

Call for papers

First International Conference of the Deliberating Universities Network UNIDELIB

Deliberating Universities for a Livable Planet

Institut d'Études Politiques UPEC – Fontainebleau, Université Paris Est Créteil
Laboratoire interdisciplinaire du politique Hannah Arendt (LIPHA)

Fontainebleau, 23 May 2025

The Deliberating Universities Network (UNIDELIB) brings together academic institutions from around the world that aim to promote and introduce deliberative experimentations in universities. Launched in November 2023, during the “Deliberation in action” conference organized by the Paris-Est Créteil University (UPEC) and LIPHA (Hannah Arendt interdisciplinary political studies research lab) at the Institut d'Études Politiques Fontainebleau – UPEC, the Deliberating Universities Network engages an ever-growing number of universities in France and around the world (<https://citizens-assembly.org>).

Universities have a key role to play in forging a path to more sustainable democracy and to address planetary boundaries issues, beginning by transforming their own institution. Drawing from the French Climate Citizens' Assembly, the network members promote and introduce, in their own university, deliberative processes in the form of student and academic staff citizens' assemblies. This way, universities are helping to reinforce the public debate on the political choices that urgently need to be made, a priority set by the French Agency for Ecological Transition via its report on the paths to carbon neutrality (ADEME, 2022). These assemblies offer an innovative framework for student engagement and collective decision-making for all university actors, to address the ecological, social and democratic challenges in universities' transformation process.

The aim of this first international conference on Deliberating universities is to bring together researchers and practitioners with an interest for citizen participation and deliberation in order to share the individual and collaborative disciplinary and interdisciplinary research produced on the existing deliberative experimentations in academic institutions (Lausanne, Nantes, Paris Est Créteil, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Sorbonne Paris Nord, Rennes, Institut de recherche en développement, INSA Lyon, SUPSI, etc.). Ongoing studies focus mainly on the design, actors and impact of academic deliberation (on university policy and on participants), as well as their integration in the existing university representative system. The objective this conference is to expand the range of these studies and to scientifically corroborate and elaborate on the discourse on the need for citizens to participate in writing environmental policy. It is also to integrate the recent development of deliberation in universities within

larger fields of research such as deliberative democracy, organization studies, environmental studies, citizenship, youth engagement, university transformations, etc.

Reference scholars of deliberative democracy Mark Warren (Professor at University of British Columbia), Yves Sintomer (Professor at Paris Lumière University) and Graham Smith (Professor at Westminster University) will give keynote speeches.

We invite scholars and practitioners to submit papers presenting:

1. Individual case studies of deliberation taking place in universities from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.
2. Comparative analyses and typologies of citizens' assemblies and other deliberative processes oriented to participatory citizenship or digital citizenship, organized in academic institutions and comparable organizations.
3. Commonalities and differences between mini-publics organized in universities and in other settings.
4. Research action: proposals to improve future deliberations, experiments to represent future generations, assessing the environmental impact of deliberative work, pilot projects on participatory and deliberative practices platform or digitally-supported, student research, etc.

Information and calendar

Submission language: English

Submission deadline for abstracts (250-600 words, with a preliminary title, keywords and a biography of authors): **February 8th, 2025**

Participants will be asked to submit their **draft papers one week before the conference** to allow for thorough discussion and speed up the subsequent publishing process of a journal special issue and/or book.

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