

*Statement Voted at the 2021 SERCIA AGM in Zaragoza, Spain*

## **WHERE WE STAND**

SERCIA would like to join the many academic societies that have been defending higher education and research in the humanities around the world.

Research requires time, freedom and respect for human dignity.

## **TIME**

The neo-liberal ideology that celebrates competition and short-term objectives has wreaked havoc on our planet and in our societies. It has proven unable to rise to the challenge of climate change and, faced with a global pandemic, is proving equally incapable of learning from its mistakes regarding research and higher education policies. In our universities, it has led us to a crisis of meaning whereby more time is spent carrying out administrative tasks and less time is devoted to our main goals: educating students and producing knowledge. The COVID pandemic has exacerbated and brought out more clearly the issues that undermine the academic communities in the current neo-liberal policy framework in particular: increased administrative workload and increased digital workload (teaching and educational platforms, e-mail availability). We have now reached a tipping point that is putting students, teachers and administrative personnel at risk physically and psychologically.

## **FREEDOM**

As an academic society that promotes the study of mainstream, national and independent cinemas alike, SERCIA opposes the utilitarian bent that has led to the shutting down of so-called dying fields, and denounces the competition this ideology has introduced between various fields or subjects in the name of their economic viability. Research objectives should not be dictated by the market but should be chosen by researchers themselves. As a community that studies the representational quality of cinema, SERCIA is particularly worried about political attempts to restrict academic freedom in exploring how film engages with society.

## **RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY**

Finally, the imposition of a neo-liberal paradigm on research and higher education has created a system that exploits non-tenured faculty that universities and other higher education institutions could quite simply not do without. It has bred competition, dissatisfaction and anxiety within the departments that impact students.

## **WHAT WE WANT**

In order to reassert the value of science and the humanities, SERCIA asks of all governments and higher education bodies that they demonstrate their faith in science and the humanities, in students, and in the future by creating tenured jobs for all higher education personnel, increasing grants for students, raising salaries for teachers, researchers and administration, providing sustainable funding for fundamental research and guaranteeing the freedom to do our work.