

Should Higher Education be a Right?



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Monday, February 27
4-6 PM

Centre for Ethics
Larkin 200

It is sometimes claimed that higher education is a right, not a privilege. Defenders claim that tuition fees and student loans should be abolished because they place unjust barriers between citizens and valuable educational opportunities. While it is true that fees can be a barrier to access, there are good reasons to think that full public funding for college/university would actually do more to increase educational inequality than reduce it. Can a case be made for a right to higher education that takes these, and similar worries, into account? In *The Right to Higher Education: A Political Theory* (2022) I argue that there can. In this talk, I provide a philosophical justification of a right to higher education including its nature, scope, and institutional implications. One upshot of a right-based conception of higher education is that it entails a far more substantial role for education over the lifespan and provides a clear direction for the future growth and development of post-secondary education.

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