

CHAPTER 1

On Minority-Serving Institutions

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To say that African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, and Native American students participate (and succeed) in higher education in disproportionately lower numbers than White or Asian-American students is to offer what can only be called a “truism.” We know this to be the case, and we have pretty good ideas about why this is so. We know most of these students are first-generation college attendees; they often come from poor and low-income households; they can barely afford postsecondary education; they attend poor, segregated public schools; and they experience hostility and unsupportive environments at many historically (HWIs) and predominantly White institutions (PWIs). We also know, almost as well, that racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in the small number of institutions denoted by the term “Minority-Serving Institutions” (MSIs). MSIs traditionally include historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) and more recently Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AAPIs). Indeed, one may say that but for MSIs, many students of color would have a significantly lower chance of attaining postsecondary education. The importance of MSIs to higher education, nay, to society, therefore, cannot be underestimated by anyone.

The importance and strengths of MSIs derive primarily from their collective missions to educate and graduate students from underrepresented groups, the culturally sensitive programs they provide those students, and the public service they perform for their racial and ethnic communities. MSIs, perhaps more than PWIs, may see social justice as their *raison d’être*. Yet, after having said this, we can say that we know very little about MSIs. Currently much has been written about HBCUs. Given the history of race

in this country, many studies of HBCUs are thus historical. The problem is that such histories tend to give general overviews of HBCUs as a collective category and thus tend to treat these institutions monolithically. There have been few attempts to systematically review research on MSIs to determine the state of the field. But, much of the current research is only marginally enlightening, amounting to what we call “catalogue-type” information such as descriptive statistics and narratives about “heroes.” Other than histories of particular institutions, few empirical studies of HBCUs exist in the literature, and there is almost no scholarship on HSIs, TCUs, and the even more invisible Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. We offer in this book empirical studies of college students, staff, and faculty at MSIs, and thus contribute to a growing literature on these institutions.

Furthermore, most scholars have tended to treat each institutional-type independently of one other, without seeking to explain how these institutions both compete with and support each other. We think little has been done to provide valuable knowledge about MSIs in a way that highlights the relationships between MSIs. Economic and political forces have an impact on different types of MSIs differently, of course, but do such forces also have an impact on MSIs in similar but as yet not fully understood ways? Only with such significant research about MSIs, and their interconnections with each other and with PWIs, can one effectively advocate for their continued support. One primary goal of this book, therefore, is to promote such advocacy by offering research and scholarship that has been sorely missing in the literature on higher education. We think such advocacy cannot take place without also pointing to the interconnectedness of MSIs, as the authors in the last section of the book do. Our hope in advocating this interconnectedness is to dispel the idea that funding must take place as the “competitive” zero-sum game that currently shapes how many of these institutions interact with each other.

Highlighting the interconnectedness of MSIs is important not only because it can help MSIs form coalitions that can press state and federal governments for more funding, but also because this interconnectedness exposes a cultural/political phenomenon common to all. The right-wing backlash against affirmative action will make MSIs even more critical to the success of minority students. In addition to successful litigation against the Universities of Texas, Georgia, and Michigan, and public-policy initiatives prohibiting the use of race in admissions and employment in California, Michigan, and Washington, conservatives have also felt empowered to challenge not only college-admissions policies, but also all kinds of race-conscious practices that seek to narrow the gap between underrepresented and overrepresented ethnic and racial groups. For example, conservative groups, such as

the Center for Equal Opportunity, with the help of the conservative regime in the federal government and its allies in state attorneys offices, have challenged programs such as summer sessions for minority students, minority scholarships, fellowships, and internships. PWIs, fearing legal action, have eliminated or opened up these programs to all students. Without the full benefit of these programs at PWIs, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities may have little recourse but to seek admission at an MSI. These institutions, therefore, have a key, and perhaps contradictory, role to play in this “politics of color-blindness”: they must not simply “pick up” the students that PWIs will lose, but also must work simultaneously to challenge the practices and ideologies that lead to this loss in the first place. These practices and ideologies benefit MSIs in the sense that their enrollments will increase, but they also set race relations in this country back 40 years.

We also advocate for MSIs not only, or not simply, because of their value to racial and ethnic minorities, but because they are part of what makes the system of American higher education the envy of the world: In theory, students have in this country an incredible array of postsecondary options. For such institutional diversity alone, MSIs must be supported. And yet, the idea of institutional diversity is just that, an idea, for if we really did value institutional diversity in this country—indeed, if we really did care about racial and ethnic diversity more generally—then we must find perplexing why MSIs continue to struggle to maintain their existence. And, thus, another primary goal of this book is to expose the sociopolitical forces that ensure that MSIs continue to struggle, a struggle that should be deemed paradoxical, at best, since it takes place despite an almost universally uncontested rhetoric that places value in individual, institutional, and social diversity.

Except for a few wealthy private HBCUs and some large HSIs, Minority-Serving Institutions have little financial resources, and many MSIs are on the brink of closure. We can account for part of this by attending to funding patterns. Decreases in state funding to higher education and in federal financial aid to their students seriously undermine the stability of MSIs and, consequently, the successes of the students they serve. Moreover, governmental aid given directly to MSIs seems based on a “competitive” scheme, in which more aid to one type of institution means less aid to another. But while funding patterns are important, they do not completely explain why MSIs are struggling. We must look to other kinds of forces. For example, measures to ensure accountability as a basis for institutional aid affect MSIs disproportionately because these colleges and universities lack the resources by which to maintain the so-called high standards such measures require. And so accreditation agencies, for example, cannot be deemed innocent here, as they tend to punish MSIs more stringently than they do

PWIs, intentionally or not. We might think as possible also that such accreditation and accountability measures seek to “normalize” MSIs and to punish those that resist.

The financial and political obstacles we have pointed to cannot be simply thought of as easily resolved by more funding, for funding is greatly determined by our perceptions of merit, but it is not quite as clear that the reverse is true. In other words, the financial obstacles faced by MSIs, and also their missions to serve underserved populations, give the perception to others that they are of low quality, which in turn leads to poor finances. Giving MSIs more funding, however, will not necessarily mean that they automatically will be deemed meritorious, as many will think that such giving amounts to nothing more than an act of charity. Merit (or, in its institutional form, “quality”) is often defined narrowly in terms of scores on standardized admissions tests, and thus MSIs, which enroll a large number of economically and academically “at risk” students, often have difficulty with perceptions about the quality of their academic programs. Furthermore, given their meager financial resources, these institutions often cannot pay their faculty and staff competitive salaries, so they find it hard to attract faculty and staff. And, given their mission to ensure a supportive environment for students, MSIs are more likely to emphasize teaching and public service over scholarship and research, resulting further in the perception that they are of low quality.

We hope that exposure to the research in this book will influence students, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to question how particular constructions of worth in higher education ensure that MSIs, and by extension racial and ethnic minorities, continue to be devalued in the United States. In other words, we seek to change the discourse on MSIs, from one that simply describes their positions in the hierarchy of education to one that also questions the mechanisms that ensure a hierarchy in the first place. Indeed, does the very term “minority-serving” actually lead to the kind of devaluing that we seek to reverse? Such a label may carry a particular stigma that some MSIs would rather avoid. All “racialized” labels may carry particular meanings of value and worth, and so we should stop and reconsider our labels, as they are always embedded in power relations that value some things over others. The labels we use to signify race are especially troublesome, for they are parts of long-standing racial stratifications in this country, even when they seek to counter the effects of those stratifications. This point should not be taken to mean that “racialized” labels must be discarded—indeed, we wonder whether that is even possible—but it does require us to think about how the labels we use both support and contest racial meanings.

This discussion about the critical use of labels leads to our third primary goal for this book, which is not all that different from our goals of advocating for MSIs and of exposing the forces that ensure their continuing struggle: We hope this book provides a teaching tool for thinking critically about MSIs, higher education, and social justice more generally. We ask students (and future researchers) to think of this book not just as an invitation for reading about aspects of higher education that are just now beginning to gain visibility, but also for reading this information critically. We hope that readers consider how each chapter critically analyzes the research on MSIs, not only with regard to the questions it specifically addresses, but also with regard to the new questions it proposes, explicitly and implicitly, as avenues of research and practice.

For example, some of the authors here define MSIs in terms of the percentages of minority students in the student body (we will, although our authors do not, call this concept a “percentage scheme”). A “percentage scheme” is what defines the HSI—indeed, the HSI does not exist, in a significant sense, outside of such scheme—but, more important, is such a scheme *more or less* telling about what actually takes place in a particular institution? Such a percentage scheme can also lead to what may soon count as a new category of institutions: The predominantly Black institution (as opposed to the HBCUs, which does not derive its status from a percentage scheme, and why now a few HBCUs are actually predominantly White). An implicit question here, therefore, is whether this “percentage scheme” means that the “historically” Black institution will (or should) become obsolete. More interesting, do percentage schemes of classification (or, conversely, does the legal classification for HBCU and TCUs) actually define what an institution *is*, that is, what it is culturally, politically, socially?

Reading critically requires, therefore, more than simply asking whether the authors did a good job in asking, answering, and posing questions. Reading critically requires *reading against the text*, so to speak, and asking how the chapters address the political assumptions, beliefs, values, and practices that dictate how we live and work. The studies in this book, therefore, should not be judged simply for the accuracy of the social realities they espouse (or assume), or for the rigor of the methods they use, but for the questions they ask and the critiques they offer. Karl Marx (1959) still seems correct when he stated that the “philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it” (p. 243; emphasis in original). This means for us that we cannot just simply provide research about MSIs and let that be the end of it; we must also ask how the world in which such research is introduced could be changed as a result. The world can be transformed only when it is seen differently than before. It is in this way that we offer this book to

readers as a license to critique, which is the most practical thing we can offer to anyone studying higher education.

So far we have sought to explain our three primary goals for the book (advocacy, exposure, and critique), and we have only alluded to its chapters. We should now provide a more specific introduction to the book's contents. Before we provide such an introduction, we should explain what we hoped to accomplish in our selection of chapters for the book. We selected chapters that reflected interdisciplinary work addressing one or more of three sets of questions, questions which we encourage readers to keep in mind as they read this book. The first set of questions involves the nature of the research. What do we know about these institutions, the students who attend them, and the faculty and staff who work in them? Why do they exist, and should they exist? What benefits do these institutions provide to students, to higher education, and to society at large? What problems are prevalent in these institutions? This first set of questions also deals with the nature of the information about MSIs—is it catalogue-like information, research-based, anecdotal, comparative, or interpretive?

The second set of questions relates to the discourse on MSIs. Who “speaks” for and about these institutions? How are these institutions spoken about? What is the nature of the information circulated about them? What information is missing? Much of the discourse on these institutions focuses on inputs and outputs, which emphasizes the “economic” benefits associated with these institutions (e.g., the number of graduates who attend graduate school; the earnings of these graduates, etc.). Yet, is this economically based language sufficient for appreciating the value of such schools? Is not such language premised on a “negative” idea about these institutions, that is, that they need to justify their existence and dispel claims of academic inferiority by their comparisons with PWIs? What other forms of justification are available? What other discourses might be available for rethinking MSIs?

The third set of questions relates to the interconnections among MSIs. How might we better classify institutions? Do current classification patterns hinder or promote social justice? How are MSIs understood in relation to each other? Are funding patterns creating obstacles to effective collaboration among these institutions? What might be done to counteract the factors that force competition among MSIs? How might MSIs best collaborate and support each other?

We hope these sets of questions reframe the scholarship on MSIs, which, as we explained, is lacking good research and fails to address the interconnections among MSIs. We refused the current logic of dealing only with each institutional type in isolation and organized our book in accordance

with three large areas of study: The foundations of MSIs, institution-specific concerns, and common issues across institutions, each constituting the three major sections of this book. The foundations part of this book introduces readers to MSIs and offers studies from various interpretive analyses. The part on institution-specific issues offers quantitative and qualitative empirical studies on students and faculty living and working at MSIs. The last part on common issues offers empirical analyses of practices across MSIs. We now turn to each chapter, in the order they appear in our book, and we offer readers a sample of critical questions that authors more or less explicitly raise in their analyses.

In addition to this introductory chapter, part I of the book, “The Foundations of Minority-Serving Institutions,” also contains an historical overview written by Marybeth Gasman. This chapter provides the reader with a backdrop through which to understand and contextualize the other chapters. Likewise, Charmaine Jackson Mercer and James B. Stedman’s chapter entitled “Minority-Serving Higher Education Institutions: Selected Institutional and Student Characteristics” provides a contemporary overview. Mercer and Stedman illustrate the importance of MSIs for racial and ethnic minorities. Readers who are unfamiliar with MSIs should find this chapter helpful for thinking about the contributions of the subsequent chapters. In reviewing previously existing research, however, Mercer and Stedman’s piece implicitly illustrates how inadequate and “catalogue-like” the current state of research is on MSIs. Much of the research reviewed by Mercer and Stedman is itself not only based on databases, which illustrates the importance of such databases to our understanding of higher education, but also requires that we ask ourselves whether the reliance on databases in our conceptualization of higher education undermines other, more contextual, individualistic, and interpretive studies that might shed different, if not greater, light on what is actually taking place in higher education.

Philo A. Hutcheson, in “Shall I Compare Thee? Reflections on Naming and Power,” illustrates through historical and rhetorical analyses, how problematic it is to label a college as “historically Black” and by extension “minority-serving.” Hutcheson illustrates how the terms “historically Black colleges and universities” and “predominantly White institutions” produce invidious distinctions binding the former to particular, limited, and undervalued race work, while freeing the latter from having to deal with such *messiness* (our term). Labels, therefore, do things other than simply designate: They carry negative connotations with them. Despite Hutcheson’s critique, we really cannot dispense with these classifications, as they allow us to initiate a political identity for MSIs that gives them legitimacy in the political arena, and, indirectly, gives voice to the students they educate. But we

read Hutcheson's argument as suggesting not necessarily the elimination of these categories but a greater understanding of how they work, and how they are put to work, to maintain particular power relations. So we must ask ourselves critically, "what's in a name?" For names reflect power. In intending a political identity worthy of respect and support through the labels "MSIs," or "HBCU," or "HSI," or, "TCUs," and so on, are we also reinscribing the oppressive power relations associated with racial stratifications in this country?

Part II of our book, "Context-Specific Trends and Challenges," begins with two chapters that we think are in conversation with Hutcheson's. Chapter 5, Noah D. Drezner's "Arguing for a Different View: Deaf-Serving Institutions as Minority-Serving," makes a compelling argument for treating deaf-serving institutions (DSIs) as MSIs. Again the question of "what's in a name" comes into play. Drezner's reason for treating DSIs as "minority-serving" is so that they can compete for funding, but this is not an unproblematic reason, since funding takes place in a zero-sum game. Will the inclusion of DSIs in this game also result in less funding for MSIs? As Drezner grapples with this question, we might also think of the more fundamental questioning that Drezner requires of us, for in asking us to rethink what "minority-serving" means, we must also ask who gets, in this case, the "privilege" of the term; which institutional politics get the upper hand; and who gets left out as a result? What are the consequences, economically or socially, intended or unintended, associated with expanding the term "minority" to any group that can claim discrimination, now or in the past? If we accept Drezner's argument for why DSIs should be MSIs, which we might add is a very compelling argument, does that put us in the uncomfortable position of having to consider extending the category of MSIs to Catholic institutions, Jewish institutions, or women's colleges? And does expanding the label "minority-serving" beyond race make the term meaningless?

Similarly, in the interesting study by Frances E. Contreras, Lindsey E. Malcom, and Estela Mara Bensimon, we are forced again to ask the question, "what's in a name?" Their chapter, "Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Closeted Identity and the Production of Equitable Outcomes for Latino/a Students," illustrates the excellent use of mission statements in a study. Contreras, Malcom, and Bensimon found, surprisingly, that in their sample of HSIs, the institutions did not explicitly confirm their status as HSIs in their mission statements, and one had to dig more carefully into their institutional statements to discover such confirmation. What accounts for the absence of such confirmation? Is the label "Hispanic-serving" perceived as negative, and if so, can we locate and condemn the social conditions that make this so? Contreras, Malcom, and Bensimon also use an "equity index" to compare

student-outcomes data, and they found that Latino/a students may be experiencing unequal outcomes compared to Whites even at HSIs. These findings, then, put into question what the authors sought to uncover in their study of mission statements: The discernment of a “Latino/a agenda” at HSIs. If HSIs do not express their status explicitly, and if Latinos/as cannot match the performance of Whites at HSIs, when can we say honestly that such an agenda exists? Should such an agenda exist, and if so, what should it look like?

The question of what such agendas should look like is central to the following chapters on TCUs and AAPIs. In chapter 7, “Tribal Colleges and Universities: Identity, Invisibility, and Current Issues,” Justin P. Guillory and Kelly Ward provide one of the few studies of TCUs available. While highlighting the poor financial conditions, and consequent poor performances of TCUs, Guillory and Ward come down in favor of TCUs. They point out how crucial TCUs are for Native Americans, which are the most underrepresented of all racial and ethnic minorities in higher education. Not only are TCUs often in the remote areas where reservations exist, but they provide the kind of culturally sensitive instruction that Native Americans require and do not get at PWIs. Indeed, given the disrespect Native American culture gets at many PWIs, it is no wonder that many Native American students refuse to attend them. Still, the deplorable conditions at TCUs cannot be denied, as Guillory and Ward explain, but they require us to ask critically why this is so. We must ask after reading their chapter, why do funding and accrediting agencies continue to devalue what TCUs offer their students culturally and to require that they behave like mainstream institutions, or even like HSIs and HBCUs? Is the actual problem, as it is with individuals, that we require conformity in institutional behavior, judging everyone and everything by prevailing standards of normativity, such that the failure of individuals and institutions to conform is deemed pathological?

As with TCUs, there are few studies of institutions serving predominantly Asian populations. In “Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions: Historical Perspectives and Future Prospects,” Julie J. Park and Robert T. Teranishi provide one such study and challenge what they call a “stubborn and persistent” divide between Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other people of color. The authors examine the current efforts by some Asian American groups to create a government designation to represent Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. Moreover, Park and Teranishi see this effort as part of a larger attempt to bring Asian American issues together with the issues of other people of color. Their chapter challenges us to consider our stereotypes of Asian Americans, asking

us to rethink the model minority myth. Their chapter also, however, requires us to consider the issue of whether expanding the category of Minority-Serving Institution furthers or hinders intergroup race relations.

Chapter 9 returns us to the HSI and the empirical study. Berta Vigil Laden, Linda Serra Hagedorn, and Athena Perrakis' chapter, "¿Dónde Están Los Hombres?: Examining Success of Latino Males at Hispanic-Serving Community Colleges," provides a blend of empirical and critical analyses. The authors point out that even two-year HSIs, which do a good job of educating Latino/a students and in promoting their social mobility, still struggle with helping Latino men. Perhaps, whatever successes we may attribute to Latinos in general are really an effect of the successes of Latinas. The authors argue that two-year HSIs must do better at educating Latino men. This is an important argument, of course, but we also know that community-college attendance has a significant and negative relationship with the attainment of a bachelor's degree. Is this the case for two-year HSIs? If so, will greater success in enrolling and retaining Latino males by Hispanic-Serving community colleges actually ensure that these men will not attain a bachelor's degree? In looking into this question, how might we also look critically into the larger social structures that ensure that community-college attendance hinders the attainment of a bachelor's degree?

Stella M. Flores and Otoniel Jiménez Morfin provide a compelling argument about "cascading" in chapter 10, "Another Side of the Percent Plan Story: Latino Enrollment in the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Sector in California and Texas." "Cascading" is a process by which minority students end up in lower-tier institutions as a result of restrictive admissions practices. Their study of enrollment patterns in California and Texas proves their point about cascading, but it also uncovers an interesting, perhaps unintended, consequence of the percentage plans implemented to counter legal policies restricting affirmative action: The percentage plans have moved many Whites and Asians into second-tier institutions, further pushing racial and ethnic minorities into the lower-tier institutions. It appears as well that HSIs are increasing their enrollments of not only Latino/a students, but also of students from other racial and ethnic groups. Other than reraising the questions posed by others, "what's in a name," and "what is the Latino/a agenda," we can ask, is this a good thing for HSIs? Is it good for society as a whole? What is gained and lost as a result?

Andrea L. Beach, Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Stephen L. Rozman and Jessie L. Grant, in "Faculty Development at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Current Priorities and Future Directions," moves away from student concerns and addresses faculty life. They use a survey of individuals involved in "faculty-development" activities at HBCUs. They

found, as one would expect, that these individuals are very committed to the idea of empowering faculty to ensure effective teaching practices at HBCUs. We might ask, however, whether what counts as faculty development is situated within Western notions of faculty success. For example, attempts to improve “teaching excellence” may be focused around “banking” notions of education, where faculty are trained to convey effectively subject matter but fail to help students think critically of the structures that work against social justice. We think studies of faculty development, and indeed any study of faculty (or administrator, or student) attitudes, must be situated within larger cultural norms about what counts as an “education,” and thus, an “educated person.”

James T. Minor’s “Groundwork for Studying Governance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities” addresses faculty life. In chapter 12, Minor seeks to uncover whether, and to what extent, shared governance takes place at HBCUs. He shows that shared governance is considered important by administrators and faculty at these institutions, but each group differs in how they perceive it, with administrators feeling that there is more shared governance than faculty. He also finds that participants in HBCUs had less confidence in shared governance than those at PWIs. Minor reads his data, which was collected from a larger study of shared governance in higher education, via critical race theory and a “culturally sensitive approach.” He concludes, for example, that a “culturally sensitive” approach to understanding HBCUs would explain why there is lower confidence in shared governance than at PWIs. Conventional thinking on shared governance focuses on formal practices, such as senates, but individuals at HBCUs may be focusing less on senates than on more “tribunal or communicative” approaches to faculty involvement. Minor’s study alerts us to how race might influence what we “see” (or, with respect to shared governance at HBCUs, “don’t see”) in higher education, but one should not stop here. One must also seek to explain not just differences associated with race, but how those differences are created, and which individuals and institutions are privileged as a result.

In their chapter, “HBCUs Institutional Advantages: Returns to Teacher Education,” Brooks B. Robinson and Angela R. Albert use the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study database to determine that despite beliefs to the contrary, HBCU graduates in teacher education do not make much more money than graduates of other institutions. There is an economic analysis of HBCUs, which reflects a significant trend in higher education: The reduction of higher education, and its worth, to economic considerations, or, more specifically, to “rates of return.” Does the reduction of higher education to economic considerations obscure other

considerations, other determinants of worth, and, in the long run, prevent us from reimagining social justice in more dynamic ways? More fundamentally, we think econometrics is becoming a dominant framework for determining “truth” in higher education, and we wonder who (or what) gains and loses as a result of such logic.

The last part of the book, “Interconnections and Common Issues,” focuses on issues touching upon two or more institution types. Terrell L. Strayhorn and Joan B. Hirt, in “Social Justice at Historically Black and Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Mission Statements and Administrative Voices,” provide a mixed-method study of the perceptions of administrators at HBCUs and HSIs. Strayhorn and Hirt ask whether mission statements and administrators’ perceptions actually reflect social-justice values. The conventional wisdom suggests that those who work at MSIs would be motivated toward social justice, but can this be verified in mission statements? And even if so, as the authors correctly point out, does this reflect actual beliefs? Is a belief in social justice a significant part of how administrators at MSIs understand their work? Strayhorn and Hirt found that indeed one can see this social-justice focus in mission statements and in administrators’ construction of themselves as professionals. Still, after reading this chapter, we may ask whether current economic and political trends tend to work against social justice—in other words, what are these administrators up against?

Chapter 15 by Brian K. Bridges, Jillian Kinzie, Thomas F. Nelson Laird, and George D. Kuh, “Student Engagement and Student Success at Historically Black and Hispanic-Serving Institutions,” uses data from national databases to inquire into the extent to which MSIs engage in effective practices seeking to promote the learning and personal development of their students; they also compare these data on MSIs with those for PWIs. They find that generally there are positive institutional effects for minority students attending MSIs. This study goes a long way toward justifying the need for MSIs. One of the critical questions this kind of study implicitly raises, however, is whether the constant need to compare MSIs with PWIs ultimately normalizes MSIs to be like their counterparts, which will be a disservice to MSIs in the long run, since (1) they may not have the same amount of resources; and (2) their missions may be different.

Frances K. Stage and Steven Hubbard, in their chapter entitled “Teaching Latino, African American and Native American Undergraduates: Faculty Attitudes, Conditions, and Practices,” move us into the questions surrounding “percentage schemes,” as we defined the term previously. As with a number of other chapters in this book, Stage and Hubbard

also use a national database (the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty), but this time to compare the attitudes of faculty at MSIs and PWIs (across Carnegie classifications) toward their careers, students, and institutions. Stage and Hubbard's study found little differences among faculty across minority or Carnegie status, except when comparing predominantly Black institutions with PWIs. What we find even more interesting is the way they conceptualized their study; they used a "percentage scheme" to compare institutions, using specifically the 25 percent scheme that characterizes HSIs to determine what qualifies as a "Black" institution. The theme of "percentage schemes" is salient throughout many studies in this book, and it is taken on more directly by Michelle M. Espino and John J. Cheslock in the following chapter, but Stage and Hubbard's study requires that we ask whether classifying institutions by the percentage of their minority enrollments really makes them culturally "minority-serving," and does not an institution's "culture" affect its faculty's attitudes? Should it? This chapter raises the specter of the question that Contreras, Malcom, and Bensimon suggest in their study: What counts as, say, a "Latino/a agenda"? Or, given the studies in this book, what counts as a "Black agenda," a "Native American agenda," an "Asian Agenda," or, perhaps even more broadly, a "minority-serving agenda" in higher education? To what extent can such an agenda be assumed simply by looking at percentages of the student population? To what extent can it be assumed otherwise?

Michelle M. Espino and John J. Cheslock's chapter, "Considering the Federal Classifications of Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities," provides an analysis of how restructuring federal classifications of what counts as an MSI restructures who wins and loses in the zero-sum game that characterizes funding decisions in this country. Using data from another national database, the 2003 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Espino and Cheslock provide scenarios for how the numbers of institutions receiving federal funds would change if various "percentage schemes" were in place. As we have alluded to before, the use of national databases in many of the studies in this book should raise questions about the transformation of knowledge in higher education—how it has been reduced to that which can be collected in a database. What gets lost when the database becomes the central figure in our conceptions of higher education? Nevertheless, we ask readers to take seriously Espino and Cheslock's arguments for who wins and loses in the politics of classification. What should HSIs or HBCUs (and other MSIs for that matter) argue for in the federal classifications? Is it in their best interest to argue for a lower percentage scheme, and thus each institution is eligible for a smaller share of

what is constructed as a small pie? Or is it better for students in the long run to have fewer institutions qualify as MSIs, but the ones that do will actually get substantially more money to accomplish their goals?

Deirdre Martinez's "Coalition Formation Among Minority-Serving Institutions" provides a study of why and how MSIs form coalitions with each other, even when the percentage scheme can provide such an obstacle to such coalitions. Using the political-science literature, Martinez addresses how the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, a coalition of major associations concerned with HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs, formed despite initial resistance. This study illustrates that while other reasons are important to the formation of such coalitions, "money talks"; that is, MSIs are more likely to join forces to better their funding positions. Coalition-building is important for economic reasons, but might it be understood as attempts by MSIs to resist the "competitive scheme" that characterizes funding decisions. In other words, is it possible that MSIs realize that they are forced to compete with each other and thwart this by forming such coalitions?

Saran Donahoo and Wynetta Y. Lee's "The Adversity of Diversity: Regional Associations and the Accreditation of Minority-Serving Institutions" closes the book with a provocative analysis of accreditation. They propose that MSIs are treated very differently by accrediting agencies. Using *Chronicle of Higher Education* articles, Donahoo and Lee compared MSIs with PWIs with regard to the actions taken by accrediting agencies and found that MSIs are considerably more likely to receive adverse actions by accrediting agencies, at least as reported in the *Chronicle*. Donahoo and Lee's study, more fundamentally, illustrates how cultural beliefs and stigmas get expressed even in seemingly neutral accrediting practices, and, we would argue, perhaps even in purportedly neutral journalistic practices. Does, say, the *Chronicle* disproportionately report adverse actions against MSIs versus PWIs? We may ask, how does race determine what we can "see" in this society?

In conclusion, we hope these studies not only reframe the scholarship on MSIs, but also alter the discourse on race more generally. We think the discourse on race currently assumes that it reflects something essential and material about individuals or institutions. While this certainly is often the case, we propose that one also consider that the "problem" of race is discursive, that is, bound up in systems of knowledge. MSIs "speak" race when they act, and the effect of such speech, as much as the act itself, is very much real. We hope that readers understand these chapters as also elaborating a discourse on race. Every time one speaks of race, one effects in reality what one says. The research on MSIs provides empirical knowledge about MSIs,

but it also keeps “race” alive in discourse. We think it is important that race be kept alive in discourse, as the conservative backlash on racial gains is gaining ground in re-creating a world where it is logical, and even morally correct, to argue that race does not exist. Race very much exists, and this book, we seriously hope, will illustrate that we still have a very long way to go before we can exalt its demise.

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