

PRESS RELEASE

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Suzanne Ortega Announces Plans to Step Down as President of the Council of Graduate Schools

Washington, DC — Suzanne T. Ortega announced today that she will step down as President of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) effective June 30, 2025. Ortega has served as president of CGS, the leading national organization in the United States dedicated to the advancement of graduate education and research, since July 2014.

In a message sent today to graduate education leaders of 460 U.S. and Canadian member institutions and 25 international members, Ortega said, “It has been an honor collaborating with our member universities to make graduate education more accessible and rewarding for current and prospective graduate students. Our successes over the past ten years would not have been possible without the commitments and innovative mindsets of our member deans and campuses.”

Michael Cunningham, Chair of the CGS Board of Directors and Associate Provost, Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Tulane University, said, “Suzanne Ortega’s leadership has given our community focus and inspiration throughout the challenges of the past decade. Across CGS’s advocacy efforts, research and best practice initiatives, and membership programs, Suzanne has prioritized holistic, student-focused supports for graduate students at all phases of the educational journey.”

During her tenure as CGS President, Ortega has significantly expanded CGS’s portfolio of research and best practice initiatives on graduate education. Over a ten-year period, the Council launched a series of projects designed to improve career transparency and success of both master’s and doctoral students across all broad fields of graduate study. Supported by diverse funders, these projects have culminated in reports, peer-reviewed publications, data briefs, and a data dashboard designed to help graduate institutions better prepare students for rewarding careers. Collecting and sharing data and information on master’s education, a previously understudied area of graduate education, has also been a focus under Ortega’s leadership. Projects designed to improve degree outcomes for graduate students have been complemented by a ground-breaking study of graduate-level microcredentials.

The Council has also expanded its efforts to make graduate education more accessible and inclusive. In the area of graduate admissions, CGS has completed multiple projects designed to support holistic admissions processes and became the national home of the National Name Exchange, a program which seeks to expand participation in graduate education to meet the needs of an evolving workforce. Ortega has also spearheaded initiatives to support student persistence and success by understanding the needs of the “whole” student. These initiatives have included a project on supporting graduate student mental health and a recently launched project designed to improve student belonging in graduate programs.

In the area of government relations and public policy, the organization has established solid working relationships with previous and current presidential administrations and Congresses. Under Ortega’s leadership, CGS has advocated for

increased federal funding for graduate education and research programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and other federal research agencies. For the last three Congresses, CGS has advocated for student financial aid reforms and the expansion of the federal Pell Grant program to include graduate education.

A national search for Ortega's successor has been launched by the CGS Board of Directors. Information about the position can be [found on the website](#).

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The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 460 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada, and 25 international institutions, 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.