



PRESS RELEASE

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Julie Masterson Receives Debra W. Stewart Award for Outstanding Leadership in Graduate Education

Washington, DC – Julie Masterson, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate College at Missouri State University (MSU), received the Debra W. Stewart Award for Outstanding Leadership in Graduate Education during an award ceremony at the Council of Graduate Schools' (CGS) 64th Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

Created in 2016 by the CGS Board of Directors, this award recognizes outstanding leadership in graduate education, with a focus on leadership qualities exemplified by the Council's fifth president, Debra W. Stewart. According to her nomination materials, Masterson demonstrates these qualities through her accomplishments in expanding access to graduate programs.

At MSU, Masterson's initiatives for increasing graduate enrollment broke records for seven straight years. Applications for degrees increased by 72 percent and the total number of graduate students increased by 27 percent thanks to her innovative marketing and recruitment strategies. She also expanded MSU's graduate programs, leading the effort to gain state and national approval for offering professional doctoral degrees. Masterson has also created initiatives that broaden access for nontraditional, underrepresented and first-generation students that have reduced time-to-degree, completion and increased retention.

Michael Cunningham, Chair of the CGS Board of Directors and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research at Tulane University, highlighted Masterson's ability to expand academic opportunities for students.

"The recognition through the Debra W. Stewart Award underscores the significance of Julie Masterson's impactful initiatives in advancing graduate education," Cunningham said. "Her work in creating dual degrees and fostering collaborations with international partners demonstrates a commitment to global learning. Additionally, her establishment of a community Graduate Assistantship program demonstrates her efforts to integrate students into local engagement opportunities."

John Jasinski, Provost at MSU, stated that Masterson exemplifies the spirit of the award by promoting and increasing graduate education on campus.

"Julie's commitment to Missouri State's academic advancement will have a lasting impact. In her time as dean, she greatly increased our applications for degree-seeking, graduate students," Jasinski said. "She also spearheaded an expansion of our graduate offerings, successfully overseeing the development, approval and introduction of professional doctoral degrees."

The selection committee considers nominees with a strong reputation for ethics and integrity, a history of active participation in the graduate community, and a record of strategic vision and actions resulting in meaningful impacts. Areas of special consideration include evidence-based innovation, program development, diversity and inclusion, student learning and career outcomes, personnel management, policy advocacy in support of graduate education and research, and fiscal responsibility.

Nominees for the award must be a current senior graduate dean at a CGS member institution and cannot be an active member of the CGS Board of Directors. Nominations are made by member institutions and are reviewed by a selection committee of former graduate deans in the CGS community. The winner receives a \$4,000 prize to support continuing innovations at the awardee's institution.

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About CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 460 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.