



Council of Graduate Schools

PRESS RELEASE

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Growth in Graduate Enrollment Remains Constant **Increases highest among women and African Americans**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is reporting today that enrollment in American graduate schools rose by 2% from 2004 to 2005. The increase was driven by growth in the numbers of female and African American students.

The survey report, *Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 1986-2005*, reveals significant increases in enrollment of ethnic minority groups in a number of fields. African American enrollment grew by 6% overall in 2005, and by 11% in Engineering programs. First-time Hispanic enrollment was up 10%, with Hispanic enrollment in Biological Sciences increasing by 16%. Total enrollment included 3% more women, compared to a 1% increase in men.

Overall enrollment in the key fields of Physical Sciences and Engineering stabilized in 2005 (no change vs. -3% and -1% last year, respectively), though there were mixed results for under-represented groups. Additionally, international students comprise a large portion of enrollment in these fields.

“The gains in the participation of minority students in graduate education are very encouraging,” said Debra W. Stewart, CGS President. “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,” Dr. Stewart continued.

The survey report also confirms previous CGS studies that reported a recovery in international student trends. First-time enrollment increased by 4% in 2005, the first increase in four years. The decline in total international enrollment slowed to -1%, from -3% in 2004 (changes in total enrollment lag behind first-time enrollment by several years).

Highlights of graduate enrollment and degree trends include:

- Both one-year and long-term enrollment growth have been due primarily to increases in the number of women pursuing graduate degrees. The proportion of graduate students who are female continues to increase: 58% in 2005, up from 57% in 2004.

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- Sixteen percent of graduate students are international, 26% of U.S. students are members of an ethnic minority group, and 45% attend part-time.
- Education and Business are the most popular fields of study, with 20% and 14% of total enrollment, respectively. Health Sciences continues to be the fastest growing field, increasing by 12% in 2005 and by an average of 4% since 1986.
- Enrollment patterns vary widely between fields. For example, 78% of Business students attend full-time, while 62% of Education students are part-time.
- While overall enrollment in Business continues to decline (-1% this year, -2% in 2004), enrollment in the field grew for all minority groups, and the decline in applications to Business programs slowed from -16% last year to -4% in 2005.
- African American enrollment grew at triple the overall rate (6%) as well as twice as fast as it did in 2004. Seventy-one percent of African American graduate students are female.
- While 40% of international graduate students study either Engineering or Physical Sciences, only 10% of U.S. students are enrolled in these two fields.
- The number of doctoral degrees awarded increased 6% in 2005, after remaining flat in 2004.
- Men earn 52% of doctorates, though they comprise 42% of total graduate enrollment.

About the report

Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 1986 to 2005 contains findings from an annual survey, co-sponsored with the Graduate Record Examinations Board, of institutions of higher education offering master's and doctoral degrees. The 643 responding institutions enroll 70% of all graduate students in the U.S., and grant nearly 80% of the nation's master's degrees and virtually all of the doctorates. The report is available on the CGS website at www.cgsnet.org.

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The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of 470 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.