

*Demographic Trends and the Scientific and  
Engineering Workforce*

December 1985

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**DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS  
AND THE SCIENTIFIC  
AND ENGINEERING  
WORK FORCE**

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**A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM**

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DECEMBER 1985

**This is an OTA Technical Memorandum that has been neither reviewed nor  
approved by the Technology Assessment Board.**

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# Foreword

Scientists and engineers represent only 3 percent of the national work force, but they are crucial to the Nation's efforts to improve its economic competitiveness and national security. Their work makes possible advances in knowledge that improve the well-being of people all over the world.

This technical memorandum explores the effect that changes in the size and composition of the U.S. population may have on the science and engineering work force. The study was requested by the Science Policy Task Force of the House Committee on Science and Technology.

OTA concluded that while demographic trends are important and should be considered in thinking about future scientific output, they are not a controlling variable. The flexibility of the American education system and the adaptability of our scientists and engineers enable market forces and career choices to play a dominant role in balancing supply with demand. OTA also concluded that it is important to maintain and strengthen existing efforts to improve access to scientific and engineering careers for disadvantaged groups.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John H. Gibbons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "G".

JOHN H. GIBBONS

*Director*

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