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May 3, 2012

The Honorable Rush Holt
United States House of Representatives
1214 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Holt,

On behalf of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and our membership of over 500 U.S. institutions of higher education I write in support of the "America Innovates Act of 2012."

This legislation recognizes the vital role played by U.S. graduate education in preparing the highly skilled scientific and technological talent the country needs to support its innovation agenda. The establishment of an American Innovation Bank will signal a commitment to the importance of innovation to our country's prosperity.

We are particularly supportive of the bill's provisions relating to federal support of graduate education at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The authorization of additional funding for the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training (IGERT) program at NSF would enable institutions with IGERT grants to support graduate students who are interested in performing some portion of their graduate research in an industrial or non-academic setting.

Further, by requiring that institutions enrolling at least six students who receive NSF Graduate Research Fellowships (GRFs), NIH National Research Service Awards (NRSAs) or other federal training/fellowship programs in STEM areas must offer such students training in areas such as intellectual property protection, commercialization, and the development of science discoveries, the bill will ensure our nation's graduate researchers have the know-how and skills to take their research to market where it can benefit the economy.

The bill also authorizes NSF to offer grants for the development of Professional Science Master's (PSM) program curricula at institutions of higher education. CGS has long been a supporter of the PSM and we see it as an important collaborative effort between universities and employers, illuminating pathways for students into careers outside academia and preparing the human talent necessary for the 21st century global economy.

The provisions of this legislation echo the findings and recommendations in ***Pathways Through Graduate School and Into Careers***, a new landmark report recently released by the Council of Graduate Schools and ETS. This report advocates greater collaboration among employers, universities and policymakers in meeting the nation's need for highly skilled talent with graduate level preparation.

We are encouraged at the companion legislation introduced in the Senate by Mr. Lautenberg and Mr. Brown of Ohio. We look forward to working with your office to advance this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Debra W. Stewart'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'S'.

Debra W. Stewart
President