

PRESS RELEASE

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Council of Graduate Schools Receives \$2 Million Grant from Pfizer Inc Launching Partnership for Ph.D. Completion Project

New York, NY – January 12, 2004. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today announced that Pfizer has committed a \$2 million, three-year grant that will support a project to address the issues of doctoral attrition and completion in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. This series of projects will take place at major U.S. research universities and is designed to create and pilot intervention strategies and to evaluate the effect of these strategies upon the institutions' attrition patterns and completion rates.

With attrition from Ph.D. programs averaging 30% to 50%, the nation is losing an important resource of highly trained personnel just as worldwide demand for science and engineering talent is rising. The attrition toll is especially severe on women and members of underrepresented minority groups, who leave Ph.D. programs at greater rates than majority or international students.

"Through its generous support, Pfizer Inc is demonstrating an extraordinary commitment to work with the graduate community in addressing one of the work forces' most serious challenges," said Debra W. Stewart, President, of the Council of Graduate Schools. "The joint project reflects shared concerns among the higher education community and employers about U.S. production of science Ph.D. graduates, especially among U.S. citizens, minorities and other underrepresented groups."

"Addressing Ph.D. completion appears to be the most promising strategy to address the related concerns about development of an adequate domestic talent pool and meeting workforce demand," said Joe Bonito, vice president of Global Leadership Effectiveness at Pfizer Inc. "As the leader in the pharmaceutical industry, it is important that Pfizer do its part to ensure a pipeline of talent, especially women and members of underrepresented minority groups, to ensure that prospective candidates are highly trained and are poised for success."

The Council of Graduate Schools just published a new report, "Ph.D. Completion and Attrition: Policy, Numbers, Leadership, and Next Steps" (2004), which reflects the results of recent empirical studies and a 2003 national conference on the issue. Recommendations from graduate education leaders at the conference included: 1) more clearly delineate the nature and extent of doctoral attrition and completion; and 2) pilot models of intervention that address the several factors shown by prior research to be important in determining current patterns and rates.

Institutions selected to participate in the CGS/Pfizer initiative will reflect a cross-section of both private and public universities that produce the bulk of Ph.D. graduates in STEM disciplines. The

project will produce the most comprehensive and useful data on attrition from doctoral study and completion of Ph.D. programs yet available. It will highlight strategies for increasing Ph.D. completion rates of minorities and women in STEM fields. The ultimate intent of the project is to reduce rates of Ph.D. attrition and increase completion, as proven intervention strategies are widely disseminated and adopted by doctoral departments and programs.

The Council of Graduate Schools is a membership association of over 450 institutions of higher education in the United States, Canada, and across the globe engaged in graduate education, research, scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. For over four decades, CGS has been the only national organization dedicated solely to representing and advancing the interests of graduate education. CGS's mission is to ensure the vitality of intellectual discovery and to promote an environment that cultivates rigorous scholarship.

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