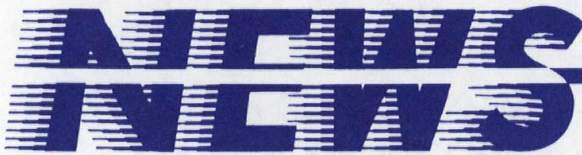


National Science Foundation



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October 15, 1993
NSF PR 93-83

NEW ALLIANCES TO ENCOURAGE MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS

Four new regional projects have joined the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Alliances for Minority Participation (AMP) Program, a two-year-old program designed to expand the participation of underrepresented minorities in science, engineering, and mathematics. The lead universities for the new partnerships, each of which spans a number of institutions, are San Francisco State, Howard, New Mexico State, and Chicago State Universities.

The new alliances join 11 other AMP projects designed to boost the numbers of African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and other minorities who receive bachelors' degrees in science, mathematics, and engineering. Each project may receive up to \$5 million over five years, with the possibility of a similar renewal award. The overall goal is to boost the numbers of minority recipients of bachelors' degrees in these technical disciplines annually from 13,000 to more than 50,000 by the year 2000.

The alliances link academic institutions, government, industry, and other organizations to eliminate obstacles that keep minorities out of science and mathematics. At present, minority students drop out of these disciplines at almost

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twice the rate of non-minorities. According to Luther S. Williams, assistant director for education and human resources, "barriers to student success include students' minimal contact with minority science and mathematics professionals; minorities' limited participation in student life because of a perceived unsupportive environment; and lack of adequate financial support. This program addresses these issues through the emphasis on engineering and the physical sciences."

Each AMP project is geared toward local needs and goals, although all alliances are expected to take the lead in some fundamental areas: promoting undergraduate research experiences, strengthening links between universities and community colleges, and improving "gateway" courses such as physics, chemistry, and calculus.

Already the colleges and universities in existing AMPs have increased the numbers of minority students in the target disciplines by nine percent. Accountability is key to the program's success: an alliance must demonstrate progress in yearly evaluations or its funding will be discontinued.

A closer look at this year's AMP awards:

- The California State University Alliance for Minority Participation, headed by San Francisco State, intends to increase the number of minority students receiving bachelors' degrees in the state from 750 to at least 1500 after five years. The project links 16 California State University campuses, 16 community colleges, and 12 major corporations.
- An alliance in the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore area, led by Howard University, will link historically black institutions--Morgan State and Hampton Universities and the University of the District of Columbia, in addition to Howard--with other universities and community colleges in Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. The training network will embrace more than 5,000 students.
- An alliance in New Mexico--the state with the highest proportion of Native Americans and Hispanics--will connect New Mexico State University to the state's 20 public two-year colleges, among other institutions. The alliance plans to boost bachelors' degrees received by minorities annually to more than 700 by 1998.
- The Chicago Alliance for Minority Participation is a network joining six universities--Chicago State, De Paul, Loyola, and Northwestern Universities, as well as the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Illinois at Chicago--to local businesses, national laboratories,

and local school districts. While these universities enroll over 2,000 minority students a year, the alliance seeks to significantly increase the quantity and quality of minority recipients of bachelors' degrees in science and mathematics. By the year 2,000, the alliance proposes to quadruple the number of such recipients to at least 1,000 per year, and to place at least 200 minority students in graduate school in the target disciplines every year.

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The National Science Foundation is an independent agency of the federal government established in 1950 to promote and advance scientific progress in the United States. NSF accomplishes its mission primarily by competitively awarding grants to educational institutions for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

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