

TRENDS OF THE 21ST CENTURY LIBERAL EDUCATION

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Ukraine has recently survived a lot of changes and it is still developing its new independent policy which includes all spheres of our life: economic, social, and cultural. Ukraine is changing its vector in favor of European and North-American countries. Education occupies a prominent place in this process. That is education that is in charge of bringing up new pro-European generation.

Considering all the above mentioned we find it necessary to analyze the experience of other countries in education of socially-responsible and globally-competent citizens. That's why the *purpose* of the following article is to study the peculiarities of the twenty-first-century liberal education campaign which has been launched in the US since 2005 considering the possibility of its further implementation in our education system.

The notion of “liberal education” has been studied mostly by foreign scholars. Among them were such thinkers as John Henry Newman, Robert M. Hutchins, Thomas Huxley, and F. D. Maurice. In the 19th and 20th century liberal education was defined as learning for its own sake and personal enrichment, separate from and largely indifferent to the careers that students would eventually enter [2].

However, over the last decades the demands for college education significantly increased and, therefore, liberal education changed its meaning. The 21st century liberal education is an approach to learning which prepares individuals to deal with complexity, diversity, and change of the world providing them with broad knowledge of science, culture, society etc. as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest [4].

Liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and an ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

In order to implement all the above-mentioned into real life, the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) created a national public advocacy and campus action initiative – Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP). LEAP responds to the changing demands of the twenty-first century – demands for more college-educated workers and more engaged and informed citizens [1]. Today, and in the years to come, college graduates need higher levels of learning and knowledge as well as strong intellectual and practical skills to navigate this more demanding environment successfully and responsibly.

As AAC&U reported in a recent study, college-bound students have barely heard of liberal education, and even advanced college students associate it mainly with study in selected disciplines [4]. The students least likely to know about liberal education are, of course, those from groups that historically have been least likely to attend college at all. LEAP is missioned to correct such inequity. For this particular reason we can observe the increase and spread of liberal art colleges. That is a

particular type of institution that facilitates close interaction between faculty and students, and whose curriculum is grounded in the liberal arts disciplines such as humanities, sciences, social sciences etc.

In the modern world employers are searching for graduates who possess good communication skills, analytical, contextual, scientific, and creative thinking, and remain innovatory-oriented, and globally-competent.

The LEAP campaign is developed to create new curricula which combine together topics drawn from the liberal arts and sciences and from professional fields such as education, health, engineering, and business. Such connection of the liberal arts and professional orientation is an important resource for individuals' learning and, ultimately, for the vision and integrity graduates carry with them into the world of work. This connection deserves new public awareness and support. A number of studies show [4] that these more “engaged” forms of learning have particular value in raising college education for a significantly new level, permitting to equal the achievement for students of different social levels.

The main goal of LEAP is to prepare students to create solutions in a complex world. That mean students are learnt to actively involve in working on problem-centered inquiry from the time they enter college until they successfully complete their degrees. However this campaign has faced some challenges and the main of them is to prepare every college student to challenge complex problems and questions and to ensure that they obtain necessary skills in evidence-based inquiry, analysis, and decision making [3].

To sum up, the 21st century liberal education in general and LEAP campaign in particular are aimed to transform the existing US education system to the one which will meet the requirements of the modern world, new generation of employers and employees. Ukrainian educators have to study the experience of the US colleagues and improve the currently existing education system by implementing some of the basics of liberal education.

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