



**‘A Pedagogy of Civic Engagement for Higher Education’
15 April 2011 at Royal Holloway, University of London
(Arts Building, Lecture Theatre 1)**

Conference Convenor: Dr James Sloam (james.sloam@rhul.ac.uk), 01784 414987

Conference Administrator: Ms. Isabelle Hertner (isabelle.hertner@rhul.ac.uk)

Rationale:

In recent decades, there has been much discussion and debate over the value of higher education (HE) for society. In this regard, policy has focused on community outreach and widening participation. Yet these efforts to add social value to universities and colleges have so far been decoupled from teaching and learning. Significant research in the US has demonstrated that rooting teaching and learning in democracy (through activities like ‘service-learning’) not only benefits HE institutions and their surrounding communities, but also enriches the *student experience* – enhancing academic achievement, democratic competences and transferable skills. Given concerns about the lack of youth engagement in democracy and in the context of the new Government’s ‘big society’ agenda, this conference will look at how teaching and learning in HE can play a pivotal role in strengthening civic engagement.

Objectives:

The principal objective of the conference is to stimulate debate and impact upon policy to strengthen the linkages between HE and democracy in the UK. In particular, the conference aims to bind teaching and learning in universities and colleges to civic (and even political) engagement. This aspect of the social role of HE has often been ignored in the UK. The conference is sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce), which will provide a direct channel to public policy, and participants will include a diverse set of policy-makers and stakeholders in universities and colleges.

Outputs:

The conference will be a deliberative exercise for the participants. The profile of the conference will be assisted by the presence of a top US academic and senior policy-makers in British higher education. This will hopefully lead to media interest. The conference will result in a special issue of a peer-reviewed academic journal, and a Hefce report/ guide for universities. The conference convenor (Dr James Sloam) will undertake research through the conference, presenting a voluntary pre- and post- conference survey to delegates, and conducting semi-structured interviews with selected delegates (wishing to participate). The findings from this research will be presented to Hefce, written up and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

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Draft Programme

10:00-10:30 Coffee/ Registration

10:30-11:45 Panel 1

A Pedagogy of Engagement: exploring the extent to which good teaching practice in HE can (and perhaps *should*) connect teaching and learning to society (and vice-verse)

Pam Tatlow (Million+)

Tony Breslin (Education Foundation)

Dina Kiwan (Birkbeck, University of London)

11:45-12:00 Coffee Break

12:15-13:30 Panel 2

Teaching and Learning in the Community: investigating the strengths and weaknesses of activities like *service learning* that aim to achieve pedagogical *and* democratic benefits; looking at how university-based research (of academics *and* students) can work to address problems in the community

Paul Manners (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement)

Susan Nash (National Union of Students)

Steven Curtis (London Metropolitan University)

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:30 Keynote Address by Benjamin R Barber (biography on following page)

15:30-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45-17:15: Panel 3

Higher Education in the ‘Big Society’: re-examining the social role of universities and colleges within the context of the new Government’s ‘big society’ agenda

John Annette (Birkbeck, University of London)

Nicola Dandridge (Universities UK)

Professor The Lord Norton of Louth

Dinner for Speakers 18:00

Large Board Room, Founders Building

Keynote Speaker: Benjamin R. Barber



Benjamin R. Barber, the internationally renowned political theorist, is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Dēmos and President of CivWorld (at Dēmos), the international NGO that sponsors the Interdependence Movement. Barber was Walt Whitman Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University for 32 years, and then Gershon and Carol Kekst Professor of Civil Society at The University of Maryland. Dr. Barber brings an abiding concern for democracy and citizenship to issues of politics, culture and education in America and abroad. He consults regularly with political and civic leaders in the United States and around the world, and for five years served as an informal consultant to President Bill Clinton.

Benjamin Barber's 17 books include the classic *Strong Democracy* (1984), reissued in 2004 in a twentieth anniversary edition; the recent international best-seller *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1995 with a post-9/11 edition in 2001, translated into twenty-seven languages) and *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*, published in 2007 by W.W. Norton in the United States and in seven foreign editions. The paperback edition of his controversial Clinton memoir *The Truth of Power: Intellectual Affairs in the Clinton White House* was published in May 2008.

Dr Barber's honors include a knighthood (Palme Académiques/Chevalier) from the French Government (2001), the Berlin Prize of the American Academy of Berlin (2001) and the John Dewey Award (2003). He has also been awarded Guggenheim, Fulbright, and Social Science Research Fellowships, honorary doctorates from Grinnell College, Monmouth University and Connecticut College, and has held the chair of American Civilization at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris.

Dr Barber is a commentator for National Public Radio's *Marketplace* and his blog can be found on The Huffington Post. He has written for *Harper's Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Die Zeit*, *La Repubblica*, *El País* and many other scholarly and popular publications in America and abroad. He was a founding editor and for ten years editor-in-chief of the distinguished international quarterly *Political Theory*. He holds a certificate from the London School of Economics and Political Science and an M.A. and Doctorate from Harvard University.