Eliza

A Joint Honor Council-Administrative Panel

Abstract released fall 2002

Abstract Discussions:
Thursday, Oct. 10 12:30 PM and 7:30 PM
in the DC Sunken Lounge

Introduction:

The Office of Safety and Security contacted Honor Council regarding a student who was parking illegally on campus. The student, Eliza, was not allowed to park her car on campus and had been doing so without a permit throughout the semester. In one particular instance, a security officer saw that a car parked on campus (which he later learned was Eliza's) had a parking decal on the side window that had been taken off of another car. The officer had the car towed. A couple weeks later, the same officer saw Eliza's car parked adjacent to campus with what he recorded as a different decal on the window. Safety and Security contacted the student's dean and the matter was taken to Honor Council. Honor Council then came to a suspicion of violation.

Eliza's Statement:

Eliza told the panel that a friend had lent her his car to use for the semester, and that she had been parking it off-campus since she was not allowed to have a car on campus. She also told the panel that she used to hang out with some kids from Ardmore who, when they learned that she couldn't park her car on Haverford's campus, gave her a parking decal that they claimed they had found. She put it on her car window and began parking on campus. A security officer spotted the taped-on decal and, seeing that the license plate was unregistered by Haverford College, had the car towed. Eliza said that she pleaded with the officer and the tow truck driver to not take the car, telling them that a friend had lent her the sticker, but that they proceeded to tow it. Later she paid the garage to get it back. She told the panel that she had no idea at the time that the sticker had been taken off someone else's car, and had she known, she would not have accepted it.

Statement of Safety and Security:

Representatives from the Office of Safety and Security told the jury that the towing incident was one instance in a pattern of misbehavior displayed by Eliza. They relayed to the
panel an incident that had occurred the semester before involving Eliza entering the Dining Center before it opened and refusing to leave when asked. According to the DC employees who witnessed the scene, the student was eating cake, reaching into the cereal containers, and when asked for her name and ID number, she gave them a fake name and number. Safety and Security was notified, and Eliza left before the officer arrived. The DC employees later identified her by looking in the student photo directory.

In another incident, Eliza (who by this time had brought the car to Haverford) was parked illegally in a Special Permit space on campus. Because the vehicle was unregistered and thus had no parking decal, Safety and Security couldn't locate the owner. A further check, however, revealed that the driver of the vehicle had received four parking tickets, none of which had been paid, and the car was towed. The Safety and Security representatives also informed the panel that Eliza broke into the garage where her car was being held, an incident to which the local police responded. To Safety and Security's knowledge, the matter was resolved.

The Safety and Security representatives explained that a couple months after that incident, Eliza's car was parked on campus with what they described as the stolen decal in a plastic baggie taped to the side window. Safety and Security had the car towed. According to the responding security officer, when the tow truck arrived, Eliza came running out of her dorm begging both the officer and the tow truck driver to release her car. They told the panel that the student stood between her car and the tow truck and would not move until the driver told her he would call the police. The security officer tried to explain to Eliza the towing policy, but she kept asking him to release her car. When the officer tried to leave in order to take another student to the infirmary, Eliza, standing between him and his vehicle, told him that she would not move. The officer told her to move several times to no avail. According to the officer, Eliza told him that he wasn't a real cop, that security officers were fakes. The officer finally got into his vehicle and began to drive away. Eliza hit the side of the vehicle with her hand and snapped the rear wiper blade against the back windshield.

Finally, they told the panel that a couple weeks after her vehicle had been towed, the same officer who saw the decal on Eliza's car saw a different parking decal on her car, also appearing to have been taken from another vehicle.

Panel Questions:

After some discussion, the panel decided to take into account all the incidents described in Safety and Security's report, not just the issue of the parking decal, and asked both parties a number of clarifying questions. They asked Eliza why she began parking on campus, and she explained that sometimes she simply needed to be somewhere quickly and had no other choice. She also told the panel that at the time she thought that "No Parking" meant no overnight parking, but that one-hour parking was acceptable.

In order to get a better understanding of the incident at the garage, the panel asked Eliza to explain. Though the events as she told them were somewhat unclear, she said that she was allowed to enter the garage by some employees. As she was getting some things from her car,
the police arrived. Both Eliza and Safety and Security explained that the police and the garage dropped the matter.

Curious about the altercation in the Dining Center, the panel questioned Eliza about it. She told the panel that that matter had been resolved months before. Eliza said that she was under the assumption she was on trial solely because she accepted a parking decal that was not hers.

When asked about the decal and specifically the second towing incident, Eliza told the panel that the kids who gave her the sticker told her that a former Haverford student gave it to them; she said that she genuinely did not know that it came from a current student's vehicle. When the car was being towed, Eliza told the panel that she ran out of her dorm and tried to talk to both the security officer and the driver, but that neither would listen to her. She said that she did block the security guard from leaving, but that she had no idea that he needed to take another student to the infirmary. When asked about calling the security officer a "fake cop", Eliza explained that she didn't think of security officers as "cops" and thus felt that she was being mistreated by the responding officer. She also admitted to snapping the back windshield wiper, but not to hitting the side of the car. She told the panel that at the time she was upset, but not acting inappropriately in any way.

Finally, when the panel asked her about the second decal that the officer saw on her window when her car was parked adjacent to campus, she became quite confused and explained that there never was a second decal. The panel looked into the matter and learned that it was the same decal she had on her car when it was towed, and that she had not removed it at that point.

Panel Deliberations:

The panel agreed that the stolen parking decal was not the only incident they needed to consider when evaluating Eliza's relationship with the Haverford community. The panel members were concerned about Eliza's apparent defiance of rules and regulations and her unapologetic behavior regarding all the instances they questioned her about. In response to almost all of the panel's questions about the incidents presented by Safety and Security, she said that she hadn't done anything wrong. They were also concerned that Eliza didn't consider security officers or Dining Center employees members of the Haverford community. After extensive deliberation, considering the entire scope of incidents relating to the student, the panel came to consensus on the following statement of violation.

Statement of Violation:

The student violated the Honor Code by willfully disregarding the rules and expectations of the community in

a) having a car on campus,[1]

b) displaying a stolen decal and lying about it,
c) repeatedly parking illegally,

d) hindering the relationship between Haverford College and outside vendors by trespassing, and

e) ignoring the rules and regulations of the Dining Center

Resolution Deliberations:

After reviewing the situation and the separate incidents, the panel began discussing the possibility of separation. One panel member suggested that Eliza's parking privileges be revoked for the next year, but the panel as a whole decided that such a measure would not address the general disrespect for the Haverford community and specifically members of the Haverford staff shown by Eliza. The general sentiment of the panel was that the student had shown that she was not ready to be a respectful member of the community. They agreed that separation could be an effective resolution, but two questions remained: for how long should she be separated, and what other resolutions could be included to make the separation more worthwhile? For the first question, the panel could not agree between separation for one semester or two semesters, but finally decided that the student should be separated for at least one semester but have the option of re-entering the community after that one semester if she agrees to fulfill other resolutions. In regards to the question of other resolutions, the panel considered having Eliza do volunteer work, write an essay pertaining to her relationship to the Haverford community, write a letter to the community, and be matched with a mentor, a staff member who could serve as a resource for Eliza and help show her what it means to be a respectful member of the community. After much drafting and re-drafting, the panel came to consensus on the following resolutions.

Resolutions:

1. The student will be separated for two semesters, with the option of returning after one semester if she has demonstrated through resolution 2 that she is ready to re-enter the community. The Dean of the College and the deans involved in the panel will make this decision.

2. To demonstrate her understanding of what it means to be a responsible member of the community, the student will write a reflective research essay of no less than 2000 words. This essay should be based on personal reflections and relevant readings, and should address:
   a) the challenges of adapting to the Haverford College environment, including establishing a relationship with rules and authority, managing anger and resolving conflicts
   b) the responsibility of members of the community to hold themselves responsible for their actions, and
   c) the value of a respectful relationship between students and all members of the staff.

3. If the student re-enters the community after only one semester of separation, she will be involved in a weekly off-campus community service project under the
supervision of the director of Eighth Dimension. If the student remains separated for two semesters, she will not be bound by this resolution upon re-entry.

4. When the student returns to Haverford, she will be matched with a member of the community who will act as a mentor for at least the first semester.

5. The student will write a letter to the community upon re-entry that addresses how her actions have affected the Haverford community. Finally, the student will write a letter to each of the involved parties addressing her responsibility in the incidents over the past year.

Presentation of Resolutions:

Eliza was upset at the panel's decisions, and said that she felt the resolutions were unfair and punitive. She also asked about the appeal procedure. The Office of Safety and Security was unavailable for comment. After presenting the resolutions to Eliza, the panel came to consensus on the tentative resolutions as final resolutions.

Questions:

1. Was the panel right in considering all the incidents involving Eliza over the year, and not just the incident that she was contacted about?

2. Was separation appropriate in this case? Do you agree with the option that the panel gave Eliza of returning after only one semester if she fulfilled other resolutions?

3. What does it mean to be a member of the Haverford community?

4. What is the relationship between staff members, such as security officers and Dining Center employees, to the Haverford community?

[1] For confidentiality purposes, this part of the Statement of Violation had to be slightly modified for the abstract.