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## News Release

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### Duke University Receives ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education

Washington, DC – The sixth annual ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion was presented to Duke University during the 54th Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). The award is sponsored by CGS and Educational Testing Service (ETS). Dr. Paula McClain, Dean of The Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education, accepted the award on Duke's behalf.

The award recognizes promising, innovative proposals to enhance student success and degree completion at the master's or doctoral level while promoting inclusiveness. The winning institution is selected on the strength of its proposal to meet the award's goals and to serve as a model for other schools. The winner receives a two-year, \$20,000 matching grant.

Duke's proposal will create Duke OPTIONS (Online Professional Development Tool for Individual OpportuNities), a tool that will help doctoral students explore a wide range of careers and create a professional development plan to acquire the skills, experience, credentials, and connections they need while they are in graduate school.

"Our students are telling us that in addition to their advisors, they need more sources of assistance in navigating career options," Dr. McClain said. "At Duke, we provide many professional development opportunities, and this tool will help students create roadmaps for their career paths and goals and connect them to the right opportunities at the right time."

The selection committee noted that Duke OPTIONS is worthy of recognition for the way it will empower students to set their own professional development agendas throughout their doctoral studies. Also, because prospective applicants will have access to Duke OPTIONS, the tool will gather data on how professional development opportunities can be used to achieve recruiting and admissions goals. Perhaps most exciting of all is the potential Duke OPTIONS has to reveal the effect of professional development on persistence and degree completion.

Following the two-year funding period, Duke OPTIONS will be sustained as a permanent program thanks to commitments by the Duke administration and the Graduate School.

*(more)*

“The graduate education community benefits tremendously from the practices showcased by this award competition,” said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. “On behalf of our members, I thank Duke University for sharing their creative expertise with graduate institutions everywhere. And of course, I thank ETS, whose support makes possible this novel way to promote best practices among the graduate community.”

“Doctoral degrees are taking graduates to all corners of the workforce today,” said David G. Payne, Vice President and COO of ETS’s Higher Education Division. “As graduate schools redefine professional development to better reflect the broad range of careers PhDs are choosing, Duke’s project is well-poised to become a model for other institutions. We are especially excited to see the project’s focus on the full life-cycle of doctoral study, the transparency it adds for prospective applicants, and its potential to improve degree completion—especially among underrepresented minority students. ETS is delighted to support Duke in creating this innovative program for the benefit of doctoral students.”

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### **About ETS**

At ETS, we advance quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research. ETS serves individuals, educational institutions and government agencies by providing customized solutions for teacher certification, English language learning, and elementary, secondary and post-secondary education, as well as conducting education research, analysis and policy studies. Founded as a nonprofit in 1947, ETS develops, administers and scores more than 50 million tests annually — including the *TOEFL*® and *TOEIC*® tests, the *GRE*® tests and *The Praxis Series*™ assessments — in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide. [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)

### **About CGS**

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 91% of the doctoral degrees and 81% 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 2013 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees