

January 22, 2014

United States Congress  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Members of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress:

As you return for the second session of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, you will be considering a number of issues that are key to the future of American job growth, innovation and productivity. To meet these priorities, the U.S. will need to recognize the critical role of graduate education in producing the highly skilled individuals that fuel innovation and top-level research activities. The U.S. cannot afford to lose its place as a producer of, and magnet for, top talent in today's global economy, especially as many countries compete to attract master's and doctoral degree holders.

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) represents over 500 universities and is the only national organization dedicated solely to the advancement of graduate education and research. CGS member institutions award more than 92 percent of all U.S. doctorates and nearly 80 percent of all U.S. master's degrees. The nation's graduate schools are the epicenters of discovery, innovation, and application, leading to advancements that affect every American. Every day graduate school faculty and students are conducting leading-edge research, creating and sharing knowledge, and teaching the next generation of our leaders, scholars, scientists, and professionals.

Among the many issues that may receive congressional consideration this year are the reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and America COMPETES, along with immigration reform. Each of these has implications for graduate students and graduate education. I urge you to consider the following issues:

- With respect to federal student loans, talented Americans must not be disadvantaged for pursuing graduate study. Because of recent congressional actions, graduate students are paying more for their student loans, a disparity that has been particularly hard-hitting for underrepresented minorities and master's degree students.
- With respect to America COMPETES, graduate students at all levels need broader career options and pathways to jobs in government, non-profit organizations and business. Six recent reports on graduate education reform support this goal and form the basis for suggested changes to the Twenty-First Century Graduate Education section in current law.
- Immigration reform is critical to ensuring that the U.S. can continue to attract top talent. Our economy would greatly benefit from allowing international students who have received advanced degrees in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines to earn green cards and work in jobs related to their fields of study.

Please take into account the needs of those obtaining master's and doctoral degrees and the programs that support them as you work on legislation this year. Our research, data and best practices reports can be a resource for you as issues related to graduate education and research are considered over the coming months.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss these and other issues affecting graduate education with you and your staff. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 223-3791, as we look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debra W. Stewart', written in a cursive style.

Debra Stewart