



News Release

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The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Receives ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education

Washington, DC – Today the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and ETS presented The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) with the 2020 ETS/CGS Award for *Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admission through Completion*. Dr. Suzanne Barbour, dean of The Graduate School, accepted the co-sponsored award on UNC-Chapel Hill's behalf during a post-meeting event of the virtual CGS 60th Annual Meeting.

The ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education recognizes promising, innovative proposals to enhance student success and degree completion at the master's and doctoral levels 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.

This year's winner, The Graduate School of UNC-Chapel Hill, will build on the work of its [Diversity and Student Success](#) (DSS) team which strives to create an environment where students are equipped to not only survive but to thrive during their tenure as graduate students. The current racial unrest, the Black Lives Matter movement, and COVID-19 have elevated the importance of DSS's work. DSS/The Graduate School will pilot the development of intersecting learning communities for both graduate students and faculty/departments to continue building upon innovative diversity and equity efforts, to address various components of systemic racism, and to create an inclusive and welcoming climate for all graduate students.

The intersectional learning communities will build upon the existing DSS work, which includes five diversity initiatives and one recruitment initiative. Through the Carolina Grad Student F1RSTS, Global Grads, Initiative for Minority Excellence, Military-Affiliated Grads, and Queer Graduate and Professional Students efforts, DSS recognizes the intersectionality of identity and encourages students to join as many of the initiatives as appropriate. The Summer Undergraduate Pipeline (SUP) program, a DSS recruitment initiative, works directly with summer undergraduate research programs to create connections and provide the necessary tools for a successful transition into a graduate career.

"We are very grateful for the honor of this support, which will help us to realize our goal of ensuring that every UNC-Chapel Hill graduate student has a positive and productive experience during graduate school," said Dr. Barbour. "Our project builds on the success of DSS in two crucial ways, by both better preparing graduate students to thrive in the cultures that they find in their departments and by providing departments with tools to assess and further strengthen their climates to better serve all graduate students."

“Ensuring graduate students from traditionally underrepresented groups succeed is crucial to our future. I cannot emphasize enough that this is a top priority for CGS, and the work UNC-Chapel Hill is doing through its DSS project and under the leadership of Dr. Barbour prioritizes student success by placing the critical need for an inclusive environment at the center of graduate education,” said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. “We are so grateful to ETS for their support in recognizing this innovative way to promote best practices among graduate schools.”

“We are proud to recognize the outstanding innovation in diversity by UNC-Chapel Hill with the 2020 ETS/CGC Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: from Admission through Completion,” said Dr. David Payne, vice president and chief operating officer of global higher education at ETS. “The efforts by the DSS team at UNC-Chapel Hill are a shining example of advancing equity by fostering a more inclusive school community to ensure that all graduate students are welcome, supported and have an opportunity to succeed.”

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

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.

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