

## Engaged University: Global Citizenship and Democratic Governance in Uncertain Futures

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Thank you. Thank you for joining this afternoon Thank you also for providing opportunity for me to visit this wonderful University. I had been hearing about MSU (Michigan State University) from Hiram Fitzgerald and of course, for many years, we have been meeting in conferences, etc. and Hi (Hiram) has been talking about MSU's civic engagement. Also in our studies on civic engagement in higher education, we have been reading about land-grant universities and the special nature of their engagement, So it's quite different to read from a distance and quite engaging to arrive and spend three days in different faculty and different programs. I must also confess that I had the privilege of watching the presidential debate last night, so thank you for providing that opportunity as well. Because by the time it is aired in our part of the world, we already have multiple commentaries from all kinds of experts, so you don't get the raw experience, which I was able to get, so I could make judgments on my own, as opposed to the political pundits, who sort of pontificate on these issues. I'm also honored to be the first speaker in the series (Global Engagement Speaker Series). It's a great privilege to be here and in a way kickoff the series and there are many other three speakers. I know a couple of them, and certainly know the work of all three of them, and I think it's a wonderful initiative -- to create space for us to learn from the work that is going on here and at the same time share what we are doing in different parts of the world. So thank you for kicking off this series today. In the framing of this presentation today, I have been not looking at the definitions of engaged university, because that's something that all scholars in a university can figure it out, and in any case, in a university setting, you can never have an agreement on definition, because if you did, how would the scholarly work proceed? So I am looking at it from the point of view of the part of the society with which university tries to engage, so if you may, I am going to share my views from this lens of engaged, which university tries to engage. I want to talk with you a little bit about the nature of the work today in the way that I'm calling uncertain futures. For me, uncertainty does not imply catastrophe, but I think we are living in a particular period where futures are not so clearly visible or perhaps even imaginable. So what are some of the elements of this uncertain future if I look at from the vantage point as I described to you? There is a unbelievable contradiction between prosperity and poverty today. Over the last 50 years, if would take post-world War 2, 60 years. The way in which standards of living have improved around the world, the way well-being has improved the many diseases which we knew been eliminated, Polio is only one example of that. Income levels, convenience levels, quality of nutrition food, etc. At the same time, there is a vast section of our world,

which is very poor, which is not able to feed itself properly. Just a couple of weeks ago, there was a global hunger report that some of you may have seen. The fact that in 2016, we are preparing a global hunger report is the epitome of that contradiction. In some fundamental ways, this dilemma is not only for those who are struggling to survive, but I think it also challenges those who live in relative prosperity. Just two weeks ago, UNESCO and International Social Trends Council released their biannual report. This time, it is focused on growing inequalities. It's a compilation of research that has happened in the last five years on inequality trends and it is talking about inequality not just in terms of wealth or income or what traditionally would be seen as economic criteria, but also on a number of other vulnerabilities-- including violence, and a sense of discrimination, disenfranchisement, so growing inequality is not a phenomenon which is across nations but in each of our countries almost in each of the regions we have growing inequality and while a lot of discussion on sustainability focuses on environmental and climate issues, I believe that inequality in the face of growth and prosperity is not sustainable, neither for those who are poor and not for those that are rich. This is something that everybody has been talking about. The only point I'm more to emphasize there is that all the discourse from Paris agreement and hydro HFCs and much of it focuses on inventing new technologies and they're being labeled as green technologies, but there is very little emphasis being given by national, local, political, academic, intellectual leaders on the question of lifestyle. The problem of climate changes, unsustainable lifestyle, and while I'm always amazed in in this hotel, Kellogg center, where I've been eating several meals. I open a menu card and I find a number of dishes which are vegan. That's heartening, people are offering lots of more options of vegetarian food and this and that. In our parts of the world, more and more people are eating meat. While a lot more people are using bicycle around here, in our parts of the world, they're using three-wheelers, two-wheelers, four-wheelers, as if we have to all reach a level of exhaustion before we reach a (?) and part of the problem is that we are thinking that somehow we will invent technologies, green, solar, wind, etc. which will solve this problem. I think it's very important to focus our attentions our questions on lifestyle. In the days, early days, we were focusing on nuclear armaments, they're still reality, but while we are focusing on nuclear armament, cyberwars are taking place. Cybercrimes have increased and it's not just about presidential election please. The people's lives are being affected and part of the uncertain futures is communities and families returning to parochial narrow identities, creates a sense of xenophobia. So we are living in a world where access to new technology to connect us with anybody around the world instantaneously, but perhaps the same technology is now helping us to withdraw in a cocoon in some way and seek safety when security in that narrow parochial identity and a lot of anger or disquiet or a sense of insecurity with dissimilar others is at the root of quite a bit of conflict and violence that our societies are facing. Despite whatever the outcome of November 8 election and similar elections around the world, there is a way in which democracy is undersees and it is undersees because formal institutions of democracy do not seem to be working for all. They seem to be working for a few. Some people have talked about elite capture of democracy, big business capturing formal democracy, but in the face of exclusion, many people feel disenfranchised and this is not just those who are poor or live on two dollars a day or who are living in remote rural areas, there's a lot of people living in cities in lower middle class and middle class who also feel disenfranchised. So if people support for democracy is not there, then uncertainty will have to be dealt with in ways that may not be very palatable to humanity, because at least democracy is a way of resolving our differences, does provide an approach, not necessarily in its institutionalized form. One could add a number of other trains, but the combination of these create a sense of uncertainty and that uncertainty is not for those of us who are, you know, like my age or you know even for the young and in

some way. I want to also talk a little bit about the university's at crossroads and I'm not just referring to MSU or American universities. In 2014, GUNI (Global University Network for Innovations) which is a baby of UNESCO, after the first UNESCO education conference, convened a team to put together this volume which is called Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education Contributing to Social Change and why I put this picture here is because the discussion on Knowledge Engagement Higher Education was the discussion at crossroads. On the one hand, we have massification in enrollment going on if you look at Asian countries, some of the sub-Saharan African countries, you know, the gross enrollment ratio is galloping forward in countries like China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, but there is very little attention to issues of quality. Enrollment has been prioritized and a large number of people coming out of higher education are finding that their degree and their knowledge with that degree is not enough to get them meaningful employment. In northern universities, particularly in Europe where the local population enrollment is stagnating or declining, enrollment is being managed through what has come to be known as internationalization, which is a euphemism for students from other countries. In those societies, therefore attracting students, enrollment has become a bigger challenge while in many of our Asian societies, providing a quality education to highly enrolling and rapidly increasing, student body has become a challenge. In many universities in North America and Europe and to some extent the trend is spreading in Asia and to some extent Latin America. There is a demand from public authorities for universities being sites of innovation and some of that is through incubating new businesses, patenting new technologies, etc. Now in universities where high massification rate of enrollments taking place, maintaining and keeping quality of learning is far more important than worrying about patenting new knowledge and in other universities, finding ways to disseminate new knowledge through innovation and through potential collaboration with business is getting. So there is a sort of a pull-push, as if you can have either quality or innovation, you can't have both, and that kind of a dilemma is particularly being reinforced with ranking pressure and have been having checked with some of you last three days, it is a mirage if some University in India will try to (?) It's perhaps not even the right race to run. A lot of pressure on ranking lends itself to greater attention to research and a weaker attention to teaching. In situations where highly massified enrollment rates are growing, students expect teaching to happen first before ranking could increase the research, so particularly teaching undergraduates, I never studied undergraduate in North America. I did my Ph.D. in North America and US (United States) and I was very fortunate to have very good interaction with my academic professors and teachers, but I am told of late that even in very prestigious ranked, highly ranked, universities teaching of undergraduates takes a second or third or fourth priority and if the best of our professors are not available for youngest of our students, there is something going on which we may not be willing to accept or do something about. While this is the fifth GUNI report, the 6th GUNI report is in the works, it should be out later in the year, perhaps around December and the focus of the 6th GUNI report is how can university balance its local relevance with its global presence. It's a challenge that comes on the one hand from ranking pressure, because you are then participating in a global comparative exercise, but at the same time there is expectation from your regions, from your districts, from your provinces that university would be relevant to that. In two particular examples that you may have heard of recently it was a big issue going on in Cape Town University in South Africa where students were questioning colonial curriculum and then the curriculum and pedagogy and not being modified after the 1994 post-apartheid constitution. In India, where indigenous people live, tribal people live in India, there are five-six universities which have opened the last 10 years and when the new generation of indigenous kids go to those universities because their parents never went to high school or post-high school, they find the curriculum just totally

alienate from their context, they find perhaps the curriculum in those universities is same as the curriculum in Boston and then it raises questions about both the curriculum and the way to start the pedagogy and the relevance of higher education, learning and research to the context in which institutions are set up. So it's a challenge, it's not something that can be easily resolved, but my general sense is that global relevance cannot be sustained at the cost of local relevance. You can't be locally relevant and pretend that you can be globally relevant. Now you are fortunate here as I am well understood at MSU because you're anchored in the State of Michigan and you have your feet deeply in the soil, so to speak. That's not necessarily the case in many other places. Now given the uncertainties and given the crossroads in which universities are, I want to move on to talk a little bit about the question of how to we deal with the generation that is now occupying leadership positions in our societies, likely to occupy next 20 years and how can universities and higher education institutions contribute to a sense of building citizenship and strengthening democracy in everyday life. Many people describe citizenship in different ways, for me, it's a combination of belonging, identity, social practice, and to some extent of collective presence, in historically, kinship and ethnicity and tribes and extended families were the basis for citizenship and then in the last couple of hundred years, citizenship seems to have been defined vis-à-vis the state, nation's state and in doing so, we have perhaps created a situation where the diversity of our communities is being strictly and severely restricted because if they all belong to the same state, how can multiple nations survive there and increasingly, some scholars are talking about state nations as opposed to nation state as a way of organizing societies. So relationship between individual and the state, and the government, the public authority has gained much more attention in scholarly work and in what has come to be known as civic education. Many of us, our kids must be going to grade 7-grade 8, you learn some civic education, but what has been, what has not been paid attention adequately is the question of horizontal citizenship, a sense of rights and obligations to fellow citizens. Obviously it starts with your immediate family, kinship, community, but even in urban settlements where people from dissimilar backgrounds live together in a condominium community, they have to somehow figure out a way of cohabitation, because if you did not, every party will be affected. So this sense of interdependence horizontally and a sense of rights and obligations horizontally is something that has not been adequately addressed in citizenship and even we talk about global citizenship, we lack attention to phenomena, like people living in East Lansing, may actually be sending some donation in the case of hurricanes or earthquakes or tsunamis happening in parts of the world they could barely figure out on the map. What is it that gets us to do so? It is a sense of horizontal solidarity with fellow citizenship, which gets us to contribute towards that, even if we don't know them and never seen them, perhaps will never meet them and perhaps don't even know the context in which those people live. So, in my view, building a Democratic Society has not been given enough attention. We have given much more attention to building a democratic polity. We are trying to create institutions where the representative forms of democracy through electron system have been stabilized in some countries to parties in some countries 20, at different levels of representation from federal to provincial to local, but what does not being paid enough attention is how do you build democratic societies. How do you create learning about dissimilar others as a part of your citizenship learning? And this is where universities to their range of initiatives, including teaching and research, in my view, could play a very important role, by enabling a younger generation to understand how others live and how they make their own meaning in life. This kind of a horizontal citizenship, in my view, is a sense of building a Democratic Society. The vertical authority state, etc. is not something that is that's already being discussed paid attention. I don't want to spend too much time on that, but there is a question about

legitimacy of those institutions. Those of us who believe in formal political democracy and believe that everybody should cast their vote religiously and we do with ourselves, tend to sometimes feel that the younger generation is not so serious. Young people don't enroll for working the mailman or go for working and we may conclude, in my view, erroneously that they are not interested in democratic politics. My sense is that they are, but they're means of engagement with politics is politics in everyday life. Those of you who are active on social media will know how much more debate is taking place on issues of gender violence, gender exclusion, voice for the voiceless. Now none of that may get reflected necessarily in the form of politics, which is the major disconnect at the moment. So question of legitimacy has become far more critical than the functioning of those institutions as forms of democracy. The point about local participation, you know, I tend to approach the question of citizenship therefore, beyond the question of being a voter and a question of being beneficiary. Beneficiary is not normally used in the context of economically developed societies, but unless the concept which has been more frequently used for so-called developing world of poor communities that they are beneficiaries, but beneficiaries is a mindset as well, where you expect the state to look after you and you expect to the extent that if free food is available, you also expect somebody to put it in your mouth. That's the level of psychological dependency that the concept of beneficiary attends to. So if you look at formal democracy in many of our countries, you can find that you have a group of people who are gung-ho voters, group of people who are enjoying beneficiary status and like it very much and what is missing is in a way the notion of citizenship and whenever citizenship is even mentioned, it always mention have you cast your vote, is one indicator of citizenship or have you claimed your rights, services, or other benefits. But the notion of citizenship beyond being a voter and beneficiary is something that has not been adequately addressed in scholarly work, as well as in the ways in which it could be practiced. So I'm coming at this question that how horizontal citizenship, horizontal relations, democracy in society and social context could be strengthened, not at the cost of citizenship with vis-à-vis the state, not at the cost of formal political participation, but going beyond is sort of a notion of participative democracy, a democracy in everyday life and the question that you may wonder is what has universities got to do with it and how universities contribute towards this? So given the way I understand uncertain future, I see challenges to social and political democracy, democracy in society, democracy politics, democracy in economy, as the biggest threat coming from a variety of factors that I mentioned and learning about citizenship in an engaged university is that a sense of mine, meaning that I provide to an engaged university. An engaged university can play a role in developing this by doing a number of things and several of you at MSU are doing them very well, but it is not a sense that is more widely shared at the moment. Much of the discussion on engagement, university-community engagement focuses on the third mission of university, research and teaching as first and second and the third being service, so engagement gets ghetto-ized, if I may use that word, ghetto-ized in service function and the research and teaching mission of the University remains untouched with the perspective of engagement. So what would engaged university look like if we were to do it in this sense? First of all, engaged university will recognize that knowledge is produced in living, in life. Some of which is produced in laboratories, but quite a bit is produced in life as well. What it implies is that it recognizes multiple forms, modes, and cultures of knowledge production. It does not privilege one over the other. It doesn't put them on a vertical totem pole, saying this is superior, this is inferior, and therefore, engaged University would encourage engaged knowledge production and that engaged knowledge production would start from acknowledging that knowledge may reside in communities. Agricultural universities, the kind that your heritage is, universities working on fishery, livestock, forestry, they willingly had to acknowledge this,

that farmers were knowledgeable after all. Farmers existed before universities came. Farmers survived before agriculture science or start. So there must have done something right to be able to provide food earlier, before colleges of agriculture came into being, but that may not be necessarily true for many other disciplines in academia. So knowledge from life which means the function of research becomes engaged function. Teachers from real world, I was giving example to somebody this afternoon, that the best musicians may not actually have Ph.D. in music and if they don't have Ph.D. in music, would they not become professors in universities? The same may be apply to the best fisherman, who may be extremely knowledgeable. Would it be possible for them to come and teach a course on sustainable fisheries? This way of crossing the boundaries, of taking teaching in the community and also bringing community into classroom is another manifestation of engaged universities. In many locations and I think Michigan and MSU is a very good example of that. Universities also can play a very meaningful anchor role, a leadership role in a larger society. In today's context, governments, businesses, communities, civil society are not very readily able to have a conversation with each other. In many contexts, they are actually behaving in a adversarial manner. Is it possible that university could co-convene conversations across these diverse views, diverse actors? Could it be playing a leadership role? University has resources. University has legitimacy. Some in the community may look at university with awe, wonder. Some may look at it as apathy(?), but potentially universities could act as anchor institutions in bringing different stakeholders to come and have a shared conversation, not necessarily shared solutions, but least have a conversation. When I mention this as a potential role then some people in universities have said that all that don't you think we will enter into messy areas? Sure, you would enter into messy areas, but the world is messy and life and universities not very non messy either. I see that if you look at the number of universities, you look at the placement of higher education institutions in remote communities in many countries, the northern Uganda, the new university has come up five-six years ago. The warring factions going on there. Can university play a role? Can it play a role of anchor institution, an anchoring engaged, now that you may say is neither research nor teaching. Surely it could be service, but more importantly in the larger ethos and context is not conducive, your research and teaching will also not be meaningful. So this is something that I'm exploring whether this road can be more actively pursued by institutions of higher education, not necessarily only universities, but colleges and other professional institutions. And finally the way engaged universities could reclaim what I'm calling public sphere. When I was a student, many, many years ago, universities had a space for debates, disagreements. You could challenge, question, critique. And those who were not students or professors could also come in and participate. In which these were open to any way, a public space where conversations about matters of common concern, public concern could be shared, talked about, debated. That space seems to be shrinking of late and the reason is shrinking sometimes is where, universities are in some context under pressure to raise revenues, to breakeven, to mobilize additional resources, to do more efficient management, that pressure is on the one side. On the other side is that society has become less open to political debates. Our political leaders, our business leaders, kinds of people in authority tend to not like open conversation, debates, airing of different points of view and one of the major functions that higher education institutions used to perform, some places still performing, but perhaps could perform even more, is to provide that space, reclaim that space, so that difficult, critical probing, discomfoting conversations could also take place, so that the place for developing new discourse, new ideas, new ways of understanding world and solving its problems need not be limited to very formal structure teaching and research but university and education institution as a sphere as a space where reclaiming publics could be possible. I don't want to continue talking too long

just one final time that you may be interesting having a longer conversation I guess is that engaged universities may do some or more of these things, but one of the places for learning ethical behavior is a great deal of concern in this uncertain future and the meaning of education from an ethical, from the lens of ethics, is something that needs to be brought back. I have recently come across some business courses where they started talking about ethics in business, but ethical questions in the way we prepare the next generation of our students and leaders is something that has been not on the table in the same way as perhaps the future requires. So I brought these books because Rob (Glew) mentioned, referred to it this is a study we did on strengthening community in university research partnerships and the second book is on knowledge and engagement, in addition to the ones you saw. I've given a set to Burt (Bargerstock). I'm going to leave a set with Department of Community Sustainability because they have been engaging with me more enthusiastically, so thank you very much and let me stop here and then we may have a conversation. Thank you.