



**The Contribution of Human & Social Capital to Academic Productivity
Workshop** organised by the **Centre for Human and Social Capital Research**,
School of Economics, University of Wollongong, Friday 22 June 2007.

Venue:

Room 25.G11, Building 25, University of Wollongong campus.

Schedule

- 9.00 – 9.30 Coffee, Welcome to Participants (Joan Rodgers)
- 9.30 – 10.20 Joan Rodgers (UOW) “Research Productivity of Australian Academic Economists: Human-Capital and Fixed Effects” (Rodgers/Neri)
Chair: Simon Ville
- 10.30 – 11.20 Kevin Fox (UNSW) “Is it Harder to Soar with Eagles When you Work with Turkeys” (Fox/Milbourne)
Chair: John Rodgers
- 11.30 – 12.20 Richard Pomfret (Adelaide U) “Why do Australian Universities Fare so Poorly in International Rankings”
Chair: Peter Siminski
- 12.30 – 14.00 Lunch at Food re Thought
- 14.00 – 14.50 Frank Neri (UOW) “Ranking Australian Economics Departments by Research Productivity” (Neri/Rodgers)
Chair: Simon Ville
- 15.00 – 15.50 Chris Doucouliagos (Deakin U) “Substitution and Complementarity in the Creation and Communication of Australian University Research” (Doucouliagos/Burgio-Ficca)
Chair: John Rodgers
- 16.00 – 16.50 Abbas Valadkhani (UOW) “Ranking and Clustering of the Faculties of Commerce Research Performance in Australia” (Valadkhani/Ville)
Chair: Martin O’Brien
- 17.00 – 18.00 Finger Food, Conclusions (Joan Rodgers)

Abstracts

RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY OF AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC ECONOMISTS: HUMAN-CAPITAL AND FIXED EFFECTS*

JOAN R. RODGERS and FRANK NERI *University of Wollongong*
Australian Economic Papers 46(1) 2007, pp.67-87.

This study investigates why some economics departments in Australian universities are more research productive than others. The hypothesis is simple: research productivity depends upon the human capital of department members and the department-specific conditions under which they work. A Tobit model is used to estimate the magnitude of the two effects. Both are found to be important. Our results help explain why a small number of departments consistently outperform the others in studies that rank Australian economics departments according to research output.

IS IT HARDER TO SOAR WITH EAGLES WHEN YOU WORK WITH TURKEYS?*

KEVIN J. FOX *University of New South Wales*
ROSS MILBOURNE *University of Technology, Sydney*
Australian Economic Papers 45(4) 2006, pp.362-371.

Lucas (1988) modelled the productivity of workers as being a function not only of their own human capital but the human capital of the people with whom they work. Using individual data, this paper investigates whether there are such human-capital externalities. In particular, we look at the research output of academic economists, and ask whether research-output productivity is affected not just by individual human-capital factors, and institutional and funding factors, but additionally by productivity of those in the same academic department. Our findings are also of relevance to the literature on peer-group effects and the 'Bell Curve' debate.

WHY DO AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES FARE SO POORLY IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS? EVIDENCE FOR ECONOMICS DEPARTMENTS AND SOME HYPOTHESES

RICHARD POMFRET *Adelaide University*
Working paper to be distributed.

This paper reviews the literature ranking universities and economics departments. In international rankings Australian universities fare well, but the most popular (ARWU and THES) measures are biased in ways that favour Australian universities. In international rankings of economics departments by their research performance, Australian universities fare poorly relative to natural comparators. Several hypotheses can explain this phenomenon: inappropriate measures, low productivity, time spent on non-research activities age and cohort effects, lack of resources.

SUBSTITUTION AND COMPLEMENTARITY IN THE CREATION AND COMMUNICATION OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Claudia Burgio-Ficca and Hristos Doucouliagos#

Australian Economic Papers 46(2) 2007, pp.170-190.

The generation of research is one of the major functions of the University sector. In most disciplines, journal articles continue to be the main outlet for the communication of research findings. However, in Australia, government induced distortions have rewarded refereed conference papers an equal status to refereed journal papers. The aim of this paper is to explore the association between research published in journals and research published in conference proceedings. We use a panel dataset of the research output of 36 Australian universities, for the period 1995-2004. Cobb-Douglas research production functions are estimated, as well as a system of research production functions that allows for simultaneity. The results indicate that journals and conferences are contemporaneous substitutes – an expansion in conference publications displaces journal publications. There is also a “DEST effect”. On average, conference papers are not converted into subsequent journal papers. The DEST effect is found also through analysis of the publication histories of 152 business and law academics. Post-graduate enrollments are shown to contribute only to conferences and have no effect on journal publications. Research income has a positive effect on both conferences and journal publications.

RANKING AND CLUSTERING OF THE FACULTIES OF COMMERCE RESEARCH PERFORMANCE IN AUSTRALIA

ABBAS VALADKHANI and SIMON VILLE

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Working paper to be distributed.

There is a growing policy focus in Australian higher education on quantitative research performance assessment. However, most of the analysis has addressed aggregate performance at the institutional level, an approach inconsistent with recent policy emphasis on diversity among universities, and one that ignores performance variations across disciplines. We use cluster analysis to classify one of the ten broad fields of education, that is, management and commerce. Using averaged and available data for 2000-2004 on various research measures, partial rankings are provided. Factor analysis is utilised to generate full-multidimensional rankings within the resulting clusters. Our results show that low total research output and poor average (per capita) performance are closely correlated. We hypothesize that a minimum scale of efficiency exists as a result of the need to cover research overheads and to embrace the benefits of communities of practice in disciplinary research.

Ranking Australian Economics Departments by Research Productivity

FRANK NERI and JOAN R. RODGERS

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Economic Record, 82(special issue), 2006 pp.S74-S84.

This study ranks Australian economics departments according to their average research productivity during 1998–2002. The highest ranked departments are those at ANU, JCU, Melbourne, Tasmania and UWA. We also rank departments according to the variability of research productivity among their members, the assumption being that, other things being equal, the less variable is productivity within a department, the better. Research productivity is found to be highly skewed within all departments. However, in general, research productivity is more (less) evenly distributed within those departments that have relatively high (low) average research productivity.