Dr. Séamus Ó Tuama, University College Cork (Ireland):  
*University Challenge: Revisiting the ‘right to have rights’ and ‘fool’s freedom’*

In the immediate aftermath of the second world war Hannah Arendt (1973) raised concerns about the real meaning of rights. She introduced the phrase ‘a right to have rights’ (296), when addressing the conditions pertaining to displaced and stateless people in particular. Of these people she said ‘their freedom of opinion is a fool’s freedom, for nothing they think matters anyhow’ (296). Today we have even more displaced and stateless people in the world. We also have huge issues around homelessness in many developed countries, we have increasing numbers of people living precariously. Precariousness in the developed world is evidenced in trends like permanently having low pay, poor conditions and insecure employment, reduced access to social and public services like healthcare and education. In the developing world it is even more drastic. Whole swathes of people have to contend with war, disease, starvation, drought on top of existing poor conditions. Almost everywhere in the world people’s right to life is challenged by extremists and in many places too by governments. Some 70 years after Arendt raised these concerns the whole rights agenda seems to be stalled at best or may in fact be in reverse.

Universities can be key actors in pushing to reverse these dehumanizing trends. Firstly, they can intellectually challenge the hollowing out of rights. In pursuit of this aim there is a need for a new approach to the justification of rights, to move the debate past cosmological certainties. In their educational philosophies universities can value the rights enshrined in virtually every national constitution and a whole cannon of international covenants. Lifelong learning and community engagement is one such domain to articulate this as Vandenabeele, Reyskens and Wildemeersch (2011) state ‘adult education could be an experiment about what living with others means (204)

Michael Wihlenda, University of Tübingen (Germany):  
*World Citizen School (WCS)*

The WCS aims to empower students to educate themselves in the humanistic tradition. With the founding of the World Citizen School, the University of Tuebingen recognises the vital role to be played by socially engaged students in the future. The WCS is a learning platform and network of self-organising students at the University of Tübingen seeking to expand the range of learning opportunities offered through conventional degree programmes. General courses each semester on Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation are supplemented by more specific course material defined by students themselves according to their needs and interests and transmitted through a network of invited experts and open learning platforms. Michaels research focus the question "How can Social Innovation Education succeed in the context of volunteering in student associations".

Dr. Jonathan Keir, University of Tübingen (Germany):  
*Basic Trust and a World Ethos*

Interreligious dialogue pioneer Hans Küng has identified Lebensvertrauen or Grundvertrauen – Basic Trust in life – as a key element shared by the world’s spiritual traditions, both major and minor, religious and non-religious. This ‘saying Yes to life despite all temptations to reject it’ is the core feature of Küng’s ‘World Ethos’ project, an intercultural dialogue initiative begun at the University of Tübingen. Indeed, Küng argues, without such Basic Trust ‘no one can behave ethically’.

This lecture briefly explores the genesis of the idea of Basic Trust in Küng’s thought, before moving on to tackle some of the contemporary practical implications of Küng’s ‘World Ethos’ insight for politics, business and society.
**Sebastian Schmidt**, Artist, Aachen (Germany):  
*The vision on an open, lively and connected society-sculpture*

During these trying times, people seem to be ready for a forum that gives expression to their wide-spread desire for community, unity and connection. The idea for this project was formed by combining the two initiatives „Your Message to the World“ and „What Connects People to Each Other“. „Your Message to the World“ gives youths a platform, allowing them to give public feedback about their thoughts and feelings regarding current events all around the world. They can voice their ideas and wishes for the world of tomorrow. In the project “What Connects People to Each Other” around 250 people design a collaborative ring sculpture in three days.

The new project, a fusion of both, has the anthem „We are a Living and Open Society“. A temporary, creative meeting place goes on tour through several parks in Aachen, consisting of a free-standing tent roof and a mobile art studio. For a few days each, an open and weather-protected art studio is created. With this initiative a meeting place for all the people, who want to focus on what connects instead of separates us, is created. For everyone, who want to participate in the shaping the world of today and tomorrow, turning their felt helplessness into communal action. This initiative is meant to offer the opportunity to recognise and perceive each other complexly once again in order to foster solidarity. Furthermore, it offers an opportunity to make music, sing, dance, create and cook in a community.

This new initiative, combining two successful projects, is an example of how a personal global citizen mindset, expressed through creative activities, can be promoted.

The time is right for transformation.  
A living dream-society-lab.  
A rewarding experiment.

**Josephine Finn**, University of Maynooth (Ireland):  
*Including ‘difference’ in higher education*

The greatest difference is always an opposition, but of all the forms of opposition, which is the most perfect, the most complete, is that which “agrees” best” (Deleuze, 1968:38)

Deleuze complains that difference was determined in philosophy as ‘unilateral distinction’ and used for comparison between things – “this is different from that” or in “making a difference” – but he claims that difference, as a concept, was not well conceived in itself. (Deleuze,1968 /2014:36) Thus, for Deleuze philosophy slandered ‘difference’ and left it in a “maledictory state” (Deleuze,1968/2014:36-37).

Deleuze raises some important issues in relation to how we conceptualize difference and offers some alternative thinking. In this lecture, I will share some of his ideas and outline why I see ‘difference’ as a positive dimension in education. I will discuss how ‘difference’ has set things and people apart and has created ‘habits of thought’ that perpetuate oppositional thinking and the creation of systems of exclusion. Higher education, I will argue, is a site where reconceptualization of difference could begin at a theoretical level and simultaneously within educational practice as an integral dimension of learning. Through this process, we could start to think ‘difference’ positively in ourselves and in groups and begin to value explicitly, different ways of knowing. In this context, where ‘difference’ is fostered not ‘othered’ and used to advance knowledge and support human enrichment, higher education would have to create new approaches to learning. An overview of my initial thoughts about the model of higher education needed to include difference will be offered for consideration.

A case study, as part of an initiative to include persons with intellectual disabilities into higher education, will be included in my presentation to enhance the discussion and illustrate the positive force that difference can bring to education.
Zsuzsa Kovács, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (Hungary):

Supporting the active engagement of elder people with the University of Third Age

Education of elder people is not only a necessary component of lifelong learning but also an important aspect of building a learning society, a mission in which universities have to take responsibilities. Along the very successful lectures on University of the Third Age held by Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest), the Institute of Research on Adult Education and Knowledge Management had decided to develop a series of seminars that provide more active and participatory learning opportunities for elderly people (Borkowski, 2008), which are mostly retired. Two benefits of this activity emerged in this pilot programme: (1) the positive development of the senior participants through engaging in active learning, and (2) the professional learning processes of those doctoral students who lead these seminars on various topics. Engaging the participants with active learning methods and different topics (e.g. online learning tools for adult learners, healthy body and mind) could have the effect to foster the well-being of the participants, as they perceive themselves as more competent and more socially integrated and supported. As the participants revealed in focus group interviews the seminars develop positive attitudes toward learning at this later stage of life, too. They support the understating and acceptance of different points of view and help to work with different preconceptions related to the topics. These seminars could increase the active involvement and social sensitivity of elderly people in our society. The pilot project also has a significant impact on the young generation of academic staff, who hold these seminars, through bringing closer the characteristics of learning needs and modes of the older learners. The presentation displays some issues that arose during the four semesters of the project looking also for answers to the very self-evident question: what roles can universities play in creating a context that supports active engagement of all generations in the global society?

PhD Viktorija Aladžić, University of Novi Sad (Serbia):

Urban Identity vs Globalisation – Situation in Serbia, Subotica experience

This lecture will discuss relations between urban identity and globalization with the special emphasizes on the situation in Serbia and the town Subotica. As cities are engines of development, intensive process of globalization influence them the most, threatening to detract their character and attractiveness. This in return may have serious impact on the quality of life and health, but also can reduce future investment and economic development. Urban heritage of the cities in Serbia reflects the complex geographical and historical patterns of the region’s changing governments and ideologies. The economic and political transition from socialist self-government towards democratic market capitalism, followed by abundant migrations, lead to abrupt changes in the treatment and management of urban heritage. In this complicated circumstances, a small group of people are trying to make a difference and promote local heritage by entertaining, educating and bringing local heritage closer to the people’s heart.

Dr. Michael Reder, Connecticut College, New London (USA):

What’s a University For?: Critical Thinking, Equity, and the Fate of Liberal Democracy

What is a university’s role in creating “World Citizens”? What are its obligations to both global and local society? The development of critical thinking skills, the nurturing of empathy, and the creation of a deeper understanding of diverse cultures are learning outcomes to which all higher education institutions can and should aspire. In addition, many of our institutions are involved both locally and nationally in supporting social entrepreneurship, community learning and outreach, and programs that promote cultural understanding and social equity and justice. As part of a student’s education, many colleges and universities in the United States, for example, attempt to provide “liberal education” (aka “generic competencies”), one that contributes to a student’s ability to live in and contribute to a diverse society and to be an active, democratic citizen. But are those aspirations and activities enough?
Globalization has in many ways magnified the social and economic inequalities on international, national, and local levels. Such inequalities have helped fuel the rise in extreme-right populism, racist and nationalist xenophobia, and economic protectionism both in Europe and in the United States.

What else can—and should—a university do? And how are universities themselves implicated in the reproduction of inequality—locally, nationally, and globally? This interactive discussion will frame some key ideas before engaging the audience with these important questions.