global South Initiative and developing mentorship programs.*

Washington, DC – Joseph Oppong, Associate Dean and Associate Vice Provost of the Toulouse Graduate School of the University of North Texas (UNT), received the Assistant and Associate Dean's Leadership Award today during an award ceremony at the Council of Graduate Schools' (CGS) 63rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

The award was created by the CGS Board of Directors to recognize individuals who have shown exemplary commitments to graduate education. Oppong has worked tirelessly to create programs that address graduate student professional development. During his tenure at UNT, he has created Thesis/Dissertation Boot Camps, established a Graduate Research and Fellowship Training program and a Graduate Students' Teaching Excellence Program (GSTEP) to prepare graduate students for teaching roles in higher education.

Oppong has also demonstrated his commitment to the graduate education community through active participation in the Association of Texas Graduate Schools, where he is currently serving as Treasurer (2019-2024), the Council of Southern Graduate Schools, the Council of Graduate Schools, and the Council of Historically Black Graduate Schools.

Oppong has also worked in partnership with the CGS Global South Initiative, participating in the CGS Global Conversations on Postgraduate Education: Exploring Pan-African Connections, leading CGS graduate deans on a trip to Ghana to initiate CGS collaboration with African graduate programs, and conducting Fulbright-supported work with graduate programs in Ghana.

Victor Prybutok, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School at UNT, who nominated Oppong for the award, celebrates his colleague's dedication to graduate education.

"I commend my associate, Dr. Joseph Oppong for his outstanding service to UNT's graduate students, the Toulouse Graduate School, our university, and the external graduate school community," Prybutok said.

Mary Farmer-Kaiser, CGS committee chair and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette celebrates Oppong's achievements.

"The success of graduate education, and most especially our operations on and beyond our campuses, depends upon much upon the individuals honored by this award. A great associate or assistant dean can zoom in and out, build teams and consensus, and inspire and advocate for others with lasting impact," Farmer-Kaiser said. "Dr. Joseph Oppong's exceptional leadership as the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education at the University of North Texas has had lasting impact at UNT through development and programs to support graduate student success and effective faculty mentorship. Most recently, his Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Ghana demonstrates impactful commitment to international collaboration and faculty development. These achievements—and so many more—make Dr. Oppong an outstanding recipient of the CGS Assistant and Associate Deans Leadership Award."

Assistant and Associate Dean Leadership Award nominees must demonstrate creativity and innovation in response to institutional challenges and/or limited budgets or resources. They must also demonstrate evidence of building partnerships both internal and external to the graduate school; identifying and obtaining resources, both internal and external to the graduate school; effectively advocating on behalf of graduate education; fostering inclusiveness in the graduate community; and engaging diverse student voices.

Nominees for the award must be a current assistant or associate-level dean at a CGS member institution (Regular or Associate) with primary administrative responsibility in graduate education. The winner receives a \$1,500 honorarium and is invited to plan and participate in a session at the CGS Summer Workshop on a topic of their choosing.

CGS gratefully acknowledges Duolingo English Test's financial support of the Assistant and Associate Dean's Leadership Award. Duolingo English Test, a CGS Sustaining Member, offers a digital language proficiency tool designed for international students and institutions.

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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.