

Epistemological (importance of interdisciplinary) and economic (training of 21st century skills) arguments appear to be boosting the liberal arts and sciences model around the world and in China. These are driven strongly by the emergence of a global knowledge economy and into a converging agenda for undergraduate education. Yet the humanistic tradition of liberal arts underlining the moral and social dimension—that is, the importance of educating the whole person, including personal and intellectual development with a view to social responsibility and conceptions of citizenship—is also relevant in Chinese debates. It is this social-moral dimension of liberal education that is perhaps the most complex one to (re-)define in the new global century, which does not seem to be characterized by convergence in political and ideological spheres. This raises questions around the perception, understanding, and interpretation of liberal arts and science education in China and its cultural fit. How, for example, can skills like creativity and critical thinking be implemented in a system by politically constraint governance models?