Uncertain futures for private colleges

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Although we have a lot of questions about public policy, we also have a lot of questions about private colleges and universities – budget cuts, enrollment declines and financial aid for students. Yet private colleges also share some of the concerns of their public counterparts: more than 4,000 institutions of higher education enroll more than 20 million students; a little more than 3,000 (almost half) are four-year private institutions. Although there are a few exceptions, they tend to be small, at around 2,000 students at most.

Yet they represent a significant portion of the national college and university enrollments. Obviously not all are created equal. Some of them are far more successful than others, and can afford to offer their students any advantages due to the large amounts of money they receive. Those colleges do not face any immediate threats when it comes to their educational systems, as the majority of students enrolled there seem to be successful enough.

Overall, approximately 4.2 million students are enrolled in private not-for-profit higher education institutions in the United States. (The same number is reported by the National Center for Education Statistics.)

### Human Investigations and Education Services

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