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## News Release

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### University of California Los Angeles Receives ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education

Washington, DC – The seventh annual ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion was presented to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). The award is sponsored by CGS and Educational Testing Service (ETS). Dr. Robin L. Garrell, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of The Graduate Division, accepted the award on UCLA's behalf during the 55th Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS).

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.

UCLA plans to build upon an existing web-based platform, the Graduate and Postdoctoral Educational Support (GRAPES), and create a new tool – Smart Recommendations (Smart Recs) – that will provide funding information to students based on their unique backgrounds, academic pursuits, and aspirational goals. Once the Smart Recs platform for funding information is built, UCLA plans to expand it to include other recommendations to support student success, such as information on campus seminars and workshops, professional and career development opportunities, and key deadlines.

"We are excited about developing a dynamic, customized recommendation system that will support the success of UCLA graduate students. The potential impact of Smart Recs extends well beyond our campus. We hope that other institutions will take note of our UX design methodology, with its focus on the graduate student user experience." Dr. Garrell said. "Because the software architecture is largely open-source, we look forward to exploring ways the underlying technology and infrastructure can be shared."

"The practices showcased by this award competition greatly benefit the graduate education community," said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. "On behalf of our members, I thank the University of California Los Angeles for sharing their creative expertise with graduate institutions everywhere by designing a platform that will provide graduate schools with better tools to bolster graduate student success. And of course, I thank ETS, whose support makes possible this novel way to promote best practices among the graduate community."

David Payne, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Global Education at ETS, also lauded UCLA's innovation. "Smart Recs will provide much needed support to prospective and current graduate students and postdocs as they move through admissions, deadlines, courses and seminars, professional development and especially funding," said Payne. "With this initiative, UCLA brings it all together in one place to save students time, reduce frustration and make for easier access to necessary information to help them pursue their studies and careers. Importantly, Smart Recs will meet students where they spend a great deal of time and where they look to gain information – online and connected to useful and needed information."

This year, the selection committee chose one institution to be named as Honorable Mention: The University of Buffalo, SUNY for the "Master's 360 – Enhancing Opportunities for Academic Success and Professional Development." This project's aim is to expand the existing initiatives of the iSEED program to enhance and improve academic success for all URMs in any discipline at the master's level. Graham Hammill, vice provost for graduate education and dean of the Graduate School, was recognized during the award luncheon.

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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 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.

\* Based on data from the 2013 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees