

# Notes and Comments – Notes et Commentaires

## *Research Productivity, University Revenue, and Scholarly Impact of 31 Canadian Universities: An Update*

Some journals are clearly more efficient at getting their issues out than others. Such a journal is the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. Usually this would be a source of pleasure to the various authors. In this case however, at least on this occasion, it means that several small anomalies and errors which we had hoped to correct in our article in the last issue, have remained incorrect.

The most important of our errors is that the total faculty size for the University of Waterloo was given as 373. This should have been 741. One of the consequences of this error is that Waterloo comes out as the number one most productive per-capita university in the list with a publication rate of 2.3 articles per year per faculty member. This figure should have been 1.1 and its rank placed at 6th.

A paragraph we would have wished to insert would have been to the effect that there were numerous small anomalies and “errors” due to the *sources* we chose to collect our data from. In regard to income, for example, our source was the 54th edition of *The Commonwealth Universities Yearbook* (1977). McGill is reported there to have a total income of \$87,317,000. This however is for 1974/75 and *excludes* “ancillary enterprises”. Western is reported with an income of \$110,880,000. This however, is for 1975/76 and *includes* \$13,000,000 for “ancillary enterprises”. On another dimension, our source gives The University of Montreal a total student population of 33,346. This figure is abnormally high because both part-time and full-time students were combined, whereas for other universities part-time students were not included. Throughout, our convention was to list the variable entries *as our source defined them*. This “objective” method of defining entries is undoubtedly a source of some error, but seemed to us a better procedure than relying on our “subjective” judgments regarding correcting discrepancies. This is particularly true given that this study was part of a general research program concerned with evaluations across three different samples – in Canada, Britain, and the United States. It was therefore necessary to use sources which would be comparable across nations: *The Commonwealth Universities Yearbook* and *The World Almanac*. It should be kept in mind when considering our results, therefore, that we have defined our variables in the particular way that we did.

Undoubtedly the results reported are subject to some measurement error. We feel, however, that the amount of error is small relative to the size of the undertaking and does not seriously affect the rankings of the universities on the several measures. Indeed, when corrections are made to some of the data (e.g., to the Waterloo and Montreal figures mentioned above), even greater support for our hypothesis of a general factor permeating disparate indices of a university’s prestige is found.

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