

Jan SADLAK and LIU Nian Cai, Editors

THE WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY AND RANKING: AIMING BEYOND STATUS

This premier publication of the new series "Higher Education for a Knowledge Society" represents the first academic analysis of its kind detailing a major recent development in higher education – the rising prominence of the "world-class university", as well as the phenomenon and impact of "ranking of higher education institutions".

The authors of more than twenty essays, themselves academic leaders and internationally acclaimed researchers on higher education, provide readers with diverse perspectives on the conceptual framework and characteristics of the world-class university and litmus tests for identifying institutions which match the criteria required to be considered as the "world-class university" – mostly in the context of university ranking and views on "winning formulas", and the challenges related to their establishment and operation.

This volume will be important reading to all those interested in the current state and future of higher education and science.

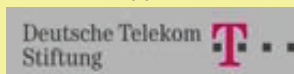
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The publication of *The World-Class University and Ranking* could not have come at a better time. The expansion of league tables and university rankings has not gone unnoticed by the various stakeholders in the world of higher education and the reaction they elicit is rarely benign. Rankings are often dismissed as irrelevant exercises fraught with methodological flaws, boycotted by some universities, and used by political opponents to criticize governments. With leagues tables becoming something of a growth industry, their accuracy, relevance and usefulness have become issues of concern.

To what extent are rankings relevant for university leaders attempting to create world class institutions? Do they have any beneficial use for public policy, accountability, and consumer information purposes? These are some of the key questions that *The World-Class University and Ranking* sets out to answer.

Jan SADLAK and LIU Nian Cai, the editors of this ground-breaking work, have been able to mobilize a wide range of researchers, academic leaders and policy analysts to explore the most important dimensions of this question. The book combines a comprehensive coverage of the various methodological approaches to rankings and an in-depth review of what it takes to build a world-class university. The result is an outstanding contribution to this debate of high priority for university leaders and policy-makers in industrial and developing countries alike.

Dr. Jamil Salmi
Tertiary Education Coordinator
The World Bank, Washington DC

Most scholars and very certainly administrators know “Who's Who” in the university world. Rather rarer are parents who need to know even if they don't. In this age of globalization and competition keeping up with the Harvards, Berkeleys and Cambridges of this world is no easy task, though those who would dearly wish to be up with the leaders grow daily. How is the excellence of universities measured? With the number of league tables flourishing across the planet like the Green Bay Tree, do they all measure the same thing? What differences are there between them? What are the objections that can be made about university ranking both in general and in particular.

The World-Class University and Ranking is a clear and thoughtful collection of essays, written by leading scholars and those who have given much thought to the questions rankings pose. It is both a timely statement for and a critique of, the current return to the fashion of measurement. Here is sober and impressive evidence to temper some of the more energetic claims, not to mention the 'boosterism' that individual universities are now being forced to display.

Prof. Guy Neave
Comparative Higher Education Policy Studies
Twente University, Netherlands

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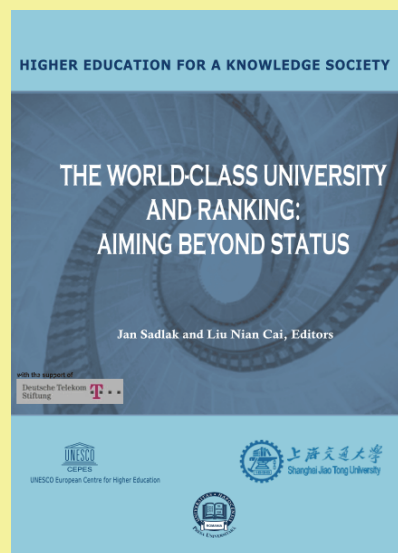
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