Data User Guide - Template

Original purpose and application (Martha)

Describe why the data exists, what organization collects it and how it is used (original purpose). Include a link to the original data set and to the organization that collects it.

Data on higher educational systems closing is gathered to keep track of how many colleges and universities have closed since 2016. The data is collected by the website, Education Dive, which uses this ongoing research as a way to track college/university closures and major trends shown in the data. Since the data is ongoing and is expected to rise, it is purposeful that they are tracking closures and consolidations from 2016-present. The data targets the United States and consists of non-profit colleges/universities only. This is to ensure there is no over or understating a "closure" since many for-profit higher education institutions are larger in size and have different reasons for closing in comparison to non-profits.

https://www.educationdive.com/news/tracker-college-and-university-closings-and-consolidation/539961/

History, standards, and format (Martha)

Describe how long this version of the data format has been in existence. Who originally started collecting this data and when? Was it the same organization that now collects it? Why does the data have the structure it does? Were new columns added to the spreadsheet recently? Is this dataset based on an existing standard, and who created this particular format?

After a 2016 report from the Parthenon Group that revealed 800 colleges were facing challenges due to revenue, tuition increases and lack of enrollment, there was a spark in interest from the Education Dive. This was to help keep further track since they expected the numbers to get larger. They kept data from 2016 and continue to update it -- the latest update being February 11, 2020.

There were previous reports that helped give inspiration to keep track of college closures but they are the only ones keeping a continuous updated list with every institution listed. The data is split up by institution, state, year, type, deal, and dive insight. If "Dive Insight" is offered, the website will research the college closure heavier and discuss what led to the issue.

There haven't been any new columns but if there is a suggestion made by anyone who submits the form to add an adjustment to the data, they will take into consideration if the column is necessary. The data is formatted in the standard csv form but the sections are based off the research Education Dive has done.

Organizational context (Martha)

Are there any issues related to the organization and how it operates that may impact the nature and quality of the dataset? Can relate to budget, staffing, mandates, etc.

Organization is pretty straight forward when looking at the data. Researchers get data on how many schools have closed, what specific institutions (and if private/public), the year they closed and whether they fully closed or merged with another institution. Some things that would be important to consider when looking for holes in the data would be the reason for closure, what type of college it was (liberal arts/religious/art), size of college (# of students), number of employees, and the school budget before closing. This will offer some coverage on possible trends between colleges, number of students before closing to consider how many students had to cover their degree at another institution, and tuition to get an idea of how much was being expected every year.

Workflow (Katie)

Describe from start to finish how this dataset is created and updated, and by whom. What technologies are involved? Outline the business processes are tied to this dataset. Mention if it is built-on other datasets. Is this data used in any other workflows not related to its original purpose?

The data is collected through Education Dive (as we mentioned above.) The sources for the list of school closings/mergers/acquisitions is linked at the bottom of the list and links to this page: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vToCdUwGBJcUMSRmrkKZuxXlfZbdRXuA7U35XUyjaSNSAfnfpgNsLqXmGiBy6dLH_4PHVC2R8e7mxha/pubhtml?gid=1180675487&single=true

Most of the sources were posted from news sites and organizations and from university websites announcing the news. There is also a form that allows the public to add in any schools that are not currently on a list. From that point, the website must vett the responses and add the appropriate schools.

Exploratory Visualization/s of the Data (Alberto)

The Trend of Closure
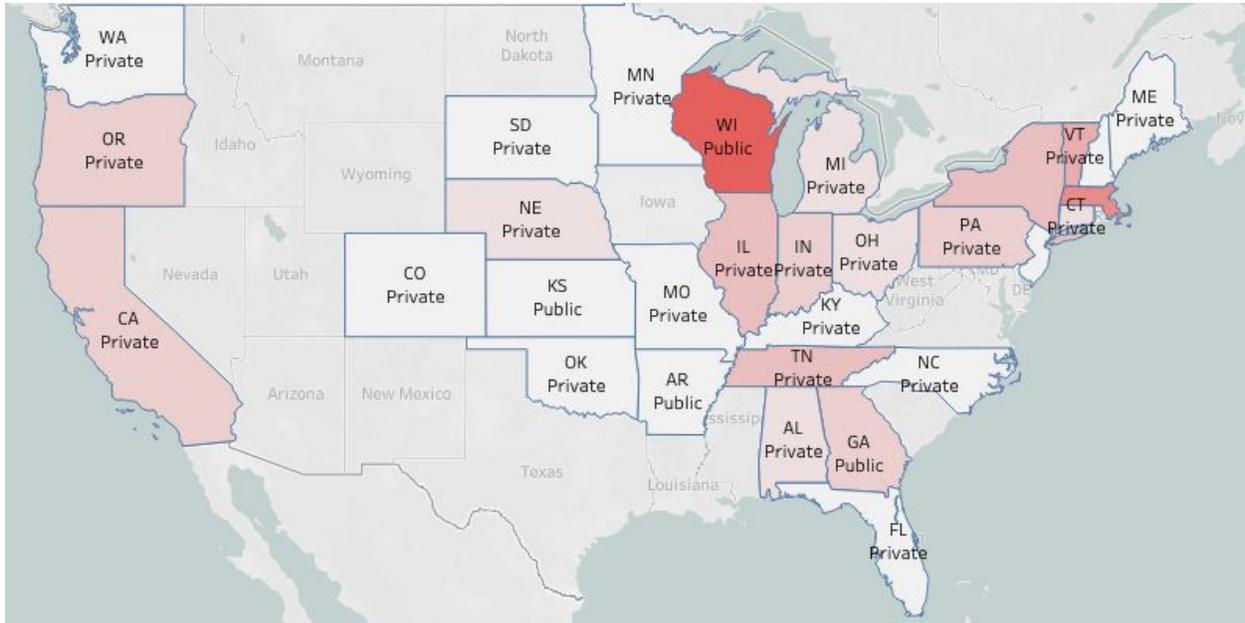
For many small public and private institutions across the United States, the difficulties of keeping their doors open has forced many to close or to be acquired by other institutions. For the state of Massachusetts from the year 2016 to now, there have been seven cases of this ongoing trend. The purpose of this data is to view the ongoing problem and understand why this is happening.

To learn more visit:

https://www.educationdive.com/news/tracker-college-and-university-closings-and-consolidation/539961/

Data Limitations (Alberto)

Are there any other limitations or details related to this dataset that limit or guide its use and interpretation?

In terms of limitations, there is no actual data visualization that goes along with the data set. It features very little categories. Categories included on the data set are the name of the institution, the date it was closed, the type of institution, the state that the college/university is in and the outcome of the school following.

In order to make this a more presentable and more understandable data set would be to

include a graphic. Being that the focus is on schools in Massachusetts and the data set includes school across the country, our goal now is to incorporate this idea but also adding on to the apparent trend.

The only good thing about this data set is the fact that it is still being updated since its initial start in 2016.

Other Stories, Reports and Outputs from this data (Katie)

https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/closures/home.asp
https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2019/01/29/college-problem/
https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/11/18/mass-governor-signs-college-closure-law

Others have made use of this data in different ways. Higher education is expensive-- to the same caliper of purchasing a house. Our generation is taught through high school and grade school that we have to go on to college and get an education but what happens when universities shut down while students are in the middle of their courses or have to relocate to the university that buys out theirs? Different sources and news outlets discuss laws and policies that should/could be put in place to prevent this. Additionally, articles talk about how this issue influences the students involved negatively.

Supplementary Information (Sam)

A list of links that include any metadata (data dictionary, field values, or codebook) that is available. Provide a link to the original data set. Include any other links to help give additional context to this dataset or the organization that collects it.

- *Bulleted list of links*
- *https://www.educationdive.com/news/how-many-colleges-and-universities-have-closed-since-2016/539379/*
- *https://www.educationdive.com/news/connecticut-community-colleges-to-merge-in-two-stages/526111/*
- *https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/08/11/new-england-smallest-colleges-are-struggling/v60cnP1oEhBX1MEOMb9oSP/story.html*
- *https://www.npr.org/2018/05/25/614315950/why-is-undergraduate-college-enrollment-declining*
- *https://cdn.ey.com/parthenon/pdf/perspectives/P-EY_Strength-in-Numbers-Collaboration-Strategies_Paper_Final_082016.pdf*
- *https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-tiaa-institute-mergers-in-higher-education/%24File/ey-tiaa-institute-mergers-in-higher-education.pdf*
- *https://www.educationdive.com/news/more-than-100-for-profit-institutions-closed-during-past-year-according-to/525094/*

- *https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2019-03-22/college-closings-signal-start-of-a-crisis-in-higher-education*

Authors of this Data User Guide (Sam)

Bulleted list of links
- *https://www.educationdive.com/news/report-more-college-closures-ahead/551055/*
- *http://blogs.bu.edu/vsapiro/files/2019/02/SapiroWhentheEndComes2019-1.pdf*
- *https://www.educationdive.com/news/massachusetts-to-monitor-struggling-private-colleges/546614/*

Source Log (All)

Include names & contact information for three sources that you interviewed about this data set. Note that your sources don't all have to be from the organization that collects the data. For example, if you are writing a user guide for Boston's spreadsheet of food inspections, you could interview restaurant owners who have had their businesses inspected by the city. So think creatively about who might have insight into different parts of the data.

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