



Council of Graduate Schools

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

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“Steps Taken on the Path Forward” highlights impact of landmark report

Washington, D.C. (April 5, 2011) – This morning, policymakers, business leaders, and higher education stakeholders shared their perspectives on the importance of graduate education to U.S. innovation and competitiveness and discussed the impact of last year’s landmark report *“The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States.”*

The Path Forward report, a joint effort of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS), called on the federal government, universities and industry to work together to ensure that graduate education remains a viable option for a growing number of students.

At this year’s forum, a new paper [“Steps Taken on the Path Forward”](#) was released; the document reviews the impact of *The Path Forward* one year later and outlines issues and challenges confronting graduate education now and into the future. On campuses, the report has:

- Influenced critical decision processes by helping to shape institutional strategic plans and goals for graduate education programs;
- Changed institutional priorities by highlighting the importance of graduate education, the report resulted in making graduate fellowships the top priority for one institution’s fundraising;
- Created new communication channels, such as catalyzing new online discussions between deans and faculty about graduate education issues and development of a video aimed at clarifying career pathways for students;
- Shaped evaluation metrics and affirming the commitment of graduate deans to developing and using outcome measures and offering more information to prospective and current students;
- Introduced new programs, particularly professional development programs for graduate students.

“The report’s findings and recommendations have had an impact on a number of fronts - from federal policy to new university based strategic directions. They have facilitated a national conversation about the role and value of graduate education and its centrality to our quality of life.” said Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Schools. “While challenges remain, stakeholders across the country have taken the report’s findings to heart and are working to strengthen the graduate education enterprise,” she added.

Among the featured speakers were several policymakers as well as business leaders and graduate deans. Kurt Landgraf, President and CEO of ETS, Stan Litow, VP of Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs, IBM and President of IBM's Foundation, and Ronald Townsend, Executive VP for Global Laboratory Operations, Battelle Memorial Institute, discussed the importance of human talent to innovation and competitiveness.

A panel of graduate deans followed, made up of Robert Augustine, Dean of the Graduate School, Eastern Illinois University; Lisa Tedesco, Vice Provost & Dean, Laney Graduate School, Emory University; and James Wimbush, Dean, The University Graduate School, Indiana University. Each dean shared examples of the ways they used the report at the local and state level.

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The event underscored the role of graduate education in maintaining and enhancing U.S. competitiveness and the need to support this strategic national asset.

About *The Path Forward* report

The report, *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States*, was guided by the Commission on the Future of Graduate Education — a group jointly formed by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and Educational Testing Service (ETS) in 2009 to study how graduate education can meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Commission is comprised of 18 university presidents and chancellors, provosts, graduate school deans, corporate leaders and higher education scholars. The report and additional information is available at www.fgereport.org.

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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 93% of the doctoral degrees and 76% 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 2009 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees