

Confronting the “New” American Dilemma

Press Release

Retaining Scientific and Technological
Leadership in a “Flatter” World

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NACME SYMPOSIUM REPORT CALLS EDUCATORS, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT TO ACTION *Sector Leaders Raise Voices for Minorities in STEM*

White Plains, N.Y.--The National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME) today published the collective calls to action of some of the world’s finest minds on behalf of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. *Calls to Action: A Comprehensive Symposium Report* articulates in detail the consensus and prescriptive recommendations of a who’s who of education, government, and business leaders who gathered at NACME’s recent 2008 National Symposium near Washington, D.C. to confront what NACME calls “the ‘new’ American dilemma: the relative absence of underrepresented minorities in scientific and engineering study and careers.”

During this time of national financial crisis, the issue of America’s competitiveness in the global economy has taken on new urgency. Filling the STEM workforce pipeline is more important than ever as Americans ponder an uncertain economic future. “In our quest to confront the new American dilemma, the time for *doing*—for taking action—is *now*,” writes NACME Executive Vice President and COO Irving Pressley McPhail in the report’s introduction.

Building on NACME’s groundbreaking reports, *Underrepresented Minorities in Engineering: A Data-Based Look at Diversity* and the *NACME 2008 Data Book*, the comprehensive symposium report urges specific change in four priority areas—K-12 education, higher education, business, and government—as demanded by symposium participants. Key speakers included Norman R. Augustine, chairman of the National Academies’ *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* Committee; Dr. Craig R. Barrett, chairman of the board, Intel Corporation; Nicholas M. Donofrio, executive vice president for innovation and technology, IBM Corporation; and Juan Williams, national political correspondent and author.

For each of the four priority areas, *Calls to Action* delivers insights and background, statistics, and quotable commentary. “There has to be public outcry from the press and from individuals that this system is unacceptable,” insists Barrett in the report’s section on K-12 education. Among others, Education Trust President Kati Haycock and National Academy Foundation President JD Hoyer weigh in with tactics for increasing teacher effectiveness and student commitment to promote minority involvement and success in STEM.

In higher education, we must “remove systemic barriers in college by addressing financial aid and admission policies,” argues NACME Board Chair and Malcolm Pirnie CEO William P. Dee.

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Margaret Daniels Tyler, senior program officer of the Gates Foundation Millennium Scholars program, offers an overview of minority STEM success, while the Lumina Foundation’s President and CEO Jamie P. Merisotis argues for greater investment in the nation’s community colleges.

The United States government must develop a national STEM workforce policy, according to NACME. President and CEO John Brooks Slaughter argues for holding policymakers accountable on diversity issues, underscoring their importance to American competitiveness. Journalist Juan Williams seeks to close “an increasing class divide . . . between those of us able to participate in this global economy and those who are on the outside literally, desperate to get a foothold on that ladder of upward mobility.”

In the business sector, NACME’s bottom line, “a workforce that resembles America,” cannot be met unless the skills pipeline is transformed. Diversity executives from corporations such as Chrysler and General Motors make clear the need for minority engineering talent in industry. IBM’s Donofrio identifies gaps in technology and strategic expertise, and “between where we are and what we think ought to be possible. If we are to close those gaps,” Donofrio says, “we must live and operate in a way that embraces integration over isolation.”

A downloadable version of *Calls to Action* is available online from www.nacme.org.

About NACME

Since 1974, the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (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. For more information, visit www.nacme.org.

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