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IMHE Presentation - September 2008

### League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?

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### League Tables: the argument in brief.

1. Tables of university ranking are becoming less avoidable as they are increasingly used in strategic positioning.
2. The comparison between football and academia implied in the term "League Table" is interesting in that it is misleading.
3. Promotion and regulation in the league tables happens most often when the rules are changed, rather than as a consequence of institutional performance.
4. It seems unlikely that a CHE type model will find favour in Australia as long as the two main tables are lists of rewards rather than useful and accurate sources of information for current and potential stakeholders.

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### League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?

*... despite the global explosion of the rankings industry, and the fact that rankings have become an inescapable proxy for ... reputation in many circles, the validity of the current ranking systems and league tables as creditable measures of reputation has been soundly criticized by educators, scholars, accreditation agencies and ... consumers alike.*

(Vidaver-Cohen, 2007; p278)

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**

*\* Oxford was ranked joint second in the world in the Times Higher Education Supplement's World University Rankings 2007.*

*\* Oxford is repeatedly ranked in the top ten of universities worldwide in the annual tables compiled by Shanghai Jiao tong University.*

*\* In May 2007, Oxford University topped The Guardian's UK rankings for the third consecutive year.*

*\* Oxford was named Britain's top university for the sixth year running in the Times Good University Guide (August 2007).*  
(Oxford, 2008)

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**

*... alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, Highly Cited Researchers, articles indexed in Science Citation Index-Expanded (SCIE) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). Two new indicators were introduced [for 2008], one is the percentage of articles published in the top 20% journals of each field, and the other is the engineering research expenditure.*  
(Jiao Tong, 2008)

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**



Similarities:-  
 No club/HEI is happy to be ranked bottom on any of the league tables.  
 Lower ranked clubs/HEIs "play" in local leagues with the aim of reaching the big international leagues.  
 Clubs/HEIs are more and more reliant on income not derived from their core business.  
 Super leagues are formed to exclude all but the elite.

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**



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Plays in the Go8 league in Oz  
Does reasonably well in the LTPF  
Does quite well in the ARC & NMHRC  
Has international aspirations  
Does OK in the THES  
Does less well in Jiao Tong

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**

*... rankings are treated with great seriousness by nearly all universities, and those institutions that score well never tire of citing their results in university promotional material. An institution that is ranked lower than its peers will complain bitterly about the flawed methodology and blind-spots of these consumer reports. Consequently, behind the scenes, many universities are eager to alter and adapt their image and academic practices to improve their scores.*

(Wellen, 2005; p28)

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*University leaders believe rankings help maintain and build institutional position and reputation; good students use rankings to 'shortlist' university choice, especially postgraduates; and key stakeholders use rankings to influence their decisions about accreditation, funding, sponsorship and employee recruitment. Respondents say 'reputation derived from league tables is a critical determinant for applicants'. Almost 50% respondents use their institutional rank for publicity purposes, in press releases, official presentations and their website.*

(Hazelkorn, 2007; p1)

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**

*2.3.5 Whether we like it or not, rankings are here to stay. Rankings will have a significant influence on how universities view themselves. Rankings will force institution to focus on league table criteria, which will inform their strategic goals, annual plans and resource allocation.*

(Fahey, 2007: p2)

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**League Tables: what chance of promotion or relegation?**

Questions?  
Contestations?

*Thank you for your attendance*

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