

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Graduate Schools Report Strong Growth in First-Time Enrollment of Underrepresented Minorities**

**Overall First-Time Graduate Enrollment Increases by 3.9%**

Washington, DC — The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today reported modest growth in first-time enrollments for a number of key demographic groups enrolling in graduate school. Notably, all underrepresented minority (URM) groups monitored by the survey saw greater increases in first-time graduate enrollment than their White, non-Hispanic counterparts, although their overall representation in the graduate student body still remains relatively low. Among first-time U.S. citizens and permanent resident graduate students in Fall 2015, at least 22.5% were underrepresented minorities, including American Indian/Alaska Native (0.5%), Black/African American (11.8%), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (0.2%), and Hispanic/Latino (10%).

CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega responded to the growth in URM graduate enrollment with cautious optimism. “The sizeable increase in overall first-time enrollments for underrepresented minorities, particularly seen among URM women, is great news, but the share of underrepresented minorities among U.S. citizens and permanent residents is similar to previous years. URMs remain proportionally underrepresented, and we must sustain this trend for several years to ensure a larger impact across graduate programs and a more diverse workforce.”

Survey results also showed increases in domestic and international enrollments. Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015, there was an increase (3.8%) in first-time enrollments for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, the largest one-year increase since 2010. These gains contributed to a 3.9% one-year increase in all first-time graduate enrollment between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015—the largest since 2009.

First-time graduate enrollment of international students rose by 5.7%, a rate considerably lower than in recent years, though international students still constitute a robust share (22%) of first-time graduate students. At research universities with very high research activity (RU/VH), three out of ten first-time enrollees (30.4%) were temporary residents. Shares of international students among first-time enrollees were particularly high for fields of mathematics and computer sciences (63.2%) followed closely by engineering (58.5%).

Institutions responding to the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment & Degrees for Fall 2015 again set new highs for the admissions cycle, receiving more than 2.18 million applications, extending over 877,000 offers of admission in Fall 2015, and enrolling nearly 507,000 incoming, first-time graduate students in graduate certificate, education specialist, master’s, or doctoral programs.

Other report findings are summarized below.

### **Findings by field**

- Engineering, business, and health sciences saw the largest number of total applications for Fall 2015. Together these broad fields of study accounted for 39.3% of total applications.
- The largest share of doctoral-level applications was seen in the social and behavioral sciences, which saw 18.7% of all doctoral applications reported. Social and behavioral sciences was also the second most competitive in terms of acceptance rates (14.7%), trailing only business (13.4%).
- Consistent with previous surveys, business, education, and health sciences were the three largest broad fields of study in Fall 2015 for first-time graduate enrollments.
- Roughly one-third (33.4%) of all first-time graduate students were enrolled in master's degree or graduate certificate programs in business and education.

### **Findings by degree level**

- The large majority of first-time graduate enrollment in Fall 2015 was in programs leading to a master's degree or a graduate certificate (83.6%).
- Applications for admission decreased for doctoral programs (-4.3%) and increased for master's/other programs (3.8%) between Fall 2014 and Fall 2015.
- At the doctoral level, education (4%) had the largest one-year increase in the number of applications of all broad fields of study. At the master's/other level, mathematics and computer sciences (11.2%) reported the highest one-year percentage increase.

### **Student demographics**

- The majority of first-time graduate students both at master's degree and certificate level (58.2%) and at the doctoral level (51.3%) were women.
- According to survey respondents, women earned nearly two-thirds (66.4%) of the graduate certificates, 58.4% of the master's degrees, and 51.8% of the doctorates. Academic year 2014-15 marked the seventh straight year women earned a majority of doctoral degrees.
- Overall among first-time enrollees in Fall 2015, men were more likely to be enrolled full-time than women (72.8% and 66%).
- All underrepresented minority groups experienced larger increases in first-time graduate enrollment than in the prior year.

### **About the report**

Graduate Enrollment and Degrees: 2005 to 2015 presents the findings of an annual survey of U.S. graduate schools, co-sponsored by CGS and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board. It is the only annual national survey that collects data on graduate enrollment by all fields of study and is the only source of national data on graduate applications by broad field of study. The report, which includes responses from 617 institutions, presents statistics on graduate applications and enrollment for Fall 2015, degrees conferred in 2014-15, and trend data for one-, five- and ten-year periods.

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*The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced 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.*