

## The Relevance and Contributions of Minority Serving Institutions

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### Overview of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)

Minority Serving Institutions emerged in response to a history of inequity, lack of minority people's access to majority institutions, and significant demographic changes in the country. Now an integral part of American higher education, MSIs—specifically Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) — have carved out a unique niche in the nation: serving the needs of low-income and underrepresented students of color. These institutions boast diverse faculties and staffs, provide environments that significantly enhance student learning and cultivate leadership skills, offer role models of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, provide programs of study that challenge students, address deficiencies resulting from inadequate preparation in primary and secondary school, and prepare students to succeed in the workforce and in graduate and professional education. Because MSIs enroll a substantial share of minority students, many of whom might not otherwise attend college, the continuous development and success of these institutions is critical for realizing our nation's higher education and workforce goals and for the benefit of American society overall. MSIs play vital roles for the nation's economy, especially with respect to elevating the workforce prospects of disadvantaged populations and reducing the underrepresentation of minorities and disadvantaged people in graduate and professional schools and the careers that require post baccalaureate education and training. By virtue of their federal legislation, MSIs enroll a largely disproportionate population of students of color. If the federal government seeks to widen educational access to this population, they should increase the nation's investment in these institutions.<sup>1</sup>

### Minority Serving Institutions by the Numbers<sup>2</sup>

599 Minority Serving Institutions

- 34 TCUs
  - 105 HBCUs
  - 315 HSIs
  - 145 AANAPISIs
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- 3.6 million undergraduates are enrolled in MSIs – 20% of all undergraduate students.
  - Over 50% of all MSI students receive Pell Grants.
  - Tuition at MSIs is on average 50% lower than majority institutions.

## **Individual MSI Sector Descriptions and Contributions**

### **Tribal Colleges and Universities**

The 34 colleges and universities that are regular members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium are spread across 13 states and include 13 four-year and 21 two-year colleges. With nearly 30,000 students enrolled, TCUs have grown significantly since the first tribal college, Diné College in Arizona, opened its doors (under the name Navajo Community College) over four decades ago. Predominantly public institutions (over 75%), TCUs vary in enrollments from under 100 to nearly 3,000 students. Most TCUs are located on reservations: among the 34 TCUs are four urban or suburban campuses, three campuses located in distant or remote towns, and 27 rural campuses. With their roots in Native American movements for self-determination, TCUs were established to provide educational opportunities for a local tribe(s) and expand a network of regional higher education opportunities for Indians and non-Indians alike. TCUs serve as places where students find the support and social capital they need to get degrees that lead to careers. TCUs have also focused considerable educational resources on the survival and development of socially and economically marginalized communities, and these institutions have helped maintain and invigorate tribal languages and cultures while at the same time developing curricula that speak to the experiences and backgrounds of Native Americans.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hispanic Serving Institutions**

Colleges and universities that serve large numbers of Hispanics date to the founding of the University of Puerto Rico (1903). In the 1960s and 70s, drawing on the example of the African American civil rights movement and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Latino/a student and community activists advocated changes in admissions policies and founded grassroots Hispanic colleges. Boricua College (1968), Hostos Community College (1969), and National Hispanic University (1981) are living legacies of community action. Leaders of de facto Hispanic Serving Institutions founded the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (1986) and coined the phrase “Hispanic Serving Institution.” This name became official federal policy in 1992, and since the 2008 amendment of the Higher Education Act, “Hispanic Serving Institution” came to designate any accredited and degree-granting public or private nonprofit institution with an undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment of 25% or higher coupled with substantial enrollment of low-income students. In the absence of a formal federal list of HSIs, the name is generally applied to institutions that meet the federal institutional and enrollment criteria. Based on these criteria, 315 institutions in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia qualified as HSIs in 2012. Scattered across 15 states and all institutional sectors, these institutions—just over 6% of all degree-granting institutions—enrolled almost four million undergraduates, including one quarter of all minority undergraduates in higher education in the United States, and nearly one-half of Hispanic undergraduates. Predominantly public (70%) and two-year (49%) institutions, HSIs also count among their numbers 10 research universities and more than 50 master’s degree institutions. As a group, these institutions play a critical role in making college accessible and starting Hispanic students on the path to degrees. HSIs are some of the most diverse institutions in the United States, serving as critical points of access to technology, information, and public space for communities with few such resources.<sup>4</sup>

## **Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

HBCUs were officially defined in the 1965 Higher Education Act as a “college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans.” Born out of segregation and spread across 20 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, these 105 institutions have played a critical role in providing education to Black Americans since the founding of Cheney University in 1837. In 2011 HBCUs made up 2% of the degree granting Title IV institutions and enrolled nearly 346,338 students—including 1.6% of all undergraduate students in the United States, 3.7% of total minority undergraduates, .3% of White undergraduates, and 11% of Black undergraduates. HBCUs get students, especially Black students, to degrees, and they do this at the same rate as majority institutions but with less funding. HBCUs have long graduated a disproportionate percentage of the Black students who earn bachelor’s degrees and who go on to graduate or professional schools. In 2012, HBCUs accounted for nearly 18% of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Black students. HBCUs not only guide students in attaining the benefits of a first college degree (income, employment) but also contribute to students’ momentum toward further education and the professions. But HBCUs do more than produce degrees: HBCUs contribute to their students’—especially their Black students’—psychosocial adjustments to college and career as well as to their cultural awareness, self-confidence, and social capital.<sup>5</sup>

## **Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions**

In 1960 the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population was less than one million, but it has nearly doubled in size every decade since then, changing the face of America and subsequently American higher education. This rapid growth is the result of immigration patterns, and these patterns have also led to an increased presence of the AAPI population on college campuses across the nation. As a result, a small group of institutions now identify—through a federal designation and funding program—as Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). In 2009, the Congressional Research Service determined that 116 institutions met the requirements of the federal designation. However, there are 145 eligible institutions in 2014; the numbers are growing quickly. Ten percent of these institutions’ student populations are low income Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders. Although the model minority myth perpetuates the false belief that all Asian Americans are academically advanced, AAPI students are in reality quite diverse and have needs that are similar to other underrepresented racial and ethnic populations. There are 48 different ethnicities among the AAPI population, and these individuals speak more than 300 languages. Of note, the most poverty stricken of the AAPI groups in terms of socioeconomic status are the Hmong (38% live below the poverty line), Samoans, (20% live in poverty), and Filipinos (6% live below the poverty line). Still finding their identity, AANAPISIs are already unearthing the activist spirit within AAPI populations, creating pathways to graduate school for low-income AAPIs, providing them with mentors, and contributing to a Pan-Asian outlook that empowers the larger AAPI community.<sup>6</sup>

## **Areas of Disproportionate MSI Impact**

### **MSIs and Production of Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) Degrees<sup>7</sup>**

Seventy-six percent of scientists and engineers with a bachelor’s degree in the United States are White. If the nation is to maintain its legacy of innovation in science and technology, we should look to MSIs to address the racial and ethnic disparities in STEM education, as diversity leads to innovation. Between 2006-2010, many MSIs have been among the top 20 academic institutions that

award science and engineering degrees to racial minority graduates.

- Of the top 20 institutions that award science and engineering degrees to Asians or Pacific Islanders, seven identify as AANAPISIs. These include large, regional universities, such as San Jose State University, which is located in the California Bay Area, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Ten HSIs are among the top 20 institutions that award science and engineering degrees to Hispanics/Latinos. Most of these institutions are located in California, Texas, and Puerto Rico.
- Ten HBCUs are among the top 20 institutions that award science and engineering degrees to Blacks/African Americans. These institutions vary in size and public and private status, and include institutions such as Alabama A&M University and Hampton University, which is located in Virginia.
- Of the top 20 institutions that award science and engineering degrees to Native Americans, only one TCU—Haskell Indian Nations University—is included. Considering that most TCUs are community colleges, with few awarding degrees beyond the associate level, this is not alarming.

### **Minority Serving Institutions and Men of Color<sup>8</sup>**

According to the Department of Education, data indicate that boys and men of color are disproportionately at risk. There are large disparities in preparation for boys and young men of color at all levels. Moreover, a disproportionate number of Black and Latino men are unemployed or in the criminal justice system. These factors contribute to the undermining of families and local communities. Lastly, as a result of these circumstances, men of color are more likely to be the victims of violent crimes. Minority Serving Institutions can and do play a large role in countering these statistics and changing the lives of men of color. Consider these data:

- Over 36% of men of color with full-time college enrollment are found at Minority Serving Institutions.
- Nearly half (48.6%) of men of color with part-time college enrollment are found at Minority Serving Institutions.
- Of the 196,110 bachelors degrees conferred to men of color, 24% (n=58,657) are awarded by MSIs.
- Twenty-two percent (n=50,829) of men of color with associate degrees earned them at Minority Serving Institutions.
- MSIs represent less than 8% of all postsecondary institutions in the nation.

### **Minority Serving Institutions and Teacher Education<sup>9</sup>**

Between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012, there were 108,054 bachelor's degrees in education conferred in the United States. Of these 11,588 were conferred by MSIs (11%). Of note, MSIs account for 53.5% of all education bachelor's conferred to Latinos, over half of education degrees for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (54%), nearly a third for Blacks (32%) as well as over a third for Asians (35%). Across MSIs, the institutions within each sector that confer the most teaching degrees are Oglala Lakota College (TCU), the University of Texas, El Paso (HSI), Jackson State University (HBCU), and California State University-Fullerton (AANAPISI).

## **Recommendations for Empowering Minority Serving Institutions and Low-Income Students of Color**

1. Colleges and universities with strong endowments and alumni giving thrive and are able to support students in more comprehensive ways (e.g., institutional aid and student support services). Investments at the federal level in MSIs should focus on building fundraising infrastructure in order to ensure long-term stability rather than short term fixes.<sup>10</sup>
2. Forty-six percent of MSIs are community colleges that enroll a largely disproportionate population of part-time students of color. Increasing investments in MSIs affects not only racial minority students, but also minorities who are also considered non-traditional – over the age of 25, working full-time and/or have family dependents for which to care.<sup>11</sup>
3. Evidence suggests that the interventions, funded through MSI federal legislation, actually work in improving student outcomes. In order for more students to reap the benefits of these interventions, more funding is needed to bring them up to scale, using exemplary programs as models. Exemplary models include math shame interventions at Chief Dull Knife College, peer mentoring in science at Morehouse College, computer assisted learning at El Paso Community College, and the Full Circle Project at Sacramento State University. See [\*Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students\*](#) report for more details.<sup>12</sup>
4. The federal government should require MSIs to [collect data on student outcomes](#) across various stages – including retention, developmental education, attainment, and post-college employment. Likewise, the federal government should provide MSIs with funding to make data collection regular and manageable as most MSIs lack the infrastructure to collect good data. Having good, solid data on hand increases MSIs performance at the state level where outcomes based funding is becoming the norm and in their interactions with private foundation and corporations looking to fund MSIs.<sup>13</sup>
5. As 11% of teacher education degrees nation wide were conferred by MSIs and a disproportionate number of teacher education degrees among students of color, it is essential to invest in teacher education programs at MSIs. Students in these programs are more likely to return to urban and rural communities to teach and can have a lasting impact on students of color in these communities. As the nation's demographics change – as predicted by the U.S. Census – it will become even more important to have a teaching force that reflects the diversity of the nation as research shows that having a teacher of the same racial or ethnic background increases student performance.<sup>14</sup>

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> Clifton Conrad and Marybeth Gasman, *Lessons from the Margins: What American Higher Education can Learn about Empowering All Students to be Successful in College*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> Marybeth Gasman and Clifton Conrad, *Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students*. (Philadelphia, PA: Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also, Marybeth Gasman, Benjamin Baez, and Caroline Sotello Turner, *Understanding Minority Serving Institutions*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid. See also, Marybeth Gasman, Valerie Lundy Wagner, Tafaya Ransom, and Nelson Bowman, *Unearthing Promise and Potential: Our Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010).
- <sup>6</sup> Robert Teranishi, *Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions: Areas of Growth, Innovation, and Collaboration*. (New York, NY: National Commission on Asian American & Pacific Islander Research in Education, 2012).
- <sup>7</sup> Marybeth Gasman and Clifton Conrad, *Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students*. (Philadelphia, PA: Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, 2013).
- <sup>8</sup> Data prepared for My Brother's Keeper Initiative by the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (Marybeth Gasman, Andrés Castro Samayoa, & Thai-Huy Nguyen), 2014. All data culled from the National Center for Educational Statistics.
- <sup>9</sup> Data prepared for a W.K. Kellogg Foundation-sponsored project titled "The Role of Minority Serving Institutions in Adopting and Implementing the New State Standards and Providing Leadership in Teacher Education" by researchers at the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (Marybeth Gasman, Andrés Castro Samayoa, Kerry Madden, Karla Silva, and Carolina Davila). All data culled from the National Center for Educational Statistics.
- <sup>10</sup> Marybeth Gasman and Nelson Bowman III, *A Guide to Fundraising at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (New York: Routledge Press, 2010).
- <sup>11</sup> Data prepared for a forthcoming report on community colleges that are also MSIs by the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions (Thai-Huy Nguyen, Valerie Lundy Wagner, Marybeth Gasman, Melanie Wolff, Desmond Diggs, Andrés Castro Samayoa, and Carolina Davila) All data culled from the National Center for Educational Statistics.
- <sup>12</sup> Marybeth Gasman and Clifton Conrad, *Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students*. (Philadelphia, PA: Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, 2013).
- <sup>13</sup> Clifton Conrad, Marybeth Gasman, Todd Lundberg, et al, *Collecting and Using Data at Minority Serving Institutions*, Philadelphia, PA: Center for Minority Serving Institutions, University of Pennsylvania, October 2013.
- <sup>14</sup> Recommendation based on data noted in endnote nine.