

## PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release:**  
January 31, 2014

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### **CGS Statement on the President's State of the Union Address**

Washington, DC — *Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) President Debra W. Stewart today released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address on January 28, 2014. CGS is the only national organization dedicated solely to the advancement of graduate education and research. The organization draws its institutional members from colleges and universities significantly engaged in graduate education, research, and scholarship culminating in the award of the master's or doctoral degree.*

In his 2014 State of the Union message, President Obama expressed his support for strategic investments to spur economic growth and secure the nation's continued position as a leader in global innovation. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is encouraged by the president's call for policies to increase job opportunities, expand our skilled workforce, support basic research, reform immigration, and increase access to education.

We appreciate the president's recognition that our nation's prosperity depends on expanded access to educational opportunity. And the evidence suggests that opportunities need to span kindergarten through graduate school. Today access to and support for graduate education is a national imperative. We know that the payoff from graduate education is undeniable in terms of economic growth, innovation and job creation

Many of the skills that U.S. employers are seeking are only gained through advanced learning. Our economy depends on this highly trained talent to compete with other nations, which are investing heavily in graduate education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by 2022 the U.S. will see an 18.4% increase in jobs requiring a master's degree and a 16% increase for people with doctoral degrees.

While the president's remarks focused on the benefits of K-12 and undergraduate education for building the new economy, we urge the administration to give equal attention in his future agenda to policies that support the pipeline of talented U.S. students enrolling in graduate programs. There are immediate and consequential risks if this pipeline falters.

One of these immediate risks is that the U.S. will fall behind in technological innovation. As President Obama emphasized, innovation will play a critical role in economic growth: "The nation that goes all-in on innovation today will own the global economy tomorrow." We commend the president's acknowledgment that federally-funded research is critical to the "ideas and inventions behind Google and smartphones," and his call for Congress to "undo the damage done by last year's cuts to basic research so we can unleash the next great American discovery[...]" Graduate degree holders create start-up companies, patents and jobs in every U.S. state.

*(more)*

At every level of education, it is vital that careers and the requisite skills needed to pursue those careers are clearly shared with students. A number of recent reports on graduate education reform, based on CGS's *Pathways through Graduate School and Into Careers* report, have concrete recommendations for universities, business leaders, and policymakers designed to address these challenges and ensure that America grows the highly-skilled talent we need.

CGS also supports President Obama's call for immigration reform. About 43% of international students studying at our colleges and universities are pursuing graduate degrees. International students who study in the U.S. often want to remain in the U.S. to work in jobs that utilize the knowledge and skills they gained through their graduate studies. Given the challenges and restrictions that international students now face upon receiving their master's and doctoral degrees, it is in our collective best interest to permit those who want to stay and contribute to our economy following completion of their degrees to do so.

We look forward to working with the Obama Administration to ensure that U.S. graduate schools can continue their vital role in achieving the goal of a creative, innovative, knowledgeable and skilled workforce that is ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century global economy.

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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 92% 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 2012 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees*