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Testimony for
Madiha Kotb, President
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NACME Special Session:
Advancing URM's in STEM Education and Careers



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ASME is committed to achieving a truly diverse and inclusive science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce in the U.S. and all over the world. Specific to the U.S., ASME would like to proffer the following policy recommendations. In 2011, women were awarded 18.9% of engineering degrees, while African Americans and Hispanics represented only 4% and 9% respectively.¹ While these numbers do represent significant gains from the 1980s, there is still much work that needs to be done.

The U.S. economy relies on the productivity, creativity, and entrepreneurship of all U.S. citizens. With the predicted changes in future U.S. workforce demographics, increasing the participation of women and underrepresented groups in the U.S. STEM workforce must become a 21st Century national imperative.

We urge policymakers to strengthen and re-examine oversight of existing legislation and programs aimed specifically at broadening participation by under-represented groups in STEM fields, including that which:

- Increases public awareness of STEM careers, including supporting efforts to foster outreach to all students, teachers, parents, and K-12 guidance counselors;
- Enables all students to have access to a rigorous STEM curriculum, hands-on laboratory experiences, and informal learning that increases academic performance and interest in STEM careers; and,
- Offers incentives and mentoring for women and under-represented groups to pursue STEM coursework and careers, including teaching careers, and continue to provide professional achievement opportunities post-graduation and throughout their careers.

By dramatically improving the participation of women and talent from other under-represented groups in the STEM workforce, the U.S. can leverage the diversity of these individuals to fuel the innovation necessary for our global competitiveness, as well as meet the challenges of a changing world.

¹ Yoder, Brian L. "Engineering by the Numbers." American Society for Engineering Education 2012. <http://www.asee.org/papers-and-publications/publications/11-47.pdf>