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Council of Graduate Schools Announces Partner Universities for Ph.D. Completion Project

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) today named the universities selected to participate in a \$2.6 million, three-year project supported by grants from Pfizer Inc and the Ford Foundation. The grants will support university projects designed to address the issues of doctoral attrition and completion in Sciences, Engineering, and Mathematics (SEM) and in Humanities and Social Science disciplines. According to Debra W. Stewart, president of CGS, “The project will produce the most comprehensive and useful data available on attrition from doctoral study and completion of Ph.D. programs, permitting the graduate community to better address those critical issues, particularly as they affect underrepresented minorities and women.”

Participating universities will create and pilot intervention strategies and evaluate the effect of these strategies upon their attrition patterns and completion rates. The ultimate goal of the project is to reduce rates of Ph.D. attrition, known to be as high as 50% in some fields, and increase completion, as proven intervention strategies are widely disseminated and adopted by doctoral departments and programs. The project will highlight strategies for increasing Ph.D. completion rates of minorities and women, particularly in those fields where these groups have been traditionally underrepresented or experience disproportionately high attrition.

Award recipients were selected by an external Advisory Board, nominated by CGS, comprised of leaders from academia, industry, disciplinary societies, funding agencies, and research programs on minority graduate education. From a highly competitive pool of submitted proposals, 21 universities were selected to participate as Research Partners in the Ph.D. Completion Project. Research Partners represent the demographic diversity of doctoral education in the U.S. and Canada; they include private and public universities from all regions of the U.S. and from Canada and minority-serving institutions.

The 21 Research Partners are:

Arizona State University
University of California - Los Angeles
University of Cincinnati
Cornell University
Duke University
University of Florida
University of Georgia
Howard University
University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign
University of Maryland - Baltimore County
University of Michigan

University of Missouri – Columbia
North Carolina State University
University of Notre Dame
University of Louisville
University of Montreal
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
Princeton University
Purdue University
Washington University - St. Louis
Yale University

Research Partners will receive awards of up to \$100,000 to: collect and submit data on doctoral completion and attrition; implement interventions in areas such as selection, mentoring, financial support, program environment, curricular processes, etc.; and develop rigorous assessment strategies to measure the impact of these interventions. A broader community of Project Partners will be invited to submit data on completion and attrition and participate as fully as possible in the Ph.D. Completion Project. All partners will have full access to information generated in the project as it develops and will meet semi-annually to share information and best practices with the broader graduate community.

The 19 Project Partners recruited by the time of this press release include:

University of Colorado – Boulder
Florida State University
Fordham University
University of Iowa
Louisiana State University
Marquette University
McGill University
University of Melbourne (Australia)
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota

New Mexico State University
New York University
North Dakota State University
Pennsylvania State University
University of Puerto Rico
University of Rhode Island
Rutgers – State University of New Jersey
Southern Illinois University - Carbondale
Syracuse University

Additional Project Partners will be included on the project website (www.phdcompletion.org).

The Ph.D. Completion Project is funded through an exciting partnership between universities, industry, and non-profit organizations. CGS promotes graduate education through research, advocacy, and the dissemination of best practices; for four decades, CGS has been the only national organization dedicated solely to representing and advancing the interests of graduate education. Pfizer Inc discovers, develops, manufactures, and markets leading prescription medicines for humans and animals and many of the world's best-known consumer brands. The Ford Foundation is a nonprofit corporation whose goals are to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement.

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