

Into Complementarity: History of the Humanities and Non-Tech in Engineering Education

This panel focuses on the humanities as a subject taught to students of engineering and its position in the curriculum. The key question is whether there has been a technological “core” of engineering education, to which the humanities and other “non-technical” or “complementary” subjects have been attached in various ways.

Our interest in this matter comes from present-day calls for humanities knowledge to have a greater presence at technical universities in relation to issues pertaining to for example AI and sustainability, and indications that engineering schools with broader remit are more successful (Geschwind et al 2020). Such calls ignite discussions about boundaries and relations, the professional identity of the engineer, and the actors involved in shaping technical universities.

The shape of an engineering education is formed by underlying views about technology and society. Underneath curricula lie notions of the societal role of the engineer, of the humanities, and the connection (or lack thereof) between the two (Hitt et al 2023, Ruprecht 1997). We are interested in historical expressions of these and adjacent debates.

The panel is hosted by Nina Wormbs and Jakob Henningsson. Please send your proposal to nina@kth.se or jakhen@kth.se.

Literature

Geschwind, Broström & Larsen (eds.), *Technical universities: Past, present and future*, Springer, 2020.

Hitt et al., “Educating the Whole Engineer by Integrating Engineering and the Liberal Arts”, in Johri (ed), *International Handbook of Engineering Education Research*, Routledge, 2023.

Ruprecht, “Humanities in Engineering Education”, *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 22:4, 363-375, 1997.