

THE HUMANITIES ARE A HINDRANCE TO INNOVATION



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He is the author of America's most popular political philosophy textbook (2001). In 2006, he published *Manliness*, an intellectual bestseller devoted to the phenomenon of the persecution of manliness in the modern 'gender-neutral' society. Francis Fukuyama was one of his students at Harvard.

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Universities have always been both a moving force in terms of social development and an obstacle hindering its advancement. I would say that **at present, universities are, at the same time, a moving force in terms of the natural sciences, but present more of an obstacle with respect to the humanities and social sciences.** It is here, in this regard, that I think universities have lost touch with their sense of purpose and objectives. Those professors who are not engaged in science seem to be lacking in confidence that what they are doing actually holds any value or use to society. This is quite characteristic of the current intellectual situation in pretty much all developed countries. A crisis is obvious. **This lack of confidence in their own capacities by university instructors of the so-called inexact sciences in universities will inevitably lead to a decline in their own influence as instructors** and that of their respective academic disciplines. Perhaps we are already observing this process even now. Professors of the humanities and social sciences in general do not speak with authority when it comes to actual and timely social and political matters. Rather, they are more wrapped up in very narrowly specialised issues and tend to paint the picture of just one side of the political debate.

One thing is clear - universities nowadays are already not as devoted to intellectual life and the level of learning

and knowledge as they once used to be. The humanities have wandered off into a lot of literary theory that is somewhat hard to follow and understand, and that bears very little relation to literature. Thus, the level of education, if by that term we are referring to the quality of the education received at universities, can no longer be seen as an indicator of the processes that are actually happening in society, because most people are not professors and don't listen to professors. Neither do they listen to professors nor do they read books written by professors.

A good deal depends on the direction that political life is taking here in the USA. If the situation gets worse, then I think that universities will be among those blamed for such failure. One clear instance comes to mind: with respect to the recent stock market crash that led to the global financial crisis, it seems that neither any professors nor economists of note managed to foresee what was coming or sound a warning about the pending crisis. This resulted some degree of damage to the reputation of universities, and this situation may very well continue to deepen further. ■

TOMSK IS READY FOR INNOVATION!



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Innovations always come from universities. Small enterprises working out many interesting new innovative products would have never arisen had they not been surrounded by a strong university environment.

Tomsk is a unique city for Russia; it has a strong complex of scientific-educational institutions, as well as many scientific and academic universities of the Tomsk Scientific Center. For this reason, **a special economic zone for the introduction of new technology was created in the city of Tomsk.** The thematic meeting under the direction of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was also held here.

The three biggest universities, the State University, the Tomsk Polytechnical University, and the Tomsk State University of Control Systems and Radio-electronics, all work in the field of information technologies. Nevertheless, while hundreds and hundreds of people graduate from these universities every year, there continues to be a shortage of IT-specialists and computer technology experts in the city. Such is the demand for these specialists, who have no problem finding a job.

Recently, our university has become the Tomsk National Research

Polytechnic University. This is an important distinction, as national research universities are especially innovative. There are five priority areas in our university, one of them - information technologies - is under my supervision. A special economic zone has been created in Tomsk for four of these areas (information technologies, nanotechnologies, medical technologies and biotechnologies), while the fifth area consists in instrument making.

Many scientific innovations originated from the Soviet Union, and Tomsk has not lost this scientific and technical edge. It is one of the most computerized cities in Russia, a statistic derived from the number of computers and advanced technologies per capita.

The prerequisites for such scientific schools to appear, such as the one in Tomsk, develop over decades. For example, the Novosibirsk Scientific Center, formed from the ground up in the 1950s, took a rather long time to be created. **It is impossible now to give a university to every regional center.** It will be harmful for the country's development. On the contrary, we should strengthen those scientific schools and scientific centers that we already have. ■