

## The University Idea: Retrospection, Vertions and Prospects

**Abstract.** The paper explores the main versions of the university idea, mission and essence in the context of different historical eras. The authors analyze the philosophical and pedagogical heritage of foreign and Russian thinkers, and trace the main evolutionary stages of higher school development. A great variety of university ideas comes from the precise historical peculiarities and experiences; though, all the existing versions are associated with idealistic (platonic, essentialist) positions. However, the authors highlight the historical relativistic approach regarding the higher school as flexible and adapting to the requirements of the relating era, and holding that declaration of the university idea changes according to the altering society demands. In conclusion, it is emphasized that the most prospective direction for overcoming the higher educational crisis involves considering the society demands and constructing and reconstructing a functional response of the higher school to those demands. The research findings can be applied to further studies aimed at analyzing the higher school position and predicting its future.

**Keywords:** university, higher school, university idea, university mission.

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