
Acknowledgments

This project, *Productivity in Higher Education*, came out of long discussions among National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) economists, especially those who study colleges and universities. We, as a group, believe that our understanding of how productive these institutions are has been recently transformed by much better data, to which we can apply much better analysis. As a group, we believe we can be much more helpful to higher education policy makers than in previous years. We believe we can provide them with the evidence and tools they need in order to engage in meaningful self-evaluation and evidence-based planning. Our main concern, as economists who work in this area, is that we are getting far out in advance of leaders in higher education—that is, while these leaders believe that many questions cannot be answered or analyzed, we economists are confident that they are wrong in this regard. Specifically, although their intentions are excellent, they do not recognize the pace of advance in the economics of higher education. We economists are determined to give them the full advantage of our data and tools, even if we have to argue them into the idea that it is possible to be much better informed.

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