



Council of Graduate Schools

STATEMENT

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Statement on Release of NRC Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs

Study reflects importance of graduate education to nation's future

The National Research Council's (NRC) Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs, released today, addresses the importance of graduate education in the United States by providing a more comprehensive, rigorous review of doctoral programs than popular rankings currently available.

The size and scope of the study—over 5,000 programs at 212 universities, spanning 62 fields—presents a significant opportunity and context in which to consider the importance of doctoral education. Graduate education leaders will be able to use information from the data based assessment as part of their efforts to continually improve the quality of U.S. doctoral programs, which are widely acknowledged as the best in the world.

The study will also be valuable to prospective students, providing them with accessible, comparable data on doctoral programs in order to help them select the one that best fits their interests and needs.

“U.S. graduate schools are a strategic national asset, and the results of this important study will help academic leaders and policy makers establish benchmarks for higher education both here and around the globe,” said Debra W. Stewart, Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) President. “Doctoral education strengthens our country’s research base and develops the talent we need to remain competitive in the knowledge-based, global economy of the 21st century,” she added.

The massive data collection effort required the participating universities to analyze and compile statistics on over 60 characteristics of each of their doctoral programs, such as faculty productivity, students, financing, and graduate placement.

The study comes at a time of increased emphasis on enhancing accountability in higher education, as President Obama has called for the U.S. to again have the world’s highest proportion of college graduates by 2020. The link to doctoral education is clear: meeting the President’s goal will require expanding support for graduate education immediately, in order to produce the future faculty needed to educate the next generation of students.

The NRC Assessment is available at: sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/resdoc/index.htm

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The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 93% of the doctoral degrees and 76% of the master's 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.*

** Based on data from the 2009 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*