



Council of Graduate Schools

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Stuart Heiser

(202) 223-3791 / sheiser@cgs.nche.edu

Two New Books Address the Promise and Challenges of International Graduate Collaborations

Two new publications from the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reveal that while there is growing recognition that international collaborations are a key part of graduate education and research training, there is a need for both clarity about the essential ingredients for success and greater strategic decision-making across and within partnering universities.

Prior CGS surveys found that joint and dual graduate degree programs have grown in number at a rapid pace and that many universities report plans for further growth. However, the new publications show that graduate education leaders considering such opportunities still have many unanswered questions regarding the benefits of such collaborations, the likelihood that they will be sustainable, and the best ways of ensuring that good research ideas find necessary institutional support.

Joint Degrees, Dual Degrees, and International Research Collaborations, the first publication, addresses these questions as they pertain to North American universities pursuing international collaborations. It describes the results of CGS research, funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, to identify barriers and strategies for success in international collaboration. This book is the first to describe US- and graduate-specific challenges and solutions in international collaboration. Two key findings are that many US programs report receiving more funding from foreign sources than from the federal government, and that domestic students participate far less in such collaborations than do international students.

Because of the need for greater institutional coordination and heightened scrutiny in the approval process, graduate deans are providing greater strategic direction than ever before, the research found, and graduate education leaders are seeking better guidelines and additional opportunities to exchange “best practices” with colleagues from around the world.

This book concludes by calling for greater national guidance to universities on how to measure and assess collaborative programs’ outcomes and success. It recommends that universities provide better training in the research ethics issues faced by students and faculty involved in international collaborations, as well as more international dialogue between faculty and university leaders to identify best practices and lessons learned in developing and sustaining international research collaborations.

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One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 230 • Washington, DC 20036

(202) 223-3791 • www.cgsnet.org

“International engagement is essential to the 21st century university and is needed to address complex global issues,” said Daniel Denecke, CGS Director of Best Practices. “International graduate collaborations help universities fulfill their missions by preparing students to succeed in today’s global research enterprise. As a result of this study, we now have an enhanced understanding of how graduate schools, faculty, and universities are beginning to work together to overcome challenges that often threaten success in international collaborations,” he added.

While the first book focuses on North American experiences, the second, *Global Perspectives on Graduate International Collaborations*, provides a diverse set of perspectives from graduate education leaders around the world.

The publication presents proceedings from the 2009 Strategic Leaders Global Summit on Graduate Education, held in San Francisco in December. Representatives from nine countries and six major national and international higher education associations discussed the challenges faced by university leaders in establishing and sustaining international collaborations, as well as practices that have proven successful to overcoming hurdles common across a broad range of countries. Challenges include ensuring quality and compatibility, developing academic staff and faculty, and measuring success.

The summit concluded with attendees reaching consensus on ten “[Principles and Practices of Effective International Collaborations](#),” which articulate shared values and support the development of successful collaborations worldwide. Representatives also approved four “action steps” that include expanding the annual Global Summit to include an even broader range of regions and countries.

“The 2009 Global Summit shed light on important differences between national contexts for international collaboration. This is important because universities increasingly find that merely understanding the policies and practices that shape collaborations in their own environment is insufficient,” said Julia Kent, Program Manager of Best Practices at CGS. “At the same time, nine countries agreeing to the Principles demonstrates that common values and practices exist regardless of national borders,” she added.

Both books are part of CGS’ broader efforts to promote improved understanding and dialogue about the globalization of graduate education. Information on ordering copies is available on CGS’s [International Publications](#) and [Graduate International Collaborations Project](#) webpages.

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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 95% of the doctoral degrees and 78% 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 2008 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees