

## USAP/AAUP Seminar 6 May 2026

### Academic Integrity and Its Importance in Modern Society

#### Opening Remarks

- Good afternoon!

It is a privilege to welcome colleagues from 29 Australian universities to this online seminar

- I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the various lands on which these universities are built, and specifically the traditional owners of the land on which our university, the University of Sydney, is built, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation
- A warm welcome also to our guests from other institutions, parliament, and government

My thanks also to the AAUP and its president, Professor Rylee Dionigi, who is joining us today

- Today's seminar is an important activity for the University of Sydney Association of Professors (USAP) and an extension of USAP's action manifesto; I have placed a link to the document in the chat
- At the heart of this manifesto are academic values—values that are enduring and form the very foundation of any institution that calls itself a university

We are here to discuss a theme that is as provocative as it is necessary: **"Make Lying Wrong Again"**

- In our current era, we are witnessing a dangerous normalisation of dishonesty. It is dangerous because truth—and justice, which is predicated upon truth—is of fundamental importance to a functioning democracy

- Great universities are the places in society where these values are most vividly experienced and understood

Furthermore, academic integrity is the framework through which students develop the capacity for rigorous reality-checking and responsible judgment

- To understand the weight of this, I want to draw your attention to the thoughts of the late Bernard Williams

He reminds us that if we lose our sense of the value of truth, we risk losing everything

Truthfulness in the academic profession requires two basic virtues: **Accuracy**—doing our absolute best to acquire true beliefs—and **Sincerity**—ensuring that what we say reveals what we actually believe

- Our authority as academics must be rooted in this truthfulness. We must be meticulous in our work, and we must not lie

The logic is simple: if we cease to search for and teach the truth, what is the taxpayer, and indeed a student, paying for?

- Consequently, there is no place in a university for those who lie whenever it suits them; such a presence is untenable

This applies not only to researchers, teachers, and students—who together form the core of every university—but also to the managers who serve the academic mission, whether they be a head of school, a dean, a provost, or a vice-chancellor

- To lead us deeper into this critical discourse, I am honored to introduce our speakers: Professors Dianna Kenny and Hans Zoellner

Please join me in welcoming them!

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