

# NACME NEWS RELEASE

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## **Grad Numbers Up, But Minorities Remain “Grossly Underrepresented” in Engineering**

*Houston, TX, May 29, 2003.* While the U.S. produced more minority engineers than ever before in 2002, African Americans, American Indians and Latinos remain “grossly underrepresented in this most critical of fields to the nation’s economy,” said Dr. John Brooks Slaughter, president and CEO of the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), today at a national conference of corporate and education diversity leaders in Houston.

“In percentage terms, underrepresented minorities are in the grips of ‘no growth,’ a trend beginning in 1998,” adds Dr. Daryl E. Chubin, senior vice president at NACME. “While baccalaureate degrees awarded in engineering rose to nearly 68,000 in 2002 — the largest class since 1990 — the aggregate proportion of the three underrepresented groups has remained under 11 percent since 1998. When the two engineering campuses in Puerto Rico are included, we reach 11.6 percent.”

The 315 American Indian graduates (less than half of one percent of the total), and record highs for African Americans (3,358, or 4.95 percent) and Latinos (3,307, or 4.88 percent) mask steady state production as a fraction of the total new baccalaureate engineering pool year-to-year. Adding the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez and Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, Latinos rise to over six percent of the total. Those two institutions alone produced nearly 1,000 Latino baccalaureate level engineering graduates last year.

### *Top producers*

“Polytechnic of Puerto Rico, with 319 Latino engineering graduates, and the University at Mayaguez with 672, are in a class unto themselves when we look at top producers,” says

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Slaughter. Among universities in the 50 states, Florida International and the University of Florida are the top producers with 118 and 110 Latino graduates, respectively. But they, like the other top producers of Latino engineers, are only “holding steady,” even though they are primarily located in states like Texas, California and Florida, where the Latino populations are growing most rapidly. Looking at five-year trends, Cal Poly Pomona was the only institution among the top 20 producers of Latino engineers to show substantial growth.

The news is similar for the top producers of African American engineers. Leaders like North Carolina A&T and Prairie View A&M University have seen precipitous declines in their numbers of black engineering graduates over the past five years, though A&T remains the largest producer. Others such as the Georgia Institute of Technology, Southern University and Howard University have remained constant, while Tennessee State University and the New Jersey Institute of Technology — a major NACME partner institution — have more than doubled their outputs. “In the aggregate, though” Chubin notes, “the top producers are down over the five year period.”

Among the top producers of American Indian engineers, only the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has posted notable gains.

“Given a student demography that is increasingly minority,” says Chubin, “the fact that African Americans, American Indians and Latinos constituted 10.3 percent of engineering graduates in 1998 and have gained less than one percent in five years is stunning. It gives added meaning to the term ‘achievement gap.’”

#### *NACME partner institutions*

Some institutions, however, have become adept at welcoming, supporting, and educating *all* students. Among those are 13 selected as NACME partner institutions. With NACME assistance, they will each support a cohort of at least 10 underrepresented minorities in engineering through graduation. These institutions, selected through a national competition that attracted more than 100 proposals, will report student progress annually to NACME through a set of prescribed performance metrics on enrollment, retention, and graduation.

Special emphasis will be placed on supporting transfer students from two-year institutions.

Included among the NACME partners are some of the most prolific producers of minority engineers. For the 1998-2002 period, the University of Colorado-Boulder graduated the highest average annual number of American Indian BS-level engineers; North Carolina A&T State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology, both new NACME partners, lead in the production of African American engineers; and Florida International (new) and Texas A&M (continuing) universities have been among the top five most productive of Latino engineers.

Chubin concludes, “NACME is proud of its affiliation with universities that – from the president down and the faculty and staff up – serve all students. Geographic location, public or private status, and size are less predictive of student success than a supportive culture and a commitment to the academic achievement of all who enroll. Such characteristics will become the hallmark of the 21<sup>st</sup> century university – competent first in educating a diverse student body, then distinguished by its entrepreneurial spirit, contributions to scholarship, and the career accomplishments of its alumni.”

#### *About NACME*

Since 1974, NACME has provided leadership and support for 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 careers. A leading source of data and analysis on minority achievement in technical fields, NACME is widely known as the nation’s largest private source of scholarships for minorities in engineering. More than 18,000 students — approximately 15 percent of all minority engineering graduates since 1974 — have received support from NACME.

NACME bases its analysis on figures derived from the Engineering Workforce Commission of the American Association of Engineering Societies, Inc.

For more information about NACME, visit [www.nacme.org](http://www.nacme.org).

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