

ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF MINORITIES IN EDUCATION

A S M E

Volume 1, Number 1

**PERCEPTIONS OF AN
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT:
ASSESSING
THE STATUS OF MINORITIES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

By

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Commentary By

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A RESEARCH PROJECT AFFILIATED WITH
THE CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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Assessing the Status
of Minorities in Higher Education"
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Foreword

LeAnne Slack, a 1988 graduate of Millikin University, worked on this report as a requirement for her participation in the James Millikin Scholars Program, the honors program at Millikin University. Students in the program take a core of special seminars and then complete a senior honors thesis. LeAnne's paper, "Perceptions of an Undergraduate Student: Assessing the Status of Minorities in Higher Education in Illinois," is her senior thesis. She, of course, worked very closely with several mentors and received help from various agencies.

On Millikin's campus, Ms. Slack received tremendous support from President J. Roger Miller not only for this project but also for her undergraduate schooling. As a freshman, LeAnne was designated a Presidential Scholar, an award given to five incoming freshmen each year at Millikin. The financial stipend of full tuition was helpful but so were the opportunities to work closely with both faculty and administration. With Dr. Miller's assistance, Ms. Slack was able to work with the staff of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities under the principal guidance of Donald Fouts, President of the Federation. To these people we are both grateful.

While I served as LeAnne's honors advisor on this project, I did so only as a liaison, especially since I was on sabbatical leave during the spring of 1988. Both LeAnne and I are particularly indebted to several key individuals on the campus of Illinois State University: Dr. Charles Morris, Vice President of Administrative Services; Mr. Ira Neal, Assistant Project Administrator of the Assessment of the Status of Minorities in Education; Reverend James Pruyne, minister with the United Campus Christian Foundation and chair of the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education; and Dr. John K. Boaz, past president and board member of the UCCF and Associate Vice-president of Administrative Services. These people gave of their time and expertise to provide a professional experience for an undergraduate working on an honors project.

In the fall of 1984, Ms. Slack entered Millikin from Pana High School. During the freshman humanities honors seminar, we read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and viewed a videotape of his Washington, D.C., "I Have a Dream" speech. In her proposal for this project, LeAnne stated that she "was originally drawn to the topic of racial interaction after viewing and reading works by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." While her first interest was a study of his writing, she saw a practical approach in doing research on the study of minority representation in higher education. By studying a unique perspective - that of small private institutions in Illinois, she would be working, if only on a pilot project, with a larger work. In doing so, she would learn about assessment procedures, about the scope of a large study, and about the nature of other small

colleges and universities in Illinois. Personally, she learned about time management and about the need for careful revision in preparing assessment instruments and in writing her paper. From her paper, it is also apparent that she learned about the difficulties of interpreting data. As her humanities instructor, I was pleased with some of the humanistic gains of this project: her awareness that the survey itself acted as a liaison between public and private institutions, that the data might assist each institution in its own assessment, that the instruments were being refined for a larger project, and most importantly that the survey heightened social awareness on several campuses. Ms. Slack now works in a large accounting firm in Chicago. It is one of the pleasures of my work with honors students to see them mature, and LeAnne Slack's project gave her the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

Dr. Mildred M. Boaz
Director, James Millikin Scholars
Program and Hardy Distinguished
Professor of English

Prologue

The work done by Ms LeAnne Slack represented a key step towards meeting the goals and objectives of the Assessment of the Status of Minorities (ASME) project. First, the report written by Ms Slack has caused the chronicling of a large part of the history of the project. Second, the report captured the essence of the project by highlighting how beneficial assessing the college campus climate can be for institutions, faculty, administrators, and especially students. Third, the report identifies how the assessment process fostered positive reflection and increased awareness in the university community of cultural and racial diversity. Fourth, the report explored student data which later were found to be statistically significant when determining differences between perceptions held by groups of students regarding campus racial climate. Finally, the report was the first of many which would collectively demonstrate that a macro assessment of campus environment is possible and beneficial.

The lack of minority participation in education is now more widely perceived to be a dilemma with nationwide adverse consequences than at any previous time. A common conclusion is evident as one reviews numerous studies and reports beginning with the Report of the Investigating Committee of the Harlem Riot of 1935 through the Report of the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life in 1988 which have focussed on the conditions of life for minorities in the United States. That conclusion is that America has moved steadily toward two societies, one black, one white...separate and unequal. The pattern of progress, symbolized by the enactment and implementation of affirmative action laws and initiatives over several decades, was slowed, if not reversed, during the 1980s.

By the year 2000, when one-third of all of the nations school children are members of historically disadvantaged racial minority groups, the implications will be plain to see. One such implication is that this group will become at least one-third of the country's future workforce. It follows that prosperity and quality of life for the country as a whole is inextricably tied to prosperity and quality of life for its racial minority groups.

Prosperity and quality of life for a group are functions of the quality of education and equal opportunity for the group. Indicators of the quality of education for a group include measures of enrollment, retention or persistence, graduation, and employment after graduation. Nonpersistence of minority students in the nation's colleges and universities is a problem of critical and monumental proportions. Data show that some institutions lose as many as 50 percent of minority students between the first and second years of postsecondary matriculation. In some instances, almost 80 percent of minority freshmen do not graduate within four years. The fact that these non-persistence rates are double the comparable rates of white students, as a group, is an

indication of the extent to which the needs of minority students are not being met in the nation's educational systems.

Some researchers assert that the most important factor in the achievement of success in a postsecondary educational environment is campus climate. Ms Slack's work is part, in fact, the beginning, of an initiative, which has as one objective--the assessment of the quality of the educational experience for minority students by examining such factors as academic, social, or racial climate.

Numerous programs in Illinois institutions emphasize strategies to enhance minority student access and graduation. The larger study, of which Ms Slack's work is a part, utilizes the survey instruments which she has used for facilitating institutional, student, faculty, and administrator evaluation of such programs. Systematic and objective review of the data collected should assist program personnel, institutional, system and agency administrators, policy makers, and members of the legislative and executive branches of state government as they strive for program effectiveness and improvement. The larger study raises the following questions for investigation:

1. What do the students of Illinois postsecondary institutions perceive the campus climate to be for minority students?
2. What do the faculty of Illinois postsecondary institutions perceive the campus climate to be for minority students?
3. What do the administrators of Illinois postsecondary institutions perceive the campus climate to be for minority students?
4. What are the differences if any, between public and private institutions in institutional, student service, and academic program support characteristics?
5. Is there congruency among students, faculty, and administrator concerning institutional, academic, and student service program support characteristics?
6. For administrators, is there a relationship between the variables of university budget support, program location, staff support, and annual expenditures and perceptions of institutional, student service, and academic program support characteristics?
7. Is there a correlation between academic, institutional, and student service program support and minority student matriculation?
8. Is there a relationship between institutional program

support characteristics and minority student matriculation?

9. Is there a relationship between academic program characteristics and minority student matriculation?
10. Is there a relationship between student support program characteristics and minority student matriculation?

During the first year of funding, the majority of the time devoted by project staff/associates was spent on concept and instrument development. The next year, without funding, was focused on pilot testing the battery of instruments in selected private Illinois higher education institutions.

Through support undergirded by in-kind contributions of Illinois State University's administration, the project remained active. This period represented a major turning point for the future of the project. It was during this time that the original assessment instruments were revised and a set of instruments suitable for Ms Slack's use in developing her Honor's Program Senior Thesis evolved.

Ira L. Neal
Associate
Center for Higher Education

Preface

I was originally drawn to the topic of racial interaction after viewing and reading works by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I was amazed by his ability to move and inspire people of every race on such a volatile topic. His work was my first interest, but a much more important issue is the present struggle of minorities. Racial equality does not exist in the United States. Therefore, I chose to investigate an issue important today instead of researching a great leader.

I began with little knowledge of the many areas of racial interaction. I have chosen to research minority representation in higher education for three reasons:

1. An administrator at Illinois State University, Dr. Charles E. Morris has had a long term interest in the higher education representation of minorities, and he agreed to assist me in my project.
2. A study will soon be conducted in Illinois to assess the status of minorities in education. My research will be a part of this study, thereby making my project worth while on a larger scale.
3. By making progress in higher education racial representation, hopefully the movement toward true equality will be advanced.

Description of Probable Project Compared to Chicago Study

A study was completed in 1984 by the Committee on Public Policy Studies Research, the results of which are recorded as a part of The Chicago Study of Access and Choice in Higher Education. Many issues were addressed, including the causes of inequities in higher education.

The study addressed specific subtopics such as enrollment and graduation patterns, family backgrounds, high school backgrounds and variation in access to higher education. In the latter stages of the study, statistics were collected to aid in studying the effects of these factors on potential students. For example, in the chapter on "Educational Differences Among High Schools in Metropolitan Chicago," the study group examined differences in curriculum requirements, educational equality of teaching and counseling staff, teacher- to-student ratios, and student retention. Data on these topics were compiled from 229 high schools in the Chicago area, and then analyzed. The results were recorded and conclusions were drawn regarding each of nine subtopics. Also presented in the report are statistics on minor-

ities in higher education, with discussion of such topics as enrollment analyses, educational attainment among minorities, and graduation statistics. These are also analyzed.

In its conclusions, the Chicago study group found few opportunities for many minority or lower income students to succeed in higher education in the Chicago area without supplementary support and/or assistance. They made recommendations for colleges, high schools, students, and the legislature on ways to correct problems in the Chicago area.

Research and statistics show that since 1975, the percentage and number of black students who obtain college degrees have declined in the Chicago area and throughout Illinois. This poses a problem for our economy and our social environment. Our economy is in danger because with an increase in the unemployment rates of minorities, we have a growing imbalance of professional and blue collar workers, thereby causing a strain on the labor force (Reich 127). A problem of social importance is also created because a lack of black representation in higher education widens the economic gaps between whites and minorities. It does this by accentuating the differences between the races and by increasing the prejudices. In my research I do not plan to address the effects of underrepresentation in higher education; instead I wish to look at the causes of the decline in the number of minority graduates and at the actions which have been and are being implemented to offset this decline.

This report provides, in part, an account of the process used to develop and administer survey instruments (inventories) for the purpose of establishing a data base in the Center for Higher Education at Illinois State University for assessing the status of minorities in education. It touches on the results and accomplishments gathered from some of the work completed thus far.

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Acknowledgements

This project and report enabled me to meet the requirements of my Honors Program Project at Millikin University and would not have been possible without the assistance and support from the following individuals:

Dr. Charles E. Morris, Vice President for Administrative Services, Associate Professor of Mathematics, Project Administrator, Assessment of the Status of Minorities in Education, Illinois State University, Normal, IL.

Ira L. Neal, Assistant Project Administrator, Assessment of the Status of Minorities in Education, Illinois State University, Normal, IL.

Dr. Mildred Boaz, Director of the Honors Program, Professor of English, Millikin University, Decatur, IL.

Gregg Smith, Instructor, Department of Political Science, Millikin University

Donald Fouts, President, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Springfield, IL.

Rev. James Pruyne, Director, United Campus Christian Foundation, Normal, IL.

The following individuals also provided valuable assistance toward helping to complete the Pilot study which is the basis for my report:

Faculty/Staff

Patrick Chew
Dr. Beatriz Clewell
Dr. Gloria-Jeanne Davis
Dr. William Gorrell
Pamela Harding
Dr. Edward Hines
Dr. Floyd Hoelting
Linda Maxwell
Dr. Jeanne Morris
Dr. Samuel Mungo
Dr. Julia Visor
Valerie Witten
Dr. Thomas Wilson

Students

Homer Franklin
Richard Hunter
Laura Knollenberg
Monica Rodgers
Tricia Seams
Tonya Tibbs

Additional thanks are extended to Laura Knollenberg for her special skills in wordprocessing.

LeAnne Slack
May, 1989

PERCEPTIONS OF AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT:
ASSESSING THE
STATUS OF MINORITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN ILLINOIS

SENIOR THESIS
JAMES MILLIKIN SCHOLARS
HONORS PROGRAM PROJECT

Since the late sixties, various strategies have been utilized to alleviate the problem of minority underrepresentation in education, including early intervention in elementary and secondary education, intensified academic advising, and precollege programming. Still the problem persists in Illinois and in the nation. Tension between the races is an important issue associated with minority underrepresentation and has become a reemerging concern during the 1980's.

During the Spring of 1984 a Subcommittee on Minority Concerns of the Illinois Senate Committee on Higher Education was formed to assess the educational progress of historically disadvantaged groups in Illinois. Both committees were chaired by Senator Richard Newhouse. An early conclusion of the Subcommittee was that a concerted effort would be required on the part of all segments of the education community to bridge gaps caused by barriers which have limited the educational access and success of racial minorities.

One of the recommendations of the Subcommittee was that Illinois universities and colleges should facilitate and sponsor research activities which focus on:

- (1) Identifying the causes for the disproportionate representation of minorities in postsecondary education;
- (2) Identifying successful strategies and programs throughout the educational system which foster and enhance the participation and status of minorities.

During recent sessions of the Illinois General Assembly, legislation has been enacted -- notably, Public Acts 84-726, 84-785, and 85-283 and various resolutions -- setting in motion statewide, multidimensional efforts to enhance minority participation in education. However, the pace of progress has been slow, prompting the creation of a Joint Committee on Minority Student Access by Senate Joint Resolution No. 72 in June 1987 and its continuation by Senate Joint Resolution No. 130 on July 1, 1988 (both sponsored by Senator Miguel del Valle). Other statewide committees -- such as the Joint Committee on Minority Student Achievement and the Task Force on Minority Concerns of the Illinois Community Colleges Trustees Association -- have been formed to focus on the same issues.

These legislative initiatives accelerated the impetus for the completion of a proposal for developing survey instruments to be used for assessing the status of minorities in education by members of the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE). The proposal, submitted by Dr. Charles E. Morris, was funded by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in December, 1987, and the assessment project was launched. The

persons initially involved (January through August, 1988) in developing the survey instruments were :

- Dr. Seymour Bryson, Assistant to the President for Affirmative Action, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
- Dr. Stafford Hood, Program Evaluator, Illinois State Board of Education
- Dr. Charles E. Morris, Vice President for Administrative Services, Illinois State University; Project Co-Director
- Dr. William Mosley, Chairman of the Department of Special Education, Western Illinois University
- Mr. Silas Purnell, Director of the Ada S. McKinley Recruitment Center, Chicago
- Dr. Alvin Townsel, Chicago, Illinois
- Dr. William Trent, Associate Professor of Educational Policy, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; Project Co-Director
- Ms Francine Clark-Jones, Graduate Assistant, University of Illinois, and
- Mr. Ira Neal, Graduate Assistant, Illinois State University

Others, including Ms Clara Fitzpatrick, a member of the Illinois Board of Regents, and Dr. Rudolfo Garcia, Associate Vice President for Research, Chicago City-Wide Colleges, provided valuable assistance.

The survey instruments consist of inventories for students, faculty, administrators, and for assessing institutional services and programs. The original inventories were piloted at Danville Area Community College in August, 1988 in a workshop conducted by Dr. Charles E. Morris. After the pilot study at DACC, the instruments were modified to 1) be more inclusive of services provided by institutions, 2) present questions in a more unbiased fashion, and 3) communicate in a clear and consistent fashion to all those surveyed.

Initially, the funds allocated were sufficient only for the development of the inventories. Consequently, a pilot study conducted in six private institutions in spring 1989 was an independent effort made possible by resources and assistance provided by Illinois State University, the Federation of Illinois Independent Colleges and Universities, the United Campus Christian Foundation of Normal, Illinois, and the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education.

The following private institutions agreed to participate in the 1989 pilot-study:

Barat College	Roosevelt University
Bradley University	Wheaton College
Illinois College	Monmouth College
Illinois Benedictine College	Illinois Wesleyan University
Lake Forest College	Blackburn College
Millikin University	Eureka College
Robert Morris College	Elmhurst College

A methodology for the pilot study was developed. It was to be the prototype for a state-wide project. The data collected from the pilot study together with some preliminary analyses have enabled the launching of the state-wide project.

Issues that needed to be addressed early in the pilot study were funding, participation and cooperation from the institutions, and evaluation of the data collected. Two persons who were important contacts for helping to accomplish the pilot study were Donald Fouts, the President of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities (FIICU), and the Rev. James Pruyne, the Director of the United Campus Christian Foundation (UCCF) in Normal, Illinois. Through Rev. Pruyne's efforts the assistance and participation of the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education (IUMHE) was also realized. After reviewing the proposal and the survey instruments, Mr. Fouts agreed to endorse the survey to the institutions in the FIICU and provide some financial support. Mr. Pruyne, working with several interns at Illinois State University, agreed to contact member colleges of IUMHE to solicit participation and to seek financial assistance through an IUMHE grant. A significant contributor and advisor to me throughout my efforts has been Ira Neal working as a research assistant to Dr. Morris, and pursuing his doctorate in higher education.

The support of Mr. Fouts and Mr. Pruyne for the project, and as initial contact persons to the universities, was invaluable. A request coming from an undergraduate student seeking universities to participate in a survey of this size and significance might be turned down for a number of reasons including: 1) the quantity and nature of information requested in the survey, 2) the value and significance of the data collected, 3) the fear of results published from the survey that may not be favorable, and 4) the sheer number of requests received by university administrators for survey participation. Funds secured through the efforts of Mr. Fouts and Mr. Pruyne were important because the financial requirements of the project included costs which could not be borne by the initial grant, such as the cost of purchase of computer software, additional computer storage space, time and paper, and costs associated with printing, postage, correspondence and travel. With their support, the pilot project became much more feasible, and the inclusion of other private institutions in the state-wide project became possible.

Another concern about the project -- validity of the data collected and of studies and reports derived therefrom -- was diligently and carefully considered. The survey instruments were reviewed and tested by more than 50 professionals and students of different racial groups. The wording and the inclusiveness of the instruments were considered time and again in order to obtain sound, unambiguous responses.

A factor that could weigh heavily on the validity of the results derived from the pilot study had to do with the institutions selected for participation. Originally six institutions were identified for the study from the membership of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities. Six additional institutions were added from the membership of the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education. This selection could be viewed as a weakness because these schools may not adequately represent all Illinois, private, non-proprietary institutions. Therefore, after an analysis considering region, community, and size, additional institutions were added to supplement the original twelve institutions so that smaller and larger institutions would be represented in the three regions of Illinois -- urban, suburban, and rural.

Important to the validity and reliability of the data collected was the sampling method employed. This was carefully considered and reconsidered. Ultimately it was determined that on each campus a survey of all administrators, all faculty, and all minority students would be attempted, along with a random sample of one-third of the white students. This sampling procedure would be modified when surveying the large state schools, but at private institutions, where the enrollment is often much lower, especially among minority students, a higher percentage of participation is preferred. From those individuals contacted for participation in the survey a 67 percent response rate was targeted.

Participation from the universities was solicited first via FIICU's support of the project. Cooperation was confirmed and the institutions' contact persons then received follow-up phone calls to resolve questions and be advised of the key people involved with the project. A second call was followed by a letter and packet of information explaining the evolution of the project and requesting institutional information. Sample letters are included in the appendix.

For the pilot project, administrator and faculty inventories were distributed and collected through campus mail. The student inventories, however, were administered at a designated survey site on campus to those students contacted and asked to participate. The decision to conduct the student inventory in this manner was based on three assumptions:

1. It would create less work for the institutional contact person assisting with the survey.

2. It would guarantee quicker turn-around time.
3. It would solicit more candid, independent responses from students.

However, the response rate using this method was lower than desired, and a new approach may be necessary for the state-wide project.

Under the best possible conditions it would have been feasible to have all of the data collected and primary analyses completed for the pilot project before April 15, 1989. However, as in most situations, the best possible conditions did not obtain. Several complications caused delays in the data collection. The most significant of these was the revision of the assessment instruments. Every effort was taken to assure that the instruments were completed in accordance with stated goals and to have complete and consistent communication with the individuals completing the survey.

At the time this paper was written a limited amount of data had been collected and coded for analysis and, thus, only a glimpse of the status of minorities at the participating institutions is obtained. Follow-up sampling must be conducted to supplement the information already collected due to the less-than-desired response to the student data collection. None of the faculty or administrator data are available at this point because those instruments were only fully revised and duplicated in the last two weeks of April 1989.

These delays, though, were well justified. The instruments, had they been rushed, might have had more flaws and the analyses conducted from them would have been less sound. The schedule of the overall project was set back slightly, but benefits were gained by the time delay. After all, one of the purposes of a pilot project is to experience failures when operating on a small scale and work through those failures. Because the administration of the survey instruments (inventories) is not yet complete, and is not likely to be completed throughout Illinois before the end of 1990, the results of the survey do not constitute the primary focus of this report.

Concerns

In the United States, Blacks, Hispanics, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians make up 90 percent of educationally underrepresented minorities. Some describe this collective group as the most underrepresented in education, the most disadvantaged in American society, and the least empowered to effect change through governmental and political processes. These minorities make up one-third of our nation according to a 1988 report issued by The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life.

Minority representation in postsecondary education is declining while minority population percentages throughout the United States are growing. In 1985, minorities represented 20 percent of the nation-wide school-age population. In 2000, minorities are projected to represent 33 percent, and in 2020 they are projected to represent 39 percent (Mortenson: The Undereducated America). However, minorities are grossly underrepresented in both undergraduate and graduate student bodies and in faculty/staff positions. A study directed by Alexander Astin (Director of the Higher Education Research Institute) in 1982 revealed shocking information about the differential rates of achievement in postsecondary education. If in the period 1977-1982, one hundred whites, one hundred blacks, and one hundred Hispanics all started high school at the same time, their educational progress is represented in the following table:

	White	Black	Hispanic
Receives high school diploma	83	72	55
Enters college	38	29	22
Receives bachelor's degree	23	12	7
Enters graduate school	14	8	4
Completes doctorate/professional studies	8	4	2
Results from 1977-1982: HERI			

This trend of progressive underrepresentation of minorities, if allowed to continue, can cause devastating results for our society and our economy.

One critical issue raised due to underrepresentation of minorities in the educational pipeline is the resulting underrepresentation of minority faculty and administrators on university campuses. This is already a matter of great concern. Between

1977 and 1983 full-time faculty positions held by blacks in Illinois decreased from 1035 to 980 (The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 1986). Because minorities are not proportionately represented on campuses in faculty and staff positions, minority students may lack the role models or academic counseling/advice that is essential to academic success. Low minority graduation statistics from higher education result in fewer minorities to move into faculty and administrator positions.

Lack of minority representation in postsecondary education can have dire economic effects as well. Twenty years ago in the "Kerner Report" it was forecast that without concerted efforts for change the country would rapidly move toward a dual society -- "one white and privileged, and the other minority and poor." In 1985, less than 44 percent of young male workers earned enough to support a family of three above the poverty line of \$8737. At that time the average earnings for a young black male were \$5229; for a young Hispanic, \$7760 ("More Young Black Men Choosing Not to Go to College"). These data, coupled with statistics on minorities in postsecondary education, suggest a direct correlation between inadequate educational opportunities and the deterioration of the quality of life for minorities. If the educational needs of minorities are not met so as to enable them to become, proportionately, productive, participating members of society, the burden of providing for their health and welfare as well as for supplementing the workforce due to the void caused by their lack of skills will ultimately fall upon taxpayers. Other adverse results are the creation of economic strain and the perpetuation of social strain between the races.

Why are minorities underrepresented in education? This is a question with many answers and theories. One explanation is that ninety percent of minority students from lower socioeconomic circumstances have been underserved by secondary school systems. Therefore, when these students begin postsecondary education they are inadequately prepared (Berrian 1982). A second explanation is that minority students are less likely to have extended contact with people who have been to college (Richardson). Most minorities attend schools where their peers do not go on to attend college. A third explanation, which ties to the second, is that minority students must overcome their own doubts and the criticisms, regarding the value of a college education (Richardson). All of these reasons can prevent a minority person from ever beginning postsecondary education, and minority students face even further inequities after graduation. Some institutions lose up to 50 percent of minority students between the first and second years.

One solution that has been used with success is financial aid. There is overwhelming evidence that federal, state, and private financial assistance have a positive effect on minorities in higher education, resulting in increases in minority enrollment. Current efforts being used to assist minorities in higher education include:

Early intervention in public schools to improve preparation and encourage college planning

Liaison programs to prepare minority students for college-level course work and campus atmosphere

Courses designed to offset gaps in secondary education

Tailored financial aid programs

Additional orientation programs to assist in course selection

Strong academic-assessment programs

Intense academic advising

Career guidance to tie education goals with career opportunities

Support programs provided early and throughout education

Tutoring services, learning laboratories, and mentoring programs

Networks, organizations, and meeting places for minority students to develop peer relationships within the larger university environment

University priorities established to include minority achievement

These efforts all provide better support for minority students in higher education.

"It is hard to find a strategy that doesn't work where faculty members take seriously the responsibility for helping all students achieve," states Richard C. Richardson, Jr. Dr. Richardson is a professor of education at Arizona State University and the Associate Director of the National Center for Post-secondary Governance and Finance. This opinion is shared by many, and it indicates that enough is not being done at the university level. Changes in policies or goals would ameliorate this problem, but it is naive to assume that a single such change alone could create successful results. University administrators are busy individuals, and like most sensible people, they reserve their efforts for issues which have observable outcomes in the short run. Administrators and faculty are also more likely to concentrate on issues that must be addressed immediately or may be used in their professional development and evaluation. These are reasons why enough is not being done at the university level. Another reason is that not everyone involved can agree on the importance or nature of minority support needed. Even when agreements are reached the most efficient procedures to follow are hard to determine.

Administrators lack information about the most effective methods to use in addressing the problem of minority underrepresentation. Data are lacking on why problems exist for minorities or on the best ways to remedy these problems. For example, in an attempt to "assist" minorities some universities encourage minority persons to pursue degrees in non-technical, non-scientific fields. University counselors frequently do this because minorities often are educationally deficient in mathematics and science. Counselors then advise minorities to avoid programs that require indepth knowledge of math or science. This may be a false success, though, because these academic fields are not in the highest demand. Therefore, career placement may be difficult. This could lead to dissatisfaction and support for the belief that postsecondary education is not important (Richardson).

Supplementary classes are sometimes provided for students to enhance skills such as writing, reading, or mathematics to a level required by the university. Because minority students are often underprepared when they enter college, special programs have been instituted to serve their needs. In analyzing these programs certain questions arise:

- What is the cost of the service, including faculty/staff salaries, utilized space, and others?
- What is the cost broken down on a per student basis?
- What is the ratio of minority/non-minority use?
- What is the level of retention in schools with these programs compared to schools without these programs?
- What is the opinion of faculty/administration of these programs?
- What is the level of cost for these programs compared with other programs and total budgets?
- What is the percentage of minority graduates before and after the institution of these programs?

From the limited data collected to date, certain trends can be recognized. Although this information cannot be used to make generalizations about the population, certain trends will eventually be confirmed or disproved thereby improving efforts to assess the status of minorities in education.

The institutions from which data were collected for this report were Barat College, Elmhurst College, Illinois Benedictine College, Illinois College, Illinois Wesleyan University, and Millikin University.

The first section of the undergraduate inventory to be analyzed, together with the demographic data, was the Racial Climate Section shown below:

RACIAL CLIMATE

Institutions vary considerably in the way they are perceived by different races. Usually there is a "climate" or "campus atmosphere" which may be described along several scales. Please circle one number on each of the following scales which best characterizes your perception of this racial climate at your campus.

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Relaxed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Tense |
| 2. Friendly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Hostile |
| 3. Cooperative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Competitive |
| 4. Socially
integrated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Socially
separated |
| 5. Communicative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Reserved |
| 6. Concerned | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Indifferent |
| 7. Inclusive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Exclusive |
| 8. Sensitive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Insensitive |
| 9. Liberal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Conservative |
| 10. Improving | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Worsening |
| 11. Harmonious | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Racist |

The Gamma Statistic was used to determine the relationship between student race and each of the Racial Climate items. A value of 0.30 or higher indicates some relationship, and a value of 0.70 or more indicates a strong relationship for social sciences purposes. Analysis of the data showed that there were significant relationships on four of the eleven scales. The relationships between student race and Racial Climate items 1, 3, 8, and 11 indicated that minority students felt that campus racial climate moves along the scale toward the deleterious aspect. For example, when asked how to rate the campus racial climate on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being **relaxed** and 5 being

tense, 64.3% of the white students surveyed responded with a 1 or 2. Among minority students only 15% rated it a 2, and no minority students rated it as a 1. The Gamma value describing this relationship is 0.56. Racial climate items which have Gamma Values indicating statistically significant relationships are shown in the following table:

<u>Scales</u>	<u>Gamma Values</u>
Relaxed to Tense	0.56
Cooperative to Competitive	0.42
Sensitive to Insensitive	0.64
Harmonious to Racist	0.56

No significant relationships were indicated in the other variables.

It is possible, though, that the issue is more polar than even these data suggest. After analyzing the personal comments of the students surveyed, a greater difference appears between the perceptions held by the two groups. When commenting on the survey instruments white students tend to suggest that there is no problem on private campuses, and that any problems that may arise are because black students do not want to join the mainstream of campus. Black students, on the other hand, consistently feel there is a problem. The problems they identify are the lack of black faculty and administrators and the lack of minority support staff. This relationship or the degree to which this relationship exists cannot be proven by the limited data that have been collected to date.

In addition to the vast information that will be available for analyses from the survey, several accomplishments have already been achieved because of the process used and the information that is communicated as a result of the administration of the survey. One such accomplishment relates to the potential uses of the data collected from the survey. All of the data collected from a given institution using the survey instruments will be available to the administration of that institution. Then institutions can analyze their own campus climate to the degree they feel necessary. For an institution to gather and compile this data on its own might entail considerable cost and time. The assessment project has made data collection and analyses available at minimal or no financial cost to participating institutions.

A second accomplishment resulting from the development of

the survey instruments is that because of the inclusive coverage of the issues, the inventories are being considered for adoption and use by several agencies and additional institutions. An ongoing study would have considerable value for tracking trends and evaluating program and service effectiveness. Hopefully, the survey instruments and process will be broadly adopted; the ultimate success could encourage their use in other states or facilitate other statewide assessments.

A third, and perhaps the most important, outcome of this experience, is the heightening of social/cultural awareness. When a survey of this scope and magnitude is introduced on a college campus it becomes the topic of many casual and informal conversations. After all, with many administrators and faculty members and more than one-third of the student body asked to participate and with the topic being one of such varying opinion, interaction is only expected. Within this interaction may ignite the spark of interest that may eventually bring about individual or group change.

Through the significance of the process used and the accomplishments thus far, this assessment project has the potential to effect and perpetuate change that would benefit the fastest growing portion of our society--our minorities--and the society as a whole. If a basic understanding of campus climate and constructive recommendations can be obtained from this and similar studies, the success and results will touch us all socially, culturally, and economically.

Appendix

Sample Letters

March 8, 1990

Dear Pres. _____,

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in the administration of the "Status of Minorities in Education" inventories. This pilot project, made possible by the cooperation of selected private institutions, is part of a more comprehensive study under the supervision of Dr. Charles E. Morris, Vice President for Administrative Services, and Ira Neal, a Graduate Assistant, at Illinois State University. Institutions included in the pilot study include Barat College, Millikin University, and Wheaton College. I have enclosed a copy of the undergraduate student inventory. The inventories for graduate students, faculty, administrators and programs are undergoing final revisions.

The most challenging portion of the assessment process is the administration of the student inventory. An outline of that procedure is provided in the following paragraphs. The remaining parts of the process will be less complicated. We would like for each member of your faculty and administration to complete an inventory. If you would provide me with the number of faculty members and administrators you have, both full-time and part-time, I can forward those to you right away.

To complete the sampling of the student population in an efficient and statistically sound manner, the following procedures for collecting data have been developed:

1. Random samples will be selected from student class listings. This selection will be made by Ira Neal and me. Ideally all minority students will be included in the sample at institutions where the total minority population is less than 500 students.

2. Students selected for the sample will be contacted via a letter from your university administration. In this letter, students will be provided with information about the survey and the importance of student participation, I stress the importance of student participation, I have asked that this letter be signed by the University President. I will send a follow up letter directly to the students in the sample three days prior to the survey date.

3. A representative, either Ira Neal, Rev. James Pruyne, a member of Rev. Pruyne's student intern group, or I will be on your campus on the designated survey date. The students selected for this survey will be expected to come to the survey site, obtain a survey instrument, and return the survey after completing it, at the survey site.

This strategy of administering the survey has been developed to assure expediency, accuracy, and candor. The data collected will be analyzed using a computer software package called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

On the date the surveys are administered a representative (as indicated in Procedure 3) will be on campus administering the survey from 9:00 AM to 5:00 P.M. Please identify an appropriate place to conduct the survey. Ideally the location you identify should be convenient to students and conducive to administering a survey of this importance. Please forward to me a first, second, and third choice of dates for the administration of the student surveys on your campus between March 13, 1989 and March 31, 1989.

A copy of resultant reports will be filed with your President's office, the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education, and policy-making agencies such as the Illinois Board of Higher Education. I believe that each institution will be assisted in its efforts to enhance minority participation as a result of participation.

Additional information about the project and my role is included in the enclosed document entitled "Background for 'Status of Minorities in Education'."

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

LeAnne Slack

Sample Letter to Student

Dear Student,

You have been selected to participate in an important survey to be conducted (date). The focal issue addressed in this survey is campus climate.

Research and statistics show that the number and percentage of minority students who enter postsecondary education and obtain college degrees have declined nation-wide. There are several conjectures as to why this is occurring. One is that 90% of minority students from lower socioeconomic circumstances are underserved by elementary and secondary school systems. Further, it is asserted that campus-climate and financial assistance are major factors in the attraction, retention, and graduation of minority students. Disproportionate minority representation poses a significant problem both economically and socially for all of us.

The data collected will be used to improve our understanding of how campus climate at predominantly white postsecondary institutions affects minority student matriculation. The survey which you are being asked to complete is one section of a four-part assessment process. Students, faculty and administrators are being surveyed, and a survey will be conducted regarding university programs. The surveys are being administered with assistance from the Federation of Illinois Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education. Initial funding for the development of the assessment instruments was provided by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

To participate in the survey, go to (location), between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. on (date). Please allow yourself approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey.

All information you provide will be completely confidential. Your participation is greatly needed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

President

February 9, 1989

Dear :

I am writing to ask your help with a project we are involved with in cooperation with the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, the Illinois Committee for Black Concerns in Higher Education and the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education. This research project is designed to measure the climate in Illinois Colleges and Universities for minority students.

It has its roots in several places. A year ago, the campus administrators in the state in cooperation with IUMHE and "The Chicago Reporter," a monthly journal/newsletter related to the United Church of Christ, undertook to pull together some data on the universities in which we serve as campus ministers. That data had to do with minority enrollment and retention, minority faculty and staff, and some very non-scientific data on climate/university climate for minority students and staff.

At the same time, the Illinois Committee for Black Concerns in Higher Education became independently interested in the same questions. Richard Wagner, Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, has also indicated an interest. Of course, the concern of all of us in this area has been heightened in the last few years by the decline of black enrollment in higher education and the increasing incidents of racism on our campuses. We must come back to the issue which many of us had hoped had been dealt with in the fifties and sixties during the civil rights movement.

Dr. Charles Morris, Vice-president for Administrative Services at Illinois State and a Presbyterian member of my campus ministry Board of Directors, was the founding president of the Illinois Committee for Black Concerns in Higher Education. This whole research project is now largely in his hands and that of an assistant in his office. We are involved because of the data campus ministers collected a year ago, all of which is now in my hands, and which we have been told is very valuable to the process. We are also involved because IUMHE has secured a small grant from the national Fund for Reconciliation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Those funds are also in my hands.

The Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities has also expressed an interest in the issue of racial climate on

our campuses. A couple of weeks ago, Dr. Morris convened a meeting which included Dr. Donald Fouts, Executive Director of the Federation. I imagine that you know him. The results of that meeting were quite positive. In cooperation with their presidents, Dr. Fouts has selected DePaul, Robert Morris College (Chicago Campus), Milliken, Illinois Wesleyan, Roosevelt University and Illinois Benedictine to be a part of the initial study. The local group responsible for conducting the study has asked to add to that list, Bradley University, Barat College, Wheaton College and the six colleges in addition to Milliken which are related to the denominations involved in IUMHE -- Lake Forest, Blackburn, Illinois College, Eureka, Monmouth and Elmhurst.

We would like to arrange with you to visit your campus for one day in March or early April in order to administer the enclosed questionnaires to the relevant persons. I currently have four interns working with me in the area of racism and minority concerns. One of those interns and I would be the persons to visit your campus.

The data gathered from all of these schools will be used in several ways. First, part of it will be used by a senior student from Milliken who is doing this as her senior honors project. Second, you will receive the results of the study of _____ [college/university] to use in any way you see fit. Third, results from all of the study will be used to refine the instruments for future use with all of our public universities on a continuing basis and in cooperation with Dr. Fouts and the Federation with the independent schools in ways they determine. Fourth, Dr. Fouts will receive a report of the entire study.

Confidentiality will be maintained, both in terms of individual responses and in terms of institutional response. I hope you will be willing to cooperate with us in this study. The church and higher education must continue to cooperate in our concern for minorities and racism in our society as we have in the past. We believe that this longitudinal study will enable us to assess the racial climate in our schools and perhaps then help us to design specific programs or interventions to deal with issues in a proactive manner.

I shall look forward to hearing from you. I do hope you will be willing to assist us in this project.

Sincerely,

James W. Pruyne

Check list of information to be returned

- _____ A listing of all students enrolled for Spring Semester 1989 including both full-time and part-time students by class level.
- _____ A listing of minority students enrolled for Spring Semester 1989 including both full-time and part-time students by class level.
- _____ The number of faculty currently employed including both full-time and part-time faculty members.
- _____ The number of university administrative staff currently employed.
- _____ The name of the person chosen to complete the institutional programs survey.
- _____ Three preferred dates for on campus student survey.

Please forward this information before March 15, 1989 to:

Status of Minorities in Education Project
c/o Dr. Charles E. Morris
Vice President for Administrative Services
Illinois State University
Hovey Hall 301
Normal, Illinois 61761

Please return this page with student listings

Number of full-time and part-time faculty members: _____.

Number of university administrators: _____.

Person selected for completion of institutional programs survey:
_____.

Dates selected for on campus student survey:

First choice _____.
Second choice _____.
Third choice _____.

Please send to:

Status of Minorities in Education Project
c/o Dr. Charles E. Morris
Vice President for Admin. Services
Illinois State University
Hovey Hall 301
Normal, Illinois 61761

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Epilogue

Ms LeAnne Slack's decision to select the "Status of Minorities in Education in Illinois" as the focus of her Honor's Program Senior Thesis at Millikin University had a catalytic effect on a project for which the acquisition of funding had been a long, arduous and, once started, intermittent process. The assessment project is one component of a proposal which, conceptually, had its beginnings in 1983, soon after the formation of the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE). The proposal was conceived and developed by ICBCHE members who believed strongly that the establishment of a data base and information center about minority participation in education and American life would provide invaluable resources required for a complete and untainted-by-racial-bias education. The data base and information center would be equally invaluable as a resource for individuals, institutions or agencies seeking examples of successful strategies to replicate, for advancing the status of education and life for minorities.

Underrepresentation of minorities in education was woven into the fabric of early American society. The consequence for the underrepresented, as initially intended, has been the deprivation of equal opportunity and of equal participation in productive and beneficial mainstream American life. Intense and unremitting efforts are required to eliminate and/or overcome the inequities and legacies of underrepresentation. While there is much evidence of improvement in the individual lives of some disadvantaged American minorities, the numbers of minorities, especially African-, Native-, and Hispanic-Americans who exist below the poverty line are far out of proportion to their numbers in the general population. The economic and social costs of maintaining systems which perpetuate or tolerate disproportionate representation and participation based on racial considerations are staggering.

Education, as a process and as an instrument of change, has long, if not always, been perceived as the great American equalizer. Knowledge, as a tool to accomplish education, is both a means and an end. The project "Assessment of the Status of Minorities in Education" seeks to build a knowledge base in the minds of individuals and as a viable resource for ongoing scholarly pursuits and policy formulation. Identification of solutions to the problems engendered and sustained by underrepresentation is one of the project goals.

The original proposal had as its central focus an Information and Research Services Center and incorporated the following primary goals:

1. To develop institutional profiles on the educational progress of minorities based on both quantitative and qualitative data about Illinois schools and institutions in order to measure effort and results achieved.

2. To collect and analyze school/institutional data for the purpose of identifying factors that appear to be responsible for the low enrollment and even lower graduation rates of minorities at post secondary institutions.
3. To monitor national and state policy developments which are related to minority access to education.
4. To formulate procedures to measure the effects on minorities of educational law and policy against standards of full access and proportional retention and graduation rates.
5. To collect and disseminate information about practices and strategies throughout the nation which have proven effective for increasing and maintaining minority enrollments at proportionate levels.
6. To prepare and disseminate periodic reports on policies and programs which impact the equality of access to education for minority students in Illinois.

Activities proposed to achieve the aforementioned goals were:

1. The acquisition of relevant data bases and the establishment of a clearing-house of information about the status of minorities in education with a focus on Illinois.
2. The development and/or utilization of research designs which demonstrate an awareness of the interaction among all forces which constitute the ecosystem for access and retention in education.
3. Fostering research efforts which:
 - (a) examine factors which influence minority access to higher education, e.g., high school completion, family structure, income and other economic factors which influence minority retention in education, such as information about successful programs which have precipitated increases in minority participation in higher education and information about institutional climate, policies, and practices,
 - (b) welcome and encourage participation by scholars from all Illinois higher education institutions,
 - (c) are interdisciplinary in nature,
 - (d) employ a well-balanced array of appropriate institutional, state, and national data bases,

- (e) will be evaluated summatively and formatively,
 - (f) involve minority researchers to direct and assist in the identification of the types of data needed to support an assessment of equity in education and the types of analyses required to monitor equity.
4. The publication of journals, newsletters, and monographs which will serve as vehicles for research and policy recommendations.
 5. Conducting statewide surveys which highlight methods and strategies for facilitating articulation agreements and other transfer programs between community colleges and upper division institutions with the objectives of enhancing matriculation by minority students.

The Assessment Project (ASME) concentrates on those goals and objectives of the original proposal that pertain to the compilation of a data base about the participation of minorities in education and American life. Funding was eventually obtained (in December, 1987) from the Illinois Board of Higher Education to develop survey instruments and a process to establish the data base. Thus, the raw (unrefined and untried) materials were available when Ms Slack targeted the "Status of Minorities in Education" as her thesis topic.

The jump-start received as a result of the need to support Slack's senior thesis requirements greatly facilitated the transition of the ASME PROJECT into the operational stage--administration of surveys, compilation and analyses of data, writing and dissemination of studies and reports, etc. The trial-run use of the first version of the inventories for a staff development workshop at Danville Area Community College in August, 1988, although minimally adequate for the purpose of gauging faculty/staff perceptions about the status of minorities at the college, served also to identify problems with the materials or process. Improvements were made as a result.

The first real test was not to occur, however, until the pilot-study in the spring of 1989, which Ms Slack assisted in planning, developing and implementing. The support network that evolved as a result of her consultations and requests for assistance expanded as needed to accomplish the considerable task. Constituting the support network were students, faculty and staff from seven colleges and universities, staff from the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities (FIICU), staff from the United Campus Christian Foundation (UCCF), and the Illinois United Ministries in Higher Education.

Notable and indispensable contributions were provided by Dr. Mildred Boaz and Gregg Smith of Millikin University; Ira Neal,

Valerie Witten, and Patrick Chew of Illinois State University; Donald Fouts, President of FIICU and Rev. James Pruyne, Director of UCCF. Millikin University and Illinois State University have been the lead institutions in this initiative with Illinois Wesleyan University and Western Illinois University playing strong support roles.

It is important to note as well that during the academic year (1988-1989) when the pilot study was conducted, no funds were awarded for the ASME Project. Thus the resources--human and financial--that were provided through the aforementioned institutions, agencies, and individuals, were critical to the continuation and eventual successes of the project. Subsequently, in September, 1989, funding was renewed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The undergraduate student inventory, revised after the pilot study, was soon to be administered in additional private institutions and eight of the twelve public Illinois institutions of higher education. Planning and development is underway to administer the inventory in the community college sector. The graduate student inventory has been revised and will soon be administered at selected institutions.

Since 1983, significant initiatives have been prompted by actions of Illinois education agencies. One example was the establishment by the Illinois Board of Higher Education of four policy priorities for improving minority representation in higher education: 1) to assist schools with efforts to increase high school completion rates for minorities, 2) to prepare more minority high school students for baccalaureate degree programs, 3) to increase the baccalaureate degree completion rate for minorities, and 4) to expand professional educational opportunities for minorities in fields leading to graduate and professional degrees, especially in fields emphasizing mathematics and sciences.

These policies were extended in April 1988, by the adoption of recommendations from the report, "Our Future at Risk", prepared by a joint committee appointed by the State Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education. The Committee urged that minority student achievement be made a high priority in Illinois higher education and that efforts be undertaken to improve the campus environment for minorities through initiatives such as curricular modifications and increases in the number of minority staff. The ASME Project, through the development of an empirical data base, gives credence and justification to the need to address the issue of campus environment.

Similar state initiatives include Minority Educational Achievement and Minority Articulation Program grants funded through the Higher Education Cooperation Act, Special Population Grants administered by the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program that provides financial aid to minority graduate students. The Health Services Education Grants Act provides funding to support minority enrollment in health professions programs at private institutions, and the state's Monetary Award Program represents a sig-

nificant state resource for students from underrepresented groups. More recently, attention has been directed toward improving opportunities for minority students to obtain baccalaureate degrees through improved course and program articulation between community colleges and four-year institutions.

State-wide committees such as the Joint Committee on Minority Student Achievement, the Joint (Legislative) Committee on Minority Student Access and the Task Force on Minority Concerns of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association are making important contributions. The Illinois General Assembly -- through legislation and through vital advocacy roles assumed by individual legislators including Senators Richard Newhouse, Kenneth Hall, Emil Jones, Miguel del Valle, and Earlean Collins, Representatives Robert LeFlore and Arthur Turner, and former Representative and Assistant Majority Leader Carol Mosely-Braun -- has provided vital and sustaining leadership.

The potential for producing valid studies and recommendations and meeting other Project goals grows with the thousands of students, faculty and administrators who complete the inventories. The data base, as a rich research resource for students and faculty, is already proven as evidenced by analyses, studies and reports in progress. Participating institutions are finding these beneficial for planning activities and programs. The Project can be of greatest value if data can be continually or periodically collected to support longitudinal studies, enabling the identification and observation of trends and patterns. Funds are needed, however, to realize these and other Project goals.

The project "Assessment of the Status of Minorities in Education in Illinois" endeavors to monitor and track relevant initiatives now underway in Illinois and throughout the country. By accomplishing other stated goals and objectives ASME can encourage the emulation of the most effective programs and arm policy makers with information and recommendations that can be instructive to them in their decision-making.

It is fitting that an undergraduate student should play such an important role in the development and implementation of a research initiative that will, in my view, have significant and enduring positive ramifications for postsecondary education and American society in general, and students in particular. LeAnne Slack's dedicated, persistent and thorough approach to her task is a compliment to her and to her alma mater. The data collected and her report can be instrumental in solving the American dilemma of minority underrepresentation in education.

Dr. Charles E. Morris
Senior Associate
Center for Higher Education

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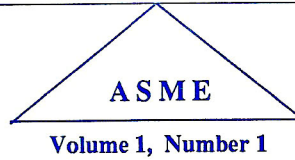
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ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF MINORITIES IN EDUCATION

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*This report was produced with assistance from:
The Illinois Board of Higher Education
The Illinois Board of Regents*