

# NACME NEWS RELEASE

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## **NACME Reports Record Minority Engineering Enrollments and New Challenges**

*September 17, 2002, New York, NY.* Propelled by the largest increase among first-year African American engineering majors in seven years, U.S. institutions enrolled a record 15,329 minority freshmen engineering students last year, according to the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), Inc. The previous high — 15,181 African American, American Indian and Latino students — was set in 1992.

While celebrating this milestone, NACME president and CEO John Brooks Slaughter notes that the vitality of many groups whose work contributed to the increase is now under duress as the corporations that support them face economic challenges. “A number of major companies, many of whom have long been engaged in the effort to diversify the engineering workforce, are decreasing their contribution levels while our output is increasing,” says Slaughter. “After a few down years, we’re in turnaround mode. This is not the time for retreat, but for reinvestment. We need to increase the number of minority engineering freshmen by more than ten percent annually to build the diverse, world-class engineering workforce the nation needs.”

NACME — which has been the nation’s largest private source of scholarships for minority engineering students for nearly 30 years — finds itself unable to support as many students as it has in the past, having suffered major setbacks such as the loss of a multiyear grant awarded by the WorldCom Foundation in 1999.

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### ***Tough choices ahead***

“Like any other business, we’re having to make tough choices. We need not only to grow our donor base, but to also use what we have more strategically,” says senior vice president for policy and research Daryl E. Chubin, “We are focusing our efforts where we can achieve the greatest returns and looking to join with institutions that are committed to enrolling and graduating larger numbers of underrepresented minority engineering students.” More than 100 such institutions responded to a recent NACME invitation to participate in its undergraduate support program. NACME will convene a panel to review and help select future institutional partners.

NACME also plans a best-practice report on retention. “We will provide a valuable service to our corporate partners and the higher education community by codifying what makes successful institutions successful,” says Chubin. “Schools need to have a student support infrastructure in place, but they also need a culture of caring and leadership that values diversity. Documenting processes and outcomes will yield lessons for all of us.”

### ***Institutional leaders***

NACME’s analysis is based on figures compiled by the American Association of Engineering Societies’ Engineering Workforce Commission (EWC). According to those figures, Alabama A&M University leads the nation with 370 African American full-time engineering freshmen, nearly tripling the 125 that entered in 2000. Tennessee State saw an increase of nearly 50 percent in its numbers, enrolling 316. Perennial leader North Carolina A & T State University’s freshman class was nearly 20 percent smaller than the previous year, but the Greensboro campus still placed third with 287 African Americans. Other HBCU’s suffering losses were Florida A&M/Florida State University (from 282 to 265) and Prairie View A&M University, which went from 285 to 257 African American engineering freshmen. On the positive side, Howard University grew its number by more than 50 percent, growing from 96 to 150.

A trio of Texas schools topped the list of those enrolling Latino engineering freshmen. Though its number is considerably smaller than last year’s (336 compared to 467 in 2000), UTEP far outpaces its closest competitor, Texas A&M University, where the Latino cohort of 211 was ten percent smaller than the 236 that enrolled in 2000.

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Third-ranked University of Texas at Austin was also down slightly, going from 199 Latino freshmen to 193. While the leaders saw declines, those registering increases included the University of Arizona, whose Latino freshman number rose from 68 to 99; California State Polytechnic University-San Luis Obispo, which went from 116 to 141, and the New Jersey Institute of Technology — a NACME Vanguard institution — whose number increased from 47 to 68.

Among those enrolling the largest numbers of American Indian freshmen, Oklahoma State University, with 35 students, moved slightly ahead of last year's leader, the University of Oklahoma, which enrolled 33.

#### *A summary of the numbers*

The number of African American engineering freshmen increased by 4.5 percent, growing from 8,192 in 2000 to 8,552 in 2001, while the numbers for American Indians and Latinos stagnated. They moved only slightly from 629 to 663 and from 6,157 to 6,114, respectively. As the overall number of engineering freshmen rose 4.85 percent — to 105,224 from 100,359 — last year's minority class still represented only 14.6 percent of the whole, down slightly from 14.9 percent in 2000 and the lowest percentage in 12 years.

#### *About NACME*

Since 1974, NACME has provided leadership and support in the national effort to increase the representation of successful African American, American Indian and Latino women and men in engineering and technology, math- and science-based disciplines. A leader in building public awareness of engineering, and in the research and policy arenas, NACME is also the nation's largest private source of scholarships for minorities in engineering. More than 15 percent of all minority engineering graduates since 1974 have received support from NACME.

To learn more about the organization and learn how you can support the next generation of technology leaders, visit the website at [www.nacme.org](http://www.nacme.org).