Abstract discussion will be held on Wednesday (3/25) at 8:00PM in the MCC (Stokes).

Good Will Hunting
An Honor Council Joint
Student/Administration Panel:
Released Spring 2015

This abstract was not released in accordance to the timeline specified by the Students’ Association Constitution. The confronting party did not consent to the release of the abstract. The confronted party consented to the release of the abstract. (The addition of this disclaimer began in Spring 2010).

Note: Some information has been lost due to the fact that the chair’s report for this case was not completed in a timely manner.

Key:
Confronting party - Professor Lambeau
Confronted party - Will Hunting
Class - Custodial Training 200

Summary/Pre-Trial:
[Professor Lambeau] confronted [Will] about accessing outside sources on a midterm and final, and plagiarism on a paper for [Custodial Training 200]. In his statement, [Will] said he had no intention of plagiarizing on the paper. He did not remember accessing outside sources on the midterm, but did remember accessing them during the final, although he did not think he had gained any information from them that he used in the final. Because the confronted party strongly wanted the trial to take place during the summer, it was difficult to convene a full jury for an academic trial1. After discussing the situation at length, Honor Council consented to send the case to a joint student/administration panel with the consent of both parties. The jury consisted of two honor council members, four community jurors, and two deans.

Fact Finding:

1 This decision is procedurally unusual. The circumstances surrounding this decision are explained in more detail in [Will’s] letter to the community.
It was clear from the papers and sources that the level of similarity was unacceptable, whether or not it was intentional.

Statement of Violation:
[Will] violated the Honor Code by failing to maintain academic integrity in his scholastic work, namely, his midterm exam, final exam, and final paper. Against the explicit instructions of his professor, [Will] sought out and used unauthorized articles on the midterm exam and final exam, and failed to cite them. He also plagiarized by improperly citing in his final paper.

Circumstantial Portion:
[Will] was very forthcoming throughout the whole trial. [Will] was concerned that separation would interfere with his future academic goals, as well as his ability to return to Haverford.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:
The jury discussed many options for resolutions that did not include separation, but ultimately felt that separation was the fairest and best option. After deliberation, the jury consented to the following tentative resolutions:
1. The jury recommends that the confronted party receive a 0.0 in the course (all consented).
2. The confronted party will be separated from Haverford College for one semester (two stood outside).
3. The confronted party will take the online tutorial on academic integrity before returning for his next academic semester at Haverford (all consented).
4. The confronted party will rewrite his final paper and a self-diagnostic reflection highlighting the differences in his scholarly approach to be reviewed by a dean or the Office of Academic Resources (OAR) director. The confronted party is encouraged to continue to meet with that person over the course of his next academic semester at Haverford to address issues with time management and the writing process (all consented).
5. The jury encourages the confronted party to attend abstract discussions to further his commitment to the Honor Code as an active member of the community (all consented).
6. Upon completion of all other resolutions, the confronted party will rewrite the Honor Code essay to reestablish his commitment to the Haverford community, to be published with the abstract (all consented).
7. The jury recommends that this violation be reported to other institutions of higher learning (all consented).

Finalizing Resolutions:
After further discussion, there was less tension in the jury about separation. The jury consented to the following resolutions:
1. The jury recommends that the confronted party receive a 0.0 in the course (all consented).
2. The confronted party will be separated from Haverford College for one semester (one stood outside).
3. The confronted party will take the online tutorial on academic integrity before returning for his next academic semester at Haverford (all consented).
4. The confronted party will rewrite his final paper and a self-diagnostic reflection highlighting the differences in his scholarly approach, to be reviewed by a dean or the Office of Academic Resources (OAR) director. The confronted party is encouraged to continue to meet with that person over the course of his next academic semester at Haverford to address issues with time management and the writing process (all consented).
5. The jury encourages the confronted party to attend abstract discussions to further his commitment to the Honor Code as an active member of the community (all consented).
6. Upon completion of all other resolutions, the confronted party will rewrite the Honor Code essay to reestablish his commitment to the Haverford community, to be published with the abstract (all consented).
7. The jury recommends that this violation be reported to other institutions of higher learning (all consented).

Post-Trial:
The final resolutions were appealed to the President of the College on substantive grounds. The appeal was not granted. All resolutions have been completed.

After the trial, Honor Council had a discussion about when modifying trial procedure is appropriate. This discussion led to the introduction of the extenuating circumstances clause (Students’ Constitution, Article VII, Section 3(g)).

For reasons unknown to Honor Council of Spring 2015, this case slipped through the cracks and much of the information was lost. We are deeply troubled by this, and hope that this abstract will serve as a reminder for posterity to make sure that we have systems in place to account for the timely production of abstracts. We believe we have already preempted this from happening again with more thorough record keeping. We are confident that this kind of oversight will not happen again.

Will’s Honor Code Essay:
There are no excuses for my actions. Claiming that I cheated because I was stressed or wanted good grades would just be a lie—those are things that every student deals with. I have had about a year to reflect on my failures and it has completely changed my attitude towards the Honor Code and what it attempts to accomplish. And I hope that perhaps by explaining my personal failures I can help someone else avoid my mistakes.
Perhaps my biggest problem was my attitude towards the Honor Code. As many of you know, there is a portion of our community that doesn’t take the Honor Code seriously. Sometimes it is manifested in not attending plenary, failure to confront a student you know has cheated, or cheating on an assignment. I did not take the Honor Code seriously my freshman year at Haverford. For example, I skipped plenary second semester because I didn’t see the point of attending. I never seriously read any of the resolutions proposed at plenary and certainly didn’t see any point in discussing those resolutions.

I first began to understand how seriously people took the Honor Code when I was contacted by one of the Honor Council co-chairs in response to the confrontation by my professor. In Honor Council’s efforts to schedule a summer trial, we had perhaps 20-30 email correspondences. When a joint panel was suggested since not enough student jurors could be found, she made it absolutely clear to me that Honor Council was willing to put off the trial until the fall semester if that made me more comfortable. I expressed some fears about having administrators on the jury, to which she responded, "have faith that the people listening to you are both human and humane and are going to look out for you...I hope this helps (despite the fact that it isn't well-written in the least), and please feel free to ask any more questions. I know that this is not at all easy, and I want you to feel that you are treated fairly. I'm sorry that these are the best solutions we currently have for you---I promise that we really have been working day and night to make sure that we aren't short changing you." I felt like I had a friend during the trial that didn’t just believe in Honor Council’s goals of education, accountability and restoration, but truly believed that I could restore the trust and faith of the community, despite my failures. To have such faith from the body that was governing my trial was truly a blessing.

Another major shift in my attitude came during my trial. I was confronted by my professor at the beginning of the summer regarding my violations and the trial began in late-July. As I mentioned earlier, I had a joint panel, so two Deans were part of the jury and I believe this addition made the trial process far more transformative. The student jurors (that were not the Honor Council co-chairs), hardly talked or asked me questions. Had it just been a jury of students, the entire discussion would have been between the professor, the co-chairs and me – and that isn’t what a trial is supposed to be like. I don’t say this to insinuate the student jurors didn’t care about the trial. But I think it can be very difficult for student jurors to actively participate in a trial where the confronted party violated the Honor Code so drastically. Think of how difficult it is for some people to just confront someone. To have a direct, insightful conversation with them about their violation requires an immense amount of maturity and understanding. On the other hand, the Deans have experience with these matters. They have dealt with violations before and they truly achieved the goals the trial: education, accountability and restoration. Their words towards me made me feel like despite my betrayal to the community and to myself, I could still redeem myself and be forgiven. To have such kindness and understanding in such a trying situation made me see that the administration takes the goals of the Honor Code to heart and made me see the value of our Honor Code.
At most academic institutions, when a student is suspected of or is caught cheating, that student just receives a 0 in the class or on the assignment. During my semester of separation, I attended the local university and had a class of 600 or so students. At the end of a test, if any student had their pencil in hand after the teacher said to stop writing, they immediately received a 0. The teacher and TA’s constantly walked up and down the aisles to ensure students didn’t cheat. At Haverford, because we have the Honor Code some teachers allow take home exams and we have self-scheduled finals that we can take essentially at our leisure. This is the main “selling point” that is brought up when discussing the Honor Code to a prospective student or an extended family member. The teachers have trust in the students’ academic integrity and thus we are given more freedom. But seldom do we talk about the benefits of the Honor Code when a student cheats. The trial process is unique and can be transformative if taken seriously. Instead of just handing down a grade reduction, the trial allowed me to have a conversation with the community whose trust I had broken. It made me focus not just on the consequences of my actions, but how my actions impacted those around me and promoted far more introspection and growth than if we didn’t have the Code.

I would like to apologize to the community. My actions are inexcusable and I feel the consequences were just. I am so ashamed to have cheated and I cannot tell you how much I regret my decisions, but know I will never do it again. Have faith in me and know that I am extremely committed to the Honor Code and let me prove my place within this community.

Discussion Questions:
1. When does expediency and the wishes of the party allow for modifications in traditional procedure?
2. How do multiple suspicions of violation affect the trial process?
3. To what extent should the student’s outlook on separation influence the final decision?