

Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education

Call for Papers for Special Issue: "Imagining the future university"

Guest Editors:

Søren S.E. Bengtson, Aarhus University

Ronald Barnett, University College London, Institute of Education

Much academic discussion of the role and purpose of the university and higher education has the character of criticism - foregrounding the hard conditions of the university and the forces and loss of meaning that influence higher education programmes and learning and teaching environments. Much less in evidence is an effort to engage in a constructive endeavor. Scholarly work involved in conceptualizing, imagining, and discussing the meaning and purpose of higher education and the university more broadly is too little seen. Even more significantly, we see few attempts to draw up alluring and *desired futures* without, but also *within*, the restraint of present state politics and economy.

Accordingly, *this special issue* of the journal, *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education* invites contributions that dare to speculate and intellectually conjure possible university futures and have the rigor and critical depth to explore the deeper meaning and purpose of the future university.

Key dimensions here are 'freedom', 'value', and 'action'. While much discussion about the role of the university and higher education today seems to assume that universities are not free and have lost their autonomy, this special issue calls for discussions about the autonomy of the university and what forms of freedom may be said to characterize the university still and so offer spaces for its own agency. Here, the understanding of knowledge is central as the foundational identity of the university rests on its understanding of knowledge and how the university produces, controls, and disseminates knowledge.

Equally important are notions of value and action. What forms of value might the university and higher education sustain or exemplify in the future? To what extent is the university able to cast such value in terms other than 'capital' and 'profit'? What vocabulary would be helpful for valuing knowledge and learning in the university in the future? And what forms of institutional and pedagogical action do such forms of value imply?

This special issue, therefore, rests on multiple understandings of the 'future'. Clearly this relates to a temporal dimension of the university and higher education, but not only so. The future, in this context, includes spatial, institutional, political, social, moral, epistemological, and ontological dimensions, as the transformation of the university and higher education brings all of these aspects into view. Do we need a new futurology of the university and higher education? Are university and higher education futures really real, or are they projections of our present state concerns and challenges? And how does this matter in building new university futures?

Proposals for this special issue should suggest building new philosophical, theoretical, or conceptual, tools in response to the issues flagged above. Papers that proffer existential, ontological, epistemological, and value-based frameworks will receive priority. Papers that explicitly engage with freedom and diversity concerns are welcomed. Papers that exemplify new versions of the future university are especially encouraged.

Potential topics include (this list is suggestive, not exhaustive):

- Existential approaches to the condition of the university and higher education today and in the future
- Value-based approaches to condition of the university and higher education today and in the future
- Epistemological and ontological analyses of nature of the future university and, by implication, the future of higher education
- Ecological approaches to higher education futures
- Social and political analyses and discussions of the relationship between the future university and other institutions (including in the private sector and with non-governmental organisations)
- The extent to which the university can be considered to be a corporate agent with spaces for its own agency
- The future higher education curriculum and implications for teaching and learning practices at the future university
- The public role(s) of higher education and the university in the future, for example in extending the public sphere
- Historical approaches to the university and higher education in relation to future challenges and prospects, e.g. intellectual history and the history of ideas

Instructions for authors:

- Submit a proposal abstract of 300-500 words (not including references; no graphics or tables allowed) to ssbe@tdm.au.dk no later than December 15, 2017.
- Invited papers must be 6000-8000 words in length, including all notes and references.
- While proposals may use any established academic writing style (e.g., Chicago Style, APA, MLA), authors must format final papers in Chicago Style, as per the requirements of the *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education*.
- Questions about the special issue can be directed to the guest editors at: ssbe@tdm.au.dk

Timeline for publication:

- December 15, 2017: Abstracts due and assessed by guest editors
- February 15, 2018: Invitations to authors for full paper consideration
- October 15, 2018: Completed papers submitted for peer-review
- January 15, 2019: Feedback to authors for revision
- April 15, 2019: Revised manuscripts due
- May 15, 2019: Absolute deadline for sending manuscripts to the publisher
- November 2019: Planned date for publication