



Graduate Education Leaders Issue Global Statement on Career Outcomes for Students

International agreement reached on building pathways from graduate programs

Hong Kong (September 28, 2011) – Higher education leaders from 16 countries agreed today to a statement of principles to strengthen and create pathways from graduate school to careers.

The agreement was reached after discussions at the Fifth Annual Strategic Leaders Global Summit, “Career Outcomes for Graduate Students: Tracking and Building Pathways,” jointly sponsored and hosted by the U.S.-based Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and The University of Hong Kong (HKU). The Global Summit is an annual event designed to promote international best practices on a pressing topic in master’s and doctoral education.

The focus on career outcomes was prompted by several parallel trends:

- Academic institutions are seeking to enhance the professional skills and career outcomes of graduate students due to increasing student demand for career development opportunities.
- Governments are working to strengthen the link between graduate training and workforce development in the competitive global economy.
- Employers are joining national and global conversations about skills needed to succeed and expectations they have for graduates.

Many universities have begun developing their own methods of tracking graduates’ career pathways and to establish programs that prepare students to adapt to new and evolving career demands. The summit featured sessions on creating institutional cultures that value career and professional development, defining new areas of professional skill, the role of programs and faculty in supporting student careers, global trends shaping careers and professional needs, and opportunities for global collaboration.

“Thirty-five university and graduate school leaders have come together at this Summit to provide a much-needed roadmap for supporting the next generation of leaders and practitioners in our knowledge-based society,” said Professor Paul K.H. Tam, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) and Dean of the Graduate School at The University of Hong Kong. “It is timely and exciting for the University of Hong Kong, which is celebrating her first 100 years of existence, to co-host this important international forum with the Council of Graduate Schools.”

During the final session, participants reached consensus on a set of principles intended to serve as a framework for establishing and exchanging best practices in tracking career outcomes for graduate students and enhancing their preparation for a wide variety of careers, both in the participants’ home countries and via international networks.

“Once again, the Global Summit has yielded a diverse set of best practice strategies that will inspire new efforts to enhance the experiences of (post)graduate students,” stated CGS President Debra Stewart. “While there are significant differences among national and regional approaches to enhancing career outcomes for (post)graduate students, this year’s summit participants have demonstrated strong collective support for initiatives that make career preparation a more integral part of graduate education.”

[continued]

The 35 participants included deans and other leaders of graduate schools and representatives of national and international associations devoted to graduate education. Along with Hong Kong and the United States, the countries represented were: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, and South Korea.

The Principles, guidelines for organization practice, are attached.

Previous Strategic Leaders Global Summits focused on international collaboration in graduate education ([Banff, 2007](#) and [San Francisco, 2009](#)) promoting scholarly and research integrity ([Florence, 2008](#)); and measuring quality in graduate education and research ([Brisbane, 2010](#)). A report based upon the proceedings will be forthcoming in 2012.

More information on the Global Summit is available at www.cgsnet.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 92% of the doctoral degrees and 77% 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.*

www.cgsnet.org

About The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) is Hong Kong's oldest university. As an English-medium university with a history that stretches back 100 years, it has grown with and helped shape the city from which it takes its name.

Today, HKU is recognized internationally as a dynamic and comprehensive university of world-class standing. With its distinguished excellence in research and outstanding performance in teaching, it attracts first-class teaching and research staff and brilliant students from around the world.

HKU is ranked as Asia's best university by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2011, and as 21st in the world by the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings in 2010-11.

Press contacts:

The University of Hong Kong

Anna Wong, Graduate School
annaw@hkucc.hku.hk/(852) 2517-6382

Council of Graduate Schools:

Belle Woods
bwoods@cgs.nche.edu/202-461-3858



Principles and Practices for Building Pathways from Graduate School to Careers

Preamble:

The global knowledge economy is developing rapidly, creating new research networks and structures as well as new career opportunities for (post)graduate students. This evolving environment demands a clearer understanding of the career pathways that future leaders in knowledge-based professions will both pursue and create. Leaders in (post)graduate education have an important role to play in ensuring that academic and professional goals of (post)graduate programs are transparent and complementary. To this end, the delegates for the 2011 Strategic Leaders Global Summit have agreed to the following principles for supporting the career development and lifelong learning of master's and doctoral students.

Principles:

1. (Post)graduate leaders in a broad range of countries must work together to support the public trust in knowledge-based professions. A collaborative effort will help support the recognition of (post)graduate education as the basis of economic progress and development that meets the economic, cultural, and social needs of society. Effective public policy advancing (post)graduate education will be strengthened by active collaboration across nations.
2. Research and advancement of knowledge is at the core of doctoral education. At the same time, doctoral education must be strengthened by the integration of essential transferable skills. Specific skills valued across national and regional contexts need to be articulated, compared, and understood.
3. Universities, graduate schools, and faculty/academic staff must play a key role in ensuring that students are aware of, and prepared for, a wide array of careers in the academic, public, and private sectors. Students should have the opportunity to develop essential transferable skills with the support of appropriate experts, depending on their chosen career pathways.
4. It is important for universities and other stakeholders to expand the capacity to track career patterns and outcomes for (post)graduate students over time. It will be particularly useful to track career outcomes according to a graduate's
 - degree level and type
 - discipline and field
 - the type of global research experiences pursued
 - exposure to transferable skills.
5. Longitudinal data on career outcomes should be used to inform and improve the quality of graduate education and to advance the public good.

6. Direct mentors and supervisors of (post)graduate students are crucial to students' professional development and success. They must receive the information and support needed to prepare students for the wide diversity of careers available to them.
7. (Post)graduate programs and curricula are enhanced by greater awareness of global workforce trends. It is important for (post)graduate institutions to engage students, faculty, and other stakeholders in developing new degree features that respond to changes in global research and careers.
8. (Post)graduate institutions and faculty require a solid understanding of the conceptual and personal skills required to lead and contribute to the global knowledge community. These skills must be deep (within disciplines and fields of research) as well as broad (transferable to a range of professional activities).