

From Rankings to Talent Development

UIC Leadership Retreat

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Critique of Rankings: Who uses them?

- Rankings rank 11th in important reasons for college selection, only 18% of freshmen nationally state the rankings were important to select their first college
- Four times as many magazines sold as there are full-time students entering the colleges in the rankings—should a media organization be in charge of determining quality
- High income, high ability students use the rankings; students who attend local colleges, delayed-entry, and nontraditional students are least likely
- Top reason for selection “good academic reputation,” and location (broad access)

Alternatives: Multiple dimensions

- College quality is multi-dimensional—and uneven within an institution (e.g. innovation, diversity, links with the community)
- Multiple dimensions, transparent, and defined areas with institutional input (e.g. social mobility, research, service).
- Movement away from resources and reputation towards talent development
- Accounting for student mobility—”returning learners” from swirl to degree attainment

Talent Development Dimensions

May include indicators of:

Teaching quality (student-centered)

Service activity, civic-minded practice

STEM productivity

Input-adjusted degree attainments (are our students doing better than expected?)

Provide recognition to broad access institutions for doing better with some of the most difficult populations to educate—aligning with national priorities

Conclusion

- Move from a market-driven ranking to one driven by the higher education system
- Indicators that stakeholders can help develop, provide feedback, and assist in data collection
- Institutions need to set their own goals and benchmarks for improvement

True excellence lies in the institution's ability to affect its students and faculty favorably, to enhance intellectual and scholarly development, and to make a positive difference in their lives (Alexander Astin, 1985).