SSRC President Calhoun chosen as new director of London School of Economics

Craig Calhoun, president of the Social Science Research Council since 1999, has been appointed the new director of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Dr. Calhoun, a world-renowned social scientist whose work connects sociology and history to culture, communication, politics, philosophy, and economics, will take up the post on September 1, 2012.

At the SSRC, Calhoun initiated major projects on the public communication of social science, on universities and knowledge institutions, on the privatization of risk, on disasters and emergencies, and on religion and the public sphere. He deepened the Council’s long commitment to combining academic excellence with the exploration of new directions for the social sciences and bringing research more effectively to bear on issues of public concern. As he insisted, "We must set high standards for ourselves, but in order to inform the public well, not to isolate ourselves from it."

Michael J. Watts, chair of the SSRC Board of Directors, commented on the appointment: "Craig is a public intellectual of international stature, a brilliant scholar equally at ease in the seminar room and at the head of a national research organization. A social and cultural theorist of great distinction, he is fully committed to the notion that academia must simultaneously produce critical social science and engage with, and be embedded within, society at large. LSE has appointed an innovative, energetic, and visionary new director. The school will unquestionably flourish under his leadership."

Professor Calhoun is an American citizen but has deep connections to the United Kingdom. He took a DPhil in history and sociology at Oxford University and a master’s in social anthropology at Manchester. He co-founded, with Richard Sennett, professor of sociology at LSE and New York University, the NYLON program, which brings together graduate students from New York and London for cooperative research initiatives.

Professor Calhoun is the author of several books, including Nations Matter, Critical Social Theory, Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China, and The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere, and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements.

The SSRC has initiated an open competition for President Calhoun’s successor, overseen by its Board of Directors.

For more information about Craig Calhoun, see http://www.ssrc.org/calhoun/. The Social Science Research Council is at http://www.ssrc.org.

For more information about LSE, see http://www.lse.ac.uk.

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