

Magna Charta: Values-based responses to the academic Freedom crisis

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Agenda

Context 1980s

Magna Charta

~~Universitatum~~

Observatory

2020

Living Values Project

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Context – 1980s

European concern about erosion of autonomy

- Financial pressures from governments to move from traditional to business orientation
- Growing interest in internationalisation and student mobility – relations between E and W
- Autonomy and Academic Freedom essential

Council of European Rectors (EUA Predecessor)

felt the need for a strong public statement

900th Anniversary of University of Bologna 1988

Magna Charta Universitatum signed by 388 Rectors

The MCU Fundamental principles

1. The university is an autonomous institution which produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching.
2. Its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.
3. Teaching and research must be inseparable if tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge.

The MCU Fundamental principles

3. Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.
4. A universityshould attain universal knowledge;transcend geographical and political frontiers, affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and influence each other.
5.  Act with integrity

Magna Charta Observatory - 2000

Promotes the fulfilment
and defence of
institutional autonomy
and academic freedom

Global guardian of
fundamental values
960 signatory universities
from 94 countries

Works by:
Gathering Information
Commissioning Research
Monitoring
Expressing Opinions
Preparing Publications
Making Presentations
Conferences and workshops
Living Values Project
Partnering with Kindred Bodies
Website
Working with Signatories

New Magna Charta 2020 - Why?

- Faster pace of change
 - Globalisation
 - Climate emergency
 - UN SDGs
 - 4th Industrial Rev
 - Univs more important for society (E.g. COVID)
 - Greater public interest
 - Greater regulation and interference
 - Political mis-trust
 - More diverse expectations from a wider range of stakeholder
 - Erosion of trust in science and experts
 - ITC and pedagogy advances
 - Social media and speed of communications
 - More competition
- Any others?

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Drafted by internationally diverse group after wide consultation.for universities globally
Nothing taken away from MCU 1988 – More added on responsibilities of universities
Enquiry, analysis and sound action - still vital
Expressed in terms of **Principles, Values** and **Responsibilities**
Engage and respond to global challenges for sustainability
Intellectual and moral autonomy – independence should be protected

MCU 2020

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Reliable social contract with civil society

Question dogmas - encourage critical thinking

Teaching and Research

ethically, integrity, trustworthy results

Part of global networks – but embedded locally

Tolerance, inclusivity, equity and fairness

Education a human right, Life Long Learning
available to all

Access to HE – engage diverse perspectives

MCU 2020


Living Values Project: Purpose

To help universities and higher education institutions ensure that:

the values they espouse reflect the institution's mission and community;
staff, students, and stakeholders have been effectively engaged in defining those values; and
all members of the institution are able to articulate and effectively live by these defined values

Living Values Project: Definition

“Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations.” (Sijbolt Noorda)

Fundamental values (institutional autonomy, academic freedom, social responsibility) and other institution-specific values.



Living Values
In Higher Education Institutions

Living Values Project: Stages

1. Initiation and plan
2. Identification of a map of values
3. Define how selected values manifest in practice
4. Relate behaviours to functions/domains
5. Conversion of values into desired behaviour
6. Conversion of outcomes into strategic plan and other policies
7. Reflection on the process, effectiveness and next cycle.

Living Values Project: Benefits

Unique for each institution

Depends on:

- starting point/circumstances/objectives

Affects:

- Governance – strategic plans
- Processes
- Behaviours

Ultimately:

- enhanced performance in T&L, R, Service to the Community
- More engaged staff/stronger community
- More understanding/engaged stakeholders

Final thoughts

MCU – owned by universities

Values – owned by universities

Serving Society – justifying academic freedom

By signing the Magna Charta Universitatum 2020 universities declare their commitment to the original declaration and to upholding and advancing the Principles, Values and Responsibilities stated above, to strengthen the role of universities in the preservation of the planet and promoting health, prosperity, and enlightenment around the world.

Thank you for your attention.

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<http://www.magna-charta.org>

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