

EUROPEAN EXPOSITION AND PUBLIC DEBATE

CURATING THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

10-11 February 2011

KULeuven, Belgium

The European Union and its member states are urging universities to innovate and change in order to be able to meet the demands of the knowledge economy and play a leading role in its further development. Existing structures of organisation, management and governance, existing curricula and ways of teaching and assessment, and existing funding and incentive mechanisms are no longer considered to be adequate if European universities are to keep up with global competition in research, teaching and service. Discussions about the future of European universities increasingly focus on questions about productive innovation, institutional differentiation and the effective mobilisation of human and financial resources. There is much attention for the 'how,' but little for the 'why' and 'what for.' We believe that it is time for a change. We believe that it is time to focus on a different question.

What do universities actually have to offer to Europe and its member states? What is the unique contribution that universities can make? We start from the assumption that the unique contribution of the university lies in its public role. Against the growing privatisation of research and teaching we aim to explore – through exposition and debate – what it might mean to take responsibility for and care for the university as a public institution? 'Curating the European University' is an attempt to turn the public role of the university into a concern for Europe.

In "What is the public role of the university? A proposal for a public research agenda," accessible online from the *European Education Research Journal* (8[2], 2009), we have set out our views in more detail (see http://www.worlds.co.uk/eej/content/pdfs/8/issue8_2.asp).

Our aim is neither to look backwards to embrace old ideas of the university, nor to engage in abstract, normative or principled discussions. The focus is at the very same time more practical, more realistic and more future-orientated in that we call for projects on specific initiatives, practices or designs that aim to build and organise the university as a public institution. Projects from all who is directly or indirectly involved in the university are welcome (higher education researchers, student organisations, academic and technical staff...). These projects should propose alternative but realistic ideas or plans on how to organise public research, public education, public service and/or public university work and life. We invite projects on for example:

- curriculum organisation
- university-based research
- student participation
- financing and evaluation procedures
- forms of publishing
- regulation of access
- housing and social facilities
- architecture

Projects are not limited to textual accounts, but may include visuals, photographs, video, installations, and so on. The main criterion is that projects should exemplify ways in which we can take care for the public role of the university in Europe today.

The exposition of selected projects followed by public debate will take place during a two day meeting at the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), 10-11 February, 2011. The exposition will start on day one, together with the official presentation of the catalogue. During the second day of the meeting round tables are organised to discuss the projects.

The deadline for submission of the proposals is 31st May 2010 (proposal format: see attached document). An international jury will make a selection by 28th June 2010. Final deadline for submission of full projects is 1st November 2010.

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