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ABSTRACT

The present status and future projections for graduate education at the doctoral level are examined and recommendations for regionalization are presented in this speech. Among the topics discussed are the Ph.D. labor supply and demand, federal graduate programs, state response, and cost studies. Although the number of Ph.D.'s awarded annually has stabilized over the last five years, colleges and universities have been reluctant to prepare themselves for this and for projected declines in student enrollments. It is suggested that many programs may soon become victims of retrenchment if counter measures are not instituted. Decreases in federally funded graduate programs are also contributing to financial difficulties. A regional approach (incorporating several states) to consolidate graduate education is recommended to make the programs more realistic in light of labor demands and more cost effective. The development of a national evaluation method for graduate programs, regional manpower studies, marketing research and an examination of Master's and external degree programs with a regional focus is urged. (BH)

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Project Intent

WICHE's project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate and Professional Education encourages resource sharing in graduate and professional education in the West by providing information about these programs throughout the region. The project is establishing an information system that will enable higher education decision makers to plan for the future of graduate and professional education from a regional perspective. The graduate education project is supported by a two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and by WICHE state dues through its Student Exchange Program.

The project seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of graduate education in the West so that both students and taxpayers are better served.

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Graduate Education: Thoughts
on a Regional Approach

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A presentation to the Advisory Council of the
Project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in
Graduate and Professional Education on February
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GRADUATE EDUCATION: THOUGHTS ON A REGIONAL APPROACH

It is always a pleasure to return to Colorado, even though the smog seems to increase steadily between trips. It is good to be able to see some familiar faces and old friends, and it is also a pleasure to get away from Washington periodically.

I thought I would say a couple of words about the National Board on Graduate Education with which Fred Thieme and I worked for nearly three years back in the early seventies. It was initially prompted by the science community which, through the vehicle of the National Academy of Sciences, was becoming quite alarmed at the sudden turn around in support for graduate education and research. The first report of the National Science Board in 1969 continued to project a growing, expanding system. It commented that every community of 500,000 people or more should be served by a comprehensive graduate university. That report was a case of awkward or inappropriate timing at best, because events were already taking a turn in the opposite direction. A retrenchment was starting, research funding was being cut back, the science development program was being curtailed or was about to be curtailed, and so on. So people at the Academy thought an independent organization should be pulled together to look into the questions facing graduate education for the next decade or so. The National Board on Graduate Education sponsored and published, through the course of its life, about eleven reports. We worked heavily in the area of labor market forecasting, and the nature and quality of graduate education. I suppose our heaviest focus was on the federal role. We had less to say about the state role. I think you will find almost nothing about the interstate or regional role in graduate education.

Ph.D. Supply-Demand Projections

Among our studies was the question of the labor market for Ph.D.s. I noticed that in the materials sent out in advance to you there were some data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that would scare you to death in terms of the excess supply they project. I want to start with a number of caveats about those data. First, the Bureau of Labor Statistics made no independent supply projections, and continues to make none. They simply use the Office of Education's supply projections. Much of the explanation for that growing gap between supply and demand is that--unless they have changed their methodology, recently--OE follows a rather simplistic extrapolation technique in projecting the number of degrees awarded. Then they periodically ratchet it down if they see that events aren't following quite the course they set. So I think that they have a very excessive projection of supply. In fact, for the last five years the Ph.D. output nationally has been stable at about 33,000 degrees per year. This is a remarkable change after nearly a hundred years of about 7 percent per year average growth. The output tripled in a decade from about 10,000 a year in 1960 to nearly 30,000 in 1970; so just to come down to a level output is quite a change from past experience. Within those 33,000 degrees there are many interesting shifts going on. One of the problems in this business is that people aggregate everything and talk about the gross supply and demand balance, which isn't terribly helpful when you are trying to translate that to the local or state level.

Most dramatic of the field shifts is in the sciences--physics, engineering, chemistry, mathematics--which have been dropping in absolute numbers of degrees since the early seventies. The enrollment decisions of students not to go on in those fields occurred very quickly in the mid-sixties, and new Ph.D.'s are

well down in number from their peaks. The number of physicists, for example, by 1980 will hit a figure just a little above half of the total output at its peak in the early seventies. There has been a remarkable shift away from science. There are more doctoral programs in education than in any other field; well over 20 percent of all those 33,000 degrees are in education alone. The humanities and social science fields have not been decreasing as rapidly as some of us thought they would.

The only reason that numbers have stayed level rather than declining is the marked change in the composition of male-female doctorates. The percentage of doctorates going to women over the last 50-60 years was fairly stable at about 11-12 percent. According to the most recent figures I have seen, in 1976 women are up to about 23 percent of the degrees now and the percentage still climbing. The number of doctorates going to men has, in fact, been dropping sharply. The number of doctorates going to women has been increasing, and the effect has been to roughly net out and produce a balance.

Within this context, I think it is important to keep in mind that there are different markets served by different fields. You all know this, so I won't belabor it, but it is often overlooked. Also overlooked is the balkinization--or segmentation--of the labor market. Any kind of realistic analysis has to look at the markets which are typically served by graduates of different institutions. Ph.D.s from institutions X and Y are not substitutes even though they are in the same discipline. I think that the best work on the demand side is Allan Cartter's book, Ph.D.'s and the Academic Labor Market, finished just before his untimely death about two years ago. The book examines the academic market with great care and is one of the few works in which you

can put any faith in projections. I think that the academic market is still fairly predictable because it is heavily driven by demographic factors which are mapped out for years in advance. The 18-year old population 18 years from now is currently born, so you don't have to guess much about that. The numbers that go on to college are subject to question, of course, but the academic market is the one place where I would put much faith in demand forecasts. But unemployment is not the real issue when dealing with doctoral education. The real issue--and a hard one for policy purposes--is underemployment. I don't know that anyone has a very good fix on exactly what underemployment is, or how much to worry about it, or even how to measure and assess it. We would all agree that the proverbial Ph.D. driving a taxi cab is underemployed, but things shade off much less dramatically after that. When you see the large number of Ph.D.s flowing into Washington agencies now, it is hard to say that those people are underemployed; but compared to what they would have been doing fifteen years ago, they are in very different types of work. Any analysis has to come to grips with, or at least be aware of, that problem.

Response to the Market for Ph.D.s

In spite of my criticisms of the BLS projections, however, there is no doubt that the basic message of those projections is accurate. In other words, we are in for at least another decade of difficulty in the academic market. And so I think that it is still fully appropriate for a group such as yours to begin to worry and plan and think about what to do. It is no longer sensible--it wasn't sensible five years ago--to just ignore the situation, hoping that it will take care of itself.

Back around '72 or '73, I had been steeped in all of these projections and Allan Cartter was on the National Board; but we were still pretty naive. We were so far ahead of the thinking of the rest of the country that we just assumed that the universities would be getting the message. It would be filtering up from students everywhere. I remember when I went on site visits after two years in Washington, visiting a number of campuses back in '74, and I came back shaken. I didn't see any serious evidence of major change or recognition of the magnitude of the problem. I think, in retrospect, that was because although the numbers were all there, they were projected numbers mostly. In fact, graduate enrollments didn't topple at all; they continued to creep up. There hadn't been enough financial and economic pressure put on institutions yet to force the kind of change that seems to me inevitable. I would rather anticipate and ride with that change than be caught by it unprepared. Until some of the departments really see the bodies not showing up nothing will happen. I submit that a number of universities must not have been hit hard enough yet. It seems to me inevitable that enrollments will turn downward, and then something will happen. That is starting in some of the very lowest rated doctoral programs, particularly in the sciences. I can point you to any number of Ph.D. programs in chemistry, in physics, that are just hanging in there. They are so marginal that a pathology of decline is setting in. Everything starts cycling downward. And those institutions are running hard and looking for new things to do. In one chemistry department, the chairman had a big map with all of the junior colleges in a three hundred mile radius of campus. The chemistry department was running out of undergraduates in this case, as well as graduates, and the faculty was going out to recruit students from the community and junior colleges.

One important caveat that I might make is that you also need to look at Cartter's book and see when the large number of faculty retirements are going to hit--which will be around 1995 and the years thereafter. If you think about how long it takes to produce Ph.D.s, we are only a decade away from a point at which we should be thinking seriously about gearing up the system again, if you will. The last ten years seem to have flown and those next ten years are likely to be over before many of us realize it. It is all too likely that about 1987, we will finally have retrenchment procedures that might have been appropriate for the late sixties in place, when suddenly we'll be back into another ride on the demographic roller coaster. I think some awareness of timing should be built into your planning.

The issue of minority students in doctoral education is getting a lot of attention now, at least in Washington. I don't know if anybody has a good solution to increase enrollments; every way that you twist or turn, it seems at first glance to come back to lots of dollars. I don't think anyone has found a clever way to recruit and finance these students inexpensively, but I have the feeling that, at least in aggregate, the problem isn't primarily one of financing. I think that a number of universities have money set aside for minorities, but students aren't coming forward to apply. There has been a noticeable reduction in the last year or two in the number of minority applicants. If minority students don't get into the programs, sufficient numbers will not be trained. In my own field--economics--the numbers produced nationally are scandalously low; there just aren't enough minority Ph.D.s out there. That problem has to be solved. Of course, there may be good reason for minorities not flowing in to Ph.D. programs. Those people who are good

enough probably have many other, far more lucrative opportunities. I suspect this applies also to women; it is part of the broader question of how to increase opportunities for young people in the universities these days.

One last issue in the labor market area that I should mention is the question of student quality. This issue has concerned a number of other groups. Even though the numbers in graduate education have by and large been holding up (as Ernest Boyer's speech to the Council of Graduate Schools suggests), many people think the quality of students going into graduate school now--say, in the arts and sciences--may be slipping significantly. The swifter of the lot are getting the message and are shifting into law, medicine, and the professional areas.

Federal Response

Let me move now to a few comments on the federal reaction. As you well know, Washington during the sixties fueled much of the growth in graduate education. Programs such as Science Development moved a number of universities well along toward growth and improvement. The Engineering complex at the University of Colorado at Boulder is, if I'm not mistaken, a byproduct of the Science Development Program. When I was a student here, it was an old vacant lot. I'm not sure, given my architectural tastes, whether it has been improved much, but I do know there is an improvement academically in what goes on in that space. Nearly all of those federal programs that were part of the educational push in the sixties got shelved. Politically, it is almost impossible to kill education programs, you know, because they manage to get a constituency built around them. Yet one of the great success stories, from a budget cutter's

point of view, is that so many graduate programs were ended. That is an interesting comment on the political clout of graduate deans and the graduate enterprise. It was possible to lay to rest the NDEA Title IV and NSF Traineeships. The one area that was a constant struggle and where cuts were never fully made was the NIH training grant area. Basic research funding, as you know, dropped by about 20 percent in real terms over the period 1968-75. Those of you who have been watching it know that the last three years have seen a major turnaround in that part of the budget. President Ford was very interested in basic research and President Carter, in his '79 budget, has continued that push. Research money seems to be on the upswing. The fellowship discussion now remains pretty desultory, but there is a small program for minorities being started now in HEW. It is up to about 8 million dollars in the '79 budget and will probably grow beyond that; NSF has managed to hang on to its 500 or so Merit Fellowships. Those are the main programs that you can still point to.

But by and large, graduate education is a nonissue in Washington. I don't think any great surprises are going to come your way from the nation's capitol and upset the kind of efforts you have underway here. Now, with the ending of all these federal programs, what were some of the results? My sense of the major result--and this is probably the core of what you are grappling with in this project--is that a great many institutions got stranded in a state of semi-development. There were launched in the sixties in developing graduate programs; now many programs are staffed with faculty who came in with promises of being able to participate in doctoral education. In many cases these faculty are fully qualified to offer doctoral education. And

yet the country doesn't need and won't support as many programs as are in existence or on the drawing board, hoping to expand into full-scale doctoral development. It is a terribly complicated problem to unwind aspirations of that sort. I don't have any bright ideas to offer you. I'm too far removed from that level of decision making, but it strikes me clearly as one of the issues to be grappled with. I suppose, in retrospect, it would have been far better if the federal government had been more judicious in the rate at which it built up graduate programs in the sixties. But certainly Washington has been a destabilizing force in the graduate environment.

State Response and Cooperative Activity

I don't have a catalog of reactions of the state level. Many of you are more familiar with that than I. Certainly the questions of accountability and program review have come into the fore and the state postsecondary agencies are getting more involved. New York State is the most dramatic instance of state intervention. The Regents have Constitutional control over both the registering and deregistering of all programs, public and private, in that state. So it is possible for New York to take on what has been a rather tough set of battles in trying to eliminate programs. They have even gone to court. A lawsuit brought by SUNY has recently been decided in favor of the Regents. I don't know of any other state that has that much power over the ending of programs, but certainly many states have the ability to stop the creation of new ones.

At the institutional level, reactions have varied. Enrollments have been cut by some institutions. During the early seventies there was great fear that leading universities were taking all of the retrenchment, that they were

doing most of the cutbacks. Frank Newman's HEW task force argued that Gresham's Law was operating in the Ph.D. world, with bad programs driving out good. This was, I think, an exaggerated view and not, in general, true, but a great many people still hold that view of the ways things are going.

Just recently a number of interesting things at the institutional and inter-institutional levels have come to my attention. Apparently the four SUNY graduate centers are starting to talk about a combined university plan for developing all graduate programs under a single degree that would bear the SUNY stamp. I don't know the details on this, but a proposal has been sent to the Ford Foundation to help them explore that type of collaboration. In New York City, a number of the public and private campuses are starting to look at joint doctoral programs that no campus can sustain on its own.

The regional reaction seems to me to be the most positive and to have the greatest potential for some interesting work; it has been almost nonexistent. Again, I don't follow this as closely as I should, but the Southern Regional Educational Board does have an academic common market in graduate programs, which is a way of encouraging interstate exchange of students. There might be something to learn from them. I don't know if the New England Board is doing anything at all in this area. And now the WICHE effort. In a way, it would probably have been better if you could have started five years ago, but politically that probably wouldn't have been possible. I certainly applaud your effort now.

Cost Studies

The increased emphasis on evaluation, cost analysis, is apparent. Every time there is a problem in education, the term cost analysis seems to jump into the picture. I watched this in Washington with the National Commission on the Financing of Postsecondary Education. Congress wanted national uniform cost standards, which turned out to be a big bust. These analyses, particularly when they are tried at the national level, are inevitably disappointing. The Council of Graduate Schools recently completed a follow-up study of their earlier cost efforts. I don't think it has developed a useful method for interinstitutional or interstate kinds of comparison--at least that's my current judgment. The various cost studies undertaken over the years have, by and large, not been terribly useful.

An individual institution can certainly do a cost study for its own purposes. I have no quibble with that kind of analysis, if it is internally done. But people inevitably want comparability. They want to compare their costs with institutions X, Y, and Z. This requires an accounting system that measures the right thing, but institutions don't account in a standard way, or even similarly--at least in my experience. At a deeper level, the real obstacle to any serious economic cost study--as opposed to an accounting cost study--is the interweaving of graduate education and undergraduate education and research. How you apportion the faculty member's time among research activities and undergraduate education and graduate students who are also acting as teaching assistants is a difficult problem. I don't think anyone has sorted this out in a useful way. For your project, with its small staff, it would be preferable to rely on the work that has been done by NCHEMS. They have been in it since '69. I don't believe that on an interstate comparative

basis, cost studies have reached a point where they would be a good use of your time.

Possibilities for Regional Project Activities

I want to wrap up with a few thoughts about what a regional activity of this sort might do--my list of sensible ways to start the project and maybe some things not to do. I think that the list that Dick Jonsen sent out to you, the paper with the ten or eleven key activities, is by and large very good. I think it hits the right issues and establishes WICHE in the right political constituency world.

A. Develop institution "mission statements"

After the inventory gets developed--and I think that it is an essential first step--it seems to me that there is a need to help states and institutions develop some clear mission statements about their individual campuses. I even argued a year or two in a conference that if there ever were to be a new Roose-Anderson or Cartter rating of graduate programs, we ought to use that rating as a device for speeding up the diversification of functions of graduate institutions. I think one of the major legitimate criticisms of the Cartter rating of doctoral programs was its single or uni-dimensional nature--just ranking and saying, in English: Harvard, Berkeley, Yale--or Berkeley, Yale, Harvard, or however it is in that field,--and simply ordering departments from one to a hundred. In an environment of retrenchment that is obviously a politically discouraging way to rank things because everyone worries that you will start cutting from the bottom if you are going to cut. A recent Council of Graduate Schools' effort was an attempt to get multidimensional ratings. In fact, I once kidded the people up there, saying, if you have two hundred graduate programs

you are going to come up with two hundred measures so that each can be number 1 on a least one dimension. It would be very useful if we could begin to formalize what, in effect, already exists, but isn't well documented or built into the system. We need a way of saying, for instance, that the University of Colorado at Boulder is a multi-purpose, national institution with a full range of doctoral programs, and that's very different from what the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo is. If we could begin to shade and make those distinctions clearer, we could begin to build them into some national evaluation scheme. That would be a step in the right direction.

B. Manpower Studies

As far as manpower planning goes, I've never really supported attempts to do manpower planning at the state level, particularly for doctorates. That seems to me too small a unit to be interesting to analyze; there is too much flow among states. Students come in and go out, and to try to figure out Montana's role in producing civil engineers for the nation is not a very useful approach. I do think, however, a regional approach, particularly for a thirteen state region of this size, probably makes a great deal of sense. From some cursory data that I've seen, it appears that Ph.D. markets really aren't fully national. There are leakages in and out from one coast to the other, obviously, but to a considerable extent I suspect that this thirteen state region is more self-contained than a lot of you might guess. If I were going to get into this, I wouldn't try to make manpower projections. I would start--if it hasn't already been done--by looking at the student flows among the thirteen states in graduate programs. What states are students in each of the

universities coming from and where are they going? You can use the work that Lindsay Harmon has done at the National Research Council in Washington with the doctorate record files, which, as you know, is a one hundred percent survey of all new doctorates. I would think for your region that would be a very useful exercise. It might highlight some areas and draw your attention to those that would be of more interest than others.

C. Master's Education

There are approximately ten times as many master's degrees awarded nationally each year as Ph.D.s, but certainly nothing like ten times the research has been devoted to master's programs. They have been largely overlooked by every study group. Nobody knows quite how to plunge into this area, and I can't really direct you to any good studies on master's education. The New York regents did a fairly interesting report about four or five years ago that was critical of many master's programs and had a good deal of information. I think that's a fruitful area for your project to investigate.

D. External Degree Programs

Much rhetoric now exists about the salvation of graduate education lying in the part-time older student, in nontraditional, external degree programs. There is a whole vocabulary in this area that changes almost weekly, it seems. There is no doubt that a vast expansion in this external degree business has taken place. The last I counted, I think there were thirteen or fourteen universities offering a master's or doctorate degree in Washington, D.C. including the University of

Southern California, and Oklahoma University. I don't know whether you want to sample this little understood world of external degree programs or not. I have a feeling that it is becoming a growth industry which is escaping most of the statistics and might be worth a look on your part.

E. New Markets

There are many instances where universities are beginning to swing around and look at new markets. Each of you could undoubtedly provide some examples, although they are probably not as systematic or generalizable as you would like. The English department at the University of Michigan, for example, some years ago decided that the need for Ph.D.s in English in the traditional mode was limited and they shifted some resources toward the community college market. They designed programs for people who were already teaching at the community colleges who wanted to come back to the university for a year of additional work, but didn't want to go through a traditional Ph.D. program. That program has been very successful. On site visits, I have encountered this kind of new direction in any number of places. Catholic University in Washington, D.C., for example, now offers its doctoral program in English in the evening, from 4:00 p.m. on. It used to be a day time program primarily, and oriented toward full-time enrolled students. That's not their market any longer. They haven't changed the program dramatically, but are simply giving it in the late afternoon and evening. My general sense is that such changes tie in with the need to recognize explicit divisions of labor in the graduate community. It seems to me that Yale has no business pursuing this nontraditional market. Yale would not do a good job at

it; they are geared up to do something else for which there is a continuing need--high quality traditional doctoral education. Some of the newer doctoral programs haven't fully developed in the Harvard or Berkeley model, and it is very sensible for them to orient toward new markets. But how can you move some of these other institutions--including most of the institutions that are offering doctoral work today--to develop some other models? What's in it for them? It seems to me that this is a very important question. It might be interesting, within your thirteen state region, to take a look at whether there is a definite, explicit move in some of these universities toward different markets. I don't think this has been surveyed systematically.

Let me give you an example of something that I think is wrong-headed but is getting support right now from the National Endowment for the Humanities. N.E.H. made a grant to the New York Regents of \$350,000 to try to develop business placements for Ph.D.s in humanities. Between 50 and 100 new Ph.D.s with degrees in English or languages or history will be given a quickie summer course at the New York University Graduate School of Business. It will be an introduction to business: this is a corporate balance sheet, this is the jargon we use, these are the parts of the industry, etc. They've got five or six New York corporations--AT&T, a couple of big banks, and some others--ready to hire these people on a trial basis for a year. What they hope is that there is a vast untapped creative link between doctoral education in the humanities and industry. And that if we can just jump over the hurdle getting people through something like this transitional summer program, these people will be so successful that industry leaders will realize that they have been

foolhardy all these years to limit hiring to lawyers, economists, and business graduates. There is also a kind of "old person" network envisioned in this program whereby these successful graduates will then spread the work back to the campus, and the faculty will suddenly see that there is a new market out there and will find ways to incorporate a little accounting, a little finance, into their Ph.D. in English programs and the programs will be saved. I think this is wishful thinking. I know that there are two sides of the coin, but my preference is not to force-feed the market. It obviously will work for some people and has worked for some in the past. I used to work in a little bank in New Mexico whose president was a Ph.D. in history from Yale. He started in the mail room and seventeen years later he was president. Such things do happen, but I don't think this is the right tactic to pursue right now. What I would argue is that you could find ways to involve humanities in the curricula of the professional schools. I think we could get a lot further that way than to try to incorporate aspects of business in the humanities curriculum as a way to save the humanities market. You could redirect faculty energies for finding ways to do what I suggest; we have seen it work in the medical schools with some of the courses in ethics in medicine, and death, and philosophical approaches to life processes.

F. Program Review

You're probably better off as a group focusing on ways to prevent the unnecessary duplication of new programs than getting into program review itself. In other words, some of the efforts alluded to here involve gathering and providing information and letting that become a reason for not starting a program as opposed to trying to jump in and kill existing

programs--which you probably have no statutory power to do. The number of new doctoral programs coming on the scene each year is still much larger than the number going out of existence, so there seems to me to be a major role in a sort of "birth control" here. Again I would avoid cost studies. You have a lot of other things to do, and if you step into that quagmire, you're lost. You'll never get out of it and you'll never get anything else done. There is going to be an inevitable tendency to want to do that. People are going to say, let's compare costs of this and that, but I don't think that in reality you'd find that cost studies--even if you had perfect cost studies--would point you toward many clear decisions. I would tie in with whatever national efforts you find going. For example, there is a very strong interest in redoing some type of Cartter, Roose-Anderson evaluation. There was a conference a year and a half ago to explore this, and three foundations are underwriting a pilot effort right now at the National Academy of Sciences. After that pilot effort is completed this summer, a recommendation will be made. It might not fly, however. The number of people who want these evaluations seem to me to be smaller than the number who don't want them. The attempt may never get off the ground. They are exploring new ways and new variables, new things to look at, rather than just pure review. An active staff is now at that work at the Academy and you ought to touch base with them and find out if there is anything you can do usefully together.

G. Regional Advocacy

My last comment--a very general and gratuitous one, because you are already doing it--is that there is a very clear role for regionalism

in this business. I think the region is a meaningful unit. It has problems, since there is no budgetary control related to that unit. But much of the data and information that would be useful for intelligent decision-making in this area are regional data. National data are difficult to relate to the state level. The jumps are too big; people at the national level can't concentrate or focus on fifty states. There is nothing harder than trying to write a chapter on the state level approach from a national prospective. The jump from one to fifty is too large, but I think the unit made up of thirteen states is a sensible and useful one. Many of the decision makers in the environment you are working in have an incentive to take that regional view as well, and I think that there is a very clear role for an active advocacy position in this area. I commend you for having the courage to jump into it.

PROJECT ON EXPANDING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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* Demonstration States Coordinating Committee also includes asterisked Advisory Council member from each demonstration state