



Canadian **Federation** for the
Humanities and Social Sciences
Fédération canadienne
des sciences humaines

The Statement on Research Ethics and Scholarly Integrity

**Submitted by the Sub-committee on Research Ethics and
Scholarly Integrity**

*Honesty and trust...[are]... the centerpiece of academic integrity, the
fundamental tenet of teaching, learning and scholarship. All members of the
University community have a vested interest in the cultivation of an
environment that both values and promotes academic integrity.*

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Preamble

In 2001, the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences established a sub-committee on research ethics and scholarly integrity. Among its tasks, the committee was to survey the member associations of the Federation and evaluate the status of member association's statements on research ethics and scholarly integrity. This task was undertaken this year (see the report on the sub-committee's survey). As an additional task, the sub-committee was to draft a statement on research ethics and scholarly integrity for consideration and adoption by the board. The statement which follows in this report was approved and adopted at the March board meeting of the Federation in 2006..

Research Ethics and Scholarly Integrity

The academic ethic is the sum of...obligations which are involved in the pursuit and transmission of advanced knowledge and in roles and in conduct affected by the real or presumed possession of such knowledge.

The Calling of Education, Edward Shils¹

In developing these principles, the sub-committee on research ethics and scholarly integrity looked to the tradition of learned societies and academic treatises in understanding "research ethics" and "scholarly integrity" as broad concepts. Such concepts include an understanding of universities as places, to quote Newman,

...where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge...It is a place which wins the admiration of the young by its celebrity, kindles the affection of the middle-aged by its beauty, and rivets the fidelity of the old by its associations. It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an Alma Mater of the rising generation.²

As DeGeorge more recently put this sentiment,

The function of...universities is to preserve, transmit and develop knowledge on the one hand and on the other to produce citizens capable of taking an active, critical part in the governance of their society.³

¹ Edward Shils (1997) *The Calling of Education*. Edited by S. Grosby. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 9.

² John Henry Cardinal Newman (1927) *The Idea of a University*, p. 473.

³ Richard De George (2003) "Ethics, academic freedom and academic tenure." *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 1 (1), p. 12.

Poff framed this same understanding of these concepts as the pertain to the professoriate when she said,

...at her or his best, the professor is paradigmatically representative of a vocational nature that should include four ideal characteristics: calling, competence, character and courage. In these senses, a professor professes the 'truth' and has a vocational calling to inquire after...and disseminate knowledge, is a competent expert in her or his field, manifests character through integrity in research and teaching and has the courage to advocate...no matter what the personal cost of doing so may be.⁴

The sub-committee also benefited from the work of scholars in Canada and elsewhere who have articulated thoughtful statements about their vocation and the responsibilities which follow from the profession of professor, both historically and currently.

Statement on Research Ethics and Scholarly Integrity

As a federation of teachers and scholars representing 68 disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic associations in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Canada, we acknowledge and embrace the following principles:⁵

1. The primary responsibility of academic teachers and scholars is the responsibility, with respect to their disciplines or interdisciplinary areas of specialization, to seek and state the 'truth' or to reflect the realities of peoples as they see it. This requires freedom of inquiry as a necessary condition and includes the responsibilities which accompany such freedom, including competence, intellectual honesty and critical self-discipline and judgment in the creation and dissemination of knowledge;
2. As professionals, teachers and colleagues mutually extend the commitment to free scholarly inquiry and its attendant responsibilities to other members of the

⁴ Deborah Poff (2004) "Challenges to integrity in university administration: Bad faith and loyal agency." *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 2 (3), p. 210.

⁵ In drafting these principles, the sub-committee acknowledges the work of many authors and organizations including the American Association of University Professors, the Canadian Psychological Association, the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, the American Historical Association and the American Modern Languages Association.

- scholarly community. This includes mutual respectful engagement in debate and constructive criticism in intellectual agreements and disagreements;
3. As teachers, it is also a responsibility to promote and protect freedom of inquiry and respect for the truth among students. This includes the requirement that teachers fully appreciate their roles as intellectual mentors and guides and avoid all forms of exploitation or discrimination, including all grounds of discrimination prohibited by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom and as stipulated in other anti-discrimination legislation in Canada;
 4. In the evaluation of students, teachers should foster honest academic conduct and to the best of their ability ensure that evaluations reflect the overall merit of student performance;
 5. As scholars and teachers, there is a further responsibility to acknowledge the work of others, including that of students;
 6. As well, the commitment to effective teaching and continuing development as professionals are held to be core values;
 7. As scholars and researchers, professors have a strong commitment to foster high ethical standards for the conduct of research involving humans and other sentient beings; and,
 8. As members of the community at large, teachers and scholars have the rights and obligations of citizenship. They should ensure that their personal activities are clearly delineated as such when they are speaking and acting as private citizens.

Respectfully submitted by the Sub-committee on Research Ethics and Scholarly Integrity

Sub-committee Members:

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