



For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

Adrienne McGarr

Ruder Finn for IEEE

312-329-3907

mcgarra@ruderfinn.com

Fran Tardo

IEEE

732-465 5865

f.tardo@ieee.org

Innovation in Danger: Not Enough Students Pursuing Engineering Careers

Thought Leaders from the IEEE Discuss Current Issues in Education, from Engaging Our Nation's Youth to Encouraging, Attracting and Retaining Engineering Talent

PISCATAWAY, N.J. – October 28, 2008 – The trend is alarming, and it's global. In Western Europe, Australia, Japan and even in India, the numbers of students attracted to engineering and computer science are declining. For example, a 2003 Harris poll conducted in the U.S. shows that only two percent of first year university students (and less than one percent of young women) want to major in computer science.

The IEEE is a driving force behind changing the perception of math and science-based careers. These low numbers raise concerns among leaders of industry and policy makers who believe that a large and well educated engineering workforce is essential to public welfare and technological progress. Indeed, the decline in engineering student numbers threatens the operation and growth of a large number of organizations and corporations around the globe. The focus of these organizations ranges from research and development and healthcare to manufacturing and advanced computing.

A major focus of IEEE's efforts is around engaging young people on engineering topics and fields. "We have two goals," says Drexel University engineering Professor Moshe Kam, 2007 IEEE Vice President for Educational Activities. "We would like to increase the propensity of young people to choose engineering as a career path, and we would like to increase the understanding that engineering provides young people with a viable and exciting future, among the parents, school counselors and teachers who provide young people with guidance about course selection and career choices."

Education is the foundation of IEEE's vision, as it serves to enlighten students on career options, and guides professionals on how to attract and retain talent. IEEE is committed to educating youth worldwide on the benefits and excitement of engineering-based careers, and to guide university students on engineering majors and careers. Specifically, the dialogue focuses on the following global themes:

- Re-thinking the engineer
- Mastering the innovation process – how corporations and academic institutions are responding
- Global workforce challenges
- Life-long learning

To this end, IEEE recently partnered with the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) to create a report entitled “Changing the Conversation,”¹ and issued a call to action for the entire industry to come together to create a coordinated, multi-year campaign to deliver the message that engineers make a world of difference – focused especially on young people who don’t see engineering as a place where they can dream.

If you are looking for proven resources and experts to provide insightful commentary on engineering and education topics, please contact IEEE at ieee-PR@ruderfinn.com.

About IEEE

The IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.) is the world’s largest technical professional society. Through its more than 375,000 members in 160 countries, the organization is a leading authority on a wide variety of areas ranging from aerospace systems, computers and telecommunications to biomedical engineering, electric power and consumer electronics. Dedicated to the advancement of technology, the IEEE publishes 30 percent of the world’s literature in the electrical and electronics engineering and computer science fields, and has developed nearly 900 active industry standards. The organization annually sponsors more than 850 conferences worldwide. Additional information about the IEEE can be found at <http://www.ieee.org>.

###

¹ Copies of Changing the Conversation: Messages for Improving Public Understanding of Engineering are available from the National Academies Press; tel. 202-334-3313 or 1-800-624-6242 or on the Internet at <http://www.nap.edu>.