

## Recap: Integrity and corruption

*J. Patrick Dobel, a well-known scholar on integrity in public institutions from the University of Washington, recently visited the U's Department of Political Science to deliver the 2016 Dalmas Nelson Lecture on Law and Ethics.*

Whether it's FIFA officials accepting bribes to sway their decisions on soccer marketing rights or the ongoing case of Mark Shurtleff and John Swallow in Utah —public officials accused of using their positions of power to allegedly accept gifts in exchange for favorable decisions —one doesn't need to look far to find cases of corruption erupting in public institutions and organizations. With such occurrences more commonplace than many leaders would wish, the U's Department of Political Science recently welcomed J. Patrick Dobel as the speaker for the 2016 Dalmas Nelson Lecture on Law and Ethics.

Dobel spoke to a full room at the Hinckley Institute of Politics. His lecture, titled "The Paradox of Integrity and Corruption," focused on how the heuristics and cognitive preferences of the mind drives people to ignore actions they take which might be construed as corrupt, illegal or immoral. The paradox, Dobel explained, lies in how the need to maintain a consistent narrative within one's self is coupled with people's heuristic tendencies — which leads many people to come to terms with corruption while denying that it has happened

During part of his lecture, Dobel spoke on the issue of how corrupt decisions emerge in institutions as well as how employees learn to live with corrupt behavior for prolonged amounts of time.

"You can lie to yourself very successfully. You can train yourself to believe something happened that didn't happen," Dobel explained.

His presentation may soon be available to listen to on *The Hinckley Institute Radio Hour*, which airs every Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. on KCPW. To visit the KCPW Hinckley Radio Page, [click here](#).

Dobel joined the Evans School faculty at the University of Washington in 1986, where today he still teaches public administration courses. He studies the intersection of politics, institutions, and judgment. His teaching covers strategy, leadership, public ethics, and public management. His main research explores the integration of values and institutional structure in

articles such as “Holy Evil” or “The Beleaguered Ideal: Defending NCAA Amateurism.” More recently he has researched the nature of integrity and political corruption and has also explored the ethics and culture of athletic achievement and competition.

Dobel has served on many university and national committees around the areas of public management, organizational design, and integrity issues. He served as the University of Washington's Faculty Athletic Representative at the PAC 10 and NCAA, for eight years, overseeing the academic integrity of the athletic program and governance. For five years he published a widely cited blog on the relations among athletics, culture, and ethics at [pointofthegame.blogspot.com](http://pointofthegame.blogspot.com).