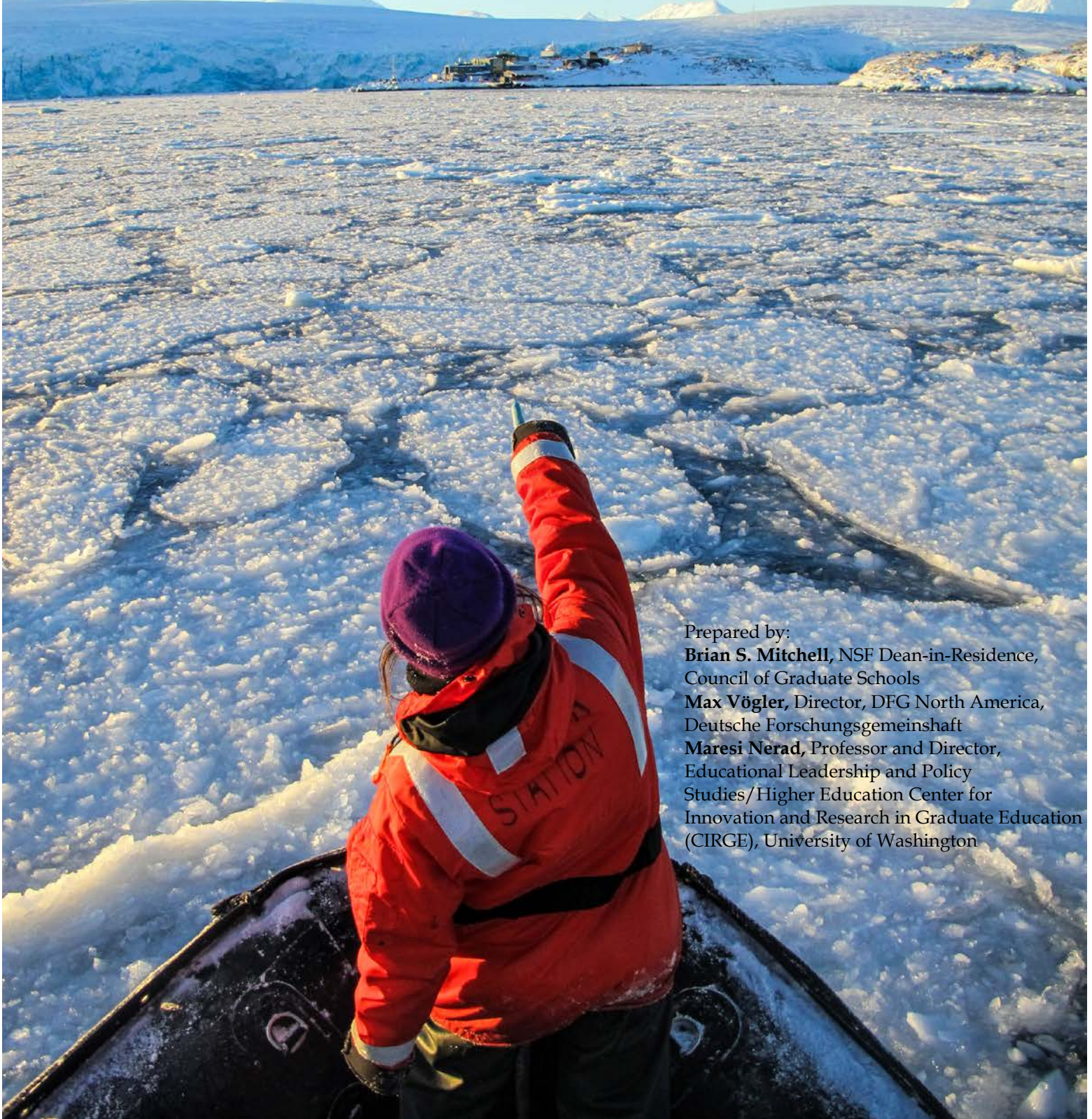


# EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

A REPORT FROM THE 2016 CGS-NSF-DFG WORKSHOP - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [Council of Graduate Schools](#) (CGS), the [Division of Graduate Education](#) (DGE) and the [Office of International Science and Engineering](#) (OISE) at the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the [North American Office of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft](#) (German Research Foundation, DFG) held a joint, one-day workshop on February 16, 2016 at the NSF in Arlington, VA to discuss evaluation of international research experiences for graduate students. The workshop brought together 55 international participants to present the current state of knowledge on assessing international research experiences and formulate a set of recommendations for program administrators to use in evaluating the effectiveness of these activities. The driving forces for this workshop were both pragmatic and programmatic: a need from funding agencies to justify the investment in international research activities that send student-citizens abroad; and a desire to better understand the impact international research experiences have on individual career and STEM workforce development. Thus, the workshop structure highlighted both program and participant assessment and evaluation. Key findings include an increased interest in continuing international research collaboration by graduate student participants in the NSF Partnerships in International Research and Education (PIRE) programs; a potential link between the networking opportunities international experiences provide and career success; and a continuing difficulty of documenting the development of global competencies that international experiences provide. A need for more robust research data was identified from structured conversations between the workshop participants, along with research questions related to the value of international experiences, their impact on career development, their timing and duration, and barriers to participation by under-represented groups.

As a result, the Advisory Committee has formulated the following set of recommendations:

1. Federal agencies and organizations that support international research collaborations – for either individuals or groups of students – should:
  - a. enable systematic reporting of student outcomes as part of the project evaluation.
  - b. also support foundational and longitudinal data collection and research studies that evaluate the long-term impact of international research experiences on participants' research careers and the global preparedness of the workforce.
  - c. provide statistics and information on students engaging in credit and non-credit activities abroad by degree level whenever possible.
2. Funding agencies and institutions should support early career researchers who have previous international research experiences in order to build and maintain international professional research networks.
3. Institutions that support international activities at the graduate level should incorporate long-term participant career tracking into their formative and summative assessment activities.
4. Principal investigators on collaborative international research projects should have embedded assessment and evaluation protocols for measuring the impact of their activities on participant career development, future leaders' personal development, and global citizenry.
5. Graduate students who participate in international experiences should be prepared not only to participate in long-term evaluation projects, but also to share their experiences with their peers and colleagues in formal and informal settings in order to demonstrate both the individual and collective good of their experiences.