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**Abstract**

There is an extensive literature on the productivity of universities. Little is known, however, about how different types of leaders affect a university's performance. To address this question, this paper blends quantitative and qualitative evidence. First, I establish that the best universities in the world are led by respected scholars. Next, by constructing a new longitudinal dataset, I show that the research quality of a university improves some years after it appoints a president (or vice chancellor) who is an accomplished researcher. To try to explain why scholar-leaders might improve the research

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performance of their institutions, I draw from interview data with twenty-six university heads in the United States and United Kingdom. These findings have policy implications for governments, universities, and a range of research and knowledge-intensive organizations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

**Signature**

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