Teacher Education across Minority-Serving Institutions
Programs, Policies, and Social Justice

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Introduction
Teacher Education across Minority-Serving Institutions

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Teacher education programs are as diverse as the students who attend them. Many programs are nested within large, flagship state institutions with long histories of educating teachers. For some institutions, even smaller ones, this history began as normal schools responsible for training teachers. In these programs, teacher candidates move through advisors, field instructors, adjunct instructors, full-time professors, cooperating teachers in the field, and other supports during their professional matriculation. The most effective of these programs exhibit certain qualities: they maintain a cohesive vision of good teaching, have well-defined standards of performance, carefully align field experiences with other parts of the program, and lead students to confront their preexisting beliefs and assumptions about students (Darling-Hammond 2006). Most often, education students at these institutions are white women who come from middle-class backgrounds (NCEI 2011). Many preservice teachers in these programs had positive experiences in schools, saw themselves becoming teachers once they were young, and enter the profession in schools similar to the ones they attended (Su 1997). Much of what we know about teacher education in the United States comes from institutions like these.

Other teacher education programs are nested in institutions that sit closer to the periphery of higher education. Thriving more on committed faculty members than state funding, these programs build up instead of weed out; more important, they take a holistic approach to preparing teachers and build supports around their students’ needs. Sometimes these needs concern passing a licensure exam. Other times they are financial or personal due to situations back home that are outside students’ control. In most cases, these programs educate a more racially and socioeconomically diverse population of teachers—a demographic that more closely matches US classrooms today. These institutions receive students perhaps not admitted into more elite institutions and
not always afforded the best opportunities and resources in their K–12 schooling experiences. Yet such programs view these potential teachers as possessing a set of assets precisely because of the challenges they have overcome. They view these assets as necessary for the deep, messy battle of teaching for justice in today's shifting school landscape. Many of these programs are housed at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

MSIs, a family of higher education institutions, serve significant percentages of low-income and underrepresented students of color (Gasman and Conrad 2013). Four types of institutions, as defined by the federal government, constitute MSIs: 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). MSIs comprise a diverse group of institutions—both public and private offering two-year and four-year programs.

In the case of HBCUs, many were founded more than one hundred years ago and were initiated through federal legislation during Reconstruction for the specific purpose of educating and training African Americans recently emancipated from slavery (Anderson 1988). One of the earliest of these institutions is Lincoln University in Chester County, Pennsylvania, founded in 1854, where both of us began our careers as professors in teacher education. Federal legislation also helped initiate the conditions for TCUs. With power granted through the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, many tribal communities created their own colleges in the spirit of self-determination, and subsequent acts offering financial assistance helped stabilize and expand these institutions (Gasman, Nguyen, and Conrad 2014).

Unlike HBCUs and TCUs, many HSIs and AANAPISIs were not founded for the education of a specific group of people. Rather, these institutions have grown to enroll high percentages of students from ethnic minority groups owing to, among other factors, demographic changes in the United States and civil rights victories that expanded access to higher education for young adults of color (Gasman, Nguyen, and Conrad 2014). Mirroring the larger demographic shifts in our country, some predominantly and historically white institutions have become HSIs or AANAPISIs. A few institutions as well, though not founded as such historically, have become Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) through significant changes in student enrollment. Collectively, more than five hundred MSIs enroll approximately 25 percent of all undergraduate students in the United States (Gasman and Conrad 2013).

The uniqueness of MSIs expands beyond the racial demographics of their students. As many researchers have noted, their contributions to higher education derive from their approach to organizing the development, education, and care of students (Conrad and Gasman 2015; Fries-Britt and Turner 2002; Gasman, Baez, and Turner 2008; Gasman and Conrad 2013; Hale 2006;
Hirt et al. 2006; Outcalt and Skewes-Cox 2002; Palmer and Gasman 2008; Palmer, Maramba, and Gasman 2013; Teranishi 2011). Clifton Conrad and Marybeth Gasman (2015) make many aspects for this approach evident in their rich case study of twelve MSIs by focusing on mission, environment, programs, and practices. MSIs build their missions and educational approach around the social and economic barriers that low-income students and students of color often experience. Access to higher education and a meaningful experience that builds upon culture and heritage is at the center of these missions. These institutions also take a holistic approach to student support and development by not only paying as much attention to what happens outside class as to what happens inside class but also sharing the obligation for student success among all campus personnel through a "lift as we climb" ethos.

MSIs also create comprehensive and nurturing environments that advocate for academic development connected to racial self-development. Their programs often center on what is needed for students who have had inadequate preparation for college to compete across the higher education and employment landscapes. Integral components of this include effective remediation programs, meaningful community-centered research projects, and accessible faculty members committed to teaching. At their most successful, MSIs have done much of the heavy lifting that majority, predominantly white institutions either cannot or will not perform.

MSIs have been seen as separate institutional types with unique histories tied to racial and ethnic groups, justice movements, or federal legislation and classifications. At this particular moment, however, MSIs are becoming more visible as a collective unit to scholars and policymakers. On March 14, 2014, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing entitled "Strengthening Minority Serving Institutions: Best Practices and Innovations for Student Success," the first of its kind and a notable expansion beyond prior congressional hearings that focused primarily on HBCUs. Charitable and advocacy organizations such as the Southern Education Fund (2014) have similarly expanded their focus beyond HBCUs to include MSIs in their policy reports. Finally, major philanthropic organizations have made significant investments in MSI scholarship and capacity building. The Center for Minority-Serving Institutions at the University of Pennsylvania is a clear example. Established in 2003, the center has, within three years, received more than 8 million dollars from the Kresge Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and other charitable organizations. These funds have been used to establish capacity-building projects, faculty development opportunities, PhD pipelines for graduate students of color, and other projects to support MSIs and thrust them into national conversations about education. Once seen as separate silos, MSIs are becoming more visible when viewed as a diverse, rich, and collective unit with many lessons to teach higher education.
As MSIs have come into focus, little attention has been paid to their roles in preparing and educating our nation’s teachers. Yet a look at the programs MSIs offer indicates they play a significant role in preparing students for a variety of roles in schools and educational settings. Of the 105 HBCUs in the United States, 76 offer an education degree program. Most of these programs are four-year, undergraduate degree certification programs in early childhood, elementary, and various secondary education subject areas. This concentration of traditional teacher training across HBCUs corresponds to many of their institutional beginnings as teacher training schools. Of the 34 accredited TCUs, 29 offer an education degree program. The majority of these programs are associate degrees in early childhood education or associate degrees that transfer to bachelor degree programs at nearby four-year institutions. This concentration of associate degrees corresponds to the status of most TCUs as two-year colleges, although ten institutions have bachelor degree programs leading to elementary or secondary certifications, and two offer master’s degrees. Of the 136 AANAPISIs and 233 (of 264) HSIs, 128 have education degree programs. AANAPISIs and HSI are spread equally over two-year and four-year institutions, and the education programs across their curricula reflect this status as well. Most two-year institutions offer associate degrees in early childhood education or child development, and most four-year institutions offer bachelor’s degrees and certifications in elementary education and a variety of secondary education subjects. These figures illustrate a broad range of education degrees, programs, and certifications across MSIs.¹

Program offerings are one lens to understand the landscape of teacher education programs across MSIs. Another helpful perspective comes from looking at what these programs have produced. In the 2012–2013 academic year, MSIs produced 8.6 percent of all four-year degrees in education. Keeping with the MSI commitment to racial diversity, these programs were responsible for an impressive percentage of degrees awarded to students of color:

- 54.1 percent of Latino/a students who received undergraduate degrees in education;
- 32.8 percent of Black or African American students who received undergraduate degrees in education;
- 57.7 percent of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander students who received undergraduate degrees in education;
- 17.4 percent of Asian American students who received undergraduate degrees in education; and
- 11.7 percent of American Indian and Alaskan Native students who received undergraduate degrees in education.²

Beyond these figures, scholars report that MSIs have awarded half of all education degrees and certifications earned by African Americans, Latino/as, and
American Indians; in addition, MSIs make an oversized contribution to high-need areas such as math and science education (Alliance for Equity in Higher Education 2000).

In our years at Lincoln University, we saw clear evidence of how the teacher education program produced a critical mass of Black teachers for the Philadelphia and tristate region. The most vivid reminder of this came during our first year participating in the Philadelphia Urban Seminar, a two-week summer immersion course that brought five hundred preservice teachers from sixteen institutions across the state to serve in Philadelphia public schools. For preservice teachers who were thinking about becoming urban teachers, this was an opportunity for a meaningful field experience internship in an urban school, something unavailable in rural and suburban parts of the state. Among the five hundred potential urban teachers, sixteen were African American. All but one came from Lincoln University. Like the larger figures on MSI teacher education programs and teacher diversity, our small HBCU of fewer than two thousand students supplied an oversized portion of African American teachers in the region.

The contributions that MSIs have made to the racial diversity of the teaching profession are important, yet discussions on this topic, both scholarly and popular, often end with simple statistics. Missing are the enormous contributions to teacher education from MSIs that extend well beyond racial demographics. Principles of freedom, justice, and service are woven into the mission of many MSIs, and many of these principles are woven into their teacher education programs. HBCUs have a distinct legacy of situating teacher education within the lineage of service, freedom, and cultural transmission of Black communities (Dilworth 2012). This legacy has played out in many Black teachers' educational philosophies and pedagogies that focus on the nexus of education and academic, political, social, and economic advancement (e.g., Foster 1993; Irvine and Fenwick 2011; Ladson-Billings 2005; Mawhinney 2014).

Programmatically, HIs have partnered with American Indian nations to prepare either culturally sustaining Indigenous teachers (e.g., Becket 1988; White et al. 2007) or culturally responsive educators to teach immigrant children in high-need schools along the US-México border (e.g., Zapata 1988). Education programs at many TCUs infuse Native languages, cultures, and epistemologies into the education of their teachers (e.g., Lamb 2014). Thus, MSIs have done much more than help increase racial diversity in the teachers' lounge; instead, they have pushed and advanced teacher education in ways not always evident in studies of teacher education program design and effectiveness. Although vital to the field, much existing knowledge about teacher education is derived from white teachers within the predominantly white programs that educate them.

Moreover, our own years as teacher educators at an MSI attest to the available, but untapped knowledge. While at Lincoln University, a collective
“lift as we climb” ethos was part of the program’s culture, as is the case at many HBCUs. Students often saw their individual success as aspiring teachers bound to the collective success of their classmates and their future students. Given the obstacles many of them had overcome as low-income students, first-generation students, and/or students of color, many resisted the push to use higher education as a way to escape their communities; instead, they felt called to return, serve, and grow more roses in concrete (Duncan-Andrade 2009). Others understood the impact they could make as teachers of color in a majority white or suburban school and felt called accordingly. They understood that who they were as teachers would be as important as what they did as teachers.

Instead of an abstract sense of “wanting to give back” or (much worse) a sense of guilt, a deep commitment to justice motivated many preservice teachers. This commitment often grew from coming to understand the systemic reasons behind their substandard schooling experiences: for example, why had their schools often employed inexperienced teachers and outdated technology? We saw their commitment to justice manifest when our students tackled their academic deficiencies head-on, demonstrated an unusual level of commitment to their fieldwork and students, and challenged one another to grow. Like many MSI faculty members, the hours we dedicated to our students outside the classroom far exceeded our job descriptions.

Teacher education has a great deal to learn about developing, educating, and supporting teachers from the legacy of MSIs. Now is the appropriate time to learn from this legacy. Over the next decades, teacher education in the United States must respond to many pressing issues: an emerging majority student population of color, more multilingual students, a widening socioeconomic gap between wealthy and poor, the erosion of the middle class, a higher concentration of students with exceptionalities in classrooms, shrinking public education funding, and new education legislation and standards, among others. We must prepare teachers for this world. While some may see this forecast as ominous, we see possibility and an opportune time to learn from MSIs and their teacher education programs. Institutional mission, US-México border proximity, immigration patterns, local rootedness, and other variables have put many MSIs ahead of the curve in responding to the complicated teacher education mission. Many teacher education programs at MSIs have arguably been confronting and responding to these demands—doing more with less—well before they became unavoidable to the entire field and country. Teacher education programs writ large have been criticized as disconnected from practice, ineffective at preparing teachers for “real” work, and slow to adopt new and innovative models (Darling-Hammond 2006). MSIs form a largely untapped resource for teacher education innovation and promise.

Policy demands facing teacher education at this contemporary moment also make this the right time to see MSIs as a collective unit in teacher
education. These demands originate from policies that pressure schools, among other things, to equate program quality with graduates' professional performance (most often their students' standardized test scores), to adopt new professional standards, to seek (re)accreditation by changing professional bodies, and to respond to controversial metrics of teacher quality. Challenges such as these provoke education scholars and practitioners to frequently describe their profession as "under attack." Although all teacher education programs must respond to these demands, they have an acute impact on smaller teacher education programs, many of which operate at MSIs. The continued success of many MSI teacher education programs entails responding to these demands in proactive ways.

This volume on teacher education across MSIs sits against this backdrop of possibility and challenge. Our collection of chapters speaks to the range of teacher education work happening at MSIs. In part 1, Community Connections and Justice-Oriented Teacher Education, the authors address the ways that MSIs orient their teacher education programs to the needs and assets of surrounding community in meaningful ways. A commitment to justice and equity with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and other dimensions is integral to this orientation. This volume opens with "The Promise of Equity: Preparing Future Teachers to Be Socially Just Educators," where Mae S. Chaplin and Annette M. Daoud look across two institutions in the California State University system—one designated an HSI and the other an AANAPISI—to unpack how these programs use social justice, equity and action planning, and critical pedagogy to prepare teachers to work with linguistically and ethnically diverse student populations. Chaplin and Daoud's recommendations for other education programs are practical, grounded in data from preservice teachers, and housed within a model that encompasses multiple stages of teacher professional growth. In chapter 2, "Learning from the Community: Innovative Partnerships That Inform Tribal College Teacher Education Programming," Danielle Lansing draws from the Wakanyeja "Sacred Little Ones" early childhood initiative to illustrate how Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute has built an education program based upon needs identified by the local Native community. Lansing offers a rare picture of the powerful work underway at Tribal College education programs that is instructive for all institution types looking to build programs around the needs of their local communities in authentic ways. In chapter 3, "Teacher Preparation for Our Communities: Building Co-teaching Collaborative Schools from the Ground Up," Cheryl A. Franklin Torrez, Jonathan Brinkerhoff, and Irene Welch move far beyond the traditional, ineffective model of fieldwork and student teaching to offer a fresh approach to clinical preparation and collaboration among university, schools, and community in New Mexico. The authors draw from data and reflection from five cohorts of teachers in their Co-teaching Collaborative School model to offer practical directions for other
programs seeking to develop organic partnership for clinical preparation. In chapter 4, "From Our Own Gardens: Growing Our Own Bilingual Teachers in the Southwest," Sandra Browning brings insight from higher education scholarship to bear on teacher education by applying nine design principles for Hispanic student success. Browning illustrates how these principles guide a collaborative partnership between the University of Houston-Clear Lake, four community colleges, and four local school districts to create opportunities for Hispanic students to become teachers.

In part 2, Program Responses to Contemporary Demands, authors confront the tough challenges facing teacher education programs. Instructive for a variety of institution types, authors outline practical methods to address these challenges. In chapter 5, "Lifting Gates and Building Skills: Preparing Diverse Candidates to Pass New Certification Exams," Joni S. Kolman, Laura M. Gellert, and Denise L. McLurkin effectively address an aspect of data-driven accountability with the most direct impact on preservice teachers: the changing battery licensure exams they must pass. The authors chronicle the rapid and profound changes to these exams in New York and unpack the specific steps they took to support their preservice teachers to pass these exams. In chapter 6, "Special Education Teacher Preparation Reform in Context: Lessons from a Decade of Program Support," Mary Bay, Norma Lopez-Reyna, and Rosanne Ward draw from their work supporting special education program development at the Monarch Center at University of Illinois, Chicago (an AANAPISI). By outlining the steps that faculty teams across sixteen MSIs took to improve their special education teacher education programs, the authors provide an excellent opportunity for others in higher education to learn from the program improvement work done by special education faculty members at MSIs. In chapter 7, "Becoming a Black Institution: Challenges and Changes for Teacher Education Programs at Emerging Minority-Serving Institutions," Byung-In Seo, DeWitt Scott, and Emery Petchauer identify some challenges to and related solutions for institutions that are becoming MSIs by serving a more racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse student body. Using the history and growth of Chicago State University—a historically white institution that has become predominantly Black—the authors provide important guide points so that institutions traveling a similar path today will provide their preservice teachers the support they deserve. In chapter 8, "The Future of Teacher Preparation at Tribal Colleges and Universities: A Talking Circle of Education Warriors," Carmelita Lamb introduces readers to the landscape of teacher education across TCUs. From her own experience working in Indian Country and through interviews with department chairs (i.e. Education Warriors) at nine TCUs, Lamb paints a picture of the harsh challenges stacking up against TCU teacher education programs and the self-determination of faculty members who have carried them thus far. In chapter 9, "Teacher Preparation at Historically Black Colleges and
Universities: Remaining Relevant in a Climate of Accountability," Brian Harper and Lynnette Mawhinney identify some ways that contemporary policy and accreditation pressures have made it increasingly difficult for HBCU teacher education programs to honor their mission of service, activism, and justice. Ever hopeful, the authors highlight some ways that current HBCU teacher education programs are still fulfilling this mission despite current challenges. We conclude this volume with a call for thinking differently about the education work at MSIs so that innovations in research and practice can spread a wider presence across this family of institutions.

The contributors to this volume come from a range of institutions. Many hold faculty positions in education departments at MSIs. Insights from these scholars, particularly ones at smaller institutions with hefty teaching loads, have been missing from our knowledge base. A few contributors are housed at predominantly white institutions but conduct work relevant to MSIs. These connections across institution types are important to start thinking about teacher education at MSIs in new ways. Some chapters in this volume derive from the work happening at specific institutions, but other chapters derive insights from the work happening across a specific institution type, like HBCUs. Furthermore, some chapters look among MSIs as a whole to draw insights about general teacher education. Consequently, the contents of this volume operate at three different scales: at, among, and across MSIs. We believe thinking about MSI teacher education work according to these three scales is a useful framework to forge a meaningful path of research and practice, and this becomes the essence of our conclusion to the volume.

As a whole, we present this volume as a resource to spark growth and improvement within teacher education programs at all types of institutions and to initiate a long line of work connected to teacher education across MSIs.

We offer a final word on language and terminology: We have an aversion for the word “minority” because its contextuality masks the larger systems that *minoritize* a person or group. We typically use the term “of color” in the place of “minority.” We also see shortcomings and problems with the term “Hispanic” and some other terms used in this volume. As the title and introduction of this volume indicates, we and the contributors use “minority” and other limited terms throughout the text in order to align with federal classification. We hope readers are mindful of the limitations of such terms and think through their implications with regard to institutional descriptions as they read the volume.

NOTES

1 We used the 2015 report from the Penn Center for Minority-Serving Institutions for our total numbers of institutions in each MSI category, which includes an institution on the brink of becoming an AANAPISI in the classification. Additionally, we excluded MSIs US territories such as Guam and Puerto Rico. It should be noted that
the total number of institutions in each category varies from year to year due to enrollment trends and other variables. Additionally, fifty-four institutions hold the designation of both AANAPISI and HSI.

2 We are grateful to the Penn Center for Minority-Serving Institutions for providing us with this IFEDS data.

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