



上智大学
SOPHIA UNIVERSITY



IAU 2024 International Conference

Hosted by Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan (22-24 November)

University Values in a Changing World

In today's dynamic and ever-evolving global landscape, universities find themselves navigating heightened complexity and uncertainty. Institutions and their leaders are increasingly compelled to adapt swiftly to a diverse range of expectations. Against this backdrop, this conference highlights the pivotal role of values, exploring how they provide universities with guidance for decision-making, ethical conduct, and meaningful engagement. Furthermore, conference sessions will assess the extent to which these values are used to address the grand challenges encountered by societies.

These challenges transcend geographical boundaries, impacting universities worldwide irrespective of their size, traditions, cultures, or operational styles. From a social and moral perspective, academic leadership is under growing pressure to respond to issues of equity, equality, and access. Institutions and their leaders are expected to contribute to the establishment of just and sustainable societies aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda and its associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In epistemic terms, universities grapple with mounting skepticism, which, compounded by the rise of populist, autocratic, and nationalist policies, seeks to undermine the legitimacy and relevance of higher education as trusted and autonomous places of knowledge, research, education, and service.

Politically, higher education finds itself entwined in the intricate and unstable dynamics of national and international politics. Institutions are compelled to address complex questions related to identity, ethics, and civic responsibility, all while contending with concerns about democratic institutions, human dignity, and peace.

Simultaneously, rapid technological advancements, particularly in generative artificial intelligence, exert profound influence on education, research, and collaboration, presenting unprecedented opportunities and daunting challenges across all disciplines. The times demand a reevaluation of academic engagement and knowledge production and dissemination.

Values, intrinsic to the very essence of universities since their inception, are deeply embedded in diverse cultures and traditions. They are integral to specific value systems within the societies in which universities operate. Amid this rich and diverse set of cultures and traditions, do higher education institutions around the world share certain fundamental university values? Are academic values, such as autonomy, academic freedom, and research integrity, at risk of being subverted by political pressures? To what extent do values play a crucial role in upholding the integrity and trustworthiness of universities in society? These are essential questions that this conference promises to explore and address.