

ARE CURRENT POLICY CHANGES CLOSING THE DOOR TO COLLEGE FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR?

New scholarly analyses of present and proposed policy changes

Minority Serving Institutions under Trump's presidency: Considerations for current policies and future actions

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This study focuses on Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), postsecondary institutions that have secured federal aid in a series of laws since the first iteration of the Higher Education Act of 1965. MSIs represent the accumulation of incremental efforts, albeit imperfect, to redress a systemically inequitable postsecondary field.

- MSIs continue to enroll and confer the majority of undergraduate and graduate degrees to students of color currently enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States; many of these students enter MSIs from under-resourced K-12 experiences. Though they account for less than 15% of all colleges in the nation, MSIs enroll around 40% of underrepresented students (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).
- These institutions include: Historically Black Colleges & Universities, Tribal Colleges & Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, Predominantly Black Institutions, Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions, and Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions.

President Trump promised support for some MSIs, but the president's budget attempted to curtail appropriations for these institutions without offering compelling evidence to justify these choices.

- In Donald J. Trump's budget request during his first year in the White House, every single program for MSIs had a reduced budget, totaling close to \$95 million in proposed cuts (see Table IV.2).
- The largest requested reduction to a single program was for the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges fund (\$465,000).
- An Executive Order from the White House on Historically Black Colleges released later on would incorrectly assert that, "President Donald J. Trump prioritizes Historically Black College & Universities" (2018).
- Congress rejected the cuts and maintained the status quo for MSIs' budgeting; they have offered temporary stopgaps to Trump's attempts to decimate funding for the institutions that serve the majority of students of color in our country.
- For FY 2019, the Trump Administration once again attempted to cut funding for MSIs by doing away with multiple programs in the name of "efficiency." Both congressional Committees on Appropriations rejected this request.
- Current discrepancies across both congressional Committees on Appropriations and the presidential requests for FY 2019 point to the inconsistent vision for federal programs seeking to support students of color.

Recommendations:

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- The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act must include serious considerations of the long-term investment in Minority Serving Institutions.
- This reauthorization is an opportunity to address chronic structural issues that limit institutions' ability to serve all of their students of color, and to support multiple ethnoracial groups in colleges.
- Congressional democrats proposed increases for MSIs should be considered.