

19.1.2025

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**Title**

Built to be excellence? : the Aalto University merger in Finland / Janne Tienari, Hanna-Mari Aula and Timo Aarrevaara

**Publication year**

2016

**Source/Footnote**

In: European journal of higher education. - 6 (2016) 1, S. 25 - 40

**Inventory number**

39406

**Abstract**

In the Finnish higher education system, government steering and the interests of industry and business have come to focus on the impact of the university in society. In 2010, Aalto University was created in a merger of three universities representing different academic fields. The new university developed a forward-looking strategy, restructured its operations to serve a new innovative and interdisciplinary institutional profile or brand, and to attract top talent across the world introduced an academic tenure track career system unprecedented in Finland. In this article, we identify strategy, branding, and human resources systems as key integrative mechanisms in the merger process and consider some of the complexities and contradictions in a merging university's drive for 'excellence' from the perspective of the identity of academic faculty members. We also consider more general implications of the Aalto merger for understanding the opportunities and challenges presented by contemporary university mergers. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)