



PRESS RELEASE

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The University of California, Riverside Receives ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education

Washington, DC – Today the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and ETS, a global education and talent solutions company, presented the University of California, Riverside (UCR) with the 2025 ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion.

Lidia Kos, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and Dawn Loyola, Director of GradSuccess in the UCR Graduate Division, enthusiastically accepted the co-sponsored award during a ceremony held at the CGS 65th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education recognizes promising, innovative proposals to enhance student success and degree completion at the master's and doctoral levels while promoting inclusiveness. The winning institution is selected on the strength of its proposal to meet the award's goals and to serve as a model for other schools. The winner receives a two-year, \$20,000 matching grant.

UCR's proposal, Embedded Expert Peer Mentors, will redesign their current mentorship program into a new and expanded service, the Graduate Student Mentorship Network (GSMN). The GSMN will embed experienced peer mentors in colleges and schools, allowing them to serve as resources to programs and departments as they establish and expand their mentorship programs. This model enables students in every graduate program to access mentorship and fosters active engagement of faculty and departments in mentoring while maintaining centralized resources and training.

Kos said that what distinguishes this initiative is its dual focus of broadening access for students while actively engaging faculty and departments in mentoring practices.

"I'm thrilled that UC Riverside's efforts to expand mentorship for graduate students are being recognized by CGS and ETS. The Embedded Expert Peer Mentors initiative reflects our belief that every student deserves access to guidance, community, and support from day one," Kos said. "This award affirms our commitment to making mentorship a shared and sustainable part of graduate education."

Chevelle Newsome, CGS President, said that the Embedded Expert Peer Mentors initiative puts students' needs at the heart of graduate programming by ensuring that there is structure to support student mentorship.

"Congratulations to UC Riverside on this innovative proposal. This program is an example of the type of student-centered excellence that will help incoming doctoral students thrive in their first year by creating a dedicated mentorship pathway," Newsome said. "We are also grateful to ETS for their support in recognizing this innovative way to promote best practices among graduate schools."

"Graduate student success thrives on strong mentorship and unwavering support," said Paul Gollash, Senior Vice President of TOEFL and GRE at ETS. "The Graduate Student Mentorship Network amplifies these opportunities across every department, ensuring every student benefits from meaningful guidance and authentic connection. ETS is proud to champion the University of California, Riverside's initiative to strengthen this work and deliver the resources needed to sustain a culture of mentorship that empowers students to excel and thrive."

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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.

About ETS

ETS is a global education and talent solutions organization enabling lifelong learners to be future ready. Our mission – advancing the science of measurement to power human progress – ensures our focus to enable everyone, everywhere, to demonstrate their skills and chart their path to future readiness for life. We are committed to readying 100M+ people for the next generation of jobs by 2035. We deliver on this commitment through trusted assessments and skills solutions – including TOEFL, TOEIC, GRE, Praxis and FutureNav – and groundbreaking initiatives powered by our Research Institute. With a robust global footprint, including subsidiaries (PSI), offices and operations in more than 200 countries and territories, we help over 50 million individuals each year measure their proficiency and unlock new opportunities. Discover how we expand our worldwide impact: www.ets.org