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**Abstract**

The global expansion of access to higher education has increased demand for information on academic quality and has led to the development of university ranking systems or league tables in many countries of the world. A recent UNESCO/CEPES conference on higher education indicators concluded that cross-national research on these ranking systems could make an important contribution to improving the international market for higher education. The comparison and analysis of national university ranking systems can help address a number of important policy questions. First, is there an emerging international consensus on the measurement of academic quality as reflected in these ranking systems? Second, what impact are the different ranking systems having on university and academic behavior in their respective countries? Finally, are there important public interests that are thus far not reflected in these rankings? If so, is there a needed and appropriate role for public policy

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in the development and distribution of university ranking systems and what might that role be? This paper explores these questions through a comparative analysis of university rankings in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US. (HRK / Abstract übernommen), Dill, David D., E-Mail: david\_dill@unc.edu