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Abstract

The central purpose of this work is to present data that evaluates the impact and perspectives of various merit-pay systems directed at Mexican academics. To this end a brief description is provided of recent Mexican higher education evolution, including that of merit-pay programs. It is proposed that faculty merit-pay systems, in the context of several institutional performance-based funding programs, and of a general conditional cash transfer approach to the distribution of public funding, have created a de facto supra-institutional academic rank ladder based on the academic's participation in the highly prestiged and well-remunerated National Researcher's System (SNI), and on the academic's highest degree (HD). Data is presented showing that increasing SNI/HD ranks are associated with less teaching, more research, stronger academic preference for research activities and less institutional involvement. Several collateral negative side-effects of this situation are highlighted and questions are posed in relation to the long-range pertinence of merit-pay systems with the characteristics that are current in the case of Mexican higher education. (HRK / Abstract

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