the promise of this approach. Yet these programs are available only to a small number of students at elite institutions. To reach its potential as a global LAS leader, we recommend that China nurture these ventures and invest in additional programs that will facilitate experimentation and broader access.

- **Focus on faculty incentives and development**: In order to achieve LAS learning outcomes, a renewed approach to teaching is required. Empirical research illustrates that learning by rote listening and memorization without interpretation or critical evaluation, still common practice in Chinese universities, is inadequate for developing creative and critical thinkers. It is not enough, however, to call for new classroom approaches. Mobilizing faculty to teach differently requires incentives for advancing teaching quality and that faculty development be given strategic priority alongside research and publication demands.

This local grounding is crucial for China to fuel an innovation economy and cultivate graduates with a sense of vocational and community purpose.

- **Embrace innovative pedagogy**: A focus on pedagogy involves greater attention to the ways in which students learn. This means mobilizing faculty to decide together what they want graduates to be able to do and fostering a shared commitment to achieving these outcomes. It further demands a broader, pedagogy-focused institutional culture that experiments with new strategies and that purposefully integrates cocurricular activities as a central means for developing students' aptitude for adaptability, problem solving, and team work.
- **Scale quality programs**: LAS reform is only worth undertaking if it is developed with an intentional dedication to quality and continuous improvement. At the same time, China has a rare opportunity to scale crucial LAS innovations as it introduces those innovations, an opportunity not available in the United States. Key factors in going to scale include leveraging new technology and developing new paradigms for quality teaching, both of which require significant investment, extensive experimentation, and careful evaluation. If it wants to achieve a broadly innovative, entrepreneurial economy and community-minded citizenry, China will need to prioritize student access to LAS opportunities.
- **Study multiple traditions**: To succeed anywhere, LAS reforms must be relevant to both local and global conversations and conditions. This imperative offers important opportunities to advance conversation among Chinese, Western, and other cultures, to explore various knowledge contributions, and to view them in the context of worldwide debates and dilemmas. While grounding a curriculum in national traditions, placing Chinese perspectives in dialogue with views from Indian, Islamic, Western, and other cultures is crucial to the students' personal and intellectual development as well as their ability to engage successfully in a global society.

These recommendations are intended for collective and internal consideration in China. They should be considered comprehensively, not individually, as an integrated part of a holistic education philosophy. But from a global perspective, China is especially well situated to show other countries new ways to meld LAS philosophy with preprofessional education; methods to develop a truly interdisciplinary, integrated education (blending across disciplines and curricular/cocurricular boundaries); and the means to produce innovative pedagogical practices that ensure quality and access. Yet none of these LAS strategies is obtainable without an open academic dialogue that incorporates a variety of historical and cultural perspectives. While there is recent evidence suggesting greater experimentation in compulsory ideological courses, there is also evidence that the central government has escalated its oversight of content and curricula. Teaching various interpretations and the multitude of traditions within China's own complex history, as well as those outside its borders, is a crucial step and a valuable way for China to take the lead among other LAS experiments where academic content is tightly controlled. ■

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The New National Rankings in India

N.V. VARGHESE

N.V. Varghese is vice-chancellor and director of the Center for Policy Research in Higher Education, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India. E-mail: nv.varghese@nuepa.org. Link to India Rankings : https://www.nirfindia.org/ranking2017.html

Although world university rankings cover only a small share of higher education institutions, their results at-

tract worldwide attention and debate. Quite often, though, these results indicate that the best performing national institutions in many countries do not find a respectable place in the ranking tables.

No doubt, international rankings contribute to promoting competition among countries to improve their positions on the lists. Rankings also lead to targeted efforts in many countries to help domestic universities attain world-class status. Countries for whom this journey is too long and difficult opt for national rankings—additionally or as a substitute.

Indian universities do not appear at the top of world rankings—a matter of serious concern in the country. The government's response seems to be twofold: establishing world-class universities/institutions of eminence, while initiating a process of national rankings. The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) helped launch the first ranking exercise in India in 2015.

Ranking Framework and Methodology

In August 2014, the ministry of human resource development organized a consultation workshop and constituted a committee to develop a ranking framework and methodology. The committee identified a number of broad areas to be covered under the ranking framework: research and professional practices; teaching, learning, and resources; graduation outcomes; outreach and inclusivity; and perceptions. The committee, however, felt that a single ranking framework with the same indicators and weighting would be a misplaced idea for a country such as India, with different categories of institutions. The committee decided to have separate rankings for the various categories of institutions.

The committee broadly divided higher education institutions into two categories. Category A institutions include all central government institutions, state universities, "deemed-to-be" universities (high quality higher education institutions specialized in one area of study), private universities, and other autonomous institutions. Category B institutions and colleges are affiliated to universities and do not enjoy full academic autonomy to develop curriculum and award degrees.

Separate but comparable frameworks and parameters for ranking were developed for engineering, management, and pharmacy institutions, and for universities and colleges. While the areas considered remain the same, the weights assigned to each of the subareas vary depending upon the major orientation of the institutions. For example, while category A institutions are assigned more weights for research, category B institutions are assigned more weights for teaching.

Data Sources and Coverage of Institutions

Participation in the ranking exercise in India is voluntary. The exercise covers all higher education institutions with an enrollment exceeding 1000. Exceptions to this rule are specialized, monodisciplinary institutions. In total, 3,313 higher education institutions participated in the rankings of 2017. The data sources on research publications for the Indian ranking exercise are the Science Citation Index (SCI), the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) hosted on the Web of Knowledge. The data on teaching, inclusiveness, outcomes, and perceptions are obtained directly from the institutions participating in the ranking exercise.

Ranking Results

The ranking results are published in April every year, with the results of 2016 and 2017 already available. A close look at the results reveals interesting trends. The top 10 institutions in the rankings of all categories are mostly public institutions. The exception is pharmacy education, where the majority of institutions are private, accounting for more than 90 percent of enrollments. In the case of general higher education, all but one of the top 10 institutions are public institutions. Many of them, especially centrally funded institutions, receive higher levels of funding; student admissions are based on admission tests; and they enjoy a relatively higher degree of autonomy. In other words, the top-ranked institutions in the NIRF list exhibit some of the important characteristics of world-class universities as defined by Jamil Salmi in 2009.

Measures adopted to get reliable data from participating institutions seem to be working well in India.

If we consider the results of the top 100 institutions of higher education in the 2017 ranking, there are only three private universities appearing on the list. Nearly 60 percent of the institutions appearing on the top 100 list are specialized institutions, and the remainder are public universities and colleges (there are three of the latter category). The variations in scores among the 100 top-ranking institutions are revealing. While the maximum overall mean score is 83.28 among the top 10 institutions, it declines drastically to 58.25 in the next group of institutions (ranked 11–20), which is inferior to the minimum mean scores of the top 10 institutions. The variations in maximum mean scores are

less in teaching & learning and outreach & inclusivity than in research and perceptions, where they are the widest.

The ranking results have been met with less criticism than might have been anticipated, partly because the results themselves were not unexpected. One of the criticisms is common to any ranking exercise: condensing all information related to a university into just one figure is not useful. Another serious criticism concerns variations in the relative position of institutions in the 2016 and 2017 rankings. Forty-seven of the 100 top-ranked institutions in 2017 were new entrants, while 35 of the universities ranked 50 to 100 in the 2016 ranking disappeared from the 2017 list. Yet another criticism questions the usefulness of comparing single-subject institutions with multidisciplinary universities. These criticisms are valid, and they also reflect the teething troubles of the Indian ranking exercise.

Lessons from the Indian Ranking Exercise

A closer examination of the results indicates that research and perceptions are important areas to consider in order to improve an institution's position in the rankings. Indeed, research is key to driving changes in perception. Therefore, efforts to establish research universities and world-class universities may be a necessary step to climb in global rankings.

Measures adopted to get reliable data from participating institutions seem to be working well in India. The ranking agency performs random checks on the institutions' records and audited accounts. Data submitted to the NIRF portal are uploaded for purposes of visibility and public scrutiny. Institutions engaging in unethical practices in data submission are debarred from participating in future ranking exercises. These measures put pressure on institutions to provide reliable data and improve the transparency and reliability of data used in the NIRF rankings.

A positive result of ranking efforts in many countries is to highlight the importance of research universities and of establishing world-class universities. India has plans to establish 20 institutions of eminence. However, this should not be seen as an alternative to promoting research among existing higher education institutions. Ranking is not a substitute to improving the overall quality of the sector, since a large majority of higher education institutions do not participate in the exercise. Instead of relying unduly on rankings, India needs to increase its public funding to higher education and adopt effective strategies to promote research and improve teaching and learning among the vast majority of poor quality higher education institutions. ■

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