

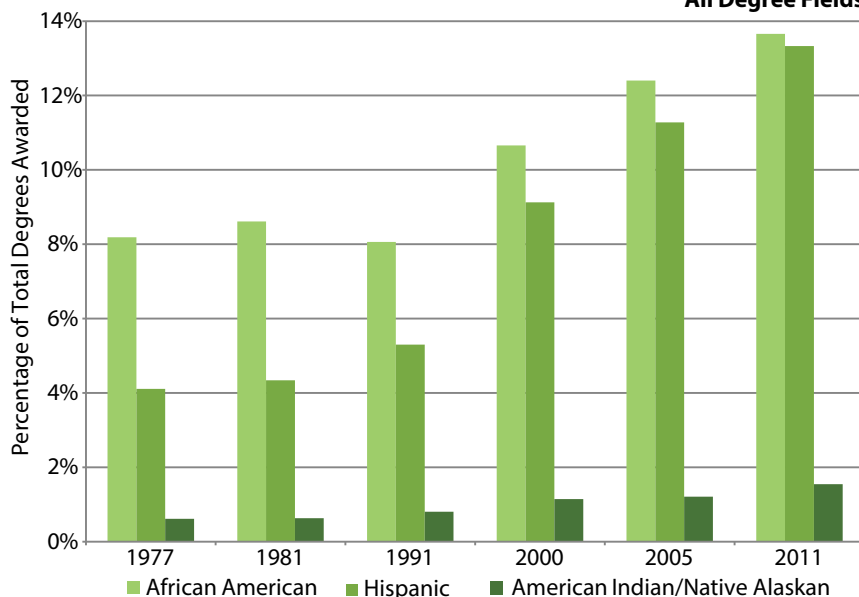
## Underrepresented Minority Participation in the Geosciences at the Two-Year College Level

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2011, enrollments at two-year colleges were 16% African American, 19% Hispanic, and 2% Native American/Native Alaskan, whereas enrollments at four-year institutions were 14% African American, 10% Hispanic, and 1% Native American/Native Alaskan. While total enrollments are higher at four-year institutions compared to two-year colleges, many underrepresented minorities start their post-secondary education at two-year colleges.

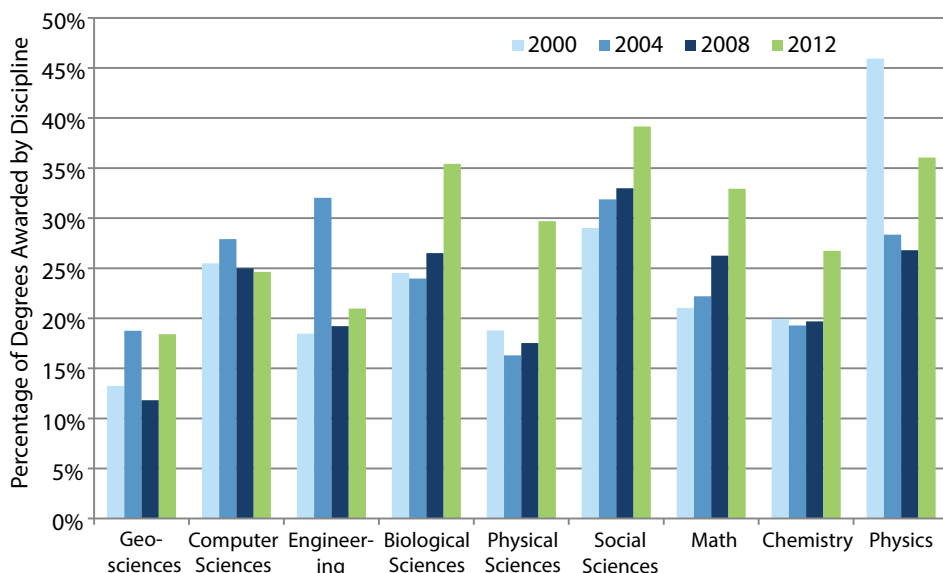
The percentage of associate's degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities has continued to increase to nearly 30% in 2011. According to the National Science Foundation, in 2012 between 18% to 36% of associate's degrees in science fields were awarded to underrepresented minorities. However, associate's degrees in the geosciences have consistently been the lowest percentage of underrepresented minorities of all science disciplines, except for the physical sciences in 2004.

Two-year colleges provide a steadily increasing pool of minority students that are showing interest in the sciences. Over 400 of these schools have a geoscience program or course available for students. Prior research has shown the importance of intro classes in the geosciences for recruitment. To increase minority participation in the geosciences, more focus should be placed on these two-year college programs, whether that means graduating more of these students with geoscience associate's degrees or encouraging them to transfer to a four-year institution for a geoscience degree.

Percentage of Awarded Associate's Degrees to Underrepresented Minorities, All Degree Fields



Percentage of Associate's Degrees Awarded to Underrepresented Minorities by Discipline



- Carolyn E. Wilson

For more information and data about geoscience education and workforce trends, please check out AGI's newly released **Status of the Geoscience Workforce 2014**  
<http://www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/reports>