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**Abstract**

Research universities and institutes assume a vital role in domestic economic development. Research universities are assigned the responsibility to train doctoral and post-doctoral students and to form new generations of faculty. Despite their critical role, the effectiveness of institutions regarding research production is rarely studied, particularly in an international, comparative context. Vital information regarding the improvement potential of institutions is generally lacking, as are good criteria by which to judge the relative merit of various types of institutions. The paper presents findings on a performance gradient that separates US and European research universities and submits hypotheses that link productivity and organizational ? or structural ? aspects of research-oriented institutions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)