



# Council of Graduate Schools

## Statement on the America COMPETES Act

March 13, 2007

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) commends Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) for their leadership in introducing the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (America COMPETES) Act (S.761). They are currently joined by a bi-partisan group of 39 co-sponsors who recognize that this important legislation is necessary to ensure America's continued competitiveness in the global economy.

This bill would implement many of the recommendations offered by the National Academies' *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* report, with the goal of increasing investment in research, expanding opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, and building the infrastructure necessary to drive innovation. It recognizes the strategic importance of a strong scientific and technological enterprise to sustaining U.S. leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

CGS applauds the bill's recognition of the role that graduate education plays in our nation's ability to maintain a highly-skilled workforce, capable of remaining on the cutting edge of innovation and discovery. Key provisions in support of graduate education include:

- A doubling of the National Science Foundation (NSF) budget and increases in the number of Graduate Research Fellowships and Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeships (IGERT). These programs provide critical support for students pursuing graduate degrees in STEM fields.
- The establishment of a competitive fellowship program at the Department of Energy (DoE) for up to 700 students pursuing doctoral degrees in math and engineering, as well as increased funding for DoE's Office of Science.
- Authorization of funds to NSF for grants to higher education institutions to establish or improve Professional Science Master's (PSM) degree programs. PSM programs address the needs of industry, government and non-profit sectors for professionals highly trained in science or mathematics as well as in business and communication skills.
- Authorization of funds to implement part-time Master's degree programs in math, science and critical foreign language education for current teachers.

CGS and its 469 U.S. member institutions urge Congress to consider this important legislation as soon as possible. The provisions in this bill address the vital role played by graduate education as a key part of our national strategy to maintain our leadership in the global economy.

*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 480 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. CGS member institutions award more than 90% of the doctoral degrees and over 75% of the master's degrees in the U.S. 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.*

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