

Panel Discussion: Are universities allowed and capable to plan their research?

Prof. Dr. Richard Münch

The Death of Creativity: Science in the Stranglehold of Strategic Planning

The new entrepreneurial university disempowers the scientific and academic communities and the disciplinary associations as trustees of the progress in knowledge in the inner core of science and in its outside relationship to society. The collective search for knowledge as a collective good and the collective process of education and knowledge transfer to society in the hands of the scientific and academic communities and the individual disciplinary associations is replaced with the privatized utilization of the progress in knowledge, of education and of knowledge transfer by entrepreneurial universities in the competition for market shares and monopoly rents. This fundamental institutional change threatens inner academic freedom and subjects education and knowledge transfer to external purposes.

The loss of autonomy of research, teaching and learning resulting from the penetration of the economy into the academic field, has crucial consequences for the evolution of knowledge and the academic educational process. The transfer from control via honor, recognition and intrinsic motivation to success figures, profit and extrinsic motivation changes the process of generating knowledge and educating students from being an end in itself to becoming a means for the end of meeting numbers and generating yields. Hence, the potential embedded in the knowledge generating and education process as such is reduced to what can be utilized in economic terms. What is valuable knowledge and valuable education is no longer determined by the trusteeship of the academic community in cooperation with the disciplinary and professional associations on the one hand, and politics, economy, civil society and public on the other hand. What is crucial now is *exclusively* the demand from the students who are no longer considered members of the academic community but customers of the entrepreneurial university, but also the demand coming directly from the economy, politics, civil society and the public.

It appears logical that this shift in the definitional power referring to the value of knowledge and education from the side of researchers, teachers and students as an academic community, to the side of external demanders for knowledge and education triggers a restriction of the knowledge generating and education process to what can be utilized in line with the interests introduced from the outside. This means nothing less than the end of academic freedom and the instrumentalization of education and science for external purposes.

In this way, the knowledge and educational process is going to lose its inner dynamics, its creative potential, its ability for continued renewal, its openness for what is new and unknown. Both – the search for knowledge and education – are no longer fueled by themselves with open results, but are driven by outside interests that are always rooted in the ruling knowledge and thought. The potential for the renewal of knowledge is shrinking.