

## Introduction

Not originally a topic for *Tourism's Horizon: Travel for the Millions*, the issue of the role of universities in providing expertise, educating many young people and shaping agendas has itself come onto the agenda in recent times. It seems appropriate to end this volume by featuring contributors who are concerned with the character of the institutions concerned with generating and passing on knowledge and skills.

Tourism is an industry that many young people want to succeed in, to earn a good living and carve out a career for themselves. That involves a good deal of training, and a fair amount of learning about the world. What should the balance be between training in business and its various functions and techniques on the one hand, and wider critical and contextual knowledge on the other ?

We have the growth of the 'critical' side of tourism studies – there are a breadth of social science approaches to variety of issues. Yet that does not seem to have led to a culture of dialogue and debate across different perspectives: a point well noted by a number of contributions to the expert interviews in this volume, and surely something fundamental to education.

The issue of academic freedom, premised upon freedom of expression, looms large in universities. Pretty much everyone opposes limits on expression that affect them and people who share their views. Yet fewer are prepared to defend the freedom of speech and enquiry for people whose views they oppose. Indeed, some actively discourage the expression of conflicting ideas, and adopt legalistic, cultural, bureaucratic and coercive means to inhibit free speech. This effectively positions academic freedom as something instrumental – a means to an end. Yet others insist it is an end in itself; a principle that underpins a healthy public sphere, and foundational for a university.

An impulse to sideline or even silence dissenting views is too common across the political spectrum today – it is a shared feature of many on political Left and Right respectively (suggesting Left and Right may be 'zombie categories' – devoid of life but still hanging around). TH:TM