Introduction:

The Dean’s Office received a Security Report about an altercation between Haverford students and individuals from outside the community at a party in one of the campus dormitories. A follow-up investigation by Safety and Security and the Dean’s Office suggested that the incident contained a level of violence rarely seen in the Haverford community. The issue was brought to Honor Council which, in turn, came to consensus on a suspicion of violation for two members of the community. Owing to the nature of the incident, Honor Council decided that a Dean’s Panel, consisting of three members of the Dean’s Office staff, would be the appropriate venue for such a case.

Statements of the Parties:

Brady was visiting friends who were hosting a party when he heard a commotion at the door. Upon investigating, he saw that four or five individuals who did not appear to be Haverford students were attempting to gain entry to the party and were not responding positively to being denied entry by the party hosts. He attempted to intercede, words were exchanged, and one of the visitors became physical. Brady states that he responded in kind to defend himself and then he and the visitor wound up outside the dorm grappling on the ground. After trading punches, Brady noticed that the visitor seemed to have given up the fight and he was, as a result, able to pull away. The visitor seemed dazed and somewhat injured. Brady left the scene at this time. In sum, Brady felt he was defending himself and protecting the community from non-students bent on crashing a campus party.

Stephen was returning to his dorm after visiting a friend and as he approached the building, he heard shouting. As he entered the building to go to his room, he had to move through the crowd that was attempting to enter a party hosted by some of the building residents. He did not recognize a handful of those present, and those individuals seemed rather angry. He surmised that they were being denied entry to the party. Stephen inadvertently bumped into one of these visitors who reacted angrily, grabbing him by the neck. After much effort, which included a punch to the visitor’s face, Stephen extricated himself from the situation. After getting free, Stephen entered his room. A few minutes later, he went down the hall to see some of his friends at the party. At this point, he noticed that everyone was rushing outside. Sensing trouble, and worried that his earlier action may have been the cause of it, he followed the crowd outside to see what was happening. He saw a friend rolling on the ground, fighting with one of the visitors. He went over to help his friend and, in an attempt to free him, kicked the other person in the ribs a number of times. The visitor stopped resisting and went limp. In the days following the incident, and with rumors flying about campus that someone had
kicked another person in the face, Stephen reflected on the incident and realized that his actions were not appropriate. Stephen asserted that had acted in the heat of the moment and regretted doing so.

Panel Questions

The panel wished to explore some discrepancies between the statements made to the Deans Panel by the two confronted parties and what Safety and Security was able to learn during its earlier investigation. To that end, the members of the Deans Panel closely questioned the two parties about what happened on the evening in question. In addition, they called in nine witnesses to get as comprehensive a picture of the evening’s events as possible. The witnesses included friends of the confronted students who were hosting the party, Haverford students who were friends of the visitors involved in the altercation and other students who had observed what had occurred but who did not have any connection with either the confronted parties or the visitors.

The Panel carefully considered all of the evidence at its disposal. The altercation flared up very quickly and ended in a matter of minutes. As a result, recollections of many were unclear, uncertain, and often contradictory. What became clear to the Panel was that the situation was not handled in a way that one would expect of Haverford students and resulted in a level of violence that is totally unacceptable in this community, one which was founded on, and continues to espouse, Quaker principles committed to non-violence. The behavior of the two Haverford students served to inflame the situation rather than calm it; many approaches to resolving the dispute and resources available to students in such circumstances were not utilized. Moreover, many of those who spoke with the Panel were shaken and deeply disturbed by what they had witnessed, especially the behavior of the Haverford students, whose resort to physical violence to settle a dispute seemed so out of place in the Haverford community.

Upon considering the matter in its entirety, the Panel became absolutely convinced that the Honor Code had been violated and came to consensus on the following Statement of Violation:

*The Deans Panel found that the behavior exhibited by both confronted students on the evening in question violated the Honor Code in that it was devoid of the respect, mutual understanding and concern that the Code expects of all members of this community (Honor Code, Sections II (A)—Community Standards and III (B)—Social Concerns). The violent nature of the behavior also seemed to us to violate the foundational principles of Haverford College, which enjoin us to seek peaceful means to resolve conflicts.*

The statement of violation was shared and discussed with the two parties after which they were asked to suggest possible resolutions to repair the breach that their conduct represented.
Resolution Deliberations:

The Honor Code enjoins us to address three areas in developing appropriate resolutions: education, accountability, and repairing the breach of trust between the parties and the community. Many ideas for resolutions were considered and discussed. Given the violent nature of the behavior exhibited by the confronted parties, the Panel felt that the following tentative resolutions (ultimately the final resolutions) were both warranted and appropriate:

For Brady:

Rather than take steps to calm and peaceably resolve a verbal altercation between a host of the party (and one of Brady’s friends) and a group of non-Haverford student guests, Brady’s behavior seems to have further inflamed an already incendiary situation, leading to a scuffle/fight between Brady and one of the visitors. As a result, we believe that the following resolutions are called for:

1) Brady’s behavior calls into question his ability to live in this community in a respectful and civilized manner and, as such, warrants losing the privilege of residence on campus. Brady may continue at Haverford next semester to complete his degree, but is required to live off-campus.

   a) Moreover, from the date that the resolutions have been finalized until graduation, Brady may not attend parties/gatherings on campus at which alcohol is served or present.

2) We believe that Brady should not be permitted to represent the College in an official capacity, and we therefore recommend to the Athletic Department that he not be permitted to participate in intercollegiate athletics during the balance of his time at Haverford.

3) It is important that the violent interaction between Brady and the guest be addressed; this can best be accomplished by a face-to-face meeting/dialogue. Brady is to engage in a mediated dialogue with this individual in the next two months. Brady will work with the Chair of the Deans Panel to organize this meeting. If the guest in question refuses to participate, appropriate alternatives will be considered.

4) Following this mediated dialogue, Brady is to write an essay to the community that reflects on the dialogue and that which he learned from it, with particular emphasis on steps he could have taken to prevent the interaction from turning violent and how others, finding themselves in similar situations in the future, can avoid the outcome that ensued in this instance.
5) It is the Panel’s expectation that Brady will, in the future, more carefully consider how his actions affect others and refrain from behavior that is violent or otherwise in violation of community standards. A letter including these resolutions will be kept on file in the Dean’s Office until such time at Brady graduates. Should Brady be found to have engaged in inappropriate behavior in the future, the fact the he has been cited by this Dean’s Panel will be made known along with this Panel’s recommendation that separation from the community should be strongly considered.

For Stephen:

We found Stephen’s behavior of kicking an individual on the ground who appeared to be in no position or condition to defend himself to be a disturbing and egregious example of gratuitous violence. The viciousness of this act seems to us to be deserving of the following response:

1) Stephen is to be separated from Haverford College for a period of one semester. Stephen may complete the current semester, with separation beginning as of the next semester.

The Deans Panel members sensed that, during the course of our meetings with Stephen, he was beginning to understand the serious violation of community standards and human decency that his behavior represented. As such, we are willing to consider the possibility of Stephen being permitted to continue at Haverford without separation. To that end, we would accept a written statement from Stephen in which he discusses his behavior on the night in question, his current understanding of what it represents in the context of the Haverford community, and why his conduct was more egregious than Brady’s. Upon receipt of such a statement, we would review it and reach a timely and final decision as to whether or not Stephen should be permitted to return to Haverford without separation.

Note that if Stephen’s statement is convincing enough to permit his return, he would be required to live off-campus for the next semester. A decision would be made at the end of that semester as to whether or not Stephen could enter the Room Draw for campus housing for the following semester. Moreover, if he were permitted to return, Stephen would not be allowed to attend parties/gathering on campus at which alcohol is served or present.

Note that Stephen did submit a statement and the level of insight it showed convinced the members of the Dean’s Panel that he should be permitted to continue at Haverford.
2) We believe that Stephen can best learn from this experience and repair the breach with the community that his conduct represents by participating in a conflict resolution course/workshop. Following completion of this course/workshop Stephen should use his newfound knowledge to conduct conflict resolution workshops on campus for the benefit of members of this community. Workshops targeted toward the entering class and athletic teams would, in our opinion, be particularly useful and apt. A “Workshop Lesson Plan” should be submitted for review and approval by the members of this Dean’s Panel within six months.

3) The violence perpetrated against the non-student must be addressed; that can best be accomplished via a face-to-face meeting/dialogue. Stephen is to engage in such a dialogue in the next two months if he is permitted to continue at the College and at a date to be determined if he is not. Stephen will work with the Chair of the Deans Panel to organize such a meeting. If the guest in question refuses to participate, appropriate alternatives will be considered.

4) It is the Panel’s expectation that Stephen will, in the future, refrain from behavior that is violent or otherwise in violation of community standards. A letter including these resolutions will be kept on file in the Dean’s Office until such time as Stephen graduates. Should Stephen be found to have engaged in inappropriate behavior in the future, the fact that he has been cited by this Dean’s Panel will be made known and factored into whatever resolutions are suggested at that time. In light of the circumstances reviewed by this Panel, it will be our recommendation that a lengthy or permanent separation be seriously considered.

Respectfully submitted,

The Members of the Deans Panel

Questions

1. Was a Dean’s Panel the appropriate trial format for this incident?
2. How are visitors to campus subject to the Honor Code?
3. Would you think of this incident differently if the visitors had been members of the Haverford Community?
4. Does a Deans Panel have the same goals as a jury?