Dweezil

An Honor Council Academic Trial

Introduction:

Dweezil was a student in Professor Moon Unit’s Music class. Prof. Moon Unit occasionally opened class with a short quiz. These quizzes were open-note but not open-book quizzes. On two of the quizzes Dweezil opened his book to search for answers. Ahmet, another student in Music, saw that Dweezil had opened his book and suggested that he contact the professor. Professor Moon Unit, upon hearing that Dweezil had opened his book, told him to contact the Honor Council. Council reached consensus that there was a suspicion of violation, and an academic trial was convened.

Fact Finding:

Professor Moon Unit’s statement:

Professor Moon Unit explained that before each of the first two quizzes he had explained the rules for using notes. Moon Unit told students that they may use notes from class, TA sessions, and from readings. He told students that they were not allowed to open their books during the quiz, to use readings, or to use notes written in the book to help answer the question. On the third and fourth quizzes Professor Moon Unit told the students that the usual rules for quiz-taking applied.

Dweezil’s statement:

Dweezil told the jury that he was under the impression from the beginning of the class that he was allowed to use his book on the quizzes. He thought it was odd that they were allowed to use the book. After the fourth quiz Ahmet, another student in the class, emailed him and told him that she had seen him using his book and asked if he was aware that the quizzes were closed book. He approached Professor Moon Unit and was then told to contact Honor Council.

Jury Questions:

One jury member asked why Dweezil did not refer to his book on the first two quizzes. Dweezil responded by saying that the answer to the first quiz was in his notes and he knew the second from memory. On the third quiz he didn’t find the answer in his notes or book. On the fourth quiz he knew exactly where the answer was in the book so he decided not to use his notes.

Jury Deliberations:

Most jurors agreed that Dweezil did not intend to cheat on the quizzes. The jury believed Dweezil’s statement that he was simply not paying attention to the professor’s instructions. One juror pointed to the section of the Honor Code that states we must follow professors’ instructions and ask for clarification if necessary. Some jurors felt that since Dweezil thought that using the book was definitely allowed, there was no need to ask for clarification. However, since the Honor Code specifically states that we must follow professors’ instructions, the jury did not think that not paying attention excused this action. A student, the jury thought, must take responsibility to listen carefully enough to know what the professor’s instructions are. The jury reached consensus on the following statement of violation.
Dweezil violated the Honor Code by not taking enough responsibility to fully understand the professor’s instructions. By using his book on quizzes, he violated the section of the Code which states “we must follow a professor’s instructions as to the completion of tests …”

The jury presented the statement of violation to Dweezil and Moon Unit who both accepted it and had no questions regarding it. The jury then moved to the circumstantial portion of the trial.

Circumstantial:
Professor Moon Unit believes that Dweezil is a thoughtful and intelligent student, but is not always attentive to small details. He felt that it was possible that Dweezil had just not been paying attention during the instructions. Dweezil told the jury that because Music was his fourth class on that day he may have been less able to pay attention to the instructions at that time.

Jury Deliberations:
The jury felt that since the cheating was unintentional, the academic consequences should not be too severe. At the same time, however, some jurors thought it would be unfair for Dweezil to receive credit for the quizzes since he had an advantage over the other students by having the book. Although Dweezil felt that his attention had been adversely affected by having had three classes earlier in the day, the jury felt that this did not excuse his actions. Many students have four classes in a day, and we must be responsible for paying attention in all our classes. The jury wanted its resolutions to address the ideas of Education, Repairing the breach of trust, and Accountability. Dweezil was very responsive to the trial process and through it realized his mistake in not paying attention, so the jury felt Education had already been addressed. To repair the breach of trust between Dweezil and the community (including Professor Moon Unit and the rest of the Music class), the jury thought Dweezil should write a letter to the community addressing these issues. The jury thought that if Dweezil failed the two quizzes on which he cheated, he would be held accountable for his actions which violated the Code without an unnecessarily harsh penalty to his course grade. The jury reached consensus on the following resolutions, with one juror standing outside.

1. The jury strongly recommends that Dweezil receive no credit for the quizzes on which he used his book.
2. Dweezil will write a letter to the community concerning his trial experience in terms of repairing the breach of trust and education, as well as the importance of student responsibility in academic life.

The jury presented the resolutions to Dweezil, who was satisfied with them. Professor Moon Unit was not able to attend the presentation of resolutions, but was contacted by email and accepted them as well. Thus concludes the trial of Dweezil and Moon Unit. Thanks for reading. Honor Council loves you.

Juror Statements:
Juror 1:
The confronted party broke the trust of the community by not following the same set of instructions as the rest of his class, even if it was entirely accidental. I thus fully agree with the statement of violation and resolutions and feel that they adequately address the breach of trust.
and subsequent accountability.

_Juror 2:_
I decided to stand outside on the resolutions because I did not feel that they were harsh enough. I feel that in general the resolutions are not harsh enough. I thought that we should have added on something more like community service, or who knows what, but something more. I agree with the resolutions that are present, I just feel that there should be more. I think the trial went well all together though.

_Juror 3:_
I reached consensus because I felt Dweezil violated the Honor Code by not following Professor Moon Unit's instructions on the tests in question. While his violation was clearly unintentional, resulting from mere miscommunication, Dweezil was no less in violation of the Code. He thus must be held accountable. I feel that the resolutions agreed upon appropriately reflect the unintentional nature of the violation while still holding Dweezil accountable for his actions.

**Questions for Discussion:**
1. How are students supposed to know that they are not following instructions when they think they are?
2. Are there events that can be considered both transgressions of the academic Honor Code and too minor to bring to Council?
3. Do students shy from confronting people about "plain as day" violations of the academic Code because they worry about being laughed at, as one would be for similar confrontations of the Alcohol Policy?
4. Are the overall Honor Code violations at Haverford as minor as recent abstracts seem to suggest?