

UNIVERSITIES IN SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Olav Jull Sørensen, Professor, International Business Centre, Aalborg University

Abstract: Universities are increasingly challenged to redefine their role in society and the financial support to universities is increasingly related to the extent to which universities take upon them these new roles. Universities cannot just accumulate knowledge through research according to a “free research formula” and disseminate it through research publications and graduates. Universities are required to engage in a much wider sense and contribute much more directly to society. Universities have followed different ideas and routes to enhance engagement, reflecting trends in society. Some have advocated an entrepreneurial university; others have adopted a Problem Based Learning (PBL) formula and others again have internationalized to bring synergy between cultures or seen the university as part of the Triple Helix construct. The aim of this article is present the Socially Engaged University (SEU) which secures the virtues of a university (the institution of critical reflection and new knowledge within a learning perspective) with a social engagement. The university will not transform into something different but engage with others offering its competences and capabilities in a synergy with resources and capabilities of others.

Keywords: Social engagement, Socially Engaged University, Triple Helix, Problem Based Learning