

A Faustian Contract: Institutional Responses to National and International Rankings

Peter W A West OBE
Secretary to the University

Reputation

'The future battle for world class universities will not be for student numbers but for reputation.'

(Frans van Vught)

- 'The Best Modern University in the United Kingdom'
- 'The No 1 Modern University in Scotland'
- 'Named as one of the top 10 Modern Universities in the United Kingdom'
- 'University of the Year'
- Auckland, Sydney, City University of Hong Kong

League Tables and European Higher Education

- 'European HE needs to be modernised. We have global dominance in football, so why not in HE.'
Commissioner Jan Figel (2/08)
- 'European HE has only two out of the top 10 in Shanghai tables. Governments can create good universities, not excellent ones.'
Minster Ziga Turk, Slovenia (2/08)
- 'The Shanghai rankings show that European HE is, overall, unsuccessful.'
M. Arnaldo Abruzzini, Euro Chambers (2/08)
- 'The European university world is not trouble-free and the European universities are not at present globally competitive'
(European Commission)
- 'There is a tendency to uniformity and egalitarianism in many national higher education systems; there is too little emphasis on monodisciplinarity and traditional learning and learners; there is too little world-class excellence'
(European Commission)

Characteristics Valued by Universities

- HEFCE SURVEY
- Graduate Job Prospects
 - Student Opinions
 - Completion Rates
 - Retention
 - Value Added
 - RAE outcome
 - Research Income
 - PH.D Degrees Awarded

- CEIHE SURVEY
- Type of Degree
 - Range of Subjects
 - Research Intensiveness
 - International Orientation

The Impact on the University of Strathclyde

- Pressure to consider an inappropriate merger
- Pressure on our traditional role of 'Useful Learning'
- Particular difficulty for Faculty of Education
- Impact on perceptions, particularly in S.E. Asia
- After years of ignoring league tables, acceptance that a response is needed
- The Excellence Agenda

League Tables Highly Valued

Improvements:

- CHE System
- OECD Initiative
- CEIHEII Diversity Study
- Subject based approach

QUOTES

'Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.'

David Copperfield

'Each university must decide what their unique mission is going to be, then aim to be the best in the world at that'

*Professor John Hood, Vice-Chancellor,
Oxford University, 2006*
