



# Educating a Diverse Nation: Lessons from Minority-Serving Institutions

*Clifton Conrad, Marybeth Gasman*

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In an increasingly diverse United States, minority and low-income students of all ages struggle to fit into mainstream colleges and universities that cater predominantly to middle-income and affluent white students fresh out of high school. Anchored in a study conducted at twelve minority-serving institutions (MSIs), *Educating a Diverse Nation* turns a spotlight on the challenges facing nontraditional college students and highlights innovative programs and practices that are advancing students' persistence and learning.

Clifton Conrad and Marybeth Gasman offer an on-the-ground perspective of life at MSIs. Speaking for themselves, some students describe the stress of balancing tuition with the need to support families. Others express their concerns about not being adequately prepared for college-level work. And more than a few reveal doubts about the relevance of college for their future. The authors visited the four main types of MSIs—historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions—to identify strategies for empowering nontraditional students to succeed in college despite these obstacles.

*Educating a Diverse Nation* illuminates such initiatives as collaborative learning, culturally relevant educational programs, blurring the roles of faculty, staff, and students, peer-led team learning, and real-world problem solving. It shows how these innovations engage students and foster the knowledge, skills, and habits they need to become self-sustaining in college and beyond, as well as valuable contributors to society.

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