

Using World University Ranking Systems to Inform and Guide Strategic Policy and Decision Making – With Applications to Canadian Research Universities

Roland Proulx*

Abstract

Recent studies related to the influence and impact of the World University Ranking Systems on Higher Education conclude that the league tables have been mostly used for promotional and reputational purposes. The author argues in this paper that the rankings cannot fully impact Higher Education policy making unless the universities go beyond the overall scores and use the various individual indicators behind the rankings. The author proposes a 3-step approach allowing universities to benchmark and compare with peer world universities (at the institutional, field and subfield levels), measuring up against global benchmarks and positioning strategically their institution. Rankings could then be used as powerful diagnosis tools, effective guides for specific goal settings and strategic devices for Global Higher Education.

Keyword: World Universities; Rankings; Policy Making; Strategic Planning; Benchmarking