

# NACME NEWS RELEASE

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## **GE Fund Partners with NACME and WorldCom Foundation to Boost Student Math Skills** *GE Fund Pledges Over \$1.3 Million to NACME*

Citing the uneven state of students' mathematics skills, the crucial role of math in career fields such as engineering, and the special need to reach underserved communities, the GE Fund has launched a major partnership with the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), Inc., and the WorldCom Foundation.

NACME — whose mission is to provide leadership and support for the national effort to increase the representation of successful African American, American Indian and Latino students in engineering and technology, math- and science-based careers — is the nation's largest private source of scholarships for minorities in engineering.

Through this GE Fund grant, NACME will build and test a comprehensive approach to strengthening math preparation and broadening the pipeline to engineering careers. Central to the effort will be NACME's teacher training in the WorldCom Foundation's *MarcoPolo: Internet Content for the Classroom* web-based teaching tools.

First, working with school administrators at predominantly minority-serving public schools in four GE communities, NACME will conduct community workshops that engage teachers, community leaders and parents, equipping them to be better advocates for and stronger supporters of their children. In addition to coordinating *MarcoPolo* training with experienced professional facilitators, NACME will introduce teachers to the NACME alternative assessment protocol, and share important information and materials from its *Math Is Power* public service education campaign.

Second, linking the K-12 program directly into higher education, the GE Fund will continue funding up to 17 NACME Scholars each year, supporting their progress toward engineering degrees.

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Third, NACME will lead a research and evaluation team to help assess the contributions all the projects funded under the GE Fund's "Math Excellence" program (20 to date). Evaluators will identify effective practices as well as support individual programs in their evaluation efforts.

NACME announced the partnership at its 21<sup>st</sup> annual conference, held recently in Baltimore. Joyce Hergenhan, president of the GE Fund, commented, "GE and NACME have a long history of working together and we're pleased to link with the WorldCom Foundation on this new venture. Our combined efforts will make a real difference in students' ability to succeed in school and pursue a wide range of careers."

The GE Fund's \$1.3 million represents a stepped up investment in NACME by the Fund, which has supported NACME since the organization's founding in 1974. These efforts are part of the Fund's new "Math Excellence" initiative, a K-16 effort focused on strengthening the math skills of students from under-represented backgrounds, leading to greater participation in engineering, information technology and quantitative business careers.

"Minority students have less access to quality math instruction than do their nonminority peers," says Daryl E. Chubin, NACME senior vice president for policy and research. "They are also more likely to have teachers who are not certified in mathematics. By providing teachers with standards-based tools, preparing them to assess and work with various student learning styles, and assisting them to use the Internet effectively in the classroom, we can improve student learning."

The GE Fund ([www.gefund.org](http://www.gefund.org)), the philanthropic foundation of the General Electric Company, invests in improving educational quality and access and strengthening community organizations in GE communities around the world. All told, GE, the GE Fund, and GE employees and retirees contributed \$100 million to community and educational institutions last year.

The WorldCom Foundation's *MarcoPolo* program (<http://marcopolo.worldcom.com>) provides Internet-based lesson plans, classroom activities, powerful search engines and links to other web-based materials. All MarcoPolo materials are based on national standards established by organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

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"Having MarcoPolo as part of the effort ensures that children in underserved communities will receive the same quality of instruction as those in wealthy school districts," says NACME's Chubin. "We look forward to working with GE and WorldCom to make a difference where it matters most."

NACME Inc., ([www.nacme.org](http://www.nacme.org)) is a not-for-profit corporation supported by leading technology-driven corporations, government agencies, foundations and universities. Known mostly for its college scholarship programs, this new initiative represents a renewed focus on precollege education.

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