Abstract discussion will be held following Thanksgiving break at a not yet announced time and place.

Pokémon:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Fall 2014

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

**Key:**
**Course:** Pokémon Catching 101: Introduction to Pokémon Catching
**Confronted Party:** Ash Ketchum
**Confronting Party:** Professor Oak and Professor Elm
**Class Resource:** Pokédex

**Summary/Pre-Trial:** Ash Ketchum, a student in the POKE101 class co-taught by Prof. Oak and Prof. Elm inappropriately used answer keys provided to him in completing important class assignments. Ash’s inappropriate academic conduct became apparent to the professors upon grading his work from the semester. After some discussion between the involved parties, the professors asked Ash to bring himself to Honor Council, which he did. The intentionality of the violation was a matter of discussion throughout the trial, though it was clear that a violation had occurred.

**Fact Finding:** During fact-finding, both parties in the trial helped explain the situation leading up to the confrontation. Ash was a student in POKE101. He struggled in the course and often missed assignment deadlines. [Pokémon-catching assignments] required access to the Pokédex, which all students were given individual login information for at the beginning of the semester. Given that Ash had not completed his work on time, he did not frequently access the Pokédex and while completing overdue assignments saw that he did not have access to it. He contacted his professors, who then attempted to meet with him a number of times to take care of the issue. Seeing as Ash did not show up, he still did not have access to the Pokédex to finish his coursework. The professors grew concerned about Ash’s ability to pass the course given that he had failed to complete assignments 3, 6, and 7. In order to try to set him back on track, they
decided to allow him to submit these past assignments late as long as he submitted the last two assignments on time, which would give him a chance to pass the course. They also used administrative powers to guarantee that Ash would have access to the Pokédex, and notified him of this. They assumed Ash now had access as they received no response that indicated otherwise. However, Ash explained that he still had a lot of difficulty accessing the Pokédex he needed to complete his assignments. Since he was completing assignments that were already due a while ago, answer keys were already made available by the professors to the class. Completing the assignments required following certain guidelines that were available to students in the Pokédex, but were also found in the answer keys. Rather than continue to attempt to use the Pokédex, Ash accessed the answer keys in order to look at the guidelines. While Ash claimed that he only looked in order to access the guidelines and nothing else, the professors demonstrated an unlikely coincidental similarity between Ash’s submitted work and the answer key on assignment 7. The professors explained that the similarities included such nuances that Ash had submitted answers that no other student in the course had come to. Ash explained that on assignments 3 and 6 he did not need to use the answer key guidelines, and therefore that it was possible that assignment 7 is more similar to the answer key. However, the professors showed a side-by-side comparison of the answer key and submitted assignment, and seemed confident that cheating had occurred. The discrepancy between Ash’s and the professors’ views on assignment 7 remained a point of controversy amongst the jurors.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:** During jury deliberations, all jurors were convinced that a violation had taken place in that Ash had reviewed the answer key prior to submitting his assignment, clearly against the integrity of the extension his professors had provided him. However, the motive of looking at the answer key remained unclear. Ash’s explanation of how he had used the answer key only for the guidelines seemed believable to most jurors but some of the jury felt that there was a piece of the story missing: specifically, that needing the guidelines was not a good enough reason to look at the answer key. However, the jury was uncertain of what else they could talk to the trial parties about that could convince them in one direction or another. Thus, the jury as a whole consented on the following statement of violation, bearing in mind that they should each continue to think critically about the case:

*Ash Ketchum violated the Honor Code by inappropriately interacting with the answer key while completing his assignment. (All jurors consent)*

**Circumstantial Portion:** During circumstantial portion, the jury mostly elaborated on the brief discussion with Ash during fact-finding about the trouble he had had in the course as a whole. Ash explained that he had taken the course unprepared for how challenging the work would be, and quickly fell behind on work. Rather than seek help immediately to get back on board, he
continued to fall behind and became more and more overwhelmed with the work. By the time he reached out to his professors, he was already far behind and felt unsure as to whether or not he would even pass the course. Ash said that he was embarrassed to keep on talking to his professors about his inability to access the Pokédex to complete his assignments, since that made it more and more evident that he had not attempted the work until weeks after it was due. Therefore, he looked at the guidelines on the answer key as a desperate measure to complete his work.

In looking for solutions for Ash’s academic trouble that led to this violation of the Honor Code, the jury spoke to Ash about on-campus help including the Office of Academic Resources, the Dean’s Office, the Academic Integrity Tutorial, and speaking to professors. Since this trial had occurred a number of weeks following the violation, Ash explained that he had already taken it upon himself to utilize these resources, though unfortunately too late to avoid the current trial. The jury appreciated Ash’s efforts, while recognizing that they came too late.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:** The jury recognized Ash’s efforts to move forward, and made sure to incorporate his previous actions into their thoughts on which resolutions were necessary to meet the goals of the trial, education, restoration, and accountability. There was still some uncertainty as to whether there was another element at play with copying from the answer key. However, because there was no consensus on the matter, the jury decided to review it again during the next session to finalize resolutions after email communication with the professors, who were absent during circumstantial portion. The jury consented on the following resolutions:

1. The jury recommends that Ash Ketchum receive a 0.0 on assignment 7 (all consent).
2. The jury strongly recommends that Ash Ketchum write a letter of apology to the course professors. The jury also recommends that Ash Ketchum consider following up this letter with a face to face conversation (all consent).
3. Ash Ketchum will compose a letter to the community to be released with the abstract about upholding academic integrity under stress and his experience with the trial process (all consent).
4. Ash Ketchum will not be separated from Haverford College (all consent).
5. The jury recommends that this incident not be reported to institutions of higher education (all consent).

The jury took into account that a 0.0 on assignment 7 would result in Ash failing the class due to his performance throughout the semester. Even so, two jurors stood outside of consensus on resolutions as a whole, because they felt that they were not strong enough given the violation.
**Finalizing Resolutions:** Following circumstantial portion, the trial chair emailed Ash and the professors with the jury’s thoughts and tentative resolutions. The professors agreed with the sentiment of the resolutions, and felt they were appropriate. Ash felt the same. However, some of the jurors still felt uncomfortable with the resolutions, and were unsure as to whether Ash was completely honest. They expressed their uncertainty to Ash. Ash appreciated their honesty, and asked if any of the other jurors felt similarly. For the most part, the jury believed Ash, but Ash showed sympathy towards the jurors who did not, understanding the leap of faith needed when one can’t prove all the parts of the narrative around an Honor Code violation.

After Ash left, the jurors continued to discuss how they felt about the violation. Ultimately, the jury felt it would be more comfortable as a whole making the statement of violation more reflective of the gravity they felt copying out of the answer key carried. While the jury did not want to change the other resolutions that were agreed upon by the parties and the jury, it decided to be more direct about the members’ opinion on the violation. Therefore, the jury consented to the following resolutions:

1. *The jury changes the statement of violation to:* “Ash Ketchum violated the Honor Code by plagiarizing portions from the answer key while completing his assignment” (all consent).
2. *The jury recommends that Ash Ketchum receive a 0.0 on assignment 7* (all consent).
3. *The jury strongly recommends that Ash Ketchum write a letter of apology to the course professors. The jury also recommends that Ash Ketchum consider following up this letter with a face to face conversation* (all consent).
4. *Ash Ketchum will compose a letter to the community to be released with the abstract about upholding academic integrity under stress and his experience with the trial process* (all consent).
5. *Ash Ketchum will not be separated from Haverford College* (all consent).
6. *The jury recommends that this incident not be reported to institutions of higher education* (all consent).

Resolutions as a whole: 8 consent, 2 stand outside (jurors standing outside wished to hear from professors who were not present during this portion before consenting).

Though this portion was technically finalizing resolutions, because of the significant changes that the trial parties were not yet aware of, the jury consented to take time to reflect on these resolutions and consult with the trial parties prior to meeting again to finish the trial. In the interim, the professors expressed via email that they were supportive of the jury’s position. The next time the jury met, Ash was present and was a little taken aback by the change in the statement of violation, but recognized that ultimately consulting the answer key in his case was technically using information from an unauthorized source without citation. The jury then consented to the following final resolutions:
1. The jury changes the statement of violation from "Ash Ketchum violated the Honor Code by inappropriately interacting with the answer key while completing his assignment," to “Ash Ketchum violated the Honor Code by plagiarizing portions from the answer key while completing his assignment" (all consent).
2. The jury recommends that Ash Ketchum receive a 0.0 on 7 (all consent).
3. The jury strongly recommends that Ash Ketchum write a letter of apology to the course professors. The jury also recommends that Ash Ketchum consider following up this letter with a face to face conversation (all consent).
4. Ash Ketchum will compose a letter to the community to be released with the abstract about upholding academic integrity under stress and his experience with the trial process (all consent).
5. Ash Ketchum will not be separated from Haverford College (all consent).
6. The jury recommends that this incident not be reported to institutions of higher education (all consent).

Resolutions as a whole: all consent.

Post-Trial:
Neither party appealed the resolutions. Honor Council has been unable to reach the confronted party since the trial ended. A letter to the community was never received.

Discussion Questions:
1. To what extent, if any, should the stress and pressure surrounding coursework be taken into account while deliberating upon Honor Code violations?
2. Do you agree with the jury’s decision to switch from “inappropriately interacting with” to “plagiarizing” in the first resolution? What do you consider to be the difference between the two?
3. How does the role of technology (e.g. the Pokédex) complicate students’ and professors’ relationship with the Honor Code? Individually and as a community, how can we adapt to the ever-change and omnipresent role of technology in our lives?
4. The confronted party was unable to be reached and therefore did not consent to the release of the abstract. What are the circumstances in which an abstract should be released without consent of the confronting and/or confronted parties?