“The center brings together an unprecedented array of human and financial resources to address the research, policy, and practice needs of a segment of higher education institutions that is serving the fastest growing demographics in this country. It will provide a critical space for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to expand the knowledge base about MSIs and to build the capacity of these institutions to address the needs of historically underserved populations in higher education. Through these activities, the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions will advance perspectives and strategies that are grounded in the challenging and changing realities that these institutions face.

—ANNE MARIE NUÑEZ, Associate Professor, University of Texas at San Antonio

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (MSIs) emerged in response to a history of inequity and lack of minority people’s access to majority institutions. 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, underrepresented students of color.
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. MSIs play a vital role in the nation’s economy by:

a. Elevating the workforce prospects of disadvantaged populations; and

b. Contributing to reducing the underrepresentation of minorities and disadvantaged people in graduate and professional schools and careers that require post-baccalaureate education and training.

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**CONTRIBUTIONS OF MSIs TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND SOCIETY:**

- **3.6 million undergraduate students—20 percent of all undergraduates—enroll in MSIs**
- **While HBCUs represent just three percent of all colleges and universities, they enroll 11 percent of African American students**
- **TCUs represent less than one percent of higher education institutions yet enroll almost 10 percent of Native American students**
- **HSIs represent only six percent of post-secondary institutions but enroll nearly 50 percent of all Latino students**
- **AANAPISIs represent less than one percent of all colleges and universities, yet enroll nearly 27 percent of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF MSIs:**

- **Over one-half of all students enrolled at MSIs receive Pell Grants, compared with only 31 percent of all college students.**
- **Tuition rates at MSIs are, on average, 50 percent less than that of majority institutions.**
- **Almost one-half of all MSI students are the first in their families to attend college, compared to only 35 percent of students attending predominantly White institutions.**
- **MSIs award nearly 50 percent of teacher education degrees and certificates to students of color.**
The Center for Minority Serving Institutions’ goals are:

TO FOSTER UNDERSTANDING BY:

- **Increasing** rigorous scholarship on MSIs.
- **Informing** administrative, instructional and philanthropic practices at MSIs.

TO RAISE AWARENESS BY:

- **Elevating** the educational contributions of MSIs, ensuring their participation in national conversations.
- **Advancing** effective policies that have a positive impact on strengthening MSIs, the development and support of their students and faculty, and the quality of the elementary and secondary schools within their communities.
- **Bolstering** the efforts of MSIs to close educational achievement gaps and assessment performance of disadvantaged communities.

TO BUILD CONNECTIONS BY:

- **Connecting** MSI academic and administrative leadership to leading reform and improvement organizations and initiatives in the United States.
- **Bringing** together MSIs around their common interests, strengths, and challenges to increase efficiency and optimize resources.
- **Ensuring** that the academic program offerings of MSIs are connected with the leading innovations in higher education.

“The Center for Minority Serving Institutions comes at a critical moment - when educating diverse students well is more critical than ever. The Center’s ability to collect and synthesize work that improves student outcomes and strengthens these institutions will be significant to reaching this goal.”

—MICHELLE A. COOPER, President, Institute for Higher Education Policy
The Center for Minority Serving Institutions will:

**SUPPORT FUNDERS, RESEARCHERS AND POLICY MAKERS BY:**

- **Convening** a national advisory board of researchers and practitioners interested in MSIs, and forming a knowledge community where ideas and suggestions for best practices and innovation are shared.
- **Serving** as a think tank on issues related to MSIs.
- **Issuing** and **commissioning** national and state policy papers from CMSIs-affiliated Fellows on salient issues for MSIs.
- **Hosting** an interactive website and publishing newsletters that promote research and best practices at MSIs.

**SUPPORT MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS BY:**

- **Establishing** a media kit for MSIs, complete with the tools and language necessary to continue reshaping, rebranding, and remarketing the MSI narrative.
- **Convening** presidents of MSIs for the purposes of eliciting their ideas about and reactions to issues that should be addressed by the Center and discussing work produced by the Center.
- **Providing** opportunities for grant funding, grant collaboration, and capacity-building partnerships.

**SUPPORT SCHOLARS BY:**

- **Sponsoring** Fellows in their research efforts to promote new work on MSIs
- **Creating** research opportunities for scholars interested in investigating issues that are important to MSIs, with a particular focus on scholars of color and scholars from MSIs
- **Offering** graduate assistantships to both master’s and doctoral students interested in research and practice related to MSIs
- **Developing** a comprehensive directory of MSIs that functions as a primary resource on the educational and lifelong benefits of an MSI education for high school college counselors, students, and families

“I am confident that the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions will fill a major void in higher education and strengthen the role of minority serving institutions in meaningful ways.”

—ALVIN SCHEENIDER, Former President of Winston-Salem State University
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Marybeth Gasman is a Professor of Higher Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. She holds secondary appointments in history and Africana Studies. Dr. Gasman's areas of expertise include the history of American higher education, historically black colleges and universities, minority serving institutions, African American leadership, and fundraising and philanthropy. She has written or edited 18 books, including *Understanding Minority Serving Institutions*, *Envisioning Black Colleges*, *Uplifting a People*, *Booker T. Washington Rediscovered*, *Race and Gender in Nonprofit Leadership*, *The Morehouse Mystique*, *A Guide to Fundraising at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, and *The Essential Guide to Fundraising from Diverse College Alumni*. Eight of Dr. Gasman's books have won research awards. Dr. Gasman's articles have been published in the *American Education Research Journal*, *Educational Researcher*, *Teachers College Record*, the *Journal of Higher Education*, the *Journal of Negro Education*, *Research in Higher Education*, the *Journal of College Student Development*, among others. She is a regular contributor to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Diverse Issues*, *The Huffington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *Academe*.

Her research has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *USNEWS*, *CNN*, and on National Public Radio. Dr. Gasman consults for many organizations, including Lumina Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Education Sector, USA Funds, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Paul Quinn College, and Philander Smith College. She has served as a Vice President of the American Education Research Association. Dr. Gasman serves on the board of trustees at St. Augustine University and Paul Quinn College. Dr. Gasman received the Penn GSE Excellence in Teaching Award as well as the Association for the Study of Higher Education's Early Career Award in 2006. In 2010, she was awarded the Ozell Sutton Medallion for Justice by Philander Smith College. In May 2012, she received an honorary degree from Paul Quinn College and the Mildred Garcia Exemplary Scholarship Award from the Council on Ethnic Participation.

**THE CENTER WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE LEADERSHIP:**

Michael Nettles is Senior Vice President and the Edmund W. Gordon Chair of Educational Testing Services’ Policy Evaluation & Research Center, and heads up the Early Childhood Research Center. Michael has a national reputation as a policy researcher on educational assessment, student performance and achievement, educational equity, and higher education finance policy. He currently serves as a member on multiple boards including the National Research Council Board on Testing and Assessment, the Joint Advisory Board for Education Research Centers in the state of Texas and the Board of the Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice at the University of Southern California. Nettles earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Tennessee. He received a master’s degree in political science and higher education, and a PhD in education from Iowa State University.
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