COMMITTEE ON UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS AND THE EXPANSION OF THE SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING WORKFORCE PIPELINE

Statement of Task: An ad hoc committee, under the aegis of COSEPUP, will explore the role of diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics workforce and its value in keeping America innovative and competitive. The study will analyze the rate of change and the challenges the nation currently faces in developing a strong and diverse workforce. It will identify best practices and the characteristics of these practices that make them effective and sustainable.

The committee will respond to the following questions:

(1) What are the key social and institutional factors that shape decisions of minority students to commit to education and careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields? What programs have successfully influenced these factors to yield improved results?

(2) What are the specific barriers preventing greater minority student participation in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields? What programs have successfully minimized these barriers?

(3) What are the primary focus points for policy intervention to increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities in America's workforce in the future? Which programs have successfully implemented policies to improve recruitment and retention? Are they "pull" or "push" strategies? Overall, how effective have they been? By what criteria should they be judged?

(4) What programs are underway to increase diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields? Which programs have been shown to be effective? Do they differ by gender within minority group? What factors make them more effective? How can they be expanded and improved in a sustainable way?

(5) What is the role of minority-serving institutions in the diversification of America's workforce in these fields? How can that role be supported and strengthened?

(6) How can the public and private sectors better assist minority students in their efforts to join America's workforce in these fields?

(7) What should be the implementation strategy? The committee should develop a prioritized list of policy and funding action items (e.g., tax credits) with milestones and cost estimates that will lead to a science and engineering workforce that mirrors the nation's diverse population.
The National Academies

Committee on Underrepresented Groups and
the Expansion of the Science and Engineering Workforce Pipeline

Committee Membership
(as of February 19, 2008)

Freeman Hrabowski, Chair President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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Carlos Gutierrez, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, California State University-Los Angeles

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Sylvia Hurtado, Professor and Director, Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA

James S. Jackson (IOM), Director, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Shirley McBay, President, Quality for Minority Education Network

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Willie Pearson, Professor of Sociology, Georgia Institute of Technology

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