

Current News  
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## Blacks Fuel Increase In Graduate School Enrollment, Says Report

Graduate school enrollment increased by 2 percent from 2004 to 2005 thanks to a spurt in the numbers of female and Black students earning advanced degrees, according to a new report released today by the Council of Graduate Schools.

The survey report, "Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 1986-2005," reveals that African-American enrollment grew by 6 percent overall in 2005, and by 11 percent in engineering programs.

"The gains in the participation of minority students in graduate education are very encouraging," says Dr. Debra W. Stewart, president of CGS. "However, the absence of across-the-board increases highlights that we cannot be complacent. Increasing enrollment of under-represented groups in graduate school, especially in science and engineering fields, is critical to maintaining America's economic competitiveness in the 21st century."

The report's survey results are based on responses from 643 institutions, which enrolled more than 1.5 million graduate students in the fall of 2005. Fifty-eight percent of graduate students were women, although men earned 52 percent of doctorates.

Black graduate students comprised the largest minority group, not counting U.S. citizens, with 135,020 students, roughly 12 percent of the Fall 2005 graduate population. Hispanics were the second largest group, with 7 percent. Asians and American Indians were 6 percent and 1 percent, respectively.

Stuart Heiser, a spokesperson at CGS, says one of the most encouraging trends is the growth in African-American enrollment. "African-American enrollment has grown five times as fast as enrollment has overall in the last 20 years," he says.

Health science continues to be the fastest growing field, increasing by 12 percent in 2005.

Dr. Suzanne T. Ortega, the University of Washington's vice provost and graduate dean, says she was heartened to see the progress among under-represented groups. Her school has seen growth in four areas: education, public affairs, engineering and medicine. Although the numbers overall are low in the school of engineering and medicine, the number of minority students have tripled since 2005.

In 1998, UW's School of Engineering had a total enrollment of 185 women and 631 men, with 108 Asians, 17 African-Americans, 18 Hispanics and three American Indians. By 2005, the school's enrollment stood at 232 women and 655 men, with 113 Asians, 17 African-Americans, 22 Hispanics and seven American Indians.

"We made a commitment to diversity and, by golly, it's paying off," Ortega says.

The report is available online at [www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/R\\_GED2005.pdf](http://www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/R_GED2005.pdf)

— *By Shilpa Banerji*