

## *FORUM*

The following Forum submission is in response to the article entitled "The Practice of Integrity Within the University" published in the *Journal of Educational Thought*, Vol. 34, #3, pp. 265-284.

### *Practicing Integrity: Some Suggestions*

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**ABSTRACT:** In their recent article in this journal, Raymond Calabrese and Angela Barton (2000) draw our attention to the importance of the concept and practice of integrity in the university. They provide a definition of integrity and consider its relationship to faculty, academic programs, and the connections of the university with its broader community. I wish to recast a portion of what they provide in order to offer a somewhat broader concept of academic ethics. Specifically, I propose hospitality as the fundamental ethical virtue for the academy, for it is the practice of hospitality that underlies the achievement of integrity. I also suggest that the concept of covenant works better than does Calabrese and Barton's use of social contract to highlight the ethical dimension of some university activities, especially teaching.

**RESUME:** Dans ce journal, Raymond Calabrese et Angela Barton (2000), ont écrit récemment un article dans lequel ils attirent notre attention sur le concept et l'usage de l'intégrité à l'université. Ils lui donnent une définition et la voient intégrée au corps enseignant, aux programmes académiques et ayant une plus grande portée sur la communauté de l'université. J'espère faire partager une partie de leur opinion

afin d'offrir un concept plus large de l'éthique académique. Dans le cadre de l'académie, je pense, plus particulièrement, que l'hospitalité, comme vertue fondamentale, est la base de toute intégrité. De même, je préfère le concept de contrat de travail plutôt que celui de contrat social, comme le proposent Calabrese et Barton, pour ainsi mettre en valeur la dimension éthique de certaines activités universitaires et plus particulièrement, celle de l'enseignement.

Raymond Calabrese and Angela Barton have rightly emphasized the importance of practicing integrity within the university (Calabrese & Barton, 2000). What they call the social contract of the university with the community implies that the university and its faculty and staff have their reason for being in meeting the educational expectations and needs of the broader community that supports them. Honoring this contract requires that they more self-consciously practice integrity. I agree with this important thesis, but suggest that it could be expanded to include recognizing that the practice of hospitality is foundational to academic ethics and integrity. In what follows, I first review the main points of Calabrese and Barton. Then in the second section I suggest how hospitality is foundational to our common life. I also propose covenant as a better term than social contract for describing what teaching involves.

## I

Central to Calabrese and Barton's definition and analysis of integrity is the distinction between espoused values and theories in use (Argyris & Schön, 1974). This is the distinction between what we tell others (and ourselves) about who we are, on the one hand, and what in fact we are, on the other hand, as disclosed by what we do. The relationship between what we espouse and how we behave tells much about our integrity. Our ethics involves the moral principles, codes, and practices to which we subscribe. They are part of what we espouse. However, our practices disclose what moral or ethical concepts (our theories-in-use) we actually value.

A gap or misalignment between the espoused and the actual suggests a lack of integrity and trustworthiness. Calabrese and Barton observe that universities need to attend more carefully to

their various levels of integrity. There are misalignments between what universities espouse and how they behave. Without the practice of integrity at the personal, programmatic, and institutional level, ethical standards in universities cannot be achieved. "Integrity makes ethics authentic by establishing a climate of trust. Integrity becomes the public expression of what constitutes the private character of an individual or organization" (Calabrese & Barton, 2000, p. 268).

The relationship of a university with its broader community is contained in what the authors call its social contract – the at-least tacit social purposes and common good that the university exists to serve through the academic programs its faculty provide. Accordingly, the authors speak of three perspectives of integrity. These are the perspectives presented by the faculty in relationship with students; the perspective of the university in its relationships with faculty, students, and external bodies; and the perspective reflecting the correspondence of the academic programs to community needs. Problems of integrity arise when university personnel policies and practices for faculty ignore the needs of students, when universities pursue their own objectives at the expense of their responsibilities to the communities they serve, and when the programs offered lack appropriate standards or qualified faculty.

Calabrese and Barton call for creating and attending to an environment of integrity throughout the university. "The mission of public institutions and their members should be to promote policies and practices that encourage, mandate, and monitor integrity" (2000, p. 279). To this end, they rightly identify the importance of conversations within and throughout the university that focus on issues of espoused theory and linkages with theories-in-use. In order for these conversations to take root, I suggest, a prior climate of openness must be created, modeled, and reinforced by those who enjoy significant influence at the university. For connected with integrity as the authors define the term is what I am calling the virtue of hospitality.

## II

I suggest that the practice of hospitality is a presupposition for integrity. By hospitality I have in mind the absolute centrality of

openness to the other in both sharing and receiving knowledge and insights. It is connected with integrity because hospitality requires trustworthiness, sincerity, and honesty. But without a prior openness to the other – that is, without practicing hospitality – integrity will be missing and neither the individual institution nor its faculty and staff are likely to escape the ingrained self-preoccupation that seems to be the mark of our times.

Hospitality reminds us of the importance of others. They are almost always necessary in helping to bring us to see the gap between what we want ourselves to be and be known as, and what we actually are. For our espoused theories often blind us to our actual behaviors. But it is conversations and other interactions with colleagues, friends, and even strangers that – with sufficient openness on our part – can bring us to greater self-awareness. There is little self-understanding that comes without understanding others. This seems true at the three levels of integrity of which Calabrese and Barton write. Thus integrity in the relationships of the university with its supporting community require the trust and wholeness that community leaders may need to demand of the university. Wrapped up in competition with each other, universities can become forgetful of their neighborhoods and indifferent to community needs and expectations. Likewise, when practicing insufficient openness with their own faculty and staff, university leaders can start to take them for granted and dwell in secretiveness instead. Integrity suffers.

But it is in their own attitudes toward teaching and learning that universities and faculties can most grievously lack integrity. For without openness toward colleagues and students, faculty (often encouraged by their universities) lose their grip on the conditions for extending truth and facilitating the search for it. Openness toward the other is essential for validating one's own truth claims. Without hospitality being conspicuously practiced, we can have no confidence that the search for truth is being advanced. For the other is always one who may function as teacher, not just student. Current scholars of pedagogy recommend a paradigm of learning rather than one of instruction (Barr & Tagg, 1995). But under both paradigms, teaching without

the practice of hospitality is reduced to credentialing and learning approaches the receipt of information without any internal impact. Education becomes a kind of mechanical interaction – an exchange of information for tuition.

Few governmental, accrediting, professional, or disciplinary agencies seem to give academic ethics the attention it deserves. Even the otherwise commendable efforts of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching fall short of attending to the rooting of academic ethics, especially to the centrality of hospitality as a cardinal virtue. Its recent publication, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, does conclude by looking at the qualities and character of the scholar and argues that scholarship has throughout “a moral character” and that the university is to be guided “by an ethical imperative” (Glassick, Maeroff, & Huber, 1997, p. 61). However important the virtues may be that the publication discusses and upholds – the main ones are perseverance and courage, as well as integrity – they seem secondary rather than truly foundational and primary. Each is implicated and rooted in the more fundamental and comprehensive virtue of hospitality.

Integrity, as I have argued, is not in this sense primary. One can display integrity in one’s own individual work and yet be indifferent to the work of others – a reluctant participant in broader educational discussions, even closed to their wider perspectives. Certainly much criticism of the academy today is aimed at just such intellectual narrowness and fragmentation. And however important individual perseverance is, one’s tenacious and hospitable support of the learning of others is essential. For increase in knowledge is ultimately a collective effort. Likewise, courage is essential, for one must accept one’s own vulnerability as scholar and teacher. But courage must be evident in the hospitable support and defense of others who may be pursuing unpopular or controversial subjects. Learning is a profoundly social enterprise and requires the practice of hospitality.

My point is that integrity, and other academic virtues like perseverance and courage, can be used in individualistic ways. Each of these virtues can be practiced instrumentally, to advance

the well-being of the individual or of his or her community at the expense of the other individual or the other community. The important points that Calabrese and Barton make need to be extended to avoid this individualism. Recognizing the foundational importance of hospitality – and practicing it – is the best way to transcend the tacit instrumentalism of the virtuous character (Bennett, 1998).

Practicing hospitality in the educational environment also directs one toward the notion of the covenant rather than the social contract. A social contract highlights the responsibilities one has toward others, but it also thereby suggests limits to these responsibilities. The covenant, by contrast, emphasizes the notion of a pledge or vow to seek the welfare of the other, even in situations where the rules of the contract might not apply or which they might not address. The concept of the covenant seems much more appropriate to the work of teaching with integrity.

### III

Unfortunately, much of North American higher education seems indifferent to matters of hospitality and integrity. Indeed, some argue that much of Western higher education is enmeshed in consumerist ideology with corporate universities as the result (Readings, 1996). Even so, some academics are paying more attention to the ethical dimensions of different social areas that they study. Thus, we read about business ethics, health care ethics, journalism and political ethics. But most academics seem reluctant to attend to issues of their own academic ethics or to the nature of the university or of education itself as a moral enterprise. What we need are more statements like that of Calabrese and Barton to remind us of the importance of practicing integrity at all levels of the university. And, I suggest, what is needed is more attention to actually practicing integrity and the hospitality that makes it possible.

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