

Announcement/Chronique

Liberal Arts and the Future of University Education

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Liberal Arts (CIRLA) will hold its second international conference May 10-11, 1996 at the *Banff Centre for Conferences*, Banff, Alberta, Canada. The purpose of this conference is to explore recent developments in the relation between liberal arts and the university.

University education is no longer simply the concern of professional educators. It has now entered the public forum as an object of political discussion. The issues are well known: What form should public support of universities take? How should the university be held accountable for that support? How do we determine the significance and relevance of the education being offered?

Related to these issues is the role of the liberal arts and sciences in university education. Once assumed to be the cornerstone of higher education, the liberal arts and the sciences have become the focus of intense debate. Demands for more specialized and more practical knowledge suggest that the liberal arts are the luxury of an elite. At the same time, an ever-increasing need to work across disciplines points to the usefulness of the skills that the liberal arts develop and the importance of the issues they address.

Some of the topics proposed for discussion are: (1) The role of the university in contemporary society; government policy on education; technology, media and the liberal arts. (2) Are the liberal arts and sciences still relevant to the university, to society or to the student? What relations do the liberal arts and sciences have to contemporary developments in continental philosophy? How have the liberal arts changed, and how must they change, if they are to meet contemporary challenges? (3) The debates about science and the social construction of knowledge; about tensions and opportunities in interdisciplinary research and teaching: (3) Diversity and unity: reflecting diversity and fostering conversation among those of differing in race, religion or ethnicity; issues of canon in text, art and idea.

If you have an idea for a paper or session that is not included here; or if you are willing to organize a symposium, please contact the director of CIRLA. There will also be a poster session, during which you may display ideas for the teaching of the liberal arts and interdisciplinary courses or the results of research.

Deadline for abstracts, draft papers and proposals: November 30, 1995. Notification of acceptance: February 1, 1996. Deadline for completed papers: March 15, 1996. Complete registration information will be mailed in the fall of 1995.

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