



## **Minority Serving Institutions: Why Consider a Designation?**

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Depending on the country in which you live and work, the term Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), may or may not be one with which you are familiar. In the United States, MSIs are increasing rapidly as the country is diversifying. There are nearly 600 of them scattered throughout the nation. They enroll 20% of all college and university students. Although many MSIs were created with the express purpose of educating Blacks or Native Americans, the majority have garnered the nomenclature based on the changing demographics in their region, which have shifted the make up of the student body. MSIs are important because the majority has a mission dedicated to serving minority students.

Given that the demographics are changing in many countries – with immigrants coming from many African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries – it is reasonable to think that MSIs might surface throughout Europe in the coming years – a few have already. Colleges and universities, as well as systems of higher education will need to decide if they will want to designate universities as MSIs or if they will merely integrate existing institutions across the board, not taking notice of the clustering of minorities.

Race and ethnicity manifest in very different ways outside of the United States and uniquely depending on the country. In some countries, using the term minority is offensive. In others, talking about race is uncomfortable and even taboo. In the United States, even though we think that people don't want to talk about race, in comparison to other countries, we talk about it, interrogate it and almost obsess about it at times.

In addition to changes in the racial demographics across the world, there are shifts in class and religion. In some countries, class issues have been more dynamic than racial issues – but let us not pretend that race isn't a substantial issue. It is just not talked about in the same ways as it is in the United States.



Diversity in terms of class is changing and countries throughout the world, including China, Brazil, and India may want to designate institutions that are particularly good at educating low-income students. Moreover, with the growing number of religious minorities in most countries, it might become advantageous for institutions to note their demographic and, in particular, their proclivity for educating religious minorities.

As colleges and universities across the world become more and more diverse and countries themselves also diversify, they will engender clusters of students based on race, class, and religion and might consider designating these institutional types and strengths in order to make them more evident to students. These designations are especially important to those institutions that have a track record for education minorities of any kind and these institutions often provide the support and encouragement needed for student success.

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