

Thursday March 19th 2015

To Members of the Nordic Council Concerning NSU

Dear Sir or Madam,

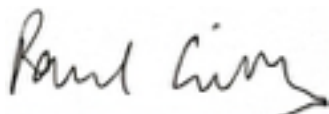
I am writing in wholehearted and enthusiastic support of the Nordic Summer University [NSU]. I understand that it is in grave danger of having its governmental funding cut. The reputation that has been won for this initiative among scholars in other European countries is a high one. But my plea on behalf of it is based upon more than its unique academic reputation.

While I was based at Yale University in the US, I was very fortunate in having the chance to participate in the 2004 session and I was therefore able to see at first hand what a unique and important opportunity was provided by the summer university. This was and remains something more than simply a chance to promote effective collaboration and interaction across national borders. The NSU was among the most fertile multidisciplinary academic environments I have encountered in more than thirty years of teaching and research in many countries. The level of debate was extremely high and the quality of interaction was memorable. The path-breaking operation of the various study circles was a model that seem to me to exemplify all that was best in multidisciplinary academic work.

The NSU also seemed to have been able to create something like a unique tone and style of trans-disciplinary scholarship that was innovative while remaining in step with broader cultural and policy questions.

Academic institutions are under new fiscal pressures everywhere. It has become routine to observe that the mission and character of universities is rapidly changing. A narrowing of focus has often been accompanied, in the social sciences and humanities especially, by a wholesale loss of curiosity and imagination. Initiatives like the NSU have a special role in offsetting that disabling crisis. They have nourished curiosity and fed the imagination. It would be folly to lose this precious scholarly space. Please rethink the decision to cease its funding.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Gilroy FBA
Professor of American and English Literature