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Estimating the Effect of Attending a Public versus a Private University in Colombia on Academic Achievement

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We evaluate the impacts of attending a public university in Colombia on the academic achievement of graduates from higher education. Our measurement of academic achievement represents the progress made between the college entrance and graduation standardized test scores. We find that public Higher Education Institutions (HEI) improve student test scores in 11 of the 12 programs analyzed. The superiority of public HEIs relative to private ones suggests the need to promote greater regulation of the latter, and a review their current standards to help bridge the gap that currently exists in terms of the value added public HEIs have in comparison to the private ones. It also suggests that, at least in the short run, it could be socially beneficial to expand the public provision of some of the higher education public programs that added more value.

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