



## Open Letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos

Secretary of Education - Betsy DeVos  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

February 9, 2017

Dear Secretary DeVos,

We at NAGAP, the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management, want to take a moment to congratulate you on your appointment as U.S. Secretary of Education. We also want you to know that we are available as a resource for issues specific to graduate education as you transition into your new role. This letter serves as a brief introduction to our association and to highlight what we believe are two of the biggest challenges facing graduate education.

For more than 30 years, NAGAP has engaged and advanced graduate enrollment management (GEM) professionals by promoting excellence and collaboration through education, research, and professional development. Through our strategic initiatives, we support both the **intrinsic value** and the **economic value** that graduate education has on society. We believe strongly in **access to and funding for graduate education** and will be directing efforts in this area over the next year.

Of particular interest and concern are the following two issues regarding the state of graduate education in the United States:

- **Student Debt:** Debt is one of the most significant issues that graduate students face. In fact, graduate students borrow an average of nearly three times more per year than undergraduates, and the average debt of graduate students has more than quadrupled since 1989 as compared with the average debt for undergraduates, which increased half of that ([Marcus, 2014](#)). Ensuring that our students have access to affordable education options and the funding needed to support their education goals is top of mind for NAGAP and our members.
- **Value of Graduate Education:** Graduate degrees are key to this country's economic development and offer economic mobility for students. The professional skills gained while obtaining graduate degrees are highly sought after by employers and are becoming the minimum standard in today's job market. In addition, an employee with a master's degree earns about 20 percent more than one with only a bachelor's degree, while those with professional degrees can make around 55 percent more (Marcus, 2014).

Please consider this letter an invitation to collaborate with us in support of graduate education now and in the future. We look forward to getting the conversation started.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Deland".

Julia Deland  
NAGAP President

CC: Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Marcus, J. (2014, November 10). The Real Student Debt Problem No One is Talking About. *TIME*. Retrieved from [time.com/3544912/graduate-school-loans-debt](http://time.com/3544912/graduate-school-loans-debt)