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SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING EMPLOYMENT GROWS FASTER THAN TOTAL LABOR FORCE OVER LAST TWO DECADES

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 1, 2004) – Although comprising only about 5% of the total labor force, the number of individuals employed in scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical (STEM) occupations grew much faster in the past 20 years than overall U.S. employment, primarily due to the recent boom in the computer and telecommunications industries. However, even among STEM occupations, there was uneven growth, with some occupations decreasing in number, according to a report issued today by the Washington, DC-based Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology (CPST).

The report, ***Twenty Years of Scientific and Technical Employment***, examines time series data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to assemble estimates of average annual employment by detailed occupation from 1983 to 2002. It documents the growth in overall numbers of persons in the entire U.S. civilian labor force, as well as the growth in STEM jobs, and provides details for men and women and for racial and ethnic minority groups where available.

The report is the first in a series from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation-funded STEM Workforce Data Project. Under the direction of co-principal investigators Eleanor Babco, CPST Executive Director, and Richard Ellis of Ellis Research Services, the project will identify and distribute reliable statistics on STEM workers in the United States. Like the earlier IT Workforce Data Project (see http://www.cpst.org for reports from the project), the STEM project will draw upon the full range of statistical resources offered by U.S. federal agencies, as well as other private sources of information, to issue reports and data in both print and electronic media.

Highlights from ***Twenty Years of Scientific and Technical Employment*** include:

- Between 1983 and 2002, the entire U.S. labor force increased by a third at its peak, to 136 percent of its size at the start of the period. Growth was stronger in executive, managerial,

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administrative and professional specialty occupations, which rose to 180 percent of their starting size during the two decades.

- STEM occupations, excluding social scientists and science and engineering technicians, increased from about 3 million persons in 1983 to over 5.7 million in the peak year of 2000, a growth rate of 190 percent. Adding in social scientists and science and engineering technicians lowers the estimate of growth slightly to 173 percent, from 4.4 million to 7.6 million jobs.

- Computer systems analyst and scientist occupations grew faster than any other STEM occupation, with a growth rate of 665 percent from 276,000 in 1983 to a peak of 1.8 million in 2001. Medical scientists and postsecondary physics teachers also saw significant gains in employment between 1983 and 2002, with growth rates at their peak years of 374 percent and 275 percent respectively.

- Occupations with considerable shrinking employment included mining engineering which shrank from 8,000 in 1983 to 2,000 at its trough in 2000, only 25% of its original size. Other occupations with significant losses of jobs included agricultural engineers, surveyors and mapping scientists, petroleum engineers, nuclear engineers, and drafting occupations.

- African Americans accounted for 6.3 percent of STEM employment in 2003, Hispanics accounted for 5.3 percent, and Asians accounted for 10.7 percent. Women accounted for one quarter (26.1%) of all STEM occupations in 2003 even though they comprised nearly half (46.8%) of the entire U.S. labor force.

The report and its accompanying data archive are available online at http://www.cpst.org.

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About CPST: The **Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology (CPST)**, founded in 1953 as the Scientific Manpower Commission, is a nonprofit corporation whose membership includes leading professional societies, corporations, academic institutions and individuals concerned with the education and employment of scientists, engineers and technical professionals. For more information, visit http://www.cpst.org.