A Review of University Rankings

Prepared by:
University Rankings Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that the University of Saskatchewan strives to be accountable to its stakeholders. Part of that accountability is to pay attention to what matters to stakeholders and what their perceptions are about our university. Whether you believe that university rankings provide an accurate perception of universities or not, they are important to us because they provide an indication of how we compare with our peers while having an influence on stakeholder opinions about us. Therefore, it is important to understand how rankings work, what they mean and how their results can be affected. The intent of this report is to provide insight in this regard.

Over the past decade there has been considerable activity pertaining to the ranking of universities around the world. This activity continues to gain prominence as more organizations attempt to provide their interpretation of where universities rank, which may or may not reflect the value and/or performance of any given university. This potentially inaccurate representation can definitely create a level of frustration for a university. Indira Samarasekera (former President of the University of Alberta) provides an interesting overview of the evolution of rankings:

Put a group of university presidents together in one room and it won’t take long for the conversation to turn to that pesky thorn that is now firmly entrenched and slowly festering in our sides: national and international university rankings. In the beginning, when these rankings were largely compiled by media outlets such as U.S. News & World Report or Maclean’s to attract consumers to special features focused on the pros and cons of campuses in the U.S. or Canada, the thorn barely touched us with a glancing scratch. Over time, however, the annual scratch became more and more insistent and harder to ignore. Now rankings are nasty and barbed thorns with the capacity to hobble — sometimes disastrously so — otherwise healthy, high-functioning institutions of higher learning. And they’re here to stay.¹

Rankings are regularly referenced by key stakeholders such as students, parents, alumni, employers, government officials and the media because of the indication they intend to provide on the quality and performance of any given university. There is an element of intrigue associated with the rankings; especially if they are favourable to our institution. Of course, the University of Saskatchewan appearing near the top of a rankings list can create a level of satisfaction, interest and pride for anyone associated with our university. Alternatively, placement at or near the bottom of a ranking can have the opposite affect and cause campus leaders to raise important questions about why we might be placing low, what the contributing factors are that determine our placement, and what we can do about it.

¹ https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2011/07/12/what-global-rankings-ignore
One of the many consequences of university rankings is that they can stimulate conversation within an institution about performance, accountability, reputation, and so on (for example, we are well-aware that media outlets will gravitate to an easy story on “why university X dropped in ranking Y”). Due to their somewhat complicated or opaque methodologies, there are many different perspective on how university rankings are conducted and what their results imply. Are the results actually indicative of university performance? Do they represent a valid comparison from one university to the next? Can we trust what the rankings are saying? Are aggregate rankings meaningful? Lack of understanding of these questions can impact the value and credibility placed on rankings by various stakeholders. In fact, the results can cause issues for individual institutions by not acknowledging their successes in particular areas of focus. As David Naylor (former President of the University of Toronto) observes: “I learned to be wary of aggregate rankings of institutions. Imagine a hospital that was superb at heart surgery but had a mediocre obstetrics program. The combined rating for these two programs would be useless for heart patients and expectant women alike. It’s much the same when complex universities are reduced to a single score.”

Perceptions of our university and how we rank can impact the decisions of various stakeholders as to whether or not they are interested in engaging with our university. In some cases, foreign governments will choose to provide funding to their students based on the ranking of the university they are planning to attend. For example, the Brazilian government initiated a national scholarship program with a goal of sending roughly 75,000 students and researchers to some of the world’s best institutions – determined based on their position in global rankings. Another example involves India’s University Grants Commission and their effort to ensure quality by requiring any foreign university wanting to partner with Indian universities to be ranked among the top 500 in the world.

57% of international student applicants and 33% of Canadian applicants to the U of S had taken rankings into consideration when choosing where to apply.

University and College Applicant Survey Academica Group (2012)

I learned to be wary of aggregate rankings of institutions. Imagine a hospital that was superb at heart surgery but had a mediocre obstetrics program. The combined rating for these two programs would be useless for heart patients and expectant women alike. It’s much the same when complex universities are reduce to a single score.

David Naylor
Former President, University of Toronto (2005-2013)

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With respect to students, we know that rankings are referenced to assist in decisions on which university to apply for. A survey conducted by the Academia Group in 2012 indicated that 57% of international applicants and 33% of Canadian applicants to the U of S had taken rankings into consideration when choosing where to apply. Also in the survey, international applicants rated the importance of rankings 5.5 out of a 7-point scale while domestic students gave a rating of 4.6, confirming that rankings are taken into account by prospective students.

Finally, there are cases where some employers will only review applicants from highly ranked institutions or programs based on the actual or perceived quality of the educational background of the applicant. An example of this is when Twitter Inc. was recruiting computer science graduates for its Vancouver office with the requirement that the applicant’s degree had to come from one of the world’s top 100 universities as defined by university rankings⁵. As all of these examples suggest, there is general awareness that rankings are perceived to provide an indication of institutional reputation and performance (accurate or not). As such, we need to understand how rankings work, what they mean and how our position in them could potentially change. Before doing so, it is essential to provide an overview of the major rankings agencies that currently exist and how the University of Saskatchewan has fared in them over the past few years.

AN OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

There are a number of organizations that produce a ranking of universities on an annual basis. Many of these agencies set out to provide an international ranking of universities while some are focused on ranking institutions nationally. The first global ranking of universities was launched in 2003 by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, called the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (or ARWU). Since then, a number of other agencies have gained prominence in producing global rankings with the most prominent being the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings. Although the ARWU, QS and THE rankings command the most attention, there are other rankings results commonly referenced as well such as those provided by U.S. News and World Report, U-Multirank, Scimago and Leiden, to name a few.

Nationally, the most well-known source for university rankings is published annually by Maclean’s magazine. Since 1992, Maclean’s has provided separate rankings of the top medical-doctoral

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universities, top comprehensive universities and top primarily undergraduate universities. The other popular national ranking initiative is provided by Research Infosource in their annual publication of the top 50 research universities in Canada (based on research revenue only).

It is important to note that no particular ranking is seen as superior over the other. David Turpin, the current President of the University of Alberta points out that “no ranking is perfect, but we look at them and it forces us to ask questions.” While each ranking agency and methodology has its differences, there is commonality among all of them with respect to their reliance on research performance and academic reputation to determine ranking results. Other factors contribute to the results as well but not to the same extent as research and reputation. The table below summarizes the weighting of these components on the overall ranking results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARWU</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QS</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maclean’s</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Infosource</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of these, the Maclean's rankings place the least amount of focus on research and reputation (but at 45%, still a major focus); an important consideration given that this is the primary Canadian university ranking initiative and likely one that our university may emphasize improvement in. More discussion on the thought of establishing goals on which rankings we should/could strive to improve in is presented in the considerations below.

### OUR PLACE IN THE RANKINGS: LEADING UP TO 2014

The University of Saskatchewan is included in all of the major global and national rankings initiatives that are currently produced, albeit in the recent past our rank has been far from stellar. For example, from 2012 to 2014, our university experienced a declining trend in every major ranking that was published. Further to this, we were at or near the bottom of every ranking in comparison to our U15 peers. The set of graphs on the next page provide an illustration of this.

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6 This category contains every U15 university except for the University of Waterloo, which is included in the comprehensive category. Université de Sherbrooke is not part of the U15 but is included in the medical/doctoral category.


8 Research performance generally refers to publications, citations, faculty awards, Tri-Agency activity and total research revenue while reputation scores are derived from responses to surveys administered by the ranking agencies.
There are a number of factors that contributed to the decline over this period. Major factors include:

- **Impact on reputation:**
  The events experienced by our university during and subsequent to our program prioritization exercise likely had a negative effect on our reputation. Leading up to 2014, we experienced a decline in our reputational scores in the various rankings instruments. In fact, our Maclean’s reputational ranking dropped so sharply between 2013 and 2014 (from 9th to 14th) that it caused Maclean’s to review and test their methodology to ensure it was not flawed. According to Maclean’s, it was uncommon for a university to see a change of that magnitude on their reputation indicator from one year to the next.

- **Decrease in research intensity:**
  The Research Infosource Top 50 Research Universities ranking was based entirely on total sponsored research income, and our decline in this ranking between 2012 and 2014 was a direct result of decreasing funding over that time (dropping from $203 million to $158 million from 2011 to 2013) while the funding of many of our peers remained strong.

- **Additional universities included in rankings:**
  Agencies like QS and THE routinely add to the pool of universities included in their rankings. The addition of new institutions that “perform” better than us can result in a decline in our ranking from one year to the next...even if our own performance did not falter. Quite simply, the more universities involved in the assessment, the more difficult it can be to score well in the ranking.
• Changes to ranking methodologies:
  On some occasions, ranking agencies will change components of their methodology for various reasons. For example, in 2014, Maclean’s removed two indicators that we generally ranked high in (total library holdings and library holdings per student). The elimination of these indicators contributed to our lowered ranking.

The decline we experienced over the 2012-2014 period was a significant catalyst for the creation of the Task Force on University Rankings in 2015. This was an initial step towards a more active approach by our university to understand rankings more effectively.

THE TASK FORCE

The primary objective of the task force was to gain a more thorough understanding of how university rankings are conducted and to provide insight on how the University of Saskatchewan may be able to reverse the decline we were experiencing. Specifically, the task force set out to:

• assess U of S strategies and plans that have a direct correlation to university rankings areas of focus in order to identify how advancing on our priorities could positively impact our performance in one or more university rankings;
• review our internal processes and tactics that relate in any way to data/information used by ranking instruments to determine if opportunities exist for ensuring that the data are accurate, reliable, and representative of U of S activities;
• evaluate the numerous rankings initiatives that exist to determine their importance and/or relevance to the U of S and hence worth tracking on a go-forward basis; and,
• determine how information on university rankings can be disseminated to campus stakeholder for the purpose of raising awareness on how these ranking instruments work and the impact of the annual results on other U of S activities.

The task force membership consisted of the following individuals:

• Patti McDougall, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
• Ivan Muzychka, Associate Vice-President, Communications
• Julian Demkiw, Chief of Staff, Office of the President
• Lisa Kalynchuk, Professor (College of Medicine) and Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee
• Rainer Dick, Professor (College of Arts and Science) and member of the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee
• Kathryn Warden, Director, Research Profile and Impact, Office of the Vice-President Research
• Laura Zink, Director, Strategic Research Initiatives, Office of the Vice-President Research
• Troy Harkot, Director, Institutional Effectiveness (task force facilitator)
• Jen Robertson, Communications Officer, Institutional Planning and Assessment (resource)
• Nelson Chen, Research Analyst, Institutional Planning and Assessment (resource)
Based on the research, analyses and discussions of the task force, a number of strategies and tactics for understanding, monitoring and influencing rankings were identified for consideration. These are articulated in the next section. It is important to note that many of the considerations below would benefit from the continued interest and/or involvement of various task force members in some capacity (e.g. the potential initiation of sub-committees or further analyses to focus on aspects of our institution’s research or reputation, etc.).

**CONSIDERATIONS**

University rankings are not only here to stay, they continue to gain popularity within mainstream media. Undoubtedly, we would all share a heightened level of satisfaction if our university’s ranking improved in any way. That being said, if their results are calculated “behind the curtain” and if their methodologies are an enigma, how can we work to better understand how to positively impact our placement in them? How can we ensure that our leaders are provided with the knowledge, support and tools necessary to make informed decisions that could have a positive impact on our rank?

It begins with education. This involves educating ourselves as much as possible on the information used by rankings, how the information is considered or “weighted” and how it may impact ranking scores. If we know this, we will have a clearer understanding of how our university’s strategies, plans, and activities relate to the areas of focus associated with rankings processes. It also involves educating our external stakeholders (alumni, media, government, general public, etc.) on our endeavours and successes in an attempt to enhance our reputation and improve our brand, both nationally and globally. The key message embedded in this report is that we must shift our focus on rankings from being “passive” to being “active”. That is, change our approach from ignoring how rankings work or what they say about our university, to one where we actively set out to understand the rankings, the data/information used as inputs, the indicators of performance to determine results, and how our institutional strategies and processes relate to rankings.

The work of the task force resulted in a number of action items to be considered by our university leadership that can lead to improved awareness (e.g. impact of our goals/strategies on rankings), better tracking (e.g. data submissions and results) and more effective communications (e.g. stakeholder engagement and media presence) of rankings… and with this, perhaps an improved position in the rankings moving forward. The ten considerations presented below are organized by the four objectives (mentioned above) that guided the work of the task force. Of them, it is worth mentioning that the next section pertaining to how our strategies and plans relate to university rankings would have the most significant impact on our ability to improve our university’s rank, primarily because of our interest in improving our research and reputation.
Since movement (up or down) in rankings is based on activity in particular areas, we should be motivated to advance our university plans and goals in those areas if we want to improve our rank, but only if it makes sense for us to do so. Over the past 15 years, we have established a set of strategic directions and three multi-year institutional plans in an attempt to establish and advance our university’s teaching and research agendas. It is important to note that progress on our strategies could translate into potential improvement in rankings. For example, by continuing to:

- **attract and retain outstanding faculty**, we can increase the proportion of faculty with highly-cited publications or award-winning research or teaching activity, which could lead to improved scores in most of the major university rankings.
- **increase our campus-wide commitment to research, scholarly and artistic work**, there is potential to significantly improve our ranking in all of the major rankings because of the substantial focus each ranking places on research performance.
- **establish the U of S as a major presence in graduate education**, we would increase the number of doctoral degrees awarded and further our research performance and potentially improve our scores in the rankings, particularly THE and U.S. News since they focus on Ph.D. graduates.
- **recruit and retain a diverse and academically promising body of students**, there is potential for international student enrolment to increase and student satisfaction scores to improve perhaps increasing our rank in Maclean’s, QS and THE.

A prominent theme in the above strategies is the potential for improving our research performance. Unfortunately, the same focus does not exist for teaching and learning since these are ignored or only marginally considered by rankings because they aren’t easily measured or quantified on an international scale. This highlights a limitation of rankings given that they don’t fully take into account both research and teaching, nor the important ways that learning and discovery support each other in the best discovery-led universities such as our own. That aside, with respect to research, there is a correlation to our ability to advance our research agenda and our ability to move up in the rankings. Because research performance impacts all of the rankings results significantly, no other area of activity would have as great an impact on our ability to improve our rank. However, ranking indicators based on research activity can be the most difficult to influence so it would be valuable for us to identify which indicators are used for tracking research (i.e. publications, citations, highly-cited researchers, research income, etc.) and make them available to our campus leaders so progress can be monitored and potential goals/targets can be established. As management consultant Peter Drucker famously said: “what gets measured gets improved”.

**Since research performance is a significant factor in all university ranking initiatives, we should define and publish a set of indicators (that are used in rankings) to monitor our research activity, establish performance targets/goals and compare our progress with our peers.**
In addition to continuing to focus on research activity, we must also consider how to support and incentivize our faculty in their research endeavours. Research goals set by the academic units should be clearly understood by faculty so that they are aware of how they can contribute to the research mission, hopefully with the motivation and vigor to do so. These goals should be referred to often by university processes for unit, leader and faculty member reviews.

Our regular review processes should acknowledge how research performance connects to our strategic initiatives and by extension, our global ranking.

The importance of advancing the university’s research goals should be engrained in all of us. Successes should continue to be celebrated and supports provided to improve low performance. Attracting top faculty/researchers to our university can advance our research agenda substantially and focus on retaining talented faculty should be paramount. If a prominent scholar leaves the U of S, it can have negative implications for the whole institution; impacting both our progress towards our goals and potentially our ranking.

Knowing how our activities impact our rankings is key to our ability to improve our ranking moving forward. We need to consider the indicators tracked by various rankings to determine which best align or are most appropriate for our institution. For example, ARWU places the most emphasis on research activity, QS is most influenced by reputational scores, while Maclean’s represents the most popular ranking of Canadian institutions and focuses more on student activities than other rankings do. The first question is: in which ranking(s) do we want to improve our position? The second question is: how?

While we want to experience improvement in any rankings initiative, we should consider setting objectives about where our desired placement would be in the major university rankings.

If we want to make a deliberate attempt at improving our place in rankings, we should identify which rankings results matter to us, where we want to be nationally or globally and where we want to be relative to our U15 peers. For example, the highest rank we have ever achieved in Maclean’s is 9th out of 15 (since they established their category of 15 medical/doctoral universities)…do we want to aim higher? Upon setting objectives for our place in rankings, we could then actively monitor the rankings and our peer universities performance in them to determine where and how they have achieved success in particular areas (e.g. Queen’s ranking in Maclean’s compared to ours).

The highest rank we have ever achieved in Maclean’s is 9th out of 15…do we want to aim higher?

To do this properly will require a dedicated assignment of analytical resources. The office of Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPA) has been studying and reporting on ranking results for a number of years (available on IPA’s website) but, as mentioned above, this activity has been somewhat passive in nature rather than aggressively focusing on how and where we
could potentially outperform our peers. Improving our placement in rankings will involve a shift in how we approach the study of rankings to be one where analyses and research on rankings is provided to campus leaders on a regular basis rather than after rankings are released.

**We should adjust our approach to the study of university rankings from passively reporting on results to actively studying how our placement could be improved.**

IPA is well-positioned to assume a lead role in implementing consideration #4 with existing staff resources and collaborations with campus colleagues who are collectively motivated to place higher in the rankings. In fact, this report and all of the considerations presented within, is the beginning of the change in our approach to consider ways of improving our position in university rankings.

**Our Processes for Providing Data to Ranking Agencies**

Rankings are calculated based on information gathered on each institution; predominantly in the areas of research activity and reputation. Much of this information is retrieved from third party sources (e.g. Web of Science for bibliometric research data or a reputational survey conducted by the agency, etc.). However, universities are required to submit data on various activities as well, which does have some impact on the results. Before 2015, our approach was to simply attempt to comply with the guidelines and definitions provided by the ranking agencies without attempting to align to our own definitions or ensuring that the data we were submitting was representing our institution in the best way possible. We can do better.

**We should take a proactive approach to review, on an annual basis, the processes and definitions associated with data submitted to ranking agencies.**

This consideration was implemented during the work of the task force in 2015. It involved reviewing our various data submissions and revising our processes to create better alignment between our institutional data definitions and those provided by ranking agencies. From this, improvements were identified in our data submission processes for a number of our indicators (e.g. count of our faculty) which impacted our 2015 rankings in a positive manner (e.g. improvement in QS indicators pertaining to faculty/research activity causing us to move up from 481-490 to 451-460). However, there is still more we can do in this regard. For example, further work is required to review how our student and human resource systems capture data that is used in rankings such as citizenship information about our faculty and students. Better information on our proportion of international faculty and/or students would benefit us in the rankings. Another example involves analysis of the data that is tracked by other third party sources such as Statistics Canada or bibliometric databases such as Web of Science or Scopus to ensure University of Saskatchewan activity is accurately reflected.

Changes to our data submission processes contributed to an improvement in our QS ranking from 2014 to 2015.
**Tracking University Rankings Results**

The IPA has been tracking our university’s placement in five popular university rankings (ARWU, Maclean’s, QS, Research Infosource and THE) for the past few years. The extent of this tracking was to monitor how the rankings were conducted and to provide briefings on the results that were shared with various campus stakeholders and posted to the IPA website. In its discussions, the task force acknowledged that there continues to be an increase in the number or rankings that are published and that it is important to be aware of our placement in the ones we deem to be most important/influential.

We should monitor, track and publish information on major university ranking initiatives because any of these results can be referenced by prospective students, faculty or researchers. We need to be aware of how we are perceived and positioned, both nationally and globally, in any set of ranking results.

Providing enhanced information on major university rankings will allow us to be more informed, more aware, and more able to engage in discussions about our position and attempt to be a leading research-intensive university. Our stakeholders will have a better sense of each ranking’s areas of focus and how those might relate to our own strategies, plans and accomplishments. Much of this work will be available on a revised university website that will include insightful briefs, interactive tools and meaningful content that can be reference by our stakeholders for various purposes. This will be part of our “online strategy” that is discussed below.

**Raising Awareness About University Rankings**

It is likely that many of our stakeholders have some understanding of university rankings. However, there is a risk that some of this knowledge may be inaccurate, sparse or uninformed which can lead to a lack of clarity about how they work and our position in them. This is especially important when annual rankings are published and newsworthy stories arise about a rise or drop in the rankings. We need to be self-aware about how our university is perceived and with this, be ready to react and respond to stakeholders (e.g. media) on our placement in rankings and whenever possible, be proactive in the anticipation of the release of new rankings. There are four considerations offered in this section to aid us in this regard.

An online strategy is essential for educating our stakeholders about rankings. Raising awareness on how rankings are derived, the areas they focus on and how we have placed year-over-year will inform our discussions on institutional strategies and plans. The strategy includes the creation of a dedicated website with all content/communications related to rankings made available to stakeholders.
Consideration #7 strives to incorporate all references and materials relating to rankings to an online location that can be referenced by our stakeholders. This website would build on existing content developed by IPA and would include the following:

- Fact-sheets or briefing notes describing each rankings instrument and result;
- Interactive (visual) modules to allow users to compare and contrast results of each rankings instrument;
- Calendar of events showing when rankings results are published; and,
- Ability for stakeholders to provide comments and/or submit questions.

An efficient and effective communications process should be implemented (involving the relevant campus units) to ensure we are proactive with our key messages relating to newly released ranking results.

A proactive approach will allow us to aggressively promote any successes realized from a particular set of rankings and/or respond to negative results or feedback arising from the release of rankings. This process would involve collaborations between U of S communications, vice-president’s offices and IPA and would establish clarity of roles and expectations for analyzing and responding to rankings.

Consideration #9 directs our attention to improving our communications with external stakeholders. As mentioned above, rankings rely heavily on indicators pertaining to university reputation. Strategic, targeted and ongoing communications to stakeholders that may be involved in responding to ranking surveys about our reputation will provide them with more insight on various initiatives underway at the U of S, which could potentially lead to improved reputation scores in the rankings.

Attempt to improve our reputation through strategic, targeted communications with alumni, employers, research partners and high school counsellors on a regular basis.

In keeping with a proactive approach to raise awareness, consideration #10 suggests that an added responsibility of IPA’s tracking of rankings should be to remain available to consult on university rankings with any campus unit or committee (at the request of the unit or committee). Knowledge of rankings can inform how we recruit faculty and students, motivate our research agenda, collaborate with stakeholders to manage our reputation, and so on.

Discussions or presentations about university rankings should occur regularly with various campus committees or units to ensure we remain actively aware of how our actions could impact rankings (e.g. enhanced research performance) and how rankings can impact our actions (e.g. student/faculty recruitment).

Collectively, the considerations in this section aim to inform our stakeholders about our institution – its successes and/or where it continues to strive to succeed in its teaching and research activities. This
can have a direct impact on how our university is perceived and could potentially lead to improved reputation scores in rankings and ultimately, improvement in the overall rankings.

**OUR PLACE IN THE RANKINGS: 2015 ONWARD**

As mentioned above, one of the strategies identified early in the work of the task force was to conduct a review of our existing processes for submitting data to external ranking agencies in an attempt to ensure that our submissions are accurate and representative of our activity while adhering to the rules and guidelines established by each ranking agency. This strategy was deployed for the data submissions in 2015 and likely contributed to the upward trend we experienced this past year, as illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maclean’s</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Out of 15 universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QS</td>
<td>481-490</td>
<td>451-460</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Out of about 850 universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Infosource</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Out of 50 universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARWU</td>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>301-400</td>
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<td>Out of about 1,200 universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE</td>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Out of about 800 universities</td>
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With respect to the THE results, our overall placement remained the same (in the 401-500 category) but we actually improved in all five categories associated in this ranking but because they rank any university that placed greater than 400 in bands of 100, we are not able to see if/how we moved between 401 to 500, but we are able to see that our scores improved compared to last year.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

While we experienced a reverse in the decline of our ranking in 2015, there is still significant potential for our university to improve in rankings moving forward. We are committed to being one of Canada’s top discovery-led universities and rankings should reflect that we are that kind of university. To advance our position in the rankings will involve raising our collective awareness on the topic by embarking on a proactive approach to studying, understanding and monitoring rankings initiatives so that we can leverage this knowledge in discussions on university plans and strategies. The considerations listed in this document have the potential to set in motion initiatives that could result in improved ranking scores. With this, the report calls on us to begin a shift on our focus on university rankings to one where we are actively aware of our impact on the results and their impact on our stakeholders. Ultimately, we need to remain committed to continuing to advance our university’s strategies and priorities as this would ultimately have a positive impact on our research performance and reputation – two key areas that rankings pay attention to.