Chauncey and Skylar
A Joint Honor Council-Administrative Panel

Abstract Released Fall 2002

Abstract Discussions: Thursday, 12 December at 1:00PM and 7:00PM
in the Sunken Lounge of the DC

Introduction:
Skylar contacted Honor Council about behavior involving Chauncey, a student
living in her dorm. She was concerned about a pattern of Chauncey’s behavior that she
suspected was a violation of the social Honor Code. The specific examples cited included
a drawing on a wall in a shared space of the dorm, which she was concerned could be
offensive to others as well as destruction of college and personal property. Other
examples included Chauncey blaring music at a level that disturbed Skylar, and throwing
a large object on college grounds that endangered both personal and private property on
campus.

Honor Council came to a suspicion of violation. After deliberating about the
nature of the incident, Honor Council consented on holding a Joint Honor Council-
Administrative Panel.

Statement of the Parties:
Prior to the first meeting of the trial, all eight members (two from the Dean’s
Office, two from Honor Council, and four random community members of which two
listed themselves on the Multicultural Jurors List) read the statements used by Honor
Council to come to a suspicion of violation.

Skylar’s Statement:
Skylar stated that her personal relationship with Chauncey had been tumultuous
since they learned that they would live in the same space. Both were members of the
same student group and were in regular contact with each other outside of the dorm.
Skylar was disturbed by a number of examples of Chauncey’s behavior that she
considered to be disrespectful. When Skylar confronted Chauncey about his actions,
Chauncey was unresponsive and the relationship began to devolve. One evening, while
Skylar was studying in her room, she heard a series of loud crashes for at least fifteen
minutes. She left her room to investigate the sounds, and saw Chauncey and three others
leaving their common space with athletic equipment. All four people in this group were
members of the same student organization of which Skylar was also a member. Skylar
dismissed the entire event and went back to studying. The following day, Skylar
discovered that the common space had been damaged in a number of ways, involving
both personal and college property. Painted on the wall was an image Skylar believed
could be considered obscene and offensive by some members of the Haverford
community. Late for an immediate engagement, Skylar left a note in Chauncey’s room
explaining that those whose property was damaged must be compensated. She also requested that Chauncey paint over his artwork in the common space. Skylar mentioned the volume of Chauncey’s music and video games as another example of Chauncey’s disrespect of other residents in the dorm, including Skylar herself. Skylar asked Chauncey to lower the volume, though he declined and told Skylar to keep her door closed instead. Finally, one evening while Skylar was asleep, she awoke to loud crashes outside her room. Peering outside her window, she witnessed Chauncey and other members of their shared student group throwing a large object at a standing structure owned by the college and adjacent to the dorm. Skylar, knowing her relationship with Chauncey was tenuous at best, requested another member of the dorm to verbally confront Chauncey. This person voiced his complaint, and returned to the dorm. Skylar then saw Chauncey throw the large object and hit a parked car. In a confrontation, Skylar claims Chauncey denied that he had any intention to hit the college property and denied that his actions caused the large object to hit the car. Skylar then contacted Honor Council and requested Chauncey submit a statement.

*Chauncey’s Statement:*

Chauncey apologized for all that occurred leading up to the Panel’s proceedings. He admitted that the damage to the common area was childish and immature, and spent hours cleaning up the area and painting over the graffiti. He expressed anger over the method with which Skylar confronted him. He felt a note left in his room rather than a face-to-face dialogue about the common area was inappropriate. Chauncey said that music was very important to his life, and that he had changed to keeping his music at a lower level since the confrontation over music volume. He also stated that he had changed his lifestyle to be more respectful to other members of the dorm. Chauncey mentioned that he believed Skylar’s view of the large object incident was obstructed. He stated that indeed he threw the large object at the college-owned structure but that it did not hit anything, and that the large object rolled and hit the base of the car without any damage.

*Panel Questions:*

The Panel asked a number of clarifying questions. Most of the questions involved the nature of the confrontation and the nature and mechanics of the large object incident. Several panel members asked Skylar why she confronted only Chauncey in the damage of the common area when in fact it had been a group of four students. Skylar replied that her relationship with Chauncey as a dorm-mate compelled her to confront only Chauncey and not the other three individuals accompanying Chauncey. Some panel members attempted to clarify whether the large object was actually thrown and how it hit the base of the car. Chauncey stated that he was not intoxicated and remembers all of the events very clearly. He stated that as a group they were playing around with the large object, and that in fact he attempted to block the large object from rolling into the car and also that when throwing it in the air it never hit the structure and was never even intended to hit the structure. Skylar stated that she disagreed and in fact witnessed the entire situation, and feared Chauncey was lying to the Panel. One panel member asked Chauncey whether or not he believed he had violated the social Honor Code. Chauncey said he had great
respect for the Honor Code, but had no knowledge of the existence or nature of the Social Honor Code.

Panel Deliberations:
The Panel considered the discrepancies between the two accounts regarding the incident with the large object. Members agreed that regardless of whether Chauncey actually threw the large object, rolled the large object, or hit the standing structure, it did indeed endanger college and personal property. Members of the Panel were also very concerned about Chauncey's statement that he had no knowledge of the existence of the Social Honor Code. They agreed on the following statement of violation and tentative resolutions:

Statement of Violation:

Chauncey violated the Honor Code by failing to maintain a "climate of trust, concern, and respect" (Introduction, II, B) through his pattern of behavior as exemplified below:

A.) Vandalizing college and personal property and painting graffiti.  
B.) After being confronted by another member of the Haverford community, failed to consider the consequences of his actions and continued to endanger public and private property with a [large object].

[The statement has been edited for confidentiality.]

Tentative Resolutions:

1) Chauncey will read the Honor Code in its entirety and write a 2-3 page essay addressing his individual responsibilities in relation to the Social Honor Code and the Haverford College community. The essay will be released with the abstract and submitted to [a member of the administration]. A discussion with [this member of the administration] must ensue regarding the substance of the essay.

2) Chauncey will re-sign his Honor Code Pledge prior to his return [next semester] to affirm that his pattern of behavior will not continue in the future.

3) Chauncey and Skylar will engage in a mediated dialogue with [a member of the administration].

In addition, we recognize his efforts to repair the breach of trust with his [dormmates] and encourage him to continue.

4) Chauncey will paint the [common area] in consultation with Physical Plant by [a certain date].
The comments in brackets were edited for confidentiality.

Presentation of Resolutions:

The Panel presented to resolutions to the parties. Skylar questioned whether accountability was addressed without a resolution stipulating separation. She also questioned the effectiveness of a mediated dialogue and whether she had any trust in Chauncey. Chauncey accepted the resolutions as written. The Panel reconvened and came to consensus on the resolutions unchanged from the tentative resolutions above.

Questions:

1) Should the Panel have confronted the other three members of the student group that damaged the common area along with Chauncey?
2) Should the Panel have confronted Skylar for failing to confront the entire group that damaged the common area?
3) How else could the Panel have addressed Chauncey’s ignorance of the Social Code?
4) What should confronting parties do if the outcome of the trial, particularly regarding resolutions, is not in keeping with what they deem is appropriate?
Essay from the "Chauncey and Skylar" Abstract

A note from Honor Council: Due to issues of confidentiality this letter was not released with the abstract.

While many might believe that the Honor Code here at Haverford is merely a code that governs academic activities and actions, such a belief is entirely short-sighted. The definition I learned of honor and character in high-school is "The way in which you act when nobody is watching." While such a statement seems to address, in a learning environment, not cheating, plagiarizing, etc., it also addresses ones behavior. The social honor code here at Haverford sets forth a guideline for behavior, a guideline that will help to ensure that people living together can coexist peacefully and happily. Without such a guideline, people could run rampant and wreak havoc, however their whims and fancies might desire.

I acted in a way entirely negligent of the social honor code set forth in the Honor Council handbook. According to the Haverford Honor Code preamble, "We seek an environment in which members of a diverse student body can live together, interact, and lean from one another in ways that protect both personal freedom and community standards." The Honor Code is one that seeks to unify people from all over the world, living together in a campus in Pennsylvania, and allow them all to lead their colleges lives together, and without conflict. As the preamble also states, "By encouraging respectful conduct, we hope to create an atmosphere conducive to learning and growing."

Regrettably, I acted in a fashion without a trace of respectful conduct. By spray-painting walls with inappropriate [...] imagery, by allowing [the property of the people I live with] to be violated, and by tossing around a bulky object in the vicinity of other persons' possessions, I acted in a way disrespectful to everyone present in the sphere
around me. Indeed, while the Haverford social honor code seeks to provide people with conduct guidelines to aim behavior in a positive direction and allow for easier living conditions, I broke that code, and therefore acted in a way that endangered the trust and respect among me and the people I live with.

“Our relationship should be based on mutual respect and concern. We must consider how our words and actions may affect the sense of acceptance essential to an individual’s or group’s participation in the community. We strive to foster an environment that genuinely encourages respectful expression of values…” Thus reads the Social Concerns, Part B, Section 2, section of the Honor Code. Because of my actions, people will not feel safe leaving their property unguarded and out of sight. What if someone comes along and smashes it again with [athletic equipment]? What if a very shy person walks down to the basement to do laundry, and sees [inappropriate images] spray-painted on the wall? Are they going to feel comfortable going down to the basement like they used to? Can people ever feel secure in parking their cars [...] again, when a [large object] was throw in their vicinity? I broke people’s trust and I added a feeling of insecurity to my living environment. I am terribly, terribly sorry. Before you are about to do something, just ask yourself a question: Do I really need to be doing this? Chances are if the answer to that question is no, then it isn’t anything you should be doing. As a member of Haverford’s community, I must work my hardest to establish trust and respect among the people I live with. I must be my own overseer, and ask myself if what I am doing is honorable or not. My actions that brought me to honor council were simply idiotic, and as a result the climate my peers and I existed in was altered. People no longer felt safe, and people no longer felt respected. I broke the honor code, and for that I am
extremely sorry. I like to have fun just like any other person. But from now on, I realize that I can have fun withoutruining relationships. And as a result, I strongly urge everyone to adopt behavior that will only help to build trust and respect. Since we live with so many different people, that is the only behavior that can ensure a happy and safe environment.

-Chauncey