



Special Session Proposal

University impacts on the local and regional economy

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Abstract

The literature has long studied the effects of universities on economic development and innovation. With the emergence of the knowledge-based economy, higher education institutes (HEIs) have acquired a crucial role in creating and transmitting knowledge. Although the university is international by intrinsic vocation and operates globally, its local and regional role is significant. Looking at the medium-long run, the presence of universities in a given area improves the stock of human capital through education. HEIs make a territory attractive to firms and potential high-quality human capital from other regions. Attracting students is even more crucial for peripheral and small-sized regions that persistently experience outbound migration flow of highly qualified human capital.

This Special Session aims to study how universities can influence their local economic environment through a wide range of activities they are naturally devoted to, namely teaching, research, and third mission. Particular attention will be paid to the disparities amongst territories and institutions. In this respect, the Session will focus on the intrinsic characteristics of the local environment (e.g., center/periphery, urban/rural), the dynamics of competition between HEIs in terms of their role in attracting students, staff, and researchers. A further issue will be the impact of e-learning, driven by the current pandemic waves, on higher education, students' preferences and choices, and the institutions.

Theoretical and empirical frameworks are equally welcome. The primary research areas of this Special Session include, but are not limited to, novel advances in the following topics:

- HEIs efficiency
- Students' migration
- Spatial analysis on demand and/or supply
- Students' preferences and choice
- E-learning effects
- HEIs' attractiveness on students and/or researchers
- The role of staff and management