

Types of Conversations in Universities

Terry Halliday

We can observe conversations and dialog of different kinds within the university.

- **Disciplinary issues/debates** – sociology, physics, law, medicine, literature, history, geology – in these fields what are the big enduring questions?
 - Sociology/law: a big question = how do legal norms/standards spread across the world?
 - Issues about methods and work – what are best ways to study something -- What are ethical ways to study [a topic]?
- **Cross-disciplinary issues** –
 - Globalization – what are mechanisms of diffusion, e.g., ideas, transmission of disease, etc.?
 - Climate change
 - How the brain functions
 - The impacts of religion
 - Energy what is it? how to harness it?
 - Race – why is its impact so tenacious?
- **Student concerns**
 - Stress – anxiety about quality – about dissertation – about jobs
 - Such a big issue Nigerian IFES movement created teams to do stress workshops
 - Competitiveness – is my classmate my competitor, not my cheerleader?
 - Injustice – universities are places where powerful social/political movements arise
 - Tiananmen Square
 - Hong Kong and the Occupy Central movement
 - Eastern Europe movements against Soviet puppet regimes
- **Local university issues** – examples include
 - Northwestern University -- sexual violence
 - Nigerian university – awful sanitary conditions in dorms
 - U of Virginia– fraternities out of control
 - Sierra Leone university – corruption in grading / sex for grades
 - UCLA law school -- racial discrimination/tensions
 - US – racial intolerance on campuses
- **Societal issues**
 - Immigration – France – US – UK
 - Slavery – resurgence in late 20thC.
 - Gender discrimination – why so ubiquitous? Is it fair, just, acceptable?
 - Poverty – US Great Society – World Bank – do we know how to alleviate it?
 - Preventing/repairing civil conflicts

- Protection of indigenous peoples -- Canada, Australia, Brazil

Author: Terry Halliday

Date: July 28, 2015

Event organizer: IFES World Assembly, Mexico City

Event topic: Seminar: Engaging the University through Conversations

Participants: Students

Place: Mexico City

Language: English