Current assessments of college value in the United States fall short of centering race in their measurements by not accounting for the unique economic conditions of racially marginalized students before, during, and after they leave college. Commonly used economic indicators, such as earnings and debt, are incomplete measures of college value for communities of color. Wider societal issues like structural racism cascade into inequities in college affordability and outcomes but are often left out of college value discussions.

Last year, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) introduced a new metric, Race and Economic Mobility (REM), capturing economic outcomes by colleges’ compositions (or shares) of racially marginalized students. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) College Scorecard, TICAS found that students who attended colleges serving greater shares of racially marginalized students earned less income 10 years after graduation than their peers from colleges with smaller shares of students of color. Even more alarming, at colleges serving the largest shares of Black students, borrowers owed more in student loans than they originally borrowed a decade after starting repayment. By racializing economic mobility, the REM metric underscores why race must be a central component when assessing the true value of a college education.

In our initial REM analysis, we noted that future iterations of the metric would examine college value by sector, minority-serving institution (MSI) designation, and region. In this technical documentation, we describe the methodology of the MSI fact sheets.

Policymakers, analysts, and researchers can use our REM methodology as a framework to design metrics that more accurately measure the value of a degree and help close racial disparities in economic outcomes. To ameliorate longstanding racial inequities in higher education and to advance a system that provides equitable opportunities for students from all walks of life to thrive before, during, and after college, federal and state-level policymakers must invest in both racially marginalized students and the institutions that serve them.

**METHODOLOGY FOR MSI FACT SHEETS**

**Data**

In the fact sheet on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), we focused on four-year colleges (primarily Bachelor’s degree-granting) only, since few two-year HBCUs (n=4) reported economic outcomes data. However, we recognize that Black students at community colleges still encounter disparate earnings and debt outcomes compared to their peers. We compared four-year HBCUs to all four-year (primarily Bachelor’s degree-granting) institutions in the public and private non-profit sector that are not identified as HBCUs in College Scorecard. We also excluded for-profit colleges in these analyses because there are no for-profit colleges designated as HBCUs.

In the fact sheets on Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), we use variables from the College Scorecard to identify colleges with each designation. We excluded for-profit colleges in these analyses because they are ineligible for these grants even if they meet enrollment thresholds.
**Analysis**

In our preliminary analysis on MSIs, we found that, because MSIs primarily serve higher shares of racially marginalized students, nearly all MSIs fell into the upper quintiles. Therefore, in our MSI fact sheets, we compared economic outcomes without creating quintiles. We separately analyzed two-year colleges (predominantly Associate’s degree-granting) and four-year colleges (predominantly Bachelor’s degree-granting) in the fact sheets on AANAPISIs and HSIs. As mentioned above, the fact sheet on HBCUs focuses only on four-year colleges (predominantly Bachelor’s degree-granting). All three MSI fact sheets compared the overall averages of median annual earnings, the percentage of debt owed 10 years after entering repayment, and the share of completers with an earnings premium.

**Limitations**

Due to federal data limitations of either privacy suppression or unreported data, we recognize that more colleges may receive the respective grants than are included in the MSI fact sheets. In the AANAPISI fact sheet, student groups are combined given federal data collection limitations and reflect the aggregated population AANAPISIs aim to serve. However, as noted in the AANAPISI fact sheet, aggregating this data risks masking variations in economic outcomes among Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) subgroups.

---

**ECONOMIC OUTCOMES**

The economic outcomes we reported are the estimated averages taken from the aggregated colleges’ MSI status.

**Median Annual Earnings**

The average of median annual earnings is calculated using the median earnings of students (both completers and non-completers) who received Title IV financial aid, are employed, and are not enrolled 10 years after entering college. Median annual earnings are measured over a 10-year period after entry.

**Percentage of Debt Owed (Dollar-based Repayment Rate)**

This variable measured the average remaining percentage of undergraduate student loans that borrowers (both completers and non-completers) still owe a decade after the loan has been disbursed and captured when borrowers enter repayment. The percentage of debt owed determines a borrower’s progress toward paying down their debt after 10 years.

**Share of Completers with an Earning Premium (Earnings Threshold)**

This measure indicated the percentage of completers earning more than a high school graduate. The average earnings premium is calculated 10 years after enrollment.
## INDICATORS IN TICAS’ RACE & ECONOMIC MOBILITY METRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable(s)</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HBCU [HBCU]</strong></td>
<td>This is based on the institutional designation as a Historically Black College and University.</td>
<td>Office of Postsecondary Education, based on an institution’s designation as of the Calendar Years 2021-2022.</td>
<td>There may be more HBCUs than are included in the analysis due to privacy suppression rules and/or no data being reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HSI [HSI]</strong></td>
<td>This is based on the institutional designation of being a Hispanic-Serving Institution.</td>
<td>College Scorecard, derived from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education’s Eligibility Matrix for Fiscal Year 2023.</td>
<td>There may be more HSIs than are included in the analysis due to privacy suppression rules and/or no data being reported. Institutional designations may also fluctuate from year to year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AANAPISI [AANAPII]</strong></td>
<td>This is based on the institutional designation of being an Asian American Native American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.</td>
<td>College Scorecard, derived from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education’s Eligibility Matrix for Fiscal Year 2023.</td>
<td>There may be more AANAPISIs than are included in the analysis due to privacy suppression rules and/or no data being reported. Institutional designations may also fluctuate from year to year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant Degree [PREDDEG]</strong></td>
<td>The predominant degree variable identifies the type of award that an institution primarily confers. The analysis defines two-year colleges as those that predominantly award Associate’s degrees and four-year colleges as those that predominantly award Bachelor’s degrees.</td>
<td>IPEDS, cohort of students starting Fall 2021 and reported in IPEDS in the Calendar Years 2021-2022.</td>
<td>This variable is assigned based on the undergraduate award level with the largest number of awards with ties going to the higher award level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Earnings [MD_EARN_WN_E_P10]</strong></td>
<td>Median earnings are based on the institutional aggregate of all federally aided undergraduate students who enroll in an institution each year and who are employed but not enrolled 10 years after entry. Median earnings by the enrollment cohort meaning data are captured for all students whether they graduate, drop-out/stop-out, or continue with school.</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Treasury, pooled cohort of students in Academic Years 2008-09 and 2009-10, measured in Calendar Years 2019 and 2020, and adjusted for inflation to 2021 dollars.</td>
<td>Median earnings are based on aggregate earnings which may mask variation at the program level. Additionally, median earnings are only captured at institutions serving Title IV students and exclude any students who are enrolled in graduate school at the time of measurement. Earnings data used in this report are not weighted because estimates are based on a pooled cohort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Variable(s)

**Percentage of Debt Owed (Dollar-based Repayment Rate)**  
[DBRR10_FED_U_G_RT]

**Share of Completers with an Earnings Premium (Earnings Threshold)**  
[GT_THRESHOL_D_P10]

### Measures

- The percentage of debt owed (or the dollar-based repayment rate) captures the remaining balance of the undergraduate federal loans disbursed, 10 years after borrowers have entered repayment. These data are captured for all borrowers, whether or not they completed.

- This variable reflects the share of completers that are earning more than those whose high school completion was their highest level of education. This estimate is measured 10 years after entry.

### Source

- National Student Loan Data System, pooled cohort of students in beginning in Academic Years 2009-10 and 2010-11 and measured in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

- U.S. Department of Treasury, pooled cohort of students in the Academic Years 2008-09 and AY2009-10 and measured in Calendar Year 2019 and 2020 and adjusted for inflation adjusted to 2021 dollars.

### Limitations

- The percentage of debt owed is based on repayment cohorts which are captured on the year students enter repayment which may be different from the year they exit their institution. They may not immediately enter repayment either due to the six-month grace period or loan deferment.

- These data are only available for completers.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) is a trusted source of research, design, and advocacy for student-centered public policies that promote affordability, accountability, and equity in higher education. To learn more about TICAS, visit ticas.org and follow us on Twitter and Instagram: @TICAS_org.

Casey Khánh Nguyễn, Ellie Bruecker, Ph.D., and Marshall Anthony Jr., Ph.D. are the primary authors of this technical document.

TICAS would like to express appreciation to Mayra Nuñez Martinez and Jaime Ramirez-Mendoza for their content and copy reviews. All mistakes are our own.

The views expressed in this paper are solely those of TICAS and do not necessarily reflect the views of our funders or reviewers.