Advancing University Engagement:
University engagement and global league tables

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DISCLAIMER:

Foreword

At the September 2017 Global University Engagement Summit in Melbourne, a question was posed as to whether universities should develop a mechanism to better recognise and incentivise university engagement on a global scale. The basis for the question was a recognition among conference delegates that university engagement is a vital component of the value universities create for society, yet it is an aspect of university impact that is not sufficiently understood or celebrated by the higher education sector. The idea was that if universities could develop some objective measures for engagement, perhaps they could find ways to integrate these measures into the various methodologies that are used to define the "performance" or "quality" of a university, as well as inform the broader narrative around the nature and role of universities in society.

As leaders of engagement at our respective universities, we share a mutual conviction that the intrinsic public value of universities extends beyond just the traditional mission of teaching and research, to include an institution's engagement with society and its surrounding community. We believe that encouraging and promoting the engagement role of universities has significant benefits for the future of higher education— as it provides universities with the opportunity to demonstrate their impact on society's most pressing challenges in the face of questions about their relevance, re-establish the value of evidence and research in policy making in the face of growing skepticsm, and justify the return on public investment in the face of concerns about the burden on the public purse, among other things.

COVID-19 and the ensuing global health, economic, and social crises have cast a spotlight on how universities can support the global response. Across our communities we have seen universities engage with governments, NGOs, industry and communities to solve pressing issues and plan for the future. Despite the significant financial burdens facing the sector, it is imperative that the engagement role of universities is enhanced, not diminished. Universities must devote attention and resources to demonstrate their positive impact.

We believe now, more than ever, it is imperative that the engagement role of universities is injected into the debate about higher education, and that universities devote more attention and resources to elevate this aspect of their work.

This concept of 'engagement' [1] varies across institutions and regions. At King's it is labelled 'service', a core part of the academic mission sitting alongside education and research, in London and internationally. Strong partnerships are built with local authorities, community groups, charities, social enterprises, voluntary organisations, and schools to deliver

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1. Throughout this paper, we use the phrase 'engagement' to refer to a concept which may have different names at different institutions. King's College London, for example, uses the term 'Service' in its Strategic Vision 2029 while the University of Melbourne uses the term 'engagement' and the University of Chicago uses 'civic engagement'. An example beyond the Consortium is 'social responsibility' at the University of Manchester. These terms are often specific to the histories and contexts of different institutions.

mutual benefits for our communities and for King's. Service includes social reform, educational experiences, research impact, volunteering, and sustainability. Under this banner, King's delivers initiatives like the King's Sanctuary Programme, which creates educational opportunities for forced migrants whose education has been disrupted by conflict; King's Civic Challenge, which brings together local charities with students and staff to co-create lasting solutions to local challenges; and the Civic Leadership Academy, a new flagship programme pairing London charities with teams of talented undergraduates to address strategic problems they are facing.

The University of Chicago uses 'civic engagement' to describe a similar commitment. Through a variety of programmes and collaborations across the University, and with City of Chicago and local community partners, UChicago works to extend education, advance urban research, and spur innovation in a mutually beneficial way. It also serves as an anchor for the south side of Chicago, by spurring economic development, engaging arts and culture, and improving public health and safety. Through this work with its host city and local community, UChicago develops ideas and solutions that have a direct impact in Chicago and direct relevance for cities around the world.

The University of Melbourne uses the term 'engagement' to encompass the many mutually beneficial relationships it shares with wider society. Engagement is what connects the valuable teaching it delivers and the research it conducts with its various communities. In this spirit, Melbourne runs programmes like Pathways to Politics, a hands-on programme which aims to redress the under-representation of women in Australian politics; and Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity, an indigenous-led programme committed to driving positive social change. In common with King's and Chicago, it also seeks to partner with its communities, in Melbourne and in regional Australia.

In an attempt to answer (or at least spark debate regarding) the question posed at the 2017 Melbourne Summit, we have come together, with support from the international management consultancy Nous Group (Nous), to find a practical way to measure and promote university engagement.

There are a variety of ways to do this and we are committed to working together on a global scale to advance this objective across a variety of platforms. That said, we elected to focus this project on global league tables, because of the influence they have in the sector and because we believe their definition of performance needs to expand. The framework and engagement indicators we have developed are the product of extensive global consultation, and have been tested with universities around the world. There is more work to do to implement our framework, but it provides a robust foundation for discussion and further exploration.

We thank everyone who contributed to this project. This includes the experts who advised us on which indicators to use and the universities who participated in our three pilots. We particularly thank the staff and students who told us what engagement looks like to them, and why it matters.

This work was completed and this report drafted before COVID-19 became a global pandemic. For this reason, our conclusions are not developed with the crisis in mind. However the conclusions remain relevant in a post-COVID-19 world, as universities help to rebuild society and communities.

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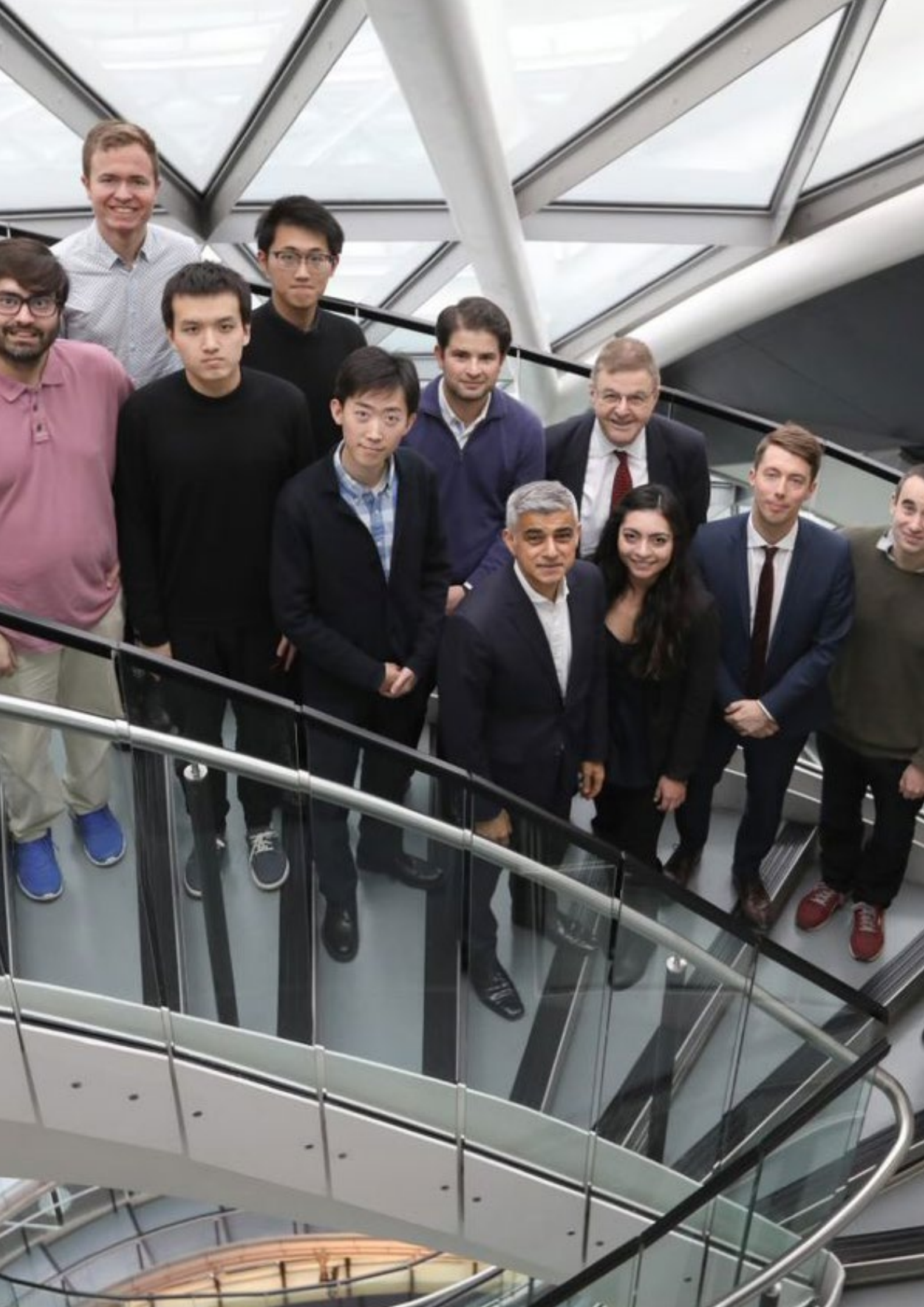
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Executive Summary

For centuries, universities have educated leaders, delivered life-saving research and been anchor institutions in their communities. With their considerable influence and resources, they are well-placed to tackle complex global challenges.

But universities are under pressure to define their impact and to justify their worth. Amid trends like declining trust in public institutions, increasing pressure on the public purse, denigration of expertise in public life, and rising costs and inequality, many universities are characterised as disconnected ivory towers, with many people questioning whether universities are contributing their fair share.

For many reasons, universities need to demonstrate their value to society, including the return on investment of public funds. But rarely is this value captured effectively and objectively. Few mechanisms tell a compelling story about universities' contributions to the public good.

Engagement is core to universitities' value

Engagement (or 'civic engagement', 'public engagement', or 'service') is the crucial third pillar of the value universities deliver, along with education and research. We define engagement as 'a holistic approach to working collaboratively with partners and communities to create mutually beneficial outcomes for each other and for the benefit of society'. The 'mutually beneficial' part is important – it includes activities such as economic development, community partnerships, and innovation – which universities and communities equally benefit from.

Engagement can help to articulate universitites' value, and demonstrate their relevance to and impact on the critical issues facing society. In doing so, it helps to rebuild public trust in their mission and activities.

We conducted a project to better measure universities' value

The consortium is seeking to recognise and measure university engagement on a global scale. As our first project, we are starting with global league tables. This is because they are the principal mechanism used to assess and compare university performance, they have a powerful impact on where students choose to study, and they influence public perceptions of the relative value of universities around the world. Because of this, they influence university behaviour and resource allocation.

The aims of our project are to:

- catalyse broader debate about university engagement
- encourage universities across the globe to adopt a holistic approach to engagement
- globally benchmark current engagement activities with similar-minded institutions
- influence global rankings to recognise university engagement

Engagement is not well reflected in global rankings. While these instruments have limitations, what is not measured is rarely fully valued. Therefore we want to harness the influence of global rankings to better recognise university engagement, by exploring the possibility of incorporating engagement metrics into global league tables.

To achieve this, we need to determine indicators that recognise engagement while balancing the needs of global ranking systems. We first developed a theory of change, which explained the behaviours we want to encourage and how they linked to the indicators. We conducted three pilot studies, with universities from around the world, to test our proposed behaviours and narrow our indicators. We asked pilot universities to assess how useful the indicators were and how well their universities performed against them. This allowed us to discard the indicators that were only meaningful in one context, or for which the burden of data collection outweighed its benefit.

THE Impact Rankings

During this project, the Times Higher Education (THE) inaugural Impact Rankings were introduced, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This initiative is an important step towards greater recognition of university engagement activities. However, there is need for a simpler set of metrics that can be incorporated into global league tables rather than used for a standalone ranking system. Our study explores this possibility.

We created a framework to rank engagement across universities

Our project has produced a framework to measure and rank engagement around the world. Our third pilot included 15 universities, from the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Latin America, Asia, and Canada. We invited universities in Africa however they were unable to participate. We consulted widely with university staff and students, particularly in our own jurisdictions. By listening to many voices, we have developed a sector-led engagement framework.

Figure 1 | Consortium University Engagement Framework

ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

University commitment to engagement

Community opinion of the university

Student Access

Volunteering

Research reach outside academic journals

Community Engaged Learning within curriculm

Socially-responsible purchasing

Carbon footprint

SECTOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

INSTITUTIONAL

STAFF AND STUDENTS

PARTNERS

LEADERSHIP BUY-IN

COMMUNITIES AND UNIVERSITIES VALUE EACH OTHER

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

REWARD AND RECOGNITION

EMBEDDING IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

We saw how important engagement is to universities

This project showed how important measuring and ranking engagement is to people across the sector. There is widespread support for the aims of the project among the universities we engaged and a broad recognition that the way we currently measure universities' performance needs to change. We heard dozens of examples of civic or public engagement in action – from online classrooms for disadvantaged students, to attempts to rehabilitate public precincts, to promoting peace after conflict through research.

This project is an important contribution to an ongoing conversation

For decades the global higher education sector has talked about civic engagement, public value, and impact. Progress has been made to measure and recognise engagement, but this has typically been at a regional level, and often the complexity has made the exercise burdensome for universities. This can limit the scale of these activities.

Our framework is an important contribution to this conversation for several reasons. It is simple, applicable to multiple types of universities, can be linked to global league tables, and is connected to a theory of long-term behaviour change.

More work is still required to incorporate our framework into these tables. During the next stage of our project, we will continue the global conversation about engagement and seek a partner to take our approach to the next stage.

02

Context

This section summarises the urgency of this project, which is the need to better recognise the value universities deliver through engagement. It also describes how our project emerged and explains its key aims.

The case for change

The impact and value universities deliver for society is essential to their distinct contribution. As such, there is a pressing need for greater recognition of university engagement, in order to encourage and capture the quality of a university.

UNIVERSITIES ARE AN ENDURING PUBLIC GOOD

Universities create public value in many ways. They:

- **Enrich people's lives through education.** This leads to better job opportunities, better living standards, and better health[3] .
- **Contribute to economic growth, nationally and locally.** London School of Economics research in 2016 showed the presence of universities in regions around the world is positively associated with faster economic growth; and doubling universities in a region is associated with over 4 per cent higher GDP per capita[4] . The Australian Trade and Investment Commission estimates that by 2025, Australia's international education will contribute over A$33 billion to export earnings[5]. In the United States, higher education institutions employ 4 million people, and between 1996 to 2015 the technology transfers from universties contributed US$591 billion to GDP[6].

- **Drive productivity.** Universities drive innovation and entrepreneurship through research and spin-out companies and provide the skilled human capital upon which our economies run.
- **Deliver impact through research.** Universities translate the research they conduct into life-saving treatments, evidence-based policy, illuminating museum exhibits, and more.
- **Produce more engaged citizens.** There is evidence that university graduates are more likely to contribute to civil society across the globe[7]. The British Household Panel Survey and National Child Development Study showed that graduates are more likely to be members of associations, like trade unions, charities, environmental organisations, and religious groups[8].

3. Universities UK, 'Degrees of Value: How universities benefit society', June 2011, https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/degrees-of-value.aspx
4. Valero, A., Van Reenen, J., 'the eonomic impact of universities: evidence from across the globe', National Bureau of Economic Research, 2016. Retrieved from: https://www.nber.org/papers/w22501.pdf
5. Australian Government: Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 'Growth and opportunity in Australian international education', 2015
6. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 'Higher Education Contributes to a Strong Economy', June 2019, https://agb.org/guardians-campaign/higher-education-contributes-to-a-strong-economy/
7. The World Bank, Higher education, October 2017, https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/tertiaryeducation
8. Evans, C. 'University education makes you a better citizen', The Conversation, September 2017, https://theconversation.com/university-education-makes-you-a-better-citizen-83373

Many regard this as 'core business' for universities. But what often gets overlooked is how universities actively contribute to their communities. This includes engaging through cultural activities, outreach programmes, volunteering, and other services to their local regions. These public or civic engagement activities are often a critical part of universities' missions and core to their public value.

PEOPLE ARE INCREASINGLY SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES

Evidence to demonstrate the benefits universities deliver frequently fails to cut through public scepticism about universities' value[9]. Some in the media, politics and public consider universities as 'ivory towers': disconnected relics unable to keep up with a fast-changing world and dynamic labour market. Amid rising costs and inequality, many question the public value of investing in institutions if they never benefit from these institutions themselves.

MEASURING ENGAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT

Recognising and strengthening civic or public engagement is crucial to counteracting this corrosive narrative. It is vital to demonstrate the immediate and tangible value universities deliver for their communities and society, as well as for their students. It demonstrates the return on investment of public funds in accessible terms.

Recognising engagement is important for reasons including:

- **Universities have the resources to make a real impact.** Universities often have significant resources to serve their communities. The

University of Manchester's 'The Works' programme, for example, provides skills development and jobs to people in the region who otherwise cannot access employment. Other universities invest in local enterprises or adopt procurement policies that prioritise their local communities. These show how universities' business choices can benefit society. Emphasising the importance of engagement encourages other universities to do so.

- **Engagement is important to students.** Increasingly, students demand their universities value civic engagement and societal impact. A 2019 UK National University of Students survey showed that 88 per cent of students agreed that universities should actively promote sustainable development[10]. Universities are responding. UK universities including Newcastle have declared a climate emergency and are developing climate change strategies. Similarly, 13 North American research universities recently formed the University Climate Change Coalition (UC3), which brings together two million students, faculty and staff, to tackle climate change[11].

- **Engagement is important to people who work in universities.** Many people choose to work in universities to give back through teaching, research translation or being part of a not-for-profit educational institution. They want their workplace to make a meaningful difference and want to contribute, such as through volunteering or mentoring.

9. John Marcus, Times Higher Education, Universities 'must reconnect with society' in a sceptical world, June 2017, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/universities-must-reconnect-with-society-in-sceptical-world
10. National Union of Students, Sustainability Skills Survey 2018-19, October 2019, https://www.wearestillin.com/news/north-american-universities-announce-university-climate-change-coalition-uc3
11. We Are Still In, North American universities announce University Climate Change Coalition (UC3), February 2018, https://www.wearestillin.com/news/north-american-universities-announce-university-climate-change-coalition-uc3

- **Engagement matters for research funding.** Research impact – translating research into real-world applications – is increasingly important to accessing research funding. The community impact of research – such as a partnership with a local school district to evaluate its curriculum, or with a city agency to develop sustainable planning – is an example of engagement. It shows how the lines between a university's 'public goods', teaching, research, and engagement, are often blurred and self-reinforcing.

The catalyst

The need to shape the narrative about universities' value was a key conclusion from the 2017 Global University Engagement Summit in Melbourne. Participants agreed that engagement is central to this value but is insufficiently recognised in the sector. A mechanism to recognise and incentivise university engagement on a global scale was needed.

Following the conference, King's College London, the University of Chicago, and the University of Melbourne began a project to explore how to incorporate institutional engagement into global league tables. The conference delegates hoped the global, university-led initiative could represent universities around the world (rather than in one region). They also hoped the collective effort of the three lead institutions and their pilot partners would help this issue be taken seriously, and in the process surface examples of great practice to be shared and celebrated.

Our aims

The project had four main aims:

CATALYSE A BROADER DEBATE ABOUT UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

We wanted to get universities across the sector talking about university engagement. By asking them to think about how engagement could

be measured and compared, and identifying interesting examples, we would contribute to the growing body of thought on this topic, beyond what our project could do alone.

To achieve this, we publicised the formation of the consortium and the goals of the project and invited over 50 institutions across six continents to participate. We published articles on our work and gave conference presentations, including at the 2019 Global University Engagement Summit in Manchester.

ENCOURAGE PLAYERS IN THE SECTOR TO ADOPT A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

Engagement means different things for different people. For some universities, it refers to their specific access and outreach work they do in their communities, while for others it describes their work to reduce their carbon footprint or represent a range of voices in the curriculum.

By developing a range of indicators, we wanted to encourage universities to adopt a more holistic approach to engagement. We wanted to measure engagement across different types of activities, like teaching, programme activities and infrastructure development; and different forums, such as universities' leadership teams and the reach of research outside academic journals.

GLOBALLY BENCHMARK CURRENT ACTIVITIES WITH SIMILAR-MINDED INSTITUTIONS

We knew our project would compare universities based on the level and quality of their institutional engagement. Even without being incorporated into global league tables, we hoped these results would be useful for universities, particularly those enthusiastic about engagement.

By involving institutions in pilot studies, we wanted to support benchmarking engagement activity against other

institutions globally. We also wanted to share lessons that could enhance this activity and provide information about ways engagement manifests in different social, economic and cultural contexts.

INFLUENCE GLOBAL RANKINGS TO RECOGNISE INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The current global rankings are an incomplete measure of the performance of a university. Incorporating engagement indicators into the global rankings criteria will provide a more accurate and inclusive picture of the quality of a university. We wanted to incentivise engagement activity in universities. We assumed that linking engagement to an external ranking of institutional performance would encourage universities to see engagement as core business.

Global league tables are not perfect. Their results can vary widely year to year and they rely heavily on perceptions of prestige through reputational surveys and on research performance through citations. Nevertheless, they powerfully influence perceptions of universities' performance and how universities allocate resources. Higher rankings help universities to attract better students, academics and international partnerships. This supports research performance and reputation, which drives rankings in a reinforcing cycle.

While many people think they are important, rankings do not account for universities' commitment to engagement or service even as government research investment strategies and university strategies increasingly drive more engaged scholarship. The THE Impact Rankings, which rank universities according to the sustainable development goals, are a notable exception, but this standalone ranking system is not part of mainstream league tables.

Incorporating engagement into global rankings and measuring a broader range of universities' activities can overcome these limitations and make rankings more useful for universities, students, government and industry.

It is time global rankings evolve, influenced by universities.

03

Our
Framework

Our work has found that engagement can be measured and universities can be ranked on a global scale. We developed a framework to measure this, based on expert input, feedback from consultations around the world, and three pilot studies with 20 universities.

This section presents our framework and indicators.

Engagement can be measured and universities ranked

Our framework (see Figure 2) describes what university engagement looks like in practice and how we can measure it. The indicators capture the breadth of university engagement activities without privileging some types of universities over others. Because it was jointly developed by universities in different regions and based on consultation, it is appropriate for universities in a range of countries and contexts. It is designed to be incorporated into global league tables, which means the measures are robust and comparable across jurisdictions.

On the left of Figure 2 are our eight engagement indicators. These indicators map to the behaviour changes we want to drive across the sector on the right of the diagram, which are in turn categorised by institutional behaviours, behaviours related to staff and students, and behaviours related to partnerships.

Figure 2 | Consortium University Engagement Framework

ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

University commitment to engagement

Community opinion of the university

Student Access

Volunteering

Research reach outside academic journals

Community Engaged Learning within curriculm

Socially-responsible purchasing

Carbon footprint

SECTOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
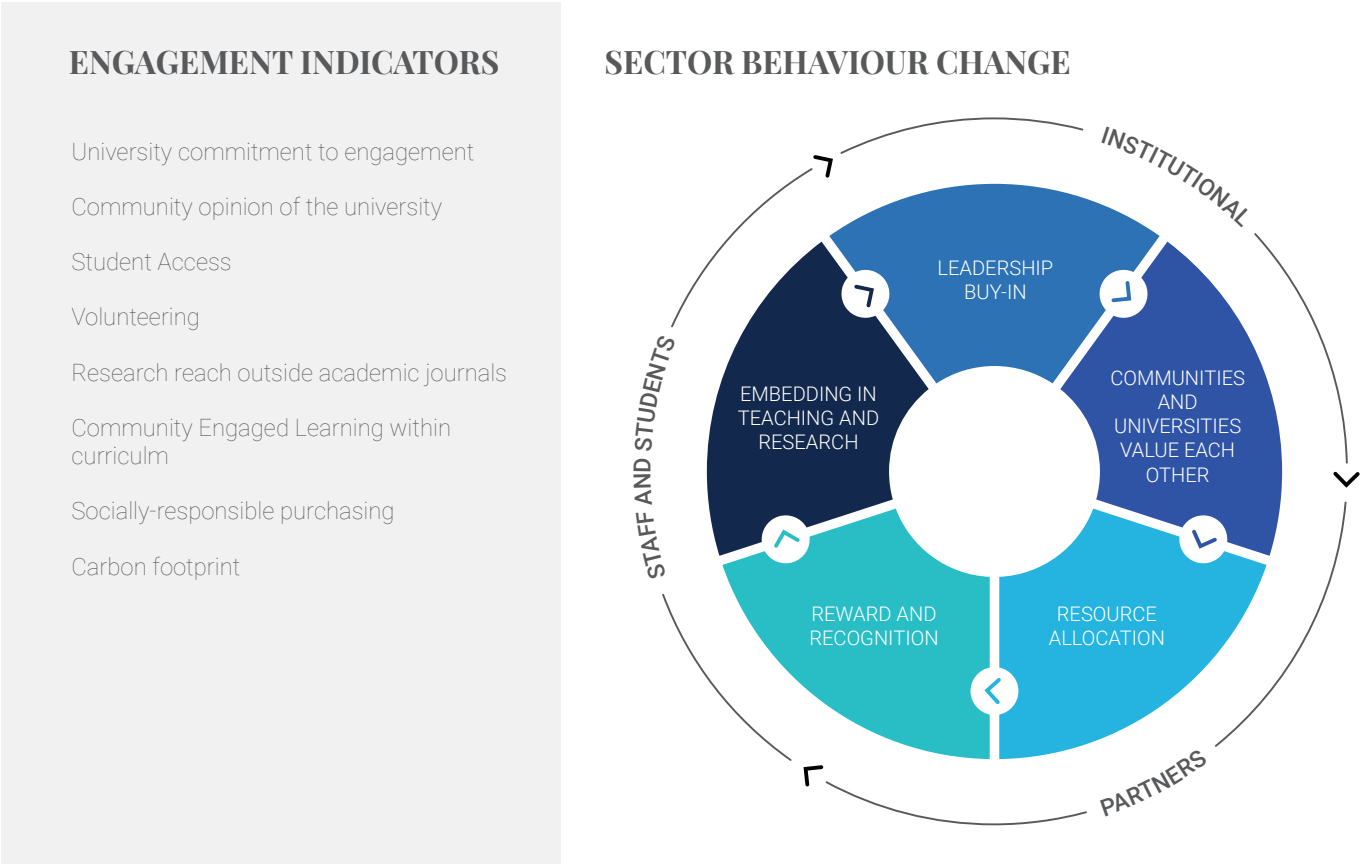
Table 1 | defines the indicators, describes good performance and explains how it can be measured.

Metric	Description	Behaviour change	How we measure
University commitment to engagement	Commitment to engagement in senior leadership and in university strategy.	Leadership-buy in.	Senior role: evidence that a senior role has responsibility for engagement. For example, a role that reports directly to Vice-Chancellor/President. Strategic document: outlines what engagement activities the institution will conduct and how they will be delivered. This document does not have to be public.

Metric	Description	Behaviour change	How we measure
Community opinion of the university	University partners' (community, not-for-profit, business and government) view of the university.	Communities and universities value each other.	A short survey of a university's partners (community, non-for-profit, business and government). We will develop this survey in consultation with our new partner.
Student access	The proportion of pre-university students who participate in a 'university preparedness' or 'access' programme. These programmes benefit pre-university students and need not lead to the students attending the university. This demonstrates that the institution supports under-represented groups and is committed to preparing these people for higher education. 'Preparedness' captures 'access' and 'widening participation' concepts.	Communities and universities value each other.	Proportion (%) of pre-university students, of the university's undergraduate cohort, who participate in these programmes. Courses/ programmes must be a minimum of four hours.
Volunteering	The proportion of students and staff who participate in volunteering/service programmes run by the university This demonstrates that the institution facilitates its members giving back to the community. 'Institution-run' refers to a programme led or funded by an institution. This captures programmes directly or indirectly funded	Communities and universities value each other. Resource allocation, because this encourages greater investment in these activities.	Assessment of the programme description. A score of the number of students and staff engaged in these programmes, divided by the total number of students and staff, multiplied by the number of hours. Score: (#students and staff/total #students and staff) x (hours) Programme length: Minimum eight hours.
Research reach outside academic journals	The ratio of non-academic mentions (citations in grey literature, media, policy papers, and elsewhere outside traditional journals) to the overall total outputs produced by the university that are tracked.	Communities and universities value each other. Reward and recognition.	Use Altmetric platform, a provider of information on the reach of pieces of research, to collect the data on behalf of participants. Score: Total non-academic mentions/ total outputs produced by the university that are tracked.

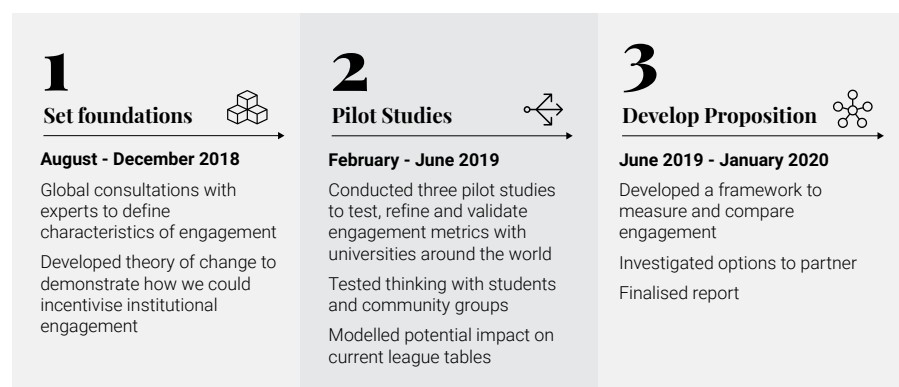| Metric	Description	Behaviour change	How we measure
Community Engaged Learning within curriculum	The proportion of curriculum dedicated to engagement/service learning and the proportion of students participating in these courses. Units or subjects dedicated to engagement are defined as: students receive a credit for the course and it has a practical community engagement element. This excludes activities linked to professional accreditation.	Curriculum and research incorporate engagement activities.	This indicator is measured in two ways. 1. The number of students participating in service/engagement courses as a proportion (%) of the total number of students (undergraduate and postgraduate). 2. Number of classes is calculated as the number of engagement classes or units, divided by the total number of classes or units (# engagement learning classes/units/ total #classes/ units offered).
Socially-responsible purchasing	The proportion of the university's negotiable budget that is spent on procurement linked to social benefit. Negotiable spend (sometimes called third-party expenditure) is the discretionary money universities can spend that is not already budgeted for (e.g. staff salaries or long-term existing contracts). Institutions define what activites are for 'social benefit', but the money they spend must have a positive outcome for their community.	Resource allocation decisions reflect commitment to engagement.	Calculated as the proportion of the negotiable budget spent on social benefits. (negotiable spend on social benefit/ total negotiable budget).
Carbon footprint	An institution's carbon footprint. Total metric tons of carbon emissions produced by a university each year. Including direct emissions produced by the university's operations, but not Scope 3 indirect emissions.	Resource allocation.	Total carbon footprint divided by the total number of students.

Further refinements

We refined our indicators, based on feedback from institutions about their meaningfulness and feasibility. We welcome further refinements when the framework is used more widely, noting that our criteria for indicators are that they encourage the desired behaviour change without increasing the burden of data collection.

Framework development

We developed the approach in three stages over 18 months (Figure 3).

Figure 3 | Three stage process

1
Set foundations

August - December 2018

Global consultations with experts to define characteristics of engagement

Developed theory of change to demonstrate how we could incentivise institutional engagement

2
Pilot Studies

February - June 2019

Conducted three pilot studies to test, refine and validate engagement metrics with universities around the world

Tested thinking with students and community groups

Modelled potential impact on current league tables

3
Develop Proposition

June 2019 - January 2020

Developed a framework to measure and compare engagement

Investigated options to partner

Finalised report

Set foundations

We started our project with consultations with engagement experts, sector commentators and people delivering engagement activities in institutions in several countries to inform a global perspective on university engagement's meaning and practice.

ESTABLISHED A WORKING DEFINITION FOR ENGAGEMENT

The activities that constitute research and teaching are well understood, but what constitutes engagement is broad, value-laden and defined differently among universities. Universities use different names for engagement, including 'service' and 'civic engagement', and also often differ on the priorities and activities included. To compare universities in engagement terms, we developed a comprehensive and universal working definition.

There are several important features of this definition.

- **'Holistic approach'** highlights that an institution's approach to engagement is embedded in its strategy, across all activities, and involves the full breadth of university stakeholders (faculty, students, and staff). It is not transactional, nor is it confined to a single department or aspect of university work.

- **'Working collaboratively'** emphasises that engagement is a two-way process, where activities are not determined by a single partner but rather are developed, agreed and delivered through a process of listening and discussion. This term was chosen as it is less prescriptive.

- **'Partners and communities'** reflects the breadth of external groups an institution might engage with. It captures activities with communities (local, regional, and global) as well as industry and government.

- **'Mutually beneficial'** acknowledges that both universities and collaborators benefit from engagement activities, and that these activities extend beyond acts of charity or philanthropy.

- **'Benefit of society'** highlights societal impact, an objective of university engagement. It speaks to the rationale for engagement.

> Engagement is a holistic approach to working collaboratively with partners and communities, to create mutually beneficial outcomes for each other and the benefit of society

BUILT A THEORY OF CHANGE

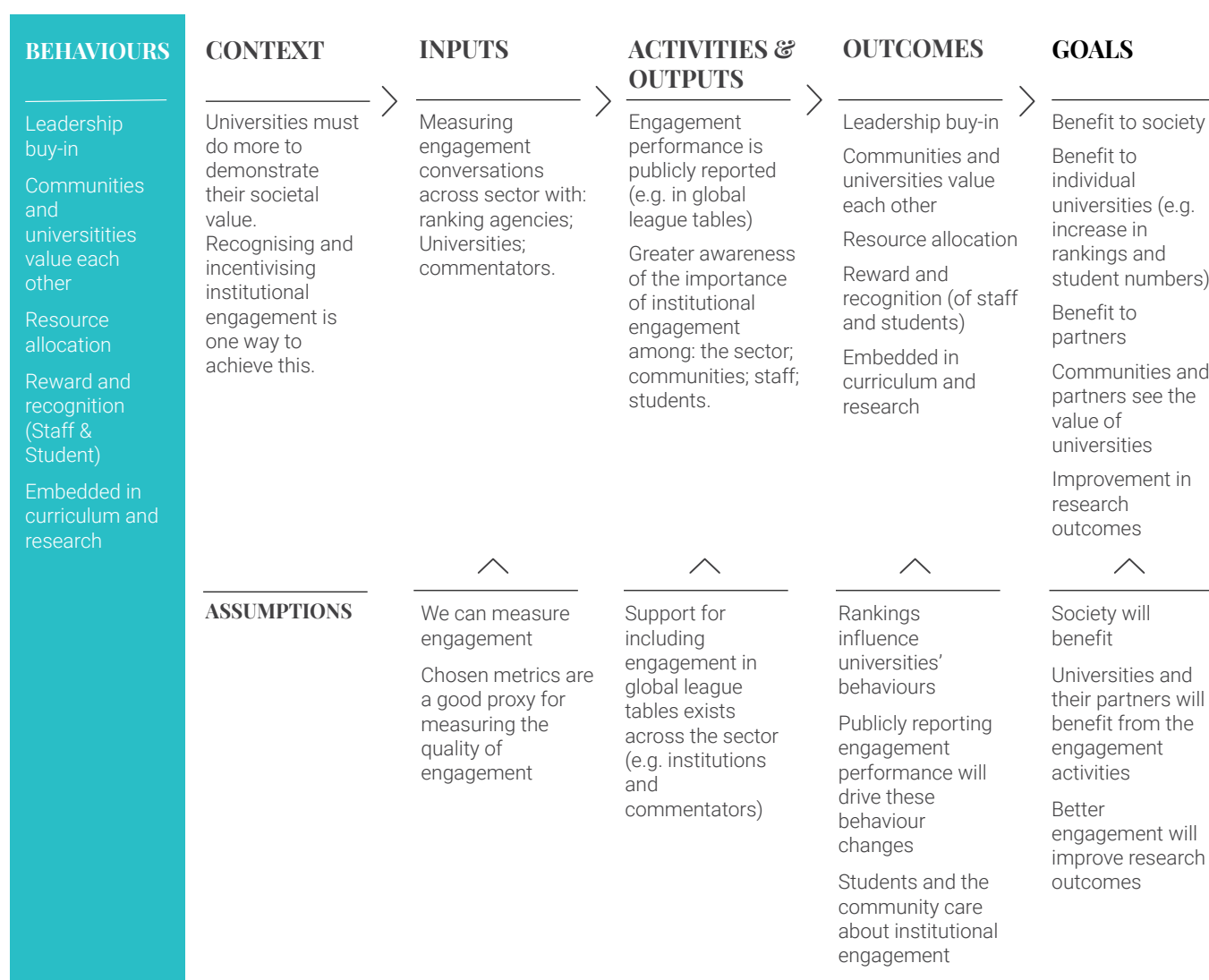There is currently no consensus on how to measure and compare (let alone rank) engagement across the sector.

Recent attempts have been made, most notably by Times Higher Education with its Impact Ranking, which measures engagement from the perspective of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Other attempts are regional, like the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), which measures UK universities' public engagement against a maturity model, from 'embryonic' to 'embedded'.[12]

The Carnegie Engagement Framework, which comprehensively assesses an institution's community engagement and awards engagement accreditation, has run for 13 years and is now being piloted in Australia, Canada and Ireland. But it largely focuses on the infrastructure (i.e. institutional capacity) a university has to support engagement.

Given these approaches, many indicators of engagement exist but few enable comparative analysis or ranking. The challenge is to identify the minimum number, and combination, of indicators that best capture an institution's engagement. Fewer indicators are more feasible to incorporate into global league tables.

We developed this theory of change (Figure 4) to test potential measures. A theory of change expresses the change we want to see across the sector, and the assumptions about how the change will occur. Our theory of change assumes that universities must do more to create and demonstrate their societal value; our hypothesis that recognising and incentivising engagement is one way to achieve this. We theorised that recognising certain engagement behaviours would encourage more support and resource allocation. If this change is successful, there should be mutual benefit to society and universities, and communities and partners should better understand the value of universities.

Figure 4 | Theory of change

BEHAVIOURS	CONTEXT	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	GOALS
Leadership buy-in Communities and universitities value each other Resource allocation Reward and recognition (Staff & Student) Embedded in curriculum and research	Universities must do more to demonstrate their societal value. Recognising and incentivising institutional engagement is one way to achieve this.	Measuring engagement conversations across sector with: ranking agencies; Universities; commentators.	Engagement performance is publicly reported (e.g. in global league tables) Greater awareness of the importance of institutional engagement among: the sector; communities; staff; students.	Leadership buy-in Communities and universities value each other Resource allocation Reward and recognition (of staff and students) Embedded in curriculum and research	Benefit to society Benefit to individual universities (e.g. increase in rankings and student numbers) Benefit to partners Communities and partners see the value of universities Improvement in research outcomes
	ASSUMPTIONS	We can measure engagement Chosen metrics are a good proxy for measuring the quality of engagement	Support for including engagement in global league tables exists across the sector (e.g. institutions and commentators)	Rankings influence universities' behaviours Publicly reporting engagement performance will drive these behaviour changes Students and the community care about institutional engagement	Society will benefit Universities and their partners will benefit from the engagement activities Better engagement will improve research outcomes

12 National Centre for Co-ordinating Public Engagement, 'Introducing the EDGE tool', accessed at: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-engagement/strategy-and-planning/edge-tool/introducing-edge-tool

The five behaviours we wanted to incentivise were:

1. **Leadership buy-in.** The university's senior management endorse engagement activities and engagement is a priority in the university's leadership structure.

2. **Communities and universities value each other's contributions.** The university and its community have a mutually beneficial relationship.

3. **Resource allocation decisions.** The university is committed (financially and otherwise) to engagement and to its community.

4. **Reward and recognition.** There are incentives for staff, faculty, and students to participate in engagement activities.

5. **Curriculum and research.** Engagement is embedded in the university's core business of teaching and research.

We believe that these five behaviours are wide reaching enough to drive change across an entire institution, rather than in distinct areas only or among specific groups of people.

CREATED INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Our indicators need to meet multiple needs to be widely adopted. To this end, we developed four criteria to assess potential measures (Figure 5.) Detail on the pilot studies can be found in the appendix.

Figure 5 | Assessment criteria

What is the level of subjectivity and bias? | **ACCURATE**

DEFENSIBLE | Is this a good measure of engagement?

Is the data relatively easy to collect? | **PRACTICAL**

SCALABLE | Could other institutions collect this data?

University of Pennsylvania (United States) – Netter Center for Community Partnerships

The University of Pennsylvania wants to improve the quality of life in West Philadelphia by combatting poverty, poor schooling, lack of affordable housing and inadequate health care. One way is by embedding local community engagement into curriculum and research at Penn in its Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) courses.

ABCS involves collaborative real-world problem-solving that is rooted in and connected to research, teaching, learning, practice and service. It is designed to advance structural community improvement (for example, effective public schools, neighbourhood economic development and strong community organizations) ABCs helps students become creative, compassionate and ethical citizens of a democratic society.

In a 2017 survey of undergraduate participants, ABCS students:

- were more involved in community engagement activities than their peers (96 per cent vs 80 per cent)

- participated in more research activities while at Penn (86 per cent vs 80 per cent)

- accessed more sources across campus for jobs and internships (3.15 vs 2.72, out of 15 opportunities listed)

- accessed more sources for research opportunities (2.7 vs 2.57, out of 12 opportunities listed).

Adriana Garcia (MPH, CPH (Penn) 2015)) said: "These ABCS courses taught me to think critically about environmental health problems by actually going into the community, not merely at a distance from an ivory tower. They gave me opportunities to plan and execute projects of great magnitude by collaborating with individuals from different fields and backgrounds at an early stage in my academic career."

THE INSTITUTE FOR
MOLECULAR
ENGINEERING
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NO
SMALL
MATTER

Molecular Engineering
April 26, 2019

04

Other findings

In this section, we outline other findings from the project. We discovered broad sector and student support for measuring engagement and incorporating measures into global league tables. We found there are many ways universities engage and more should be done to showcase this work. Finally, our modelling showed that incorporating engagement into global league tables could have a material effect on universities' positions in those rankings.

Broad sector and student support

The universities we consulted expressed widespread support for the aims of our project. These institutions confirmed the behaviours we identified in the theory of change – including leadership buy-in and more resources for engagement – as things they wanted better reflected across the sector. There was support for our breadth of indicators, which institutions thought captured the diversity of engagement activity.

At an Emerging Findings workshop held with institutions in Mancester in 2019, we reconfirmed enthusiasm and support for the intent of the project. Concerns were raised about ranking fatigue, creating perverse incentives and a reductionist approach; all issues we are also concerned about. There was acknowledgement that universities must do more to influence rankings, specifically what and how they measure performance, and get better at telling stories to our communities.

We ran focus groups with students across the three consortium institutions. Over 40 students participated: a mix of international, domestic, undergraduate and postgraduate. Participants reflected significant interest in, and support for, recognising and measuring universities' engagement activities. In addition:
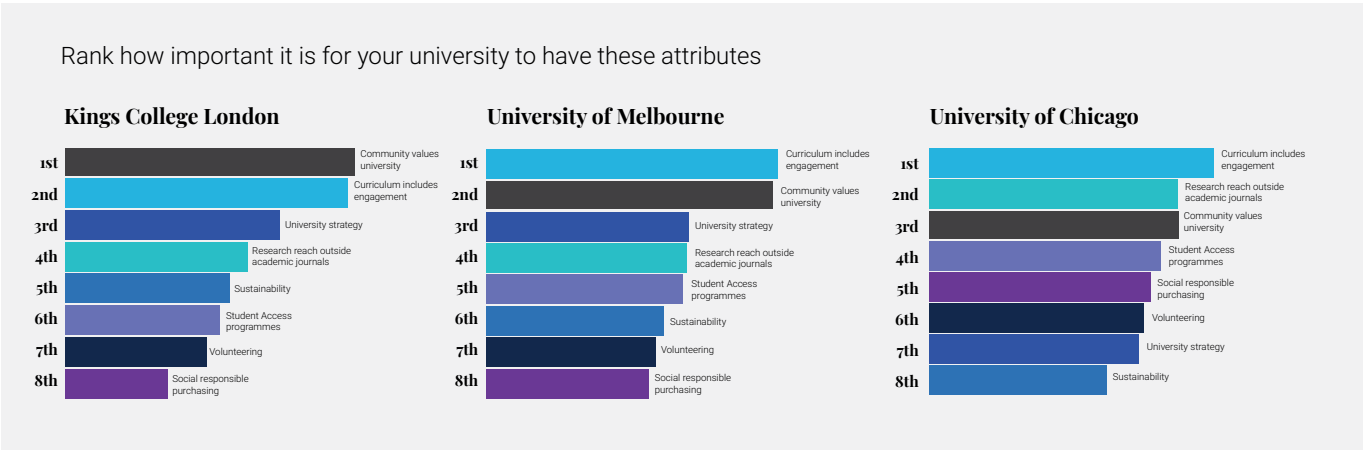
- Students considered several factors when applying to university, and these factors were common across the focus groups. Factors included location and prestige or reputation (in their community).

- Rankings did not influence the decisions of the majority of students, but the level of influence varied across and within institutions.

- Of the metrics we showed students, drawn from our project, and QS and THE rankings, students said the most important were 'community and universities value each other' (from our project), 'reputation with employers' (QS) and 'reputation of institution' (QS and THE) as the most important. (See A.1 for rankings metholody)

- 'Engagement' was not listed as a factor in students' decisions. But it was a factor when we broke down the term into the activities that comprise engagement.

- Of our indicators, 'proportion of negotiable spend on procurement linked to social benefit' and 'volunteering' resonated the least across all three institutions.

- Further work is required to refine the language of the indicators to make them more accessible.

How each institution's focus group ranked the indicators is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 | Student focus group results

Rank how important it is for your university to have these attributes

Kings College London

1st	Community values university
2nd	Curriculum includes engagement
3rd	University strategy
4th	Research reach outside academic journals
5th	Sustainability
6th	Student Access programmes
7th	Volunteering
8th	Social responsible purchasing

University of Melbourne

1st	Curriculum includes engagement
2nd	Community values university
3rd	University strategy
4th	Research reach outside academic journals
5th	Student Access programmes
6th	Sustainability
7th	Volunteering
8th	Social responsible purchasing

University of Chicago

1st	Curriculum includes engagement
2nd	Research reach outside academic journals
3rd	Community values university
4th	Student Access programmes
5th	Social responsible purchasing
6th	Volunteering
7th	University strategy
8th	Sustainability

Impact on global league tables

To understand the impact of these engagement indicators on global league tables, we modelled their effect on the existing THE and QS ranking systems. We wanted to explore how sensitive the current league tables are to changes in their composition. We also wanted to determine whether universities that are recognised as leading in civic engagement would see a change in their position.

We modelled three weightings for our indicators: 2.5 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 10 per cent. Under any of these models, incorporating the new indicators, there was likely to be a change of at most 4–5 ranking places for universities already in the top 50. There was a greater impact outside of the top 50 (Figure 7).

Figure 7 | Student focus group results

Engagement ranking weight in THE 2019 Ranking
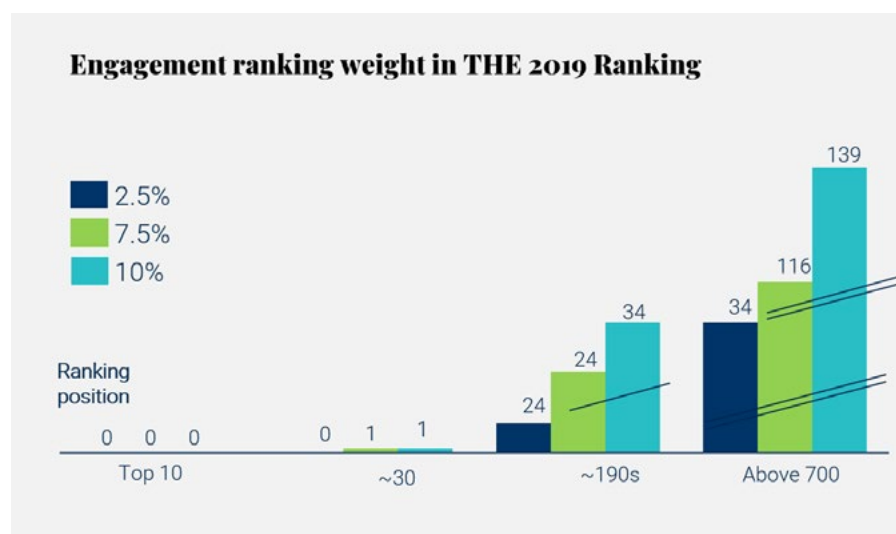
This showed the engagement indicators could have a material impact on an institution's ranking and reputation. However, it requires a strong weighting, to compete with the pre-existing research and teaching indicators.

The University of Lincoln (United Kingdom) – Invigorating Lincolnshire's engineering strengths

Siemens, a multinational engineering firm, is the largest private-sector employer in Lincolnshire county, Northern England. The company was struggling to attract and retain engineers in the city of Lincoln and was considering closing its Lincolnshire operation.

The University of Lincoln formed a partnership with Siemens and as a result established a new Engineering School in 2009. This was the first new engineering school in the UK for more than 20 years.

The deep partnership has led to many opportunities for Lincoln's students, Siemens, and other businesses in the region. Students receive 300 hours of training per year in Siemens product technology, giving them real experience of engineering products. Research projects have been commissioned, including work on gas turbine combustion, high-speed coupling and laser ignition. The Engineering School has engaged with more than 400 engineering businesses and organisations to undertake commissioned research and provide access to part-time degrees.

O5

Challenges and limitations

Measuring and comparing engagement is complex and difficult, especially when trying to do it on a global scale.

One strong criticism of our project centred on global rankings themselves. We know global league tables are far from perfect. Their methodologies are often opaque and privilege larger, more established universities over others. They are strongly influenced by perceptions of prestige –a slippery concept – and can be volatile as methodologies and weightings can arbitrarily change.

Many universities said we risked entrenching these biases by engaging with rankings on their own terms. We acknowledge this criticism but maintain our view that while rankings have such influence, we should engage with them pragmatically, and use our collective influence to shape them for the better.

Another criticism of our methodology was that by attempting to drive behaviour change through global rankings, we would create perverse incentives for universities. There is a risk that universities do these activities only to drive their performance, without an overall framework for engagement. Given the commitment to engagement we heard from universities through our study, we thought this risk was unlikely to materialise. Nevertheless, we included indicators – like senior leadership commitment to engagement – that prevented a 'tick-box' approach.

Challenges for our indicators

There were seven key challenges associated with narrowing our indicators and collecting data to measure them. These challenges are outlined in Table 2.

National University of Singapore –Day of Service

The National University of Singapore is committed to giving back to the community. Since 2016, NUS has run its Day of Service, where students, staff (including the President and Provost), and alumni come together to give back to society and broaden understanding of community services and charities.

Students can participate in volunteering opportunities for organisations including Action for Singapore Dogs, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Food from the Heart, and Singapore Red Cross Society. The activities can be an ongoing community service or a new initiative – there are no restrictions so long as the activity benefits the community.

In the most recent DOS, more than 2,000 NUS students, alumni and staff participated in 53 community-initiated projects.

Table 2 | Indicators challenges

Challenge	Example
Difficult to collect data for some indicators	Some indicators were very difficult to accurately measure and validate, often because they relied on collecting data outside of the university's control. Where the difficulty of collecting and validating data outweighed the benefit, we removed the metric from the mix. This was different to the university simply not collecting data on an indicator. In those cases, on indicators such as 'proportion of negotiable spend on social benefit', universities agreed the indicator was important to keep and they should collect data to measure it in the future.
Difficult to measure outcome, rather than just activity	It is very difficult to measure the benefit universities create for society and their communities – for instance, in terms of jobs created, knowledge shared, or economic impact. One of our earlier metrics was the number of jobs created by the university in the local region, but it was too difficult to correlate new jobs with the university's direct activity. As a result, our indicators tended to measure engagement-related activity as a proxy for engagement impact or outcomes.
Some indicators were subjective	Some indicators, such as 'the number of graduates with jobs who give back to their community', were seen to be open to interpretation – what kinds of jobs, and how long after graduation? Where universities had very different interpretations of an indicator, we removed it.
Language of some indicators were meaningful to some jurisdictions and less to others	Different parts of the world use different language to describe social benefit. The language of 'widening participation', for example, is popular in the UK, whereas other countries refer to 'access programmes'. This did not exclude these indicators but meant we were more careful with their definitions.
Indicators could privilege some kinds of institutions	One early indicator we floated was the number of patents a university generated. But we found this privileged research-intensive universities.
Altmetric has an English language bias	Altmetric, an external source to measure research reach, has a technical limitation: it has a bias toward publications in English and specific disciplines. This was unhelpful for universities who participated in our pilots where English was not the operating language. Altmetric is working to address this issue.
Some indicators have a bias toward some types of government policy	Some universities performed well against indicators because these were incentivised in government policy and government required they collect the data. Widening participation and lowering universities' carbon footprint is a UK policy priority. This could obscure indicators that were very important to universities but not to their country's government.

Many of these challenges are inherent in any attempt to assess and compare the performance of diverse institutions.

This does not mean the task is not worth doing. The challenges of putting too much emphasis on rankings or creating perverse incentives for universities must be acknowledged and addressed.

The challenges associated with our indicators are productive. The indicators are the product of testing with multiple universities, which helped us to see what would work, what would not, and what we needed to watch in the future. This study is, in many ways, a beginning. Given the discussion is evolving, we expect new indicators of engagement will arise and the sector will need to remain nimble in capturing and measuring value.

06 Next steps

We have identified the next three steps for this project: we will continue to build the case for global rankings to recognise engagement and develop our approach to measuring engagement; we will seek a partner to help us take this project into its next phase; and we will explore platforms to promote university engagement.

Build our case

We are seeking to disseminate this report and continuing the sector-wide conversation on engagement. We will present it at conferences internationally, while continuing these conversations in our own regions and universities.

In the pilots we developed a maturity model, which placed universities' engagement performance on a continuum. We will build out this maturity model for use as an interim mechanism to measure engagement and to support universities pursuing this agenda, before our proof of concept is complete.

Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Mexico) – Prepanet

Inequality is widespread in Mexico. Many students cannot access high school because of economic, social, or geographic disadvantage.

Tec de Monterrey's 2030 vision is for ethical and conscious leadership that considers social impact. It promotes leadership that puts itself at the service of others. It established Prepanet, an online high school, to give accessible and flexible education to young people across Mexico. Prepanet costs less than 5 per cent of of the traditional Tec high school system and is run mainly by Tec de Monterrey students, who serve as tutors.

A 2017 study showed the social return on investment of Prepanet is approximately $9.22 pesos per every peso invested. The investment leads to more jobs, savings for families, and more skilled labour.

Explore partnership possibilities

To take this project to its next phase –incorporation of measures of engagement in global rankings – a partner is required to test the framework and data with a wider group of universities. We wish to explore how the framework can be operationalised, what resources are required, and how it can be rolled out internationally.

We have spoken to potential partner organisations, including global ranking agencies, social enterprises and for-profit digital companies. Our partner could be a rankings agency but does not need to be. What matters is that it is committed to the intent of this project and has the tools and expertise to deliver it. The partner also need to meet our criteria:

- **Credibility with the sector.** Its indicators are reasonable and used meaningfully across the global higher education sector.

- **Wide geographical reach.** It includes multiple regions and encompasses universities that operate in multiple languages.

- **Aligned values.** It believes engagement is important and worth measuring.

- **Financially viable.** It is big and established enough to be financially sustainable and will reduce risk.

- **Add intellectual value.** It will build on the thinking in our framework while taking it in new directions.

The project must continue to be sector-led and be transparent about methodology. This will keep the project relevant in the sector and maintain the spirit of trust and collaboration.

Explore additional platforms to promote and encourage university engagement

As a next step, we intend to promote university engagement beyond global league tables. This means exploring other platforms. For example, we may host an annual engagement conference or forum for universities to share thinking on engagement. Other options include a global network or a media campaign to promote engagement. These platforms should champion engagement and contribute to ongoing dialogue about engagement.

University of Northampton (United Kingdom) – Social Enterprise Place

Northampton has a vibrant and historic social enterprise sector. The sector needs to grow strategically by growing its trade and developing its networks with other social enterprises and other economic sectors.

As a 'changemaker challenge', the University of Northampton is committed to making Northamptonshire the best place in the UK to start, run and build businesses. These values are linked to Northampton's commitment to support the Sustainable Development Goals. The university worked with its social enterprise partners to apply to Social Enterprise UK, a leading impact sector organisation in the UK to designate Northampton as a recognised Social Enterprise Place.

The application succeeded in June 2019. The SE Town partners (with the University's support) are developing marketing strategies, growing trade/business, holding networking and public events, developing a digital presence and better understanding the needs of the sector.

Liz Minns, Head of Member Networks, SEUK, said: "The University of Northampton's work in supporting the SE Place application for the Northampton consortium was integral to the success of the bid. Their commitment to supporting their local community in Northamptonshire, and specifically social enterprises, demonstrates their commitment to social innovation in the town."

07

Final reflections

As we began to write up this project, the world was confronted with, in the words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the "most challenging crisis we have faced since the Second World War". The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted virtually all aspects of life and mobilised a global response on a scale not seen since that conflict.

So why does advancing university engagement matter amid a global pandemic?

Universities around the world are making extraordinary efforts to fight the virus – testing medicines, developing vaccines, creating apps, building ventilators – They are also supporting their local communities through deploying clinical staff, student volunteering, providing food parcels, bridging grants to local small businesses and non for profits, and protective wear such as gloves, masks and gowns. It is hard not to appreciate the role universities can play as civic institutions.

We are confident our project and our framework will catalyse discussion about this issue within our institutions, across the sector and with our partners. Through engagement, universities can create a new narrative, sharing real stories that highlight our role in the post-COVID environment.

We express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to this project or served as a critical friend – providing advice on our framework and indicators. With your contributions, we have made great progress in defining and measuring engagement, thereby driving institutional behavioural change that we seek across the sector.

Publication of this report is just the start of our efforts. We hope this will advance a global conversation to re-position universities, with civic engagement as a core part of their mission.

With this in mind we will reach out to colleagues across the world that have supported us in developing the framework reported here. We will ask them how their university supported their communities during COVID-19 and publish these accounts. We anticipate this will further demonstrate the critical role of universities' civic engagement and also shape the debate on the social purpose of a university in the 21st century.

08 Appendix

A.1 Our methodology and results

Pilot studies methodology and results

To test and refine our indicators, we consulted more than 100 people through pilot studies, workshops and interviews. Our aim was to find a small number of indicators that captured the breadth and depth of engagement activities. We took an iterative approach, testing our indicators at each stage of the pilots. We also tested our approach in workshops, including at the 2019 Global University Engagement Summit in Manchester and with students at our consortium's universities.

PRE-PILOTS – REFINING INDICATORS

In the first stage, we sought a broad set of indicators to test in the pilot studies. We developed a long list (~25) of indicators and mapped them against the engagement behaviours we had identified in our theory of change (Figure 8). We tested these against existing engagement frameworks and other systems to measure university performance, to make sure we reflected broader thinking about university performance.

The consortium members tested the indicators informally, to assess whether they would work for their context and how easily the data could be collected. Through this process we refined our long list to 19 indicators.

Figure 8 | Pre-pilot indicators

BEHAVIOURS	METRICS*
LEADERSHIP BUY-IN	Evidence of strategic commitment in structure/governance Responsible employer measures
COMMUNITIES AND UNIVERSITIES VALUE EACH OTHER	Partner Esteem Relative mentions in media/Altmetrics # of jobs created in local region % patents filed % students on local placements % of students volunteering % students first in family Student attainment gap (which students?)
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	% total income generated from engagement % revenue spent on engagement % of research funding for engagement % campus space/industry space/designed for engagement % procurement through local companies % green energy % recycled waste
REWARD AND RECOGNITION	% staff or staff time spent on engagement
EMBEDDED IN CURRICULUM AND RESEARCH	% curriculum dedicated to engagement/service

*original list of metrics developed in December 2019. Pilot 3 will test seven metrics

PILOTS 1 & 2

We engaged the three consortium members in Pilot 1 and six universities in Pilot 2. Although these universities were in different regions, they had similar contexts. Following Pilot 1, 18 metrics were included in Pilot 2. What we asked of participants in both Pilots is contained in Table 3.

Table 3 | Pilot data request

Data collection

Respondents were asked for what data they had against each indicator for 2017-18. If this was not available, we asked respondents to indicate the period the data came from.

Perspectives on indicators definitions

We included our working definitions for each of our indicators and asked respondents for their perspectives. Where they gave alternative definitions for indicators, we asked them for evidence.

Assessment of indicators

The self-assessment had several components. Respondents were asked to:

Identify whether the data was collected, and if not, whether there are plans to collect the data.

Score the indicators against the following criteria.

Accuracy – what is the level of subjectivity and bias?

Practicality – is the data relatively easy to collect?

Scalability – could other institutions collect this data?

Defensibility – is this a good measure of engagement?

Identify whether alternative indicators existed that also met the above criteria

Assess the variance they would expect from year to year.

We conducted a comparative assessment, giving the strongest performance a 10 and then scoring the other institutions by comparison. Zero scores were given when a participant was unable to provide the data. This was to indicate it was not possible to judge their performance, not that they had performed poorly. In some cases, institutions were doing the engagement activities, but did not collect any data. In these cases, we still gave them a zero score, to incentivise data-collection in the future.

These studies found:

- **Overall results were similar for each institution:** scores ranged from 74 to 82 out of a possible 130.
- **Performance varied significantly for each metric despite similar scores overall.** In five indicators all participants performed well. This demonstrates the challenge in choosing just one or two indicators as a good proxy for an institution's performance.
- **At the time of the pilot, no institution was able to provide responses to all indicators:** This was partly due to some waiting for data to be collected in the coming months.
- **The level of difficulty in collecting the data varied between institutions and indicators:** For example, some UK participants found it easier to collect the data as it is required by government; this was not the case elsewhere.
- **Definitions and methodology varied for each indicator:** How institutions chose to interpret the definitions and scope varied, showing the breadth of what data universities do and don't collect.

Table 4 assesses the indicators tested in these pilot studies, including an overall assessment mark and commentary on issues that required resolution. The outcomes from these pilots were the focus of a two-day workshop with the consortium and Nous.

Table 4 | Pilot 1 and 2 detailed assessment

	RESPONSE	METRIC VALIDITY (LOW–HIGH)
Evidence of strategic commitment	High response rate. Evidence of engagement in strategic plan and senior positions.	▪▪▪ | (high)
% procurement through local companies	Mixed response rate, with two participants currently not collecting this data. Those that did varied from 1.5% to 32%. One institution noted that this metric may have unintended consequences for finances as local procurement can be very expensive.	▪ | ▪▪
% procurement with social enterprises	All respondents found this difficult to respond to, and none currently measured	
% green energy	All provided a response, however with very mixed performance, ranging from 2% to 54%.	▪▪▪ |
% recycled waste	All provided a response varying between 20%-48%.	▪▪▪ |
% funding allocated to widening participation schemes	All but one institution was able to provide a response. Those that responded data varied from being in currency to % of overall spend.	▪▪▪ |
% curriculum dedicated to engagement/service (not in pilot 1)	To be considered in any following pilots.	▪▪ | ▪
% of students that enter the institution via an access scheme	All provided responses that varied between 2.5% - 25% of students.	▪▪▪ |
% students first in family	All participants were able to provide a response, and all had relatively high % of first in family. All were neutral on whether responses would vary each year.	▪▪▪ |
#students that go through non–revenue generating college access and readiness schemes	Those that run access schemes responses varied from 2%-6% of total student numbers. Some questioned accuracy and defensibility. Note that one institution did not have an access scheme, however ran access events with over 29,000 applicants	▪▪▪ | ▪
Student attainment gap	Majority of participants were able to provide responses, and the metric scored well in the self-assessment.	▪▪ | ▪
Partner Esteem	None currently collect this type of data, however all are keen to conduct a survey.	
Relative mentions in media (Altmetrics)	Responses varied due to interpretation of definition.	▪▪ | ▪
# patents filed	Similar response rates for the research intensive universities and easy to collect. These results were in stark contrast to smaller institutions.	▪▪ | ▪
% students on local placements	Response varied, with some providing % of overall students, others providing % within specific courses. One institution was unable to provide a response at this time, and those that did said it was difficult and questioned whether it was defensible.	▪ | ▪▪
% students and staff that reflect the community which sustains the institution	All respondents found this difficult to respond to, and none currently measured	

	RESPONSE	METRIC VALIDITY (LOW–HIGH)
% student volunteering	All participants were able to respond, however questions were raised about whether the data is defensible and easy to collect.	
No of publications on urban studies, issues of important to the community (e.g. diabetes) tropical diseases etc (not pilot 1)	Initial feedback advised that definition and scope must be agreed.	

Pilot 3 indicators

Indicator 1:. Evidence of strategic engagement

Indicator 2:. Ratio of pre-undergraduate students participating in an intensive university preparedness programme

Indicator 3: Ratio of non-academic to total mentions

Indicator 4. % negotiable spend on procurement linked to strategic social benefit outcomes

Indicator 5. % of staff and student participating in an institution-run volunteering/service programme

Indicator 6. Partner esteem

Indicator 7. % Green energy

Indicator 8. % curriculum dedicated to engagement

Through this process, we refined our indicators from 18 to eight by removing indicators that were not meaningful to many or most universities, not scalable, or where the burden of data-collection outweighed the potential value.

PILOT 3

Fifteen universities completed Pilot 3, including, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Mexico), Universidad del Pacífico (Peru), EAFIT (Colombia), the National University of Singapore (Singapore), University of Pennsylvania (United States), University of Lincoln (United Kingdom), the University of Technology Sydney (Australia) and the University of Sydney (Australia). The consortium universities also participated in the pilot.

The eight metrics that came out of Pilot 1 and 2 were further iterated to strengthen their scope and definitions..

To test our thinking, we mapped the indicators against the behaviour changes in our theory of change. Based on this assessment, we felt these indicators would drive the desired behaviour changes and captured the breadth of engagement activities. We opted to not include an indicator on research, because research is already strongly reflected in league tables.

In Pilot 3 we did not collect data against indicator 6 (partner esteem) or 8 (proportion of curriculum dedicated to engagement) because we believed it would be too difficult for institutions

to collect at this stage. Indicator 3 (ratio of non-academic total mentions to total outputs) was collected on behalf of participants.
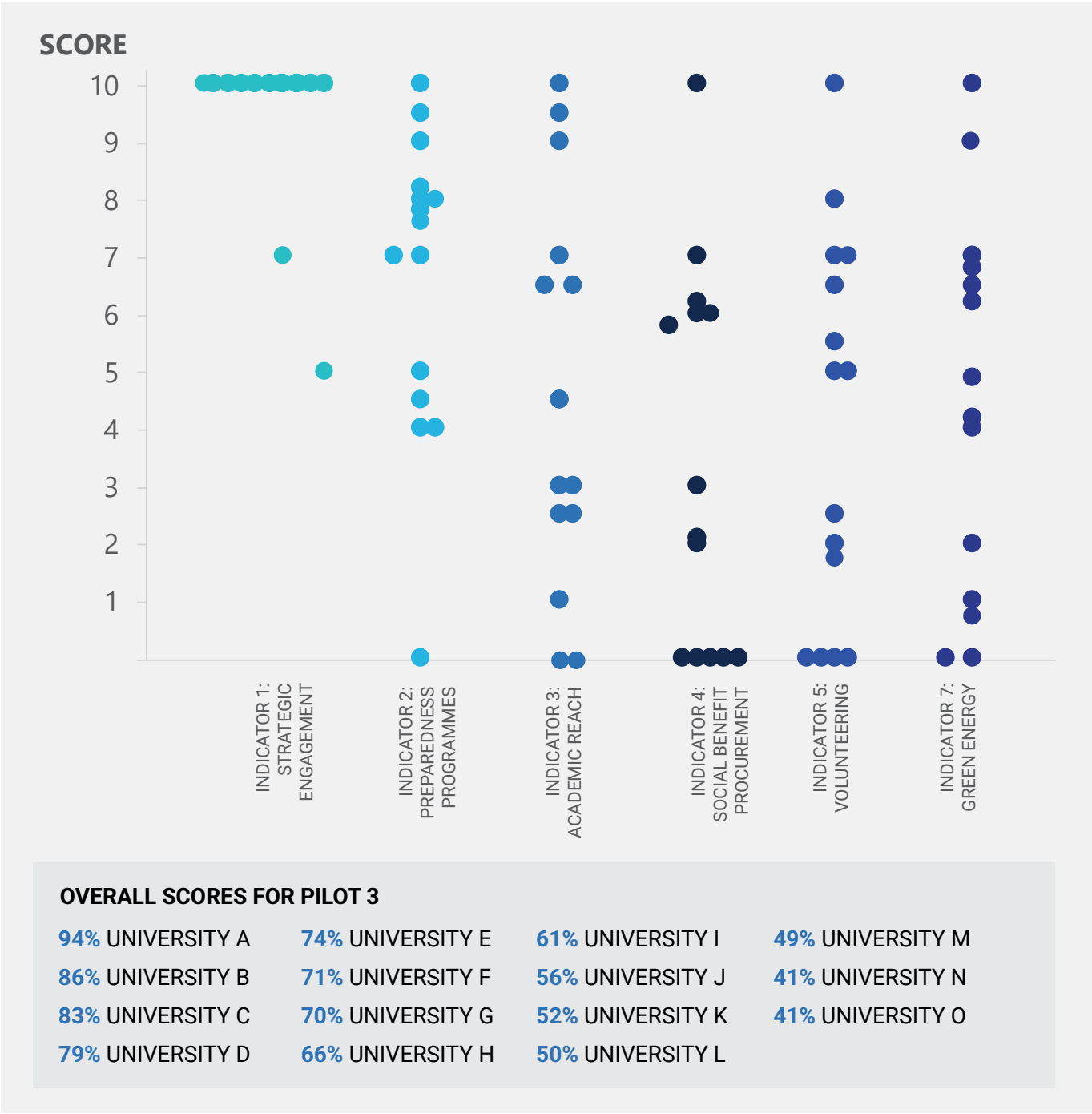
We allowed the institutions some latitude in interpreting the metrics, and the findings were consistent with Pilot 2. These included:

- There was strong support for the project's intent and the desired behaviour changes.
- There was support for the breadth of indicators.
- Performance varied across each indicator (see 7), and therefore we felt that at least eight indicators were required.
- Universities believed the definition and scope of some metrics needed refinement.
- Collecting data remained a challenge, however the difficulty varies across institutions for each indicator.
- More work is needed to validate the data to assess and compare responses.

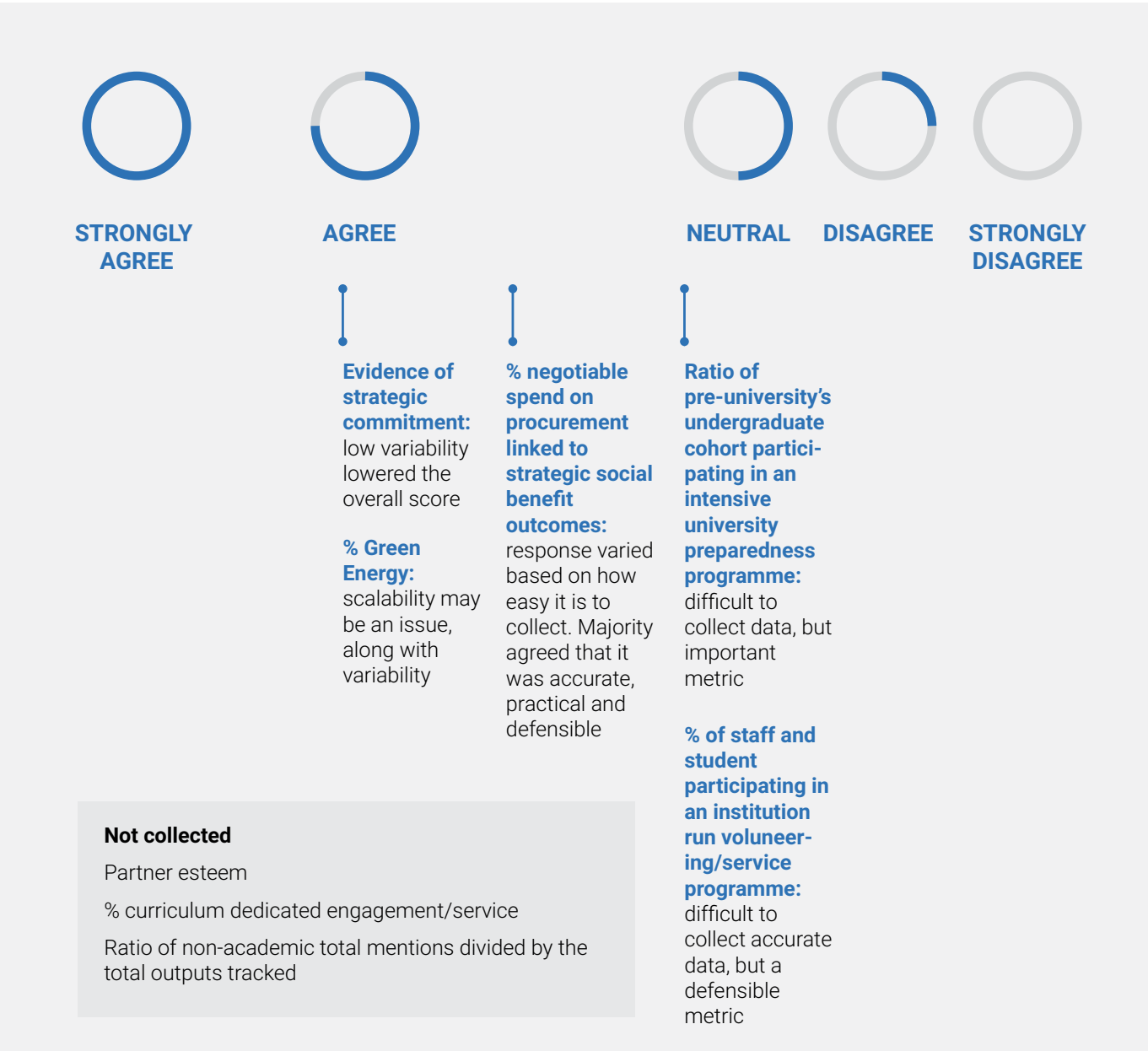The comparative assessment findings for Pilot 3 are captured in Figure 9.

Figure 9 | Pilot 3 comparative assessment results

OVERALL SCORES FOR PILOT 3

94% UNIVERSITY A	**74%** UNIVERSITY E	**61%** UNIVERSITY I	**49%** UNIVERSITY M
86% UNIVERSITY B	**71%** UNIVERSITY F	**56%** UNIVERSITY J	**41%** UNIVERSITY N
83% UNIVERSITY C	**70%** UNIVERSITY G	**52%** UNIVERSITY K	**41%** UNIVERSITY O
79% UNIVERSITY D	**66%** UNIVERSITY H	**50%** UNIVERSITY L	

We asked Pilot 3 universities to complete the assessment of the quality of the metrics described in Figure 5, but against only the five indicators used in Pilot 3. We then aggregated these scores to find an overall score for each metric, noting that the difficulty in collecting data did lower overall scores for some metrics.

Overall, the assessment scores for each institution were similar for each metric in this pilot. Differences in score were often due to the difficulty in collecting the data. Several participants said that despite difficulty in collecting the data for some metrics, for example the metric measuring participation in intensive preparedness programmes, it was still important for this metric to be included. Figure 10 captures the overall scores for each metric.

Figure 10 | Aggregated self-assessment scores for Pilot 3

STRONGLY AGREE

AGREE

NEUTRAL   **DISAGREE**   **STRONGLY DISAGREE**

Evidence of strategic commitment: low variability lowered the overall score

% Green Energy: scalability may be an issue, along with variability

% negotiable spend on procurement linked to strategic social benefit outcomes: response varied based on how easy it is to collect. Majority agreed that it was accurate, practical and defensible

Ratio of pre-university's undergraduate cohort participating in an intensive university preparedness programme: difficult to collect data, but important metric

% of staff and student participating in an institution run voluneering/service programme: difficult to collect accurate data, but a defensible metric

Not collected

Partner esteem

% curriculum dedicated engagement/service

Ratio of non-academic total mentions divided by the total outputs tracked

We used this data to refine our indicators and to comparatively assess the universities' performance. Based on this, we changed 'proportion of green energy' to 'carbon footprint', because this data was more widely collected. The other adjustments focused on the definition of the indicator and how it should be measured, based on feedback from the institutions.

Overall, the staged approach was an effective way to refine and validate our framework. Figure 11 contains an end-to-end summary of this approach.

Figure 11 | How we refined our metrics

| BEHAVIOURS	PILOT 1 19	PILOT 2 18	PILOT 3 8
LEADERSHIP BUY-IN	Evidence of strategic commitment in structure/governance Responsible employer measures	Evidence of strategic commitment in structure/governance % students first in family Student attainment gap Responsible employer measures	Evidence of strategic commitment in structure/governance
COMMUNITIES AND UNIVERSITIES VALUE EACH OTHER	Partner Esteem Relative mentions in media/Altmetrics # of jobs created in local region % patents filed % students on local placements % of students volunteering % students first in family Student attainment gap (which students?)	Partner Esteem Relative mentions in media/Altmetrics # of jobs created in local region % patents filed % students on local placements % of students volunteering %students that enter a institution via an access programme # students that go through a non-revenue generating college access and readiness scheme	Partner Esteem Ratio of pre-university students to the university's undergraduate cohort participating in an intensive university preparedness programme % of staff and student participating in an institution run volunteering/service programme
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	% total income generated from engagement % revenue spent on engagement % of research funding for engagement % campus space/industry space/designed for engagement % procurement through local companies % green energy % recycled waste	% procurement through local companies %procurement through social enterprises % green energy % recycled waste % funding allocation to widening participation schemes	% negotiable spend on procurement linked to strategic social benefit % green energy
REWARD AND RECOGNITION	% staff or staff time spent on engagement	% of student and staff that reflect the community which sustains the institute # publications on urban studies, issues of importance to the community	Ratio of non-academic total mentions divided by the total output tracked
EMBEDDED IN CURRICULUM AND RESEARCH	% curriculum dedicated to engagement/service	% curriculum dedicated to engagement/service	% curriculum dedicated to engagement/service

43

Global league rankings methodology

Times higher education World University Rankings
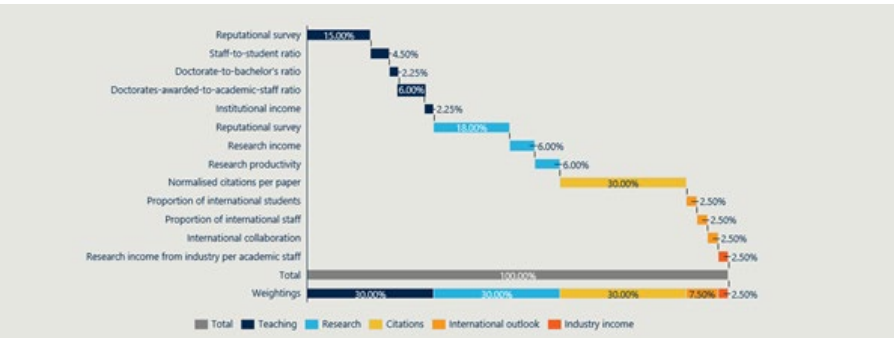
QS World University Rankings
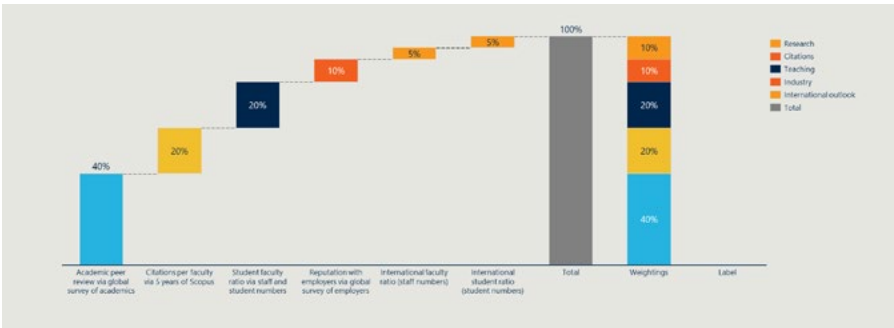
ARWU / Shanghai rankings
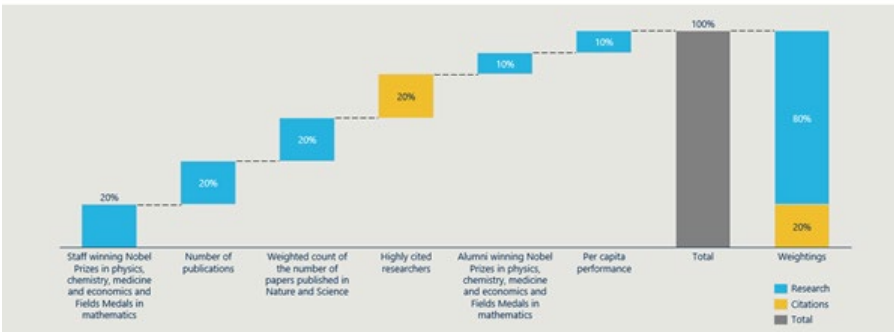
List of Pilot Participants

Some of these universities participated in Pilots 1, 2 and 3.

EAFIT (Columbia)

King's College London (United Kingdom)

National University of Singapore (Singapore)

Sheffield Hallam University (United Kingdom)

Simon Fraser University (Canada)

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Mexico)

University of Sydney (Australia)

Universidad del Pacífico (Peru)

University of Chicago (United States of America)

University of Lincoln (United Kingdom)

University of Manchester (United Kingdom)

University of Melbourne (Australia)

University of New South Wales

University of Northampton (United Kingdom)

University of Pennsylvania (United States of America)

University of Technology Sydney (Australia)

An Asian University that requested anonymity

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A.5 Consultations

This project has been informed by interviews and workshops with academics, engagement experts and commentators at King's College London, University of Chicago, University of Melbourne, University of Manchester, University of Lincoln, Simon Fraser University, Wonkhe, British Academy and Engagement Australia.

Emerging findings were presented at a workshop attended by representatives of about 16 universities at the Global University Engagement Summit, hosted by University of Manchester in September 2019. Feedback from participants has informed the report.