That which is worthy of love: What could Aristotle’s friendship arguments contribute to an ethical understanding of student-staff partnership?

NB: Lewis will be delivering a talk based on collaborative work carried out with Philip Woods and Karen Smith.

In this talk we engage with the ethics of student-staff partnership in higher education. The talk is aimed at students, academic and leaders who are interested in the way they engage with each other. This paper may also be of interest to those in other areas of education where partnership working is seen to be a significant part of their practice. Until very recently much of the discourse of student-staff partnership (sometimes called partnerships in learning and teaching or pedagogical partnerships) have focussed on policy demands and the countering the neo-liberal culture that has rapidly changed students into ‘customers’ and ‘consumers’. This talk problematises the limited engagement with the ethical foundations of partnership working in higher education. Aristotle’s friendship arguments, from the Nicomachean Ethics, are explained in order to understand the purposes and philia (that which is worthy of our time, love and energies) of different types of relationship. After this analysis, we springboard from the
different types of friendship, which include utilitarian-, pleasure- and flourishing-based, to reflect on how these may help us understand the central purposes and philia of student-staff partnerships. We then develop a fourth partnership, which focusses on the creation of ideas and contribution. We then move into a discussion of the need to make members of partnerships aware of such ethical underpinnings, so that there is a critical and reflective understanding of how such a partnership will/not contribute to their conception of a flourishing life. This paper has been developed with the support of funding from PESGB.

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Please note the slightly later start time: 5.30pm to 7.30pm in room G2.01 (Harvard Lecture Room in the Gateway building) at University of Bedfordshire, Bedford Campus, Polhill Avenue, Bedford. MK41 9EA.

This event is free. Tickets are available at: http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/pesgb-bedford-6070108391

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