



Council of Graduate Schools

Statement of the Council of Graduate Schools in response to the State of the Union address

January 26, 2007

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) welcomed President Bush's references in his State of the Union address this week to economic competitiveness and preparation in math and science. It is indeed critical that we have a highly-trained science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce, with the knowledge and skills to compete in the global economy.

This will require a commitment to math and science education not only at the K-12 level, but across the educational spectrum through graduate education. Graduate students are trained to perform the creative and innovative research that is essential to maintaining U.S. economic competitiveness and national security.

Leadership in research and innovation has been critical to the nation's economic leadership and national security. Research is driven by innovation, and graduate education drives research. Support for graduate education, especially for students pursuing advanced degrees in STEM fields, therefore must be part of any national strategy to promote U.S. competitiveness. CGS calls on the president and Congress to increase the budgets for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, so that these agencies can expand their basic research and graduate education programs in the physical and biomedical sciences.

The president also called for comprehensive immigration reform. Any such reform must include highly-skilled workers as well. International students and scholars have made significant contributions to our nation's economy and entrepreneurship, and the U.S. must continue to attract the best and brightest talent from around the globe, as it has for decades.

One way to accomplish this would be to create a special visa category for doctoral students and scholars in STEM fields, as was included in the immigration reform bill passed by the Senate last year. CGS urges the president and Congress to include such a provision in any immigration reform bill considered this year.

Producing the next generation of Americans with the ability to perform innovative research, and welcoming the world's top talent, are crucial to keeping our nation secure and economically competitive in the 21st century.

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 475 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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