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Does higher education need a hippocratic oath?

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Abstract

Taking as a starting point Eric Ashby's proposal that academic staff should swear to inculcate 'the discipline of constructive dissent', this paper explores the question of whether or not contemporary society's ethical expectations of higher education should be codified. Three types of relationship between the university and its communities are explored: 'first order', arising from the university just being there; 'second order', being largely structured by contracts; and 'third' order, between the institution and its members. This leads to discussion of partnerships, stakeholding, of governance, of the public interest and of academic citizenship. Ashby's approach to academic values is then contrasted with that of the Institute of Business Ethics and the Council for Industry and Higher Education, as well as Macfarlane's concept of academic virtues. The author concludes with a proposed set of '10 commandments' for members of universities and colleges. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)