

# Impact of COVID-19 on Minority-Serving Institutions

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## 1 Introduction

COVID-19 has affected all facets of learning and socialization in American higher education. According to Harper (2020), reopening of college and university campuses in the midst of the pandemic had implications in our campus community and student life. Campus life should always be rewarding to students and community members because these groups are deemed as the institution's lifeblood. Adapting to the 'new normal' is challenging for our students and the emotional period that they are undergoing will be difficult to unravel. Harper (2020) emphasized the risk of violence for Asian-American and Asian International students due to stereotyping, xenophobia, and discrimination. For instance, the constant calling of the 'Chinese Virus' or 'Kung Flu' heightens bias and hate crimes against these groups. These actions are possible threats to students' mental health and development on campus. Another implication is experiencing trauma and depression that is prevalent among students of color. Infections and deaths are taking a toll for the majority of these groups and therefore, making it harder for them to focus on their academics and professional life. While these infections continue to rise, it also poses a risk for students to contract the virus and transmit it to vulnerable communities on campus. Student athletes are also at risk as they exercise, dine, and play sports with their peers, which further complicates the rule of social distancing.

## 2 Impact on Minority-Serving Institutions

The true essence of campus life centralizes in human interaction and this common nature has been obliterated. Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) have also been extremely affected by the pandemic. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are still underfunded and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) are among the poorest in higher education (Harper, 2020). Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are enrolled in highest numbers. Planning and implementing safety measures for these students cost money and students who heavily rely on income to sustain their education are lost. Advanced technology, devices, and training experiences also come with a hefty price tag which impacts the low-income students and students of color. Although providing these devices were not sufficient enough, low-income

students lacked access to internet and Wi-Fi due to this digital inequity. Adequate federal funding protects the MSIs and other racial peer groups against these fiscal challenges. Another ramification is the lack of attention to students who are experiencing food insecurity and racialized housing on campus (Harper, 2020). When the pandemic reached its peak in March 2020, students were forced to leave and return home. The highest numbers of BIPOC students struggled with this issue.

### 3 Conclusion

Postsecondary institutions have the responsibility to provide proper care for students who rely on meal plans, campus pantries, and housing. Statistics have shown that BIPOC students are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses (National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2019). Not only these courses are very expensive, it cannot be taught online and also requires laboratory work. Thus, this large proportion of BIPOC students will have to switch to remote learning. The serious problem of racism that existed in classrooms before the pandemic are likely to exacerbate online. Students of color have thoroughly experienced microaggressions in classrooms and most black students are taught by white instructors, which are often imbalanced at predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

The strong emphasis on underrepresented students reflects the harsh realities of their everyday lives on campus. Being part of a community for these groups seem to require a lot of work and are treated as inconsequential to the society. COVID-19 has definitely intensified these issues more abruptly and the racial inequalities were exposed under those elements. We have failed as a country, as well as our leaders who were supposed to be the bulwark of peace in our community. Politicization, partisanship, and self-aggrandization were recipes for disaster. Race is the mechanism of social division and we are now more divided at any other time in modern American history.

### References

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- b. National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (2019). *Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*. Special Report NSF 19-304. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation.