

Campaign *for the* Public University

presents

Re-Imagining the Public University

A day of workshops at Aston University, Birmingham
Saturday 5 March 2011

Timetable:

11.00-11.40	<i>Reforms to Higher Education: The State of Play</i>
11.50-12.30	<i>Research Councils, Funding & Early Career Academics</i>
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.10	<i>The Question of Research & The Future of Higher Education</i>
14.20-15.00	<i>Pedagogy of the...: Or How, What and Why Do We Teach Now?</i>
15.00-15.30	Coffee / Tea
15.30-16.10	<i>How the Public University Might Appear on the Internet</i>
16.20-17.00	<i>Taking the Public University Online</i>
17.10-18.30	<i>What is the Public University and What Could It Be?</i>
18.30-late	<i>Drinks, dinner, continuing discussions...</i>

Session Details:

11.00-11.40 John Holmwood ***Reforms to Higher Education: The State of Play***

This session will involve an update on the unfolding of government reforms and their implications across the sector. It will consider how the university has developed across a series of reforms since the mid-1990s. These will include the abolition of the binary divide and subsequent attempts to reconstitute it and the development of the new agenda for selectivity and concentration.

11.50-12.30 Philip Cunliffe, James ***Research Councils, Funding & Early Career Academics***
Ladyman & Philip Moriarty

The decision by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to restrict PhD funding to twenty-one doctoral training centres, coordinated by consortia of universities, is just the most recent example of Research Councils UK (RCUK)'s drive to align research with pre-defined, short-term, and short-sighted research goals. The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has similarly announced that it will no longer fund project studentships, focussing instead on doctoral training centres in areas defined by the council as of key strategic importance. EPSRC - whose Chief Executive, David Delpy, is also the RCUK Impact Champion - has been at the vanguard of changes to research council policy which are fundamentally distorting the ethos of university research. By coercing academics to work on near-market problems whose direct socioeconomic impact can (ostensibly) be predicted in advance, RCUK both fails to understand the fundamental societal role of universities and will ultimately, and perhaps counter-intuitively, damage the return on taxpayers' investment in publicly-funded research. In this workshop we shall discuss how RCUK's impact agenda, and associated emphasis on directed/managed research, contributes to the marketization of academia and the potential effects this will have on early career academics in particular. A central objective of the workshop will be the identification of mechanisms which will actively oppose RCUK's moves to sideline disinterested, curiosity-driven research.

13.30-14.10

Patrick Ainley

The Question of Research & The Future of Higher Education

This discussion will suggest that one way to recover the purpose of higher education in critically transmitting culture to future generations is to include original acts of creation, experiment, practice, scholarship or research in the programmes of all students as contributions to the on-going conversations that should constitute induction into their various subject disciplines and areas of practice. This is suggested as an answer to the vexed question of research in HE: research must be generalised to as many teachers and students as possible. This does not preclude dedicated specialist research institutes such as already exist in this and other countries. In general however, teaching should be combined with research as a means of introducing students to an academic community that critically learns from the past to change behaviour in the future. The undergraduate dissertation can be developed to emphasize the contribution that students can make to that continuing conversation as the final degree demonstration of graduateness.

14.20-15.00

Sarah Amsler

***Pedagogy of the...:
Or How, What and Why Do We Teach Now?***

Despite all the attempts in recent decades to reduce education to sterilizing functions of 'learning and teaching,' teachers and students remain guided by a range of pedagogical philosophies and purposes. We teach to reproduce society, to critique it, to transmit ideas and concerns, to broaden and deepen understanding of the world, to transform subjects and situations; perhaps we even understand education as a practice of freedom or a way of life. There were plenty of positions to debate here already, although critical debates have been rare in recent years. But the present proposals to subordinate higher education to the logic of the market and the needs of the powerful; to turn education, educators and students even further into marketable commodities; and the indications we have that these proposals will be pushed forward through antidemocratic means, require us now to reconsider who we teach, what we teach, why we teach, and how we teach within the universities. This workshop is intended to be a space for those who care about liberal, critical and radical education to talk through the conditions of practice for these repressed sorts of learning (and for learning at all), and what we can do now to practically develop them both within the university and without. There will likely not be time to discuss the role of pedagogy (in the widest sense) in the struggles for the public university and democratic society, although somehow we must begin this conversation as well.

15.30-16.10

Patrick Lockley

How the Public University Might Appear on the Internet

16.20-17.00

Mark Carrigan

Taking the Public University Online

An introduction to using CftPU's blog and twitter - a practical overview of the campaign's social media tools, with step-by-step demonstrations of how to post on the blog, as well as a brainstorming session about how we might extend and improve our use of social media.

17.10-18.30

Gurminder K. Bhambra

What Is the Public University? And What Could It Be?

This session is open format and looks to enabling a discussion of the options for further campaigning and activism in the light of the changes discussed in the previous sessions. It also seeks to address the question of 'what is the public university?'

Followed by dinner and drinks in the local area!