Johannes and Professor Mae
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Abstract Released Fall 2002
Abstract Discussion: Spring 2003 TBA

Introduction:

Johannes felt guilty and came forward to confess to Professor Mae that he cheated on his exam: he significantly exceeded the allotted time, used his notes and plagiarized published essays. Johannes and Professor Mae decided to contact Honor Council to mediate their reconciliation. Honor Council consented to a suspicion of violation.

Fact Finding:

Johannes’ statement:

The exam was to be completed within three hours using no notes or other sources during the duration of the exam. Johannes explained that he began studying for the exam by reading his notes and published material on the topics that the exam covered. He explained that he was very anxious about taking the exam, so he opened it and looked at the questions before he began taking the exam. After looking at the questions, Johannes stated that he spent two days answering the questions using his notes and published material. He also inserted a few passages from published material into the rest of his exam claiming them as his own. He submitted the exam to Professor Mae on the date it is due.

After submitting the exam, Johannes explained that he felt guilty for cheating on the exam. He decided to confess to Professor Mae that he had cheated. He stated that he contacted Professor Mae before the exams were read and evaluated, disclosed all the instructions he failed to follow, and pointed out the instances of plagiarism in the exam.

Professor Mae’s statement:

Professor Mae agreed with Johannes’ account of their interaction. She added that she probably wouldn’t have known that Johannes cheated if Johannes hadn’t told her.

Jury Deliberations:

The jury first came to the conclusion that Johannes violated the Honor Code in two ways: he failed to follow instructions and he plagiarized. In the case of the former, all jury members agreed on the delinquent acts. On the issue of plagiarism, however, the jury was unsure if Johannes’ act of plagiarism was a gross act of plagiarism or not. There were two views on the criteria for assessing the degree of plagiarism: amount and intent. Although only a few sections were plagiarized, Johannes had the full intention to plagiarize. Finally, the jury came to consensus that Johannes committed a gross act of plagiarism.
Statement of Violations:

1. The student violated the Honor Code by committing an act of gross plagiarism.
2. The student violated the Honor Code by not following the professor’s instruction regarding an exam.

One member stood out of consensus for Statement 1 while all members came to consensus for the aggregate.

Circumstantial Portion I:

Professor Mae expressed her concern for Johannes: she didn’t want the resolutions to detrimentally affect Johannes’ academic career or extend beyond the scope of the class. However, she did acknowledge that the purpose of the trial is to reconcile the breach of trust beyond her classroom. She asked that the jury take into account the fact that Johannes came forward himself. Professor Mae explained that Johannes had been taking steps to regain her trust.

Professor Mae explained the exam is only a component of a student’s performance and what is used to assess her students. She expects her students to complete all of the assigned work. She therefore suggested that Johannes fail the exam and take another one, which will not be for credit. She felt like she could trust Johannes though she wanted to meet with him specifically to discuss the rules for citation. Finally, Professor Mae stated that Johannes could possibly pass the class with a 2.0 if he was permitted to continue the course.

Johannes expressed remorse for his actions. He stated that the trial process had made him more aware of the presence and impact of the Honor Code. He expressed anxiety about his academic future.

Jury Deliberations:

The jury first discussed if they should give Johannes 0.0 for the class. They agreed that failing Johannes wouldn’t serve to repair the breach of trust: it would interfere with repairing his relationship with Professor Mae

Resolutions:

1.) The student will receive a 0.0 for the exam.
2.) The student will take a similar exam for no credit due before the end of the semester.
3.) The student and professor will participate in at least one unmediated dialogue. The student will meet with his dean to discuss issues surrounding the trial before the end of the semester.
4.) The student will write a letter to the community including, but not limited to, his reflections on the responsibilities associated with take home exams and his reasons for coming.

**Presentation of Resolutions:**

Johannes accepted the terms of the resolution. Professor Mae was unable to attend the presentation of resolutions, but sent an e-mail to the chair expressing her approval.

The jury came to final consensus on the resolutions as they were.

**Questions:**

1. What is the criterion for assessing a gross act of plagiarism?
2. Should the statement in the Honor Code that gross plagiarism usually results in separation be reconsidered?
3. If a student herself admits to violating the code, should the resolutions be less punitive?