Feature Story

5 drivers of global university ranking
1. International reputation
2. Citation of research paper
3. Faculty staff-to-student ratio
4. Number of international (including Mainland for HKU) students and staff
5. Collaboration with industry

University ranking, although not perfect, offers some insight into the performance of an institution. There are things that we all can do to improve the global standing of HKU. For example, welcoming students and staff from diverse background enriches our campus and everyone’s learning experience. Also, HKU research papers with international or Mainland collaborators are more highly cited and tend to be published in journals with higher impact factor. This translates to higher quality and better individual and institutional reputation.

In the recent 2017 Times Higher Education global ranking, HKU outperformed every other universities in Asia, UK, EU, Australia, Canada, and US as the world’s third most international university. Why is this important? Studies have shown that by becoming more global, HKU is in a better position to have better teaching, better research, more impact, more innovation, and our students getting better jobs!

W. John Kao, PhD FBSE

Internationalisation in Research

Collaboration with Mainland and international partners augments the impact and quality of HKU’s research papers. Let’s look at the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) for papers published (2011-2015) around the world with:

HKU-only authors: 1.44
U Sydney-only authors: 1.93 HKU + U Sydney co-authors: 8.77
UCL-only authors: 1.46 HKU + UCL co-authors: 8.62
NUS-only authors: 1.42 HKU + NUS co-authors: 3.45
Harvard-only authors: 1.31 HKU + Harvard co-authors: 7.42
HKU + CUHK, Tsinghua, Nanjing, SJTU, CAS co-authors: 2.81, 5.80, 6.64, 7.91, 2.04, respectively

Global average for all universities is 0.74 FWCI. Higher the number the better. Research Reputation and Citations are important parameters (weighted 25-40% and 20-40%, respectively) in most global university rankings.

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Internationalisation in Teaching and Learning

- Teaching is another important indicator (weighted 10 to 30%) in most global university ranking. This includes criteria such as faculty-to-student ratio, reputation, and number of PhD awarded.

- “Global Challenges, Local Solutions” is a global student competition for you to offer innovative solutions to change lives for good here in HK and abroad. More than 20 teams representing 9 Faculties were in the first round. HKU final-round presentation is on 20 March. Come to support your team! Information: http://wp2.cedars.hku.hk/wcc-hku/

Internationalisation in Knowledge Exchange

HKU research papers with academic-industry collaboration are much more highly cited: 41.4 citations (6.63 FWCI). This contrasts 2.4 and 11.8 citations (0.88 and 2.02 FWCI) for papers without collaboration and with international/ML collaboration, respectively. Collaboration with industry partners enhances scholarship and quickens the pace to societal impact.

Guest Contributor Credit: Professor S Andrews, HKU Dean of the Faculty of Education

University rankings are capricious. Some universities pour scorn on them, dismiss them when they are unfavourable; while some universities feign modesty (or shout from the rooftops) when the rankings flatter them. Nevertheless, however much some academics may disdain rankings, university rankings cannot be ignored: they have become part of the ‘brand’ of each university and faculty, used by prospective students, academics, and the general public as a means of benchmarking and comparing institutions. Given the assumed impact of rankings on their ability to attract students and staff, some universities set ambitious targets based upon rankings. Wiser institutions adopt a more sanguine approach, prioritising quality enhancement and efficient reporting in all three major areas of activity - research, teaching and learning, and knowledge exchange - with an effective reputation management. It is expected that if those priorities are achieved, and achievements are publicized, there is every chance that it will be reflected positively in the rankings.

- “Strategic Partnership Fund with U Chicago, U Sydney, UCL, SJTU, and King’s” is a scheme to foster deep relationship and collaboration with highly-selected top-tier global universities.

- “Global Partnership Seed Fund” facilitates exploration of new collaborations.

Next deadline: 31 August 2017
For more information: http://www.global.hku.hk/funding-opportunities

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