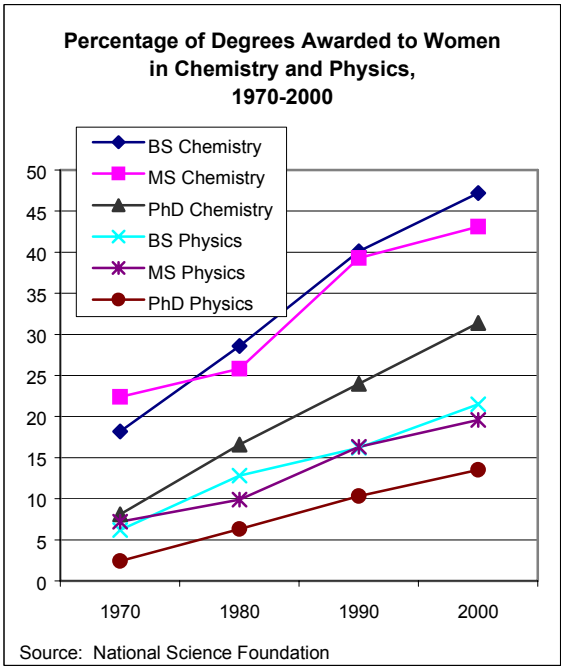
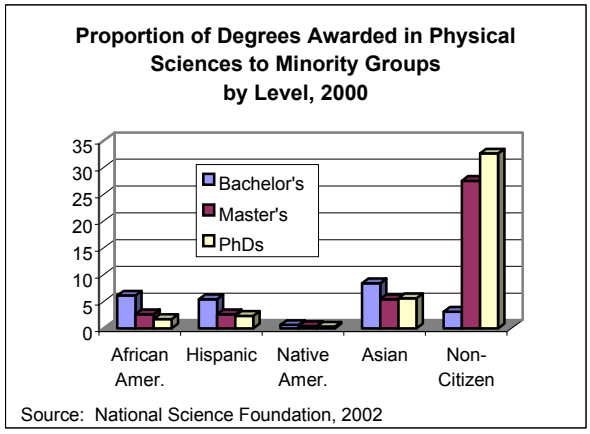
CHAPTER 6 – PHYSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

This section traces the progress of women and minorities in the physical, earth/ environmental, and mathematical/computer sciences. Highlights include:

- Women have made tremendous progress in their pursuit of degrees in the physical sciences over the past couple of decades. In 2000, they received 41% of the bachelor's degrees, 35% of the master's degrees, and 24.5% of the PhDs, up from 14.5%, 15%, and 6% respectively in 1980. However, their progress has not been uniform across all the physical sciences. While women earned 47% of the bachelor's degrees in chemistry, they earned only 22% in physics. Similar data exist at the graduate level.



- Looking only at U.S. citizens and permanent residents, the underrepresented groups (African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans) earned 12.1% at the bachelor's level, 5.6% at the master's level and 4.3% at the doctoral level in 2000. Asian Americans earned 8.4% of the baccalaureates, 5.4% of the master's and 5.6% of the PhDs awarded in 2000 in the physical sciences. At the graduate levels, non-U.S. citizens earned 28% of the master's and 33% of the doctorates in the physical sciences in 2000.



- Women have also made progress in the environmental sciences. Over the 35-year period from 1966 through 2000, women increased their proportion of earned degrees from 9.4% at the bachelor's level, 5.9% at the master's level, and 3.0% at the doctoral level to 40.0%, 38.1% and 30.4% respectively.

- In the mathematical sciences, women increased their share of degrees earned at the bachelor's level from 33.3% in 1966 to 47.8% in 2000. And while women increased their proportion of computer science baccalaureates from 14.6% in 1966 to 25.0% in 2000, their proportion has been dropping steadily since 1984 when they earned 37.2% of the baccalaureates in computer science.

- Minority groups also made progress in the mathematical and computer sciences as shown in the accompanying chart.