

Jagiellonian University Academic Code of Values

approved by the Jagiellonian University Senate on 25 June 2003

The Preamble to the Academic Code of Values of the Jagiellonian University

Science and higher education in Poland are undergoing significant restructuring processes. Alongside state schools and universities, private education has developed rapidly and in addition to free of charge studies, various forms of expensive educational services have emerged. The university structure and the university functioning conditions are changing too. Cooperation but also competition with foreign universities pose challenges and threats that had not been recognised before. Members of the academic communities tend to take up several jobs, which may affect the activities of home institutions, as well as the quality of scientific research. Participating in activities that pretend to be scientific, such as political events, providing biased expert opinions on corporate orders or spreading para-scientific views in the media may also endanger the quality of the university work. The number of unfavourable phenomena that occur in thinking, in motivation to act and in the ethical attitudes of the members of the academic community seems to be increasing too. Today, in the face of growing threats, it has become necessary to recall these moral and ethical values developed over the centuries of the tradition that shape the authority of science. These values express moral power of the academic world and the sense of mission in promoting ethical and civic virtues. There are many of such values, principles and norms. However, presenting their canon synthetically seems sufficient as by recalling most fundamental obligations all the remaining values are indirectly represented too.

1. Truth

Service to truth is a fundamental duty of a scientist. It is both about discovering the truth, formulating sound judgments and theories, and about proclaiming truth and educating students in its spirit. Service to truth also means the search for new, original and better solutions, as well as the promotion of innovativeness and creativity. The opposite of truth is not only outright falsehood, but also half-truths, prejudices and wacky theories, which tend to express ideological assumptions and extraneous business expectations usually in line with the tasks commissioned outside of science. Service to truth should also guide the scientific approach in evaluating research projects and works, which should be done

regardless of social and professional environments, constrains, influences, demands as well as all non-scientific, personal or national prejudices. The attitude towards truth should also become the criterion of the self-assessment of one's own achievements. Continuous, valid and honest assessment must outweigh ambitions, fashions and the importance of past successes. Truth is an autotelic value: being the goal of science itself, it cannot be used as a means to attain other purposes, especially when rejecting the ethical principle of impartiality in acquiring it.

2. Responsibility

Responsibility relates to a scientific discipline, institutions and environment in which scholars act. It also means responsibility for educating students, exercising scientific authority outside the academic world, including disseminating and applying research results. This responsibility concerns all the scientific disciplines. However, it particularly relates to the disciplines in which ground-breaking discoveries are made and new concepts are formulated. They may lead to radical but positive changes in human life, but at the same time they generate substantial risks of side effects. Responsibility also entails full participation in all the forms of the University life, when it comes to holding academic functions, teaching, or protecting the home institution against competition. Consequently, any reluctance to perform solid and responsible work for the University, neglecting duties and obligations, and, in particular, acting directly or indirectly to its detriment is an offence not only within the meaning of the law. Also, it means violating good academic practices and undermining the principles defining the community of scholars.

3. Kindness

Science together with academic life make a long historical chain of taking over the outcomes of our predecessors' work, generating new knowledge and passing it on to next generations in the spirit of educational solemnity. But this process should happen, above all, in the atmosphere of kindness towards our successors, especially towards students and the aspiring adepts of science. It is each master's duty to shape new masters and to share knowledge transparently and solidly with their audiences: listeners to their lectures and readers of their scholarly papers. Kindness also entails support of the budding minds, help to develop academic interests, and discreet but effective monitoring of the first, independent steps of the seminar participants, graduate or doctoral students. Also, kindness involves creating a healthy workplace environment, where the energy and enthusiasm of all the participants has a chance to be released: such an environment is free from pettiness, off-putting criticism, undue haste or feigned actions. Kindness should be tangible during exams and pre-exams, which, unfortunately, are not always free from callousness, ill-will or even oppressive behaviours. These malpractices are also noticeable in other areas of academic life, such as promotions,

where the approval of academic community is needed. In contrast, working environment which is full of respect, trust and creative synergy generates human potential that not only encourages us to multiply efforts, but also it promises satisfaction from our own and other community members' achievements in research and teaching.

4. Fairness

Higher education institution can be perceived as the higher school of fairness which offers lecturing on how to recognise, define and apply justice and respect its principles. Naturally, grades in index books and diplomas should reflect the factual state of students' knowledge, rather than be the twists of fate or the subjective favouring shown by the examiner (sometimes caused by side factors, including morally reprehensible factors, such as corruption, nepotism, sexual harassment, paid tutoring sessions with lecturers, and the like). Assessment that creates opportunities for scientific development or opens doors to a fast, non-academic career should be fair too. Fairness is also needed when it comes to professional and ethical assessment of other scholars' work, in peer assessment, especially in competitions, promotions, grants and awards, and in creating formal hierarchies within scientific institutions. Fairness should be applied when allocating duties, so that they do not become an excessive burden for some, and unjustified privilege for others who then tend to take advantage of these inequalities and take up numerous tasks outside their home university. Fairness should be applied in public institutions, with respect to economic conditions, where a demand for fair and appropriate remuneration adequate to the merits within the University framework appears urgent.

5. Reliability

Science is the domain of extraordinary reliability, accuracy, uncompromising attitude to facts, scientific research as well as to the language in which theories are offered and knowledge is disseminated. Scholarly works and academic lectures must never sacrifice the principle of reliability for the display of eloquence, originality and false reasoning. Academic language must not be taken over by non-scientific registers, which express commonplace views, satisfy opinions of the majority and the expectations formulated by influential decision-making bodies. Reliability shapes the desirable academic efficiency and solid methodology, while offences in this area undermine the trust that science should enjoy as the most credible signpost for human knowledge and attitudes. Reliability always requires accountability and accurate logical reasoning. Also, it requires the ability to be critical and self-critical, up to the limits of unattainable moral exemplar, including the ability to admit own mistakes, generosity towards opponents, and, if necessary, courage to alter one's own unfair or unjustified views.

6. Tolerance

The history of science combines not only scientific successes, usually added up to the previous achievements in the linear process of a simple accumulation of the theories that follow. Its historical sense also embraces unsuccessful, incomplete attempts as well as the attempts which bring about uncertain resolutions. Such attempts are often important and instructive, as they exclude some options and falsify hastily adopted concepts. No historical period or school, no method, and no most enlightened mind can terminate the process of the history of science. Therefore, cognitive development requires caution and, above all, the recognition of the importance of diversity, its understanding and its critical approval, *i.e.* tolerance. Tolerance means attentive listening to the opinions of others, even if these opinions are in contrast to generally accepted views, including our own, personal views. Tolerance includes opening up to other cultures and different concepts, even to those clearly inconsistent with our own scientific or informal approaches. Tolerance means the rejection of a discriminatory division of students and fresh researchers according to their national, racial, political characteristics or their beliefs. It is also acknowledging the recognition of the primacy of reason over emotions and demanding from the entire academic community to respect the principle of a rational and tolerant attitude as the principle ethically approved by modern society, especially by its intellectual elites.

7. Loyalty

Each well-functioning community expects from its members mutual respect, cooperation and solidarity while each individual of each group is expected to respect the principles of loyalty towards the entire group. The academic community creates conditions for the development of unique individual talents and personal virtues. At the same time, it fosters social flourishing of the University, whose good name becomes a quality symbol of the entire community and a hallmark of respect for each staff member and each student due to the splendour of the *Almae-Matris*. Loyalty towards own's own academic community should be manifested both on a daily basis and in special moments that require courage, sacrifice and commitment, and pushing aside privatism and opportunism. Loyalty entails both employee's discipline and supporting democratically elected authorities, as well as solidarity towards colleagues, students and all the members of the academic community in supporting joint ventures, primarily aimed at building the prestige of the University. Actions intended directly and indirectly against the authority of the University and counting against it can be treated as offences against loyalty. In particular, breaching the principle of loyalty involves intentional undermining the position of the University as the whole, weakening its structures, and endangering well-being of the colleagues and other members of this community.

8. Independence

Scientific creativity is a process of two intertwining activities: critically approaching the achievements of others, and, on the other hand, adding up the results of one's own independently developed research. It is expressed primarily in publications that give the discoveries their final form, revealing the characteristics of a given scientist, defining his/her methodology or language, or the specificity of a research group. Each violation of the principle of such independence means breaking the fundamental rules of the mission of the scientific approach. Therefore, it must be considered as particularly reprehensible ethical attitude of the University staff members. It also constitutes serious infringement of the law. This applies primarily to intentional plagiarism (the theft of someone else's intellectual property), but also to other, more sophisticated forms, such as crypto plagiarism (using someone else's concepts or ideas without providing sources), claiming authorship to the results of someone else's work, suggesting higher-than-factual degree of co-authorship, or self-plagiarism (offering the same product multiple times). Trafficking scientific works, such as dissertations or theses, *i.e.* appearing both as contractors and sellers, and buyers—alleged authors also demands moral disapproval. The consequence of these fraudulent practices is the acquisition of undeserved promotions, diplomas, titles, professional qualifications, licenses and other goods without independent merits of their beneficiaries. In a social dimension, it means generating educational chaos, devaluating the diplomas and publications and the overall, extremely relativistic moral permissiveness. It needs emphasizing that the same standards should apply both to academic staff members and to students, but the former throughout their academic career, must be indisputably positive role models for their colleagues and students.

9. Integrity

Integrity is one of the most basic and universal ethical rules applicable to all of us without exception, in various situations, in various office positions and in the face of various adversities. Integrity involves the attitude towards other people and the attitude to public affairs of every scope and level of personal responsibility; within research and teaching, it means applying clear and unambiguous methodological and evaluation criteria. An honest scientist is reliable in her/his work when s/he does not succumb to the pressure of instant, but dubious fame, but always supports the research conclusions with appropriate arguments, attained through a long-lasting and painstaking process. Honest scientists fully reveal their methodologies, without any camouflage, hidden assumptions and esoteric, woolly language of communication, which may strengthen the appearance of certainty for their theses. Honest scientists, even those of the highest rank, can define, in Socratic language the limits of their knowledge and ignorance. They would not pretend to have more wisdom than it is really possible to accumulate, protecting themselves from the temptation to formulate judgments, opinions, and even

pseudo-theories in the discipline in which they are far from being experts. Honest academic teachers offer knowledge based on the state-of-the-art research and on the results coming from participating in the development of their own discipline in order to avoid the role of a non-academic second-hand message transmitter – the result of clever compilation. This set of requirements applies both to the activities within the University partly controlled by the institutional mechanisms and the opinion of the audiences, and to the increasingly intense participation of scientists in outside the University performances as experts, but also unfortunately as opinion-makers and experts on everything in practically any domain. Honesty also applies to students: this is an appeal for solid, serious and thorough studies of a chosen academic discipline and for constant renewing and developing of knowledge, also after formal completion of education.

10. Dignity

In principle, dignity embraces almost all other values, transformed into their subjective relation to oneself, demanding, at the same time, respect for a given “I” by others. Dignity activates an internal force that enhances following one’s own beliefs, ethical ideals and trust in reason, but not succumbing easily to pressure, the temptation of comfort, and the desire for honours and rewards. Everyone has the right for their dignity to be protected and respected, irrespective of any differences which favour superficial and conventional divisions. This also applies to the world of scientists, who, due to their social position, must take care of their dignity themselves, especially when civil courage, independence of judgment and strong character are indeed needed. The dignity of science depends not only on the objective cognitive value of a theory, but on the uncompromising attitude of dignity towards politics, the compelling power of money, and towards colleagues and competitors at the same time. The hierarchical structure of science and the University generate numerous internal threats to dignity. Thus all the members of the University community should be given special attention to ensure equal access to the protection of dignity. Dignity is not a privilege of any social group, environment or office position. Within the University community, it is necessary to take care of the dignity of not only members of its academic staff, but also of the administrative staff, as well as of librarians, warehouse workers or cleaning personnel. Violation of anyone's dignity is a morally repulsive act; it becomes a signal of an ethical malfunction within the environment or a low morale of individuals. It cannot be excused by other academic qualities or achievements.

11. Freedom

Ethical values are originated, applied and developed in the communities of free people. Freedom is conducive to the rise and choice of values, searching for them and creating them. Therefore, the freedom of a scientist is indispensable when, by following reason and acting in accordance to one’s

own experience and conscience, research talents and the skill of avoiding pressure of negative external factors or the self-paralysing drudgery are to develop. Freedom is both an opportunity and a source of energy for the entire science: only the freedom of research, together with free discussion and expression bring about positive results, whereas any restrictions cause stagnation and a decline in creativity. What is needed then is the freedom of scientific research, always immersed in the real world of other spheres of life. After all, science owes its vitality predominantly to the trust granted to it and the guarantees of relative independence and autonomy. Therefore, a moral duty of the entire community of the University is to take care of the realisation of freedom in its every dimension, including its affirmation in daily routine of the academia as well as in educating students to freedom.

Kraków, June 25, 2003