

U.S. Rep. Davis Recognized With Inaugural Congressional Champion Award By Council Of Graduate Schools

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) recognized Representative Rodney Davis (IL-13) and Representative Annie Kuster (NH-02) with their inaugural Congressional Champion Award during CGS’s 60th Anniversary Annual Meeting, held virtually December 2-4. Granted to two bipartisan members of Congress, the award acknowledges the remarkable contributions each has made toward advancing graduate education in the federal arena.

“We are extremely grateful for Congressman Davis’ and Congresswoman Kuster’s ongoing support for graduate students,” said Suzanne T. Ortega, CGS president. “Each

demonstrates a commitment to increasing access to graduate education, which benefits individuals from communities across the country and ensures we have a workforce armed with the knowledge and skills to ignite innovation and find solutions to today's challenges."

Representative Davis has fought tirelessly to preserve and expand certain tax provisions so that individuals and employers can utilize them toward academic pursuits. He has introduced and is an original cosponsor of several bills that support this endeavor, including championing legislation that would expand employer-provided educational assistance to include payments of qualified education loans. Additionally, Congressman Davis has lent his support to international students and the Optional Practical Training program, elevating their contributions to the U.S. at a time when the pandemic has created challenges for international graduate student recruitment and retention.

"I'm proud to represent the campuses of 8 universities and colleges and 5 community colleges in Congress," said Representative Rodney Davis. "Graduate education and students help our communities grow culturally and economically and are vital to our nation's success. In this Congress, we've supported international students bringing their talents to America and enacted innovative programs to make college more affordable and reduce student debt, but we have more work to do. I'm honored to receive this award from the Council of Graduate Schools because supporting higher education has always been a top priority of mine since coming to Congress. I'd like to thank the Council for all of their great work, and I look forward to continuing our bipartisan collaboration to support graduate education and students across the country."

Representative Kuster led the introduction of the Expanding Access to Graduate Education Act (H.R. 3334), which would provide former Pell Grant recipients the opportunity to apply remaining semesters of Pell Grant support not exhausted during their undergraduate education towards their first post-baccalaureate degree. True to the spirit of the Pell Grant program, this legislation would help ensure that qualified, low-income students would have a better chance of pursuing graduate education. We applaud Representative Kuster who worked to introduce the bill alongside her colleagues from both sides of the aisle.

"In order to succeed in the 21st century, the United States needs a highly-educated and skilled workforce," said Congresswoman Annie Kuster. "The Expanding Access to Graduate Education Act will open the doors of graduate education to more Americans and provide opportunities for them to get ahead. I will continue my efforts to ensure every American can access the education and job training and they need to thrive in the 21st century economy. I'm honored to receive this award alongside my colleague, Congressman Rodney Davis, and look forward to collaborating with him on this important issue moving forward."

CGS, and its membership of nearly 500 institutions of higher education across the United States and Canada, thank Representatives Kuster and Davis for their advocacy and look forward to working with them and their staff in the 117th Congress.

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.