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**Statement of the Council of Graduate Schools
Responding to the State of the Union address
February 1, 2006**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) applauds President Bush for announcing in his State of the Union address an American Competitiveness Initiative to increase our investment in research and development, strengthen education, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. This initiative recognizes that to strengthen our economic competitiveness for a 21st century global economy, we must act now.

As the President noted, federal investment in basic research has proven critical to keeping America's economy strong. Such research investment is needed to generate new knowledge and develop new technologies, and the creation of both is dependent upon having a world class education system. Over the last 50 years, U.S. graduate schools have been the jewel in the crown of that system.

It is thus essential that any national strategy to promote U.S. competitiveness include support for graduate education, especially for students from under-represented groups and those pursuing advanced degrees in the key fields of science, math, engineering, and foreign languages. CGS supports the President's call for an increased investment in research and development, and notes that a similar investment is needed to develop the highly trained workforce required for our research and development enterprise.

Because this specialized training occurs primarily at the graduate level, we call on the President and Congress to expand the traineeships and fellowships that support graduate students, such as NSF IGERT and Graduate Research Fellowships, NIH National Research Service Awards, and the Department of Education's Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need program. Likewise, support for Professional Science Master's (PSM) degree programs, which prepare graduates for professional positions in business, government, and nonprofit sectors, is vital to America's competitiveness agenda.

Producing the next generation of Americans with the ability to perform innovative research is crucial to keeping our nation secure and economically competitive in the 21st century.

About the Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 450 institutions of higher education engaged in graduate education, research and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. CGS member institutions award 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.