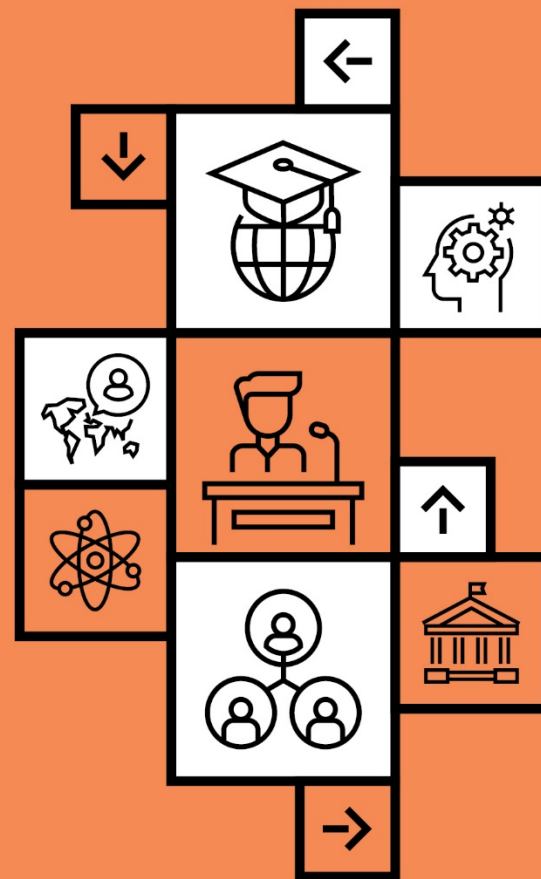


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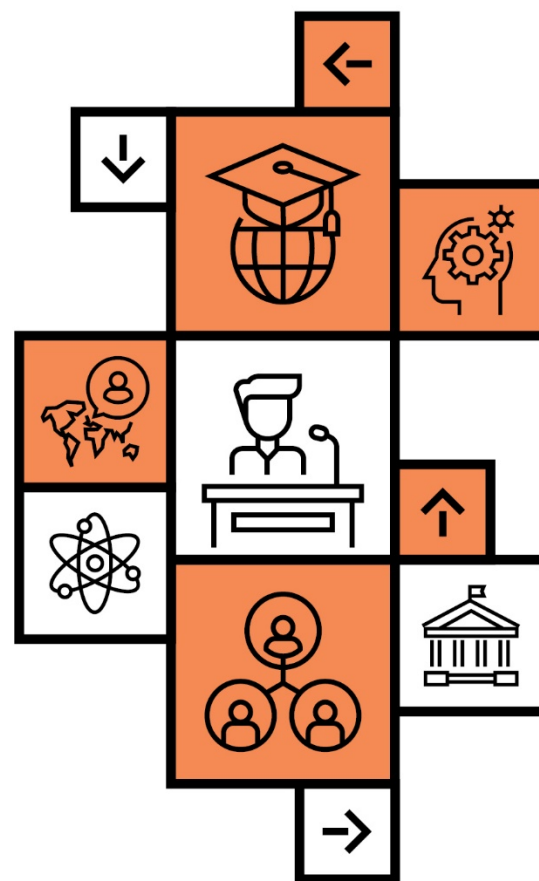
# What Can Czech Universities Do About World University Rankings?

6.11.2019

**Věra Šťastná**

*Caleb House*

**CZEDU** →  
**CON** FÓRUM MEZINÁRODNÍHO  
VYSOKOŠKOLSKÉHO  
VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ



# Introduction and Perspective

Věra Šťastná – Head of Department of Analysis and Strategy at Charles University

Caleb House – Ranking Strategist at the Czech Technical University in Prague



# Context of Rankings

Original intention

Sudden and recent rise

Rapid global adoption

*Despite significant limitations, world university rankings have become the unchallenged arbitrators of university quality*

Heard at all ranking conferences:

*“Yes but....Rankings are not going anywhere.”*



# Context of Rankings



REUTERS



eduniversal  
BUSINESS SCHOOLS  
RANKING 2015  
The best Business Schools worldwide



nature INDEX



Webometrics  
RANKING WEB  
OF UNIVERSITIES



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# Methodology

## Four Types of Rankings:

“Comprehensive”

League tables: *THE / QS*

Non-ranked: *MultiRank*

## Measuring Research Performance

League tables: *ARWU / US News & World Report*

Non-ranking: *Leiden Ranking*



# Methodology

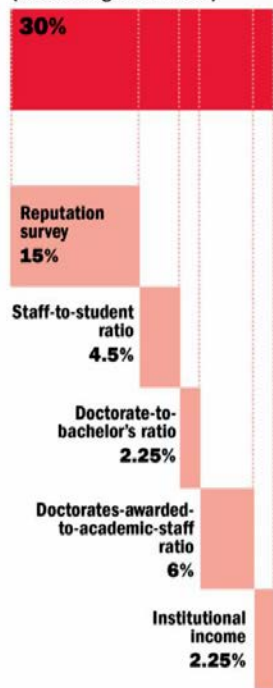
What do QS / THE claim to measure?

What do they actually measure?

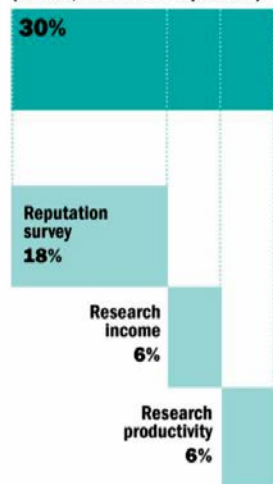


# Methodology

## Teaching (the learning environment)



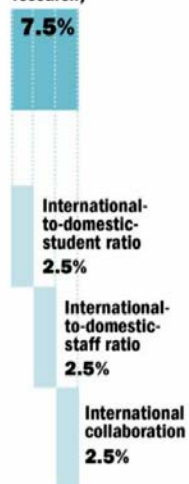
## Research (volume, income and reputation)



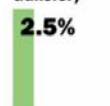
## Citations (research influence)



## International outlook (staff, students, research)



## Industry income (knowledge transfer)



## World University Rankings: Methodology

What information is collected, and how is this used to compile the ranking?



### Academic reputation

Based on a global survey of academics



### Employer reputation

Based on a global survey of graduate employers



### Faculty/student ratio

An indication of commitment to teaching



### Citations per faculty

An indication of research impact



### International student ratio

Measuring international diversity of the student community

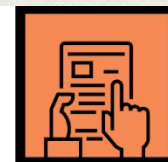


### International staff ratio

Measuring international diversity of the academic faculty



[www.TopUniversities.com](http://www.TopUniversities.com)

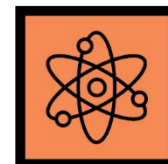


# Leiden Manifesto (2015)

1. Quantitative evaluation should support qualitative, expert assessment
2. Measure performance against the research missions of the institution, group, or researcher
3. Protect excellence in locally relevant research
4. Keep data collection and analytical processes open, transparent, and simple
5. Allow those evaluated to verify data and analysis
6. Account for variation by field in publication and citation practices
7. Base assessment of individual researchers on qualitative judgement of their portfolio
8. Avoid misplaced concreteness and false precision
9. Recognize the systemic effects of assessment and indicators
10. Scrutinize indicators regularly and update them

<http://rutgersaaup.org/sites/default/files/images/Leiden-manifesto-research-methods-520429a.pdf>

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# Why Should We Care?

Rankings are an easily-available proxy that enables global comparisons and might be used for global benchmarking IF used correctly

Rankings determine global reputation

Access to partnerships, international employees, projects, top students, etc.

Influence on national policy



# Why Are No Czech Universities in the Top 1%?

In global context (20k-30k universities in the world), Czech Republic has a respectable performance

BUT

We are falling behind global competition

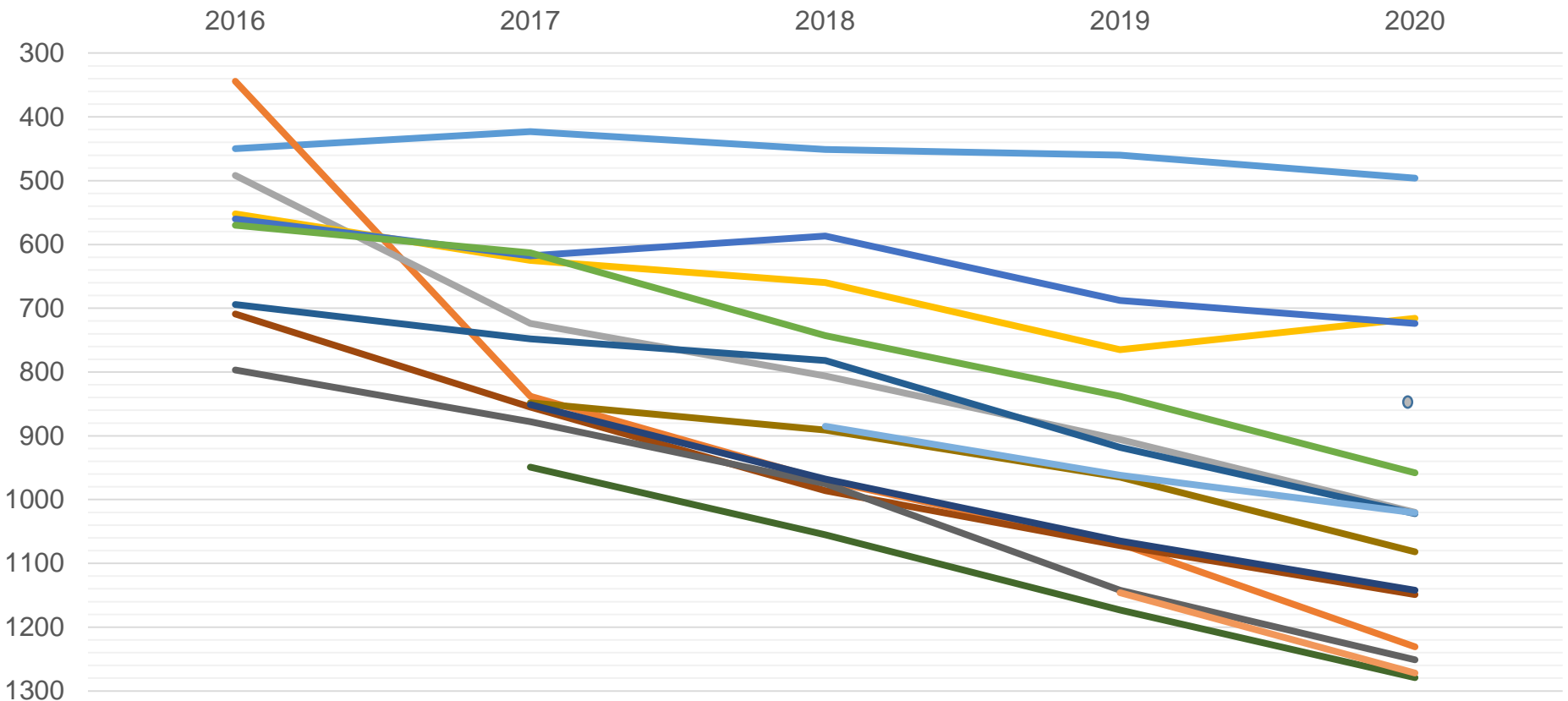
We face outgoing rather than incoming (the level of students/graduates has not decreased but the best go abroad where the conditions are better; the same applies to academic and research staff)

We are not used to comparing ourselves to an international standard



# Time Higher Education Global Rank, All Czech Universities

- Charles University
- Brno University of Technology
- Masaryk University
- University of Chemistry and Technology, Prague
- University of Pardubice
- Tomas Bata University in Zlín
- University of Ostrava
- University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
- VŠB - Technical University of Ostrava
- Palacký University Olomouc
- Czech Technical University in Prague
- University of West Bohemia
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CULS)
- Technical University of Liberec
- University of Economics, Prague
- Mendel University in Brno



COUNTRY	AVERAGE CHANGE IN SCORE	AVERAGE CHANGE IN RANK
Qatar	16.7	215
Jordan	10.7	48
Macao	6.2	28
New Zealand	5.7	24
Belgium	4.4	21
United Arab Emirates	7.4	21
Finland	5.5	18
Luxembourg	4.4	14
Denmark	3.8	12
Australia	4.4	9
Singapore	3.0	4
Saudi Arabia	6.3	3
Netherlands	1.4	-2
Lebanon	5.3	-4
China	6.5	-6
Ireland	4.0	-7
Norway	2.9	-9
United States	2.8	-12
Pakistan	6.0	-13
Germany	2.1	-14
Switzerland	1.5	-16
Iceland	2.1	-17
Sweden	1.6	-20
Greece	4.9	-20
Canada	2.7	-22
United Kingdom	2.6	-22
Hong Kong	7.2	-30
France	2.5	-38
Israel	2.7	-38
South Korea	3.9	-39
Austria	1.9	-42
Cyprus	2.3	-45
Slovenia	4.5	-51

Estonia	3.3	-52
Uganda	2.1	-54
Hungary	4	-55
Italy	1.6	-57
Lithuania	3.9	-58
Spain	3.0	-60
Portugal	2.4	-62
South Africa	1.9	-63
Indonesia	4.9	-66
Colombia	3.4	-76
India	3.1	-77
Russian Federation	1.5	-87
Turkey	2.6	-89
Ghana	1.9	-97
Malaysia	2.1	-98
Egypt	3.7	-102
Iran	1.5	-105
Taiwan	1.4	-108
Morocco	4.4	-110
Poland	2.6	-113
Japan	1.6	-116
Thailand	2.1	-122
Chile	1.1	-138
Belarus	3.2	-142
Brazil	0.5	-154
Oman	0.3	-157
Romania	7.0	-166
Nigeria	2.6	-170
Kenya	1.2	-173
Slovakia	-0.5	-196
Mexico	-2.2	-198
Czech Republic	-2.1	-199
Latvia	-0.9	-204
Ukraine	0.7	-212



COUNTRY	AVERAGE CHANGE IN SCORE	AVERAGE CHANGE IN RANK
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Singapore	3.0	4
Saudi Arabia	6.3	3
Netherlands	1.4	-2
Lebanon	5.3	-4
China	6.5	-6
Ireland	4.0	-7
Norway	2.9	-9
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Sweden	1.6	-20
Greece	4.9	-20
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United Kingdom	2.6	-22
Hong Kong	7.2	-30
France	2.5	-38
Israel	2.7	-38
South Korea	3.9	-39
Austria	1.9	-42
Cyprus	2.3	-45
Slovenia	4.5	-51

Estonia	3.3	-52
Uganda	2.1	-54
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Lithuania	3.9	-58
Spain	3.0	-60
Portugal	2.4	-62
South Africa	1.9	-63
Indonesia	4.9	-66
Colombia	3.4	-76
India	3.1	-77
Russian Federation	1.5	-87
Turkey	2.6	-89
Ghana	1.9	-97
Malaysia	2.1	-98
Egypt	3.7	-102
Iran	1.5	-105
Taiwan	1.4	-108
Morocco	4.4	-110
Poland	2.6	-113
Japan	1.6	-116
Thailand	2.1	-122
Chile	1.1	-138
Belarus	3.2	-142
Brazil	0.5	-154
Oman	0.3	-157
Romania	7.0	-166
Nigeria	2.6	-170
Kenya	1.2	-173
Slovakia	-0.5	-196
Czech Republic	-2.1	-199
Ukraine	0.7	-212



# Why Are No Czech Universities in the Top 1%?

## External Factors:

Ranking methodology is based on an Anglo-Saxon approach to education

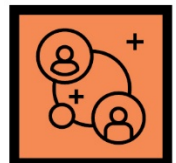
Advantage of global languages

Increased competition, including the flood of “newcomers” to rankings

Massive overhauls of higher education systems / institutions in other countries based on ranking methodology

Other institutions learning to “play the game”

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# Why Are No Czech Universities in the Top 1%?

## Internal Factors:

Research inbreeding, lack of international teaching / research staff

At many Czech universities (faculties/institutes) research has only recently become part the core mission

Long history of under-funding Czech universities, which only recently started improving slightly

Coffee-grinder type of evaluation and funding

Splitting forces – universities are good in certain areas, not overall

Lack of competing for excellence – comparisons tend to be national

Lack of self-promotion, especially outside Europe

Language limitations (publications / instruction)

Lack of administrative centralization

Underestimating professional staff (underpaid, lack of incentives etc.)



# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

## 1. Remember That Rankings Are Important But Are Not Everything

Not everything that counts is countable, not everything which is countable counts

Significant changes in rank are often disconnected from consistent university quality

Resources used on rankings come from a zero-sum education budgets – the focus should be to invest into research, promotion, good professional staff, etc.

Normalization in a black box makes many results useless for internal benchmarking

Danger in thinking there is ONE type of university and that all can be compared on the same stage

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# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

2. Make Sure Data Collection Is Clean and Optimized

Ex: Correcting Number of International Staff



# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

## 3. Find a Vision

There are many ways to improve in rankings, but are they consistent with your university's goals?

Improve quality of research performance instead of its quantity

Deepen internationalisation of all university activities

**MOST IMPORTANT**

What kind of university do you want to be?

Central vision must be communicated and adopted



# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

## 4. A Research-Centric Approach

Improvement of research at a university means improvement:

- of university's international reputation, consequently interest of international students, staff and employers
- of its research performance
- of its citations
- of success in attracting international staff and students
- of its budget
- of its rankings

Examples of Charles University (internal evaluation of research with international dimension, support for researchers – grant applications and teams)



# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

## 5. International-Centric Approach

Rankings are designed for international students and global comparison, they are biased towards internationalization

Beyond “International Students” and “International Staff”, also “Reputation Surveys”, “Citations”, and “Research” are measured from an international perspective

Duncan Ross, THE Lead Ranking Strategist: “We believe that internationalization is important.”

Excellent domestic university will not succeed in rankings, and international students are just the beginning



# How Can Czech Universities Approach Rankings?

## 6. Institution-Wide Involvement

Reputation surveys

HR

PR

Alumni engagement

Converting international students into staff

Citations incentivization

Researchers using knowledge of ranking methodology

Include ranking knowledge in strategy decisions where appropriate

Institutional-wide coordination

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# Conclusions

More questions than answers

Rankings present a massive challenge to our perspective and institutional culture

What kind of institutions do we want to be?

Global or domestic?

Known for teaching, career-preparation, research, innovation?

How will we use rankings to pursue the goals that really matters to us?



# Conclusions

It is essential to create a comprehensive, long-term, widely-adopted vision and decide how rankings fit into it...

...otherwise we will be sucked into the narrow and ill-fitting vision that rankings have for us.



