



# Council of Graduate Schools

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Number of Universities Offering PSM Programs Surpasses 100**

#### **Number of PSM programs tops 200**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) announced today that the number of universities offering a Professional Science Master's (PSM) degree program has reached over 100.

The PSM has experienced remarkably rapid growth: the number of programs has doubled in barely two years, and has grown 36% so far this year alone. There are now over 200 PSM programs, located in 31 states and DC, as well in Canada and the UK.

The PSM is an innovative graduate degree designed to prepare students for science careers in business, government or non-profit organizations. Programs combine rigorous study of science or mathematics with courses in workplace skills highly valued by employers, such as project management and communication, and are unusually nimble in adjusting to shifting workforce demands.

PSM programs are officially recognized by CGS if they meet criteria established by a national board covering areas such as core curriculum, the inclusion of a professional skills component, and the involvement of an employer advisory board.

First developed in 1997, early PSM programs were concentrated in biotechnology and financial/industrial math. Programs have now been established in fields such as Human-Computer Interaction, Climate Science and Solutions, Restoration Ecology, Biosecurity and Biodefense, and Forensic Science.

The range of universities offering PSMs is also diverse: they include regional public and master's-level institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and public and private research universities.

"The rapid acceptance and growth of this new type of master's degree reflects the broad demand from employers for science professionals with valuable workplace skills," said Carol B. Lynch, Director of the PSM Initiative at CGS. "It also reflects the growing number of students who are interested in pursuing cutting edge science careers as part of a highly-skilled 21st century workforce", she added.

There has also been growing federal support for the PSM. A 2008 report from the National Academies recommended "concerted action to accelerate the development nationally of professional science master's education" and funding for PSM students and programs by all federal science agencies.

Just this spring the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded grants totaling \$15 million to 21 institutions to develop or expand PSMs, in an initiative authorized by the America COMPETES Act and funded by the 2009 stimulus bill.

Legislation to reauthorize the COMPETES Act is currently being considered in Congress. A House Science Committee report accompanying the bill explicitly notes the Committee's intent that PSM programs remain eligible for NSF funding. Similarly, a recent Senate Appropriations Committee report lauded the PSM as "a critical program for preparing future science professionals and leaders," and urged NSF to continue funding PSM programs in fiscal year 2012 and beyond.

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CGS is working to make the Professional Science Master's degree a regular feature of graduate education by providing official recognition of new programs, helping universities achieve such affiliation, providing guidance to existing programs, and informing government and industry leaders of this unique degree. More information about the PSM is available at [www.sciencemasters.com](http://www.sciencemasters.com).

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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