

Concept Paper

Liberal Education: In Conversation with Today's World of Tomorrow

Like every great idea, Liberal Education has withstood the test of time. Yet, it has not done so without remaining open to continual re-interpretation by those who see its value from within and without. In conversation with politics, technology, society, the economy and educational systems, a Liberal Education has taken on new shapes and meanings. In today's world of tomorrow -- a world concerned with accelerated change in all these fields, where it becomes increasingly urgent that our discourse considers the long-run sustainability of human activity and our current ways of life -- the question of Liberal Education remains as relevant as ever.

LESC 2019 seeks to understand the tone and content of the conversation between a Liberal Education and the world at large, asking how current model(s) of Liberal Education interact with these five spheres historically, today, and into the future. It asks what supports and what stifles Liberal Education and how Liberal Education can help us as individuals and on an institutional level accomplish the needed change in each of these fields. By constructing a narrative framework, LESC 2019 encourages reflection on the value of Liberal Education at both the individual and macro level. Over the course of four days, conference participants learn about and discuss the past, present, desired and possible future(s) of Liberal Education in relation to today's world of tomorrow.

Call for proposals

After three successful editions in Lüneburg, Freiburg, and Utrecht, LESC comes to Berlin in May 2019. This iconic, historical city provides a fitting backdrop for a discussion of Liberal Education. Situated in leafy Pankow, in former East Berlin, Bard College Berlin provides an intimate environment to consider the conversation of Liberal Education with itself, the individuals that keep it alive through practice, and the world at large.

LESC 2019 asks:

- How and in what way(s) do the spheres of politics, technology, society, the economy, and education support or stifle Liberal Education -- now and in(to) the future?
- How and in what way(s) does or could Liberal Education influence the spheres of politics, technology, society, the economy, and education?
- What is the place of the individual in Liberal Education? How is thinking at the individual level vital to the endeavour of Liberal Education?

Conference participants are asked to write a formal academic paper on one of these prompts, focusing on either politics, technology, society, the economy or education as a specific sphere that Liberal Education interacts with while engaging critically with the question of the individual's place in this picture and the significance of thinking at an individual level. This engagement with the role of and value to the individual in a Liberal Education may be implicit or an explicit area of focus in an academic paper. The following prompts give example focus

questions for a conference contribution and are meant as a starting point for potential participants to begin thinking of their own research topic; participants may also attempt to answer one (or a variation) of these questions:

- **Politics:** How do political movements support, deter, or direct the evolution of Liberal Education? How does and can Liberal Education influence politics?
- **Technology:** How does technology facilitate/disrupt the reception and importance of Liberal Education?
- **Society:** What does society demand of Liberal Education and what can it reasonably provide? (Addressing issues of social mobility, social reception, social cohesion etc.)
- **Economy:** How does an increasingly capitalist global economy affect Liberal Education? (Consider the issues of funding, job creation, demand for skill training, etc.)
- **Education:** How are LE innovations rejected, accepted, or taken over by programs that are not Liberal Education? Is the rise of Liberal Education an error in interpretation or a 'true' trend? What should we expect for the future of LE given accreditation regimes, student expectations for future employment, university ranking systems etc.?

Please note: Though submission of a formal academic paper is encouraged, a limited number of artistic works or creative interpretations of the core questions will also be accepted provided a strong and convincing proposal for such a work is made.

Joint contributions, be they academic or artistic in nature, are also welcome. Please specify on your proposal if you plan on such a contribution along with the names of those who will partake in the collaboration.

Formalities

- The submission of an academic written contribution or a non-academic artwork addressing one of the major motivating questions of the conference and pertaining to one of the five spheres of influence is required for participation in LESC 2019.
- Before writing (or crafting) their contribution, interested applicants must submit a 500 word proposal explaining and motivating their planned contribution. This proposal must distinguish if the final contribution will be academic or artistic and whether it will be a joint contribution.
- In addition to the proposal, potential participants taking an academic approach must include a comprehensive list of resources they plan on consulting for their final written contribution.
- Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis starting 20th January 2019
- The deadline for proposals is the 3rd February 2019. Feedback on whether the applicant's proposal is accepted or rejected will be given out by 17th February. Accepted applicants will have until the 28th February to confirm their attendance and until April 14th to submit their final contribution paper.
- Final contribution papers should be between 1500-3000 words (excluding the cover page and reference list)

- You can submit your proposal and your contribution by emailing the documents in pdf format to contributions@lesconference.eu
- The fourth LESC will take place from Thursday 2nd May to Sunday 5th May 2019 at Bard College Berlin in Germany
- BCB will be able to host up to 80 participants, including speakers, moderators, and the organising committee members
- The call for proposals will be sent out to all LE programmes in late November 2018
- The most competitive papers will be compiled in an eBook and published after the conference comes to a close

Please see practical information for costs.