

A reflection upon the Socratic Oath as a Faculty

By ALDEMARO ROMERO

After spending one year on sabbatical, in addition to doing a lot of research and writing, I had the opportunity to reflect on my duties as a faculty. Below is what I called "My Socratic Oath as a Faculty" which is a modified version of the one proposed in F. H. Rhodes. *The Creation of the Future. The Role of the American University.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2001). I present it here as a statement about the renewed commitment I feel as I return to my duties.

The Oath:

I hereby devote myself to the advancement and extension of knowledge, recognizing that I have an obligation to my students, to my discipline, to my professional colleagues, to Macalester, and to the public.

I embark on teaching as a moral vocation. I recognize research and scholarship

as a public trust and accept professional service as a societal obligation. In pursuing my responsibilities, I will devote to both teaching and research the same sustained, imaginative, and rigorous attention. I will pursue new knowledge and creative activities in a scrupulous manner that befits the highest professional standards in my field. And I will play my full part in service to the larger community. In undertaking these tasks I recognize that teaching, research, and public service are the fundamental responsibilities of every faculty member; that they are responsibilities that must be continuously balanced; and that while they are responsibilities of comparable importance, teaching lies at the heart of the mission of the college.

Towards this end, I accept the trust that the transmission of knowledge implies so that accuracy, fairness, balance, and integrity are exemplified in the way my subject is presented and arguments are handled. I will present my subject, whatever it may be,

with rigor, but also in a liberal spirit, with a breadth of outlook and a humane concern for its foundations, context, relationships, and implications.

I will respect the integrity of the relationship between professor and student, in both personal and intellectual terms, and in both substance and appearance. My relationships with students will always be open but respectful, intellectually intense but personally scrupulous. I will consider misrepresentation of both as unthinkable as abuse of power or harassment. I will be scrupulous in preparation for class, discussion, laboratory, fieldwork, or other exercises and will supervise the same scrupulous preparation of any student teaching assistant or work-study student who might assist me. I will be objective, rigorous, and fair in student evaluation, and I will be available for student conferences, office hours, laboratory sessions, fieldwork, and other formal contacts outside the lecture room.

I will participate in the life of the col-

lege community, cooperating with both colleagues and students in both educational endeavors and campus-wide activities. And, as I develop in my own career, I will encourage, help, and mentor my colleagues, especially those newly appointed, to become effective teachers and successful scholars.

Finally, I promise that all my activities as a faculty will be as transparent as possible, open to scrutiny, inviting to criticism, and accountable to the end.

This vow, which I freely take, I will keep, recognizing that the privilege of academic freedom that is entrusted to me carries with it the obligation of professional responsibility to honor and serve my students, my discipline, my profession, my colleagues, Macalester, and society as a whole.

Aldemaro Romero is Director and Associate Professor of the Environmental Studies Program.