

A universal institution in a globalised world.  
University traditions as an answer to the  
current crisis of the university

---

*Pieter Dhondt*

*University of Eastern Finland  
Department of Geographical and Historical Studies*

*pieter.dhondt@uef.fi*

# Intensive seminar in two parts

---

- part 1: historical approach (Kant, von Humboldt, Newman and others), democratisation and massification, commodification of higher education, Bologna and the unified European market of higher education, the idea of a contemporary university
- part 2: interviews with students and staff from the following departments: history, psychology, communication studies, political and social sciences, economics, agricultural engineering, engineering, astronomy and physics, medicine

# The university as studium generale / as a universal institution

---

- universitas magistrorum et scholarium (see KULeuven, Agora learning centre)
- collegial, collective examinations
- universal aims of the university
  - general/liberal education
  - vocational training
  - scientific education
- in the service of the public interest / amor sciendi
- universal knowledge (artes liberales <> artes mechanicae)

- Grossbetrieb der Wissenschaften (Friedrich Althoff), e.g. Monumenta Germaniae Historica



# The university as studium generale / as a universal institution

---

- privileges with a universal validity
- open for everyone (*République des lettres*)
- licentia ubique docendi
- recognised by an authority with universal power (pope or emperor)
- one common language

# Conclusion



time as the greatest threat

a plea for diversity:

“The university is as a galaxy, being a collection of stars with different ways of thinking, just like stars are following different paths, moving fast or slow, in a regular or irregular circle. However, despite this great degree of variety, somehow they still belong together, because in one way or another they are doomed to circle around each other in the same galaxy. They work in the same institution, each of them trying to be innovative in his or her own way.”