Dora contacted Honor Council about an academic matter in her Map Making class. Professor Diego had confronted her about plagiarism on her final exam and asked her to bring herself to Council. Council received the statements from Professor Diego and Dora and consented on a suspicion of violation. Due to the nature of the case, Dora having had an abortion during finals week, Council took certain measures to make sure that the trial was conducted in a way that was sensitive to the issues.

First, Council consented that all jurors be asked in their initial jury duty email if they could be impartial in a case involving an abortion. A second consideration that was discussed at great length was whether Dora would have to be present for the circumstantial portion where her abortion would be discussed. Dora was given the option to not be present (she could answer questions posed by the jury via instant message or by phone), but Dora ultimately decided that she would be present for the circumstantial portion.

Fact-Finding:

Professor Diego gave his statement first. He explained that the exam was a final exam for his Map Making class. The exam was a timed open-note and open-book take-home exam that included essays. Professor Diego said that Dora turned in her exam on time.

He noticed that there might be something problematic while he was grading the exam. Professor Diego explained that he grades the exams anonymously, but that while grading this particular exam he became suspicious after noticing that, though the answers were all correct, they referenced material and topics that were not addressed in class. He entered a few sentences into Google and found texts that the student had lifted from. As Professor Diego searched a few other sentences, he found that each paragraph had been taken almost verbatim from other sources online and pieced together to create a complete essay and ultimately a complete exam.

Dora was emotional. She confirmed Professor Diego’s statement. She had picked up her exam one morning and looked at the questions later and panicked. She typed the questions into Google hoping to find some ideas on what to write about. She copied and pasted quotations from the internet in order to organize her ideas, ultimately creating essays out of the documents. Dora was even more distressed as she said that she signed her name to the plagiarized exam.
The jurors had no questions for the confronted or confronting parties.

**Statement of Violation and Discussion:**

The chair explained to the jury that it must decide whether “the event described transgresses the values and standards of the community” (Universal Trial Procedure, 7.02 e ii). Additionally, the chair explained that all decisions must be arrived at through consensus. The jury agreed that there had been a violation of the Honor Code and that the statement of violation should clarify that Dora did not take another exam and copy it but instead looked up sources and compiled a collection of uncited quotations. The jury consented on the following statement of violation:

*Dora violated the Honor Code by representing others’ scholarship as her own on an exam.*

**Circumstantial Portion**

The chair reviewed the circumstantial portion procedure with the jury, explaining that the goal of the circumstantial portion is “to understand more fully the circumstance in which the violation occurred. Confronted can offer defense; jury can gain perspective through questions” (Honor Council Trial Procedures: For the Jury). The chair then asked the jury if they had any questions. The jury had no questions and Dora was brought in.

Dora took some time to gather herself, and then she began. She explained that she began to feel sick in the weeks before finals week and that she started to worry when her period was late. Although she had been on birth control, she had stopped taking it because she felt unwell, but continued to use other forms of protection. She was embarrassed to talk about the decision to stop taking the birth control with the jury. She explained that she knew it was a poor decision, but she and her boyfriend continued to use other forms of protection when they had sex, so she didn’t feel completely irresponsible.

Dora took a pregnancy test the Friday before exam week while with her boyfriend. She said that she was stunned and couldn’t do anything when she saw the test results. Her boyfriend searched for information about abortion clinics and women's centers online. Dora looked through his findings and selected a clinic to schedule the abortion.

Dora and her boyfriend discovered in their research that a non-surgical abortion is only possible before the seventh week of pregnancy. Dora was six and a half weeks pregnant when she went to the clinic for the examination. She wanted to do the non-surgical option and avoid dealing with her pregnancy at home. She was required to have a medical exam with an ultrasound before the procedure, and to attend an information session.

Dora explained that her family is very religious and very close. She loves them and feels close to them, but she didn’t feel comfortable telling them what was going on and didn’t want them to know. She explained that her cousin was exiled from the family for having an abortion, and explained that she didn’t want the same type of familial rejection to happen to her. She said, “I don’t want my mom to stop loving me.”

After attending the information session, which she had to attend at least 24 hours before taking the first pill, Dora returned to campus and took the first pill. She took the pills in one of the lesser used bathrooms on campus so that no one would be able to tell what she was doing. She had forgotten about the exam in all of the confusion until a classmate reminded her about it.

Dora returned to her room to wait for the bleeding to start. It finally did four hours later,
at which point she was caught off guard and had to run to the bathroom. She explained that she was surprised by the amount of blood and that she bled for weeks after, all throughout winter break when she was home with her family. At the time, she was frightened and upset, and the amount of blood heightened her anxiety.

When Dora finally remembered about the exam, she had five and a half hours to complete it and turn it in. Dora sat down to complete the exam and panicked. She couldn’t focus, and ultimately said to herself, “I can’t do this.” She told the jury that all she wanted was for everything, including the exam, to go away.

The jury was curious as to why she hadn’t asked for an extension, and Dora explained that she had thought about it, but that she was too embarrassed to tell anyone that she had gotten pregnant and had chosen to have an abortion. She also explained that she was intimidated by the class and by Professor Diego. The class had been difficult, and after receiving a disappointing grade on her first assignment, she had worked very hard to make the rest of the grades in the class better. At the end of the semester, she had managed consistently better grades after the initial poor mark. While Dora explained this, she consistently referred back to her embarrassment and desire for the pregnancy and abortion to remain private.

Dora also said that she wasn’t eating and couldn’t sleep because she kept thinking of herself as “a walking, bleeding womb.” She said she didn’t feel like a person anymore.

Dora said she just didn’t know what to do and that she didn’t mean to copy the answers. She started looking at internet sources to compile the answers for the exam and began copying full phrases from a variety of sources in order to compose the answers. Dora had one self-scheduled exam remaining, during which she was still upset and completely distracted. She had finished her others before the exam period began.

Dora explained that she had been trying very hard in all of her classes, and that the effort she was putting into Professor Diego’s class was matched in her other classes.

Dora went on to explain what happened once the semester ended. She said that being at home was worse than being at Haverford. She explained again about how close her family is and how deeply religious they are. She relayed the story about her cousin again. Dora had to have a post-abortion check-up during winter break.

Dora explained that she had felt really alone while she was home because not only did no one know, but she couldn’t tell anyone. She said that she likes to write so she filled a journal with her thoughts about the whole situation and experience. She brought the journal to the meeting and showed the jury how full it was. She explained how it was easy for her to be pro-choice before everything happened but that it was completely different with her own body in question. She explained that she thinks about it every day and that it has changed every aspect of her life. She also said that she was happy that her act of plagiarism was caught because it makes her a better person and helps heal the wounds.

Dora explained further that one of the hardest things was feeling so alone and not knowing who to turn to on the campus. And though she thinks Haverford was great, she just wasn’t sure what to do or where to go on the campus when she was so upset and confused. She expressed a great wish that no other girl feel that way and would like to do something with the Women’s Center on campus to be sure that no one has to endure what she did alone.

At the end she just kept saying that she wished she had been able to remember who she was while everything was going on and while she had the exam in front of her. She wanted to remember the things that were important to her.
Before questioning Dora, the jury allowed her to compose herself. A few members of the jury were crying as well and needed a few moments of silence. After a brief break, the jury had a few questions for her.

One juror asked what Dora was doing to help herself heal now that she was back on campus. She replied that she was seeing a counselor through psych services.

Another juror asked Dora to elaborate on the situation with Professor Diego and how she felt about him not knowing. Dora explained that she had been too embarrassed to say anything and that, though she was still embarrassed, she recognized that for a full restoration to occur, she needed to tell him what had happened. She said it was hard while they had been waiting for the fact-finding portion to begin, because they were waiting together outside, and he was so nice to her and said to her “I don’t judge you.” Dora said that she wanted to be honest and tell him.

At this point there were no further questions and Dora proposed her suggested resolutions. Dora’s resolutions were:
1. No separation because although that is the usual course of action in a serious case of plagiarism, Dora feels much safer at Haverford than she does at home, and she feels that being home would do more harm than good.
2. Failing the exam.
3. Failing the class because that is “customary”; however, she was hesitant to suggest it because she worked so hard throughout the semester and it was only the one exam that she had failed to complete correctly.
4. Writing a letter to the community, apologizing for signing her name to the Honor Code pledge when she had no right to do so. She suggested releasing the letter separate from the abstract.
5. Meet with or write a letter to Professor Diego to explain what happened. She also suggested continuing to meet with him after the explanation until trust was completely restored.
6. Work with the Women’s Center to help girls who have to endure an abortion. Dora mentioned that she didn’t want to reveal her identity by doing this, so she proposed working with the Women’s Center through Honor Council in order to get started.

The jury sat while she composed herself. The group had a moment of silence, and Dora was asked to leave.

Tentative Resolutions

The group reconvened with a moment of silence. At this point, Professor Diego’s suggested resolutions were reviewed. The professor’s suggestions were:
1. Dora should receive a failing grade for the course.
2. Dora should not be separated from the college.

Bearing in mind Dora’s and Professor Diego’s suggestions, the jury began to discuss the best course of action. The jury was unanimous that Dora had suffered and been punished enough. It was also unanimous that she should not be separated, with the rationale that it would do more harm than good, and that Dora would be better able to heal at Haverford than at home.
The jury appreciated Dora’s gesture toward telling Professor Diego, but didn’t feel comfortable mandating that she tell him her story due to its sensitive nature. The jury agreed that it wanted to support Dora’s suggestion without mandating it.

The jury also did not feel comfortable mandating the interaction with the Women’s Center due to confidentiality issues.

The jury liked Dora’s willingness to write a letter, and agreed that the letter could have an earlier release date if Dora so desired, since it was likely (and preferred by the jury) that the abstract be delayed until after Dora’s graduation from Haverford.

The jury was unsure about whether Dora should fail the class or not. The jury felt that Dora had been a conscientious student throughout the rest of the semester and was a conscientious student overall (evidenced by her finishing two final exams before finals week started). Additionally, the jury did not want to add another stressor for Dora, since failing the class would eliminate its value as a class credit. The jury didn’t want to force Dora to scramble for credits when she was working on healing herself.

The fact that Professor Diego suggested that Dora fail the class weighed heavily on the jury, but the jury believed that his behavior suggested that he would understand once he knew the full extent of the circumstances that surrounded the exam.

Tentative Resolutions:

1.) We recommend that Dora fail the exam.
2.) We support Dora’s suggestion that she meet with and/or write a letter to Professor Diego to discuss the circumstances surrounding the exam.
3.) We recommend that she write a letter to the community to be released at her discretion so long as it is not released after the abstract.

The jury consented on this list of resolutions with no one standing outside.

Presentation of Resolutions
The chair of the trial e-mailed the tentative resolutions to both Professor Diego and Dora as soon as the tentative resolutions meeting ended.

Interim
It was found that the jury could not reconvene within the two business days allotted by the Constitution. The jurors re-consented within 48 hours of the deliberations meeting via e-mail.

Finalizing Resolutions
The jury consented by email, but met again when they could. The meeting began with a moment of silence. The chair reviewed some qualms that Professor Diego had expressed via e-mail. The jury discussed the issues, but ultimately arrived at the conclusion that the group was not comfortable changing the resolutions while the professor still didn’t know Dora’s full story. Furthermore, to acknowledge that the issue had been discussed fully, the jury consented to the chair writing a supplemental letter to Professor Diego to explain the jury’s decision (though not disclosing Dora’s circumstances) in addition to offering the opportunity for the professor to meet with the Dean of the College to alleviate any additional misgivings.
The jury consented on this set of final resolutions:

1.) We recommend that Dora fail the exam.
2.) We support Dora’s suggestion that she meet with and/or write a letter to Professor Diego to discuss the circumstances surrounding the exam.
3.) We recommend that Dora write a letter to the community to be released at her discretion, so long as it is not released after the abstract.

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent can a jury preserve confidentiality, even as this requires them not to divulge information to other parties involved?
2. What is the balance between maintaining confidentiality and designing resolutions most appropriate to the case?
3. What role do faculty have in community decisions?
To the Haverford Community,

There are a million things I could talk about in this letter. Going through an Honor Council trial is complicated. I thought about sharing my specific experiences, I thought about spending pages talking about why plagiarism truly is wrong. But there is something I have learned through my trial that shines as the most important.

You are so lucky to be a Haverford student. You are at a college where people really and truly care about you. No matter how lost you feel, or alone, or embarrassed, there are people here who want to help and support you. I wish I had learned that sooner. I would have avoided so many wrong decisions and so much pain. Don’t be afraid to come forward with your mistakes because most likely, you will find compassion and forgiveness on the other side. There will be someone who wants to help you fix it. I did things I thought were unforgivable, and the Honor Council listened to me without judging. They listened with empathy and love. The people in this community want what is best for you, they really do. I want you to know that asking for help is not something to be ashamed of. That Honor Council isn’t like a court room where you are punished and sentenced. It’s a place and a process that allows a number of your peers to metaphorically hold your hand and be there for you. It’s a place to mend your mistakes.

The words “I’m sorry” are so familiar now they taste like my own name. But I am learning how to say “I need you.” “Help me.” “I don’t want to do this alone.” Please, if something hurts, say it. Say it today, this second, before it’s too late and your pain turns you into a person you don’t recognize. Before your despair dictates your actions, like it did for me. I hope that all the members of the Haverford community, who impress me every day with their compassion, bravery, and sincerity, will be able to read what I have done and learn from my mistakes. And most of all, I hope you realize that you are not, and never could be, alone here.