Introduction:

Pip was asked to contact Honor Council by his Chemistry professor Estella. Professor Estella suspected that Pip had extrapolated and possibly copied data from outside sources on two of his titration labs. After Pip and Professor Estella initially spoke, the matter was taken to Honor Council.

Honor Council met to discuss the situation concerning Pip and the titration labs and reached consensus that a suspicion of violation existed and that the matter should be resolved in an academic trial.

Fact Finding:

Professor Estella’s Statement
Professor Estella began by explaining the lab assignments. In each lab, students were to make observations over a period of time. Due to confusion early in the semester, Estella, for this lab, explicitly indicated that in observing students should not guess, nor should they obtain data from other sources.

Estella’s concern arose upon receipt of the first part of a two-part titration lab. The observations and data on the lab were perfect. Estella indicated that this was not possible because chemical solution that was made for the lab was of the incorrect concentration. Therefore, Pip could not have made the observations that he did. Estella thought that Pip had possibly consulted the course textbook, which included sample data tables for the lab that the class was performing. She also mentioned that data fabrication was a possibility. Professor Estella’s suspicions were raised further by the fact that Pip’s earlier work displayed a degree of error and uncertainty entirely consistent with the coursework.

Professor Estella also had concerns with the second part of the lab. On this lab, the times at which data were recorded were strange in that the intervals were all off by 5 minutes. When these extra 5 minutes were subtracted, the times and corresponding intervals were almost exactly perfect. Estella was concerned with the unusual degree of accuracy and once again questioned whether Pip had consulted the course textbook. Again, Estella mentioned that fabrication was a strong possibility.

Professor Estella confronted Pip about this lab because she was not satisfied there was not an Honor Code violation. She was unsure because data fabrication and extrapolation are not
explicitly addressed in the Code. She stressed that making up data in the scientific world is considered to be very serious, although she did not mention this in the instructions for the lab assignments.

_Pip’s Statement:_
Pip began by acknowledging that he did a very poor job on the labs in question. In addressing the first part of the titration lab, he said that he had lost most of the data and observations that he had collected. He used the few initial observations that he had collected and had not lost to extrapolate out all the data for the lab. He acknowledged that he understood the directions and that his actions definitely did not fall under good scientific practice. Under the constraints of time, though, he extrapolated from the data that he had to finish the lab.

In addressing the second part of the titration lab, Pip began by saying that, in general, he was not particularly aware of the time of day. He also said that at the time of the lab he had recently lost his watch. In past labs, he had relied on his watch to record times and intervals. When his watch broke, he was forced to rely on the clock in class and admitted that he carelessly glanced at the clock when it was time to make observations. He attributed the 5 minutes in question to this carelessness. Once again, he realized his work on this lab was not of the highest integrity.

In both labs, Pip stated that he had not consulted any outside sources and relied solely on extrapolation and guesswork to complete the labs. He agreed with Professor Estella in that he was unsure whether or not a violation of the Honor Code had occurred.

_Jury Deliberations:_

After both statements, the jury discussed the event in question. Jury members were concerned with the amount of precision that was apparent in the second part of the lab in conjunction with the problems with time recording and intervals. Additionally the jury was concerned with the impossibility of observed data in the first part of the lab. The jury consulted Professor Joe about the precision of the second lab and its plausibility.

_Fact Finding II:_

_Professor Joe’s Statement_
Professor Joe indicated to the jury that level accuracy displayed in Pip’s lab, although difficult to obtain, was possible given careful observation. Because of this, the data Pip collected in the second part of the lab was possibly valid.

_Jury Deliberations:_

After hearing all the facts in the case, the jury discussed the following: data fabrication within the context of the Honor Code, data extrapolation within the context of the Honor Code, and how closely Pip should have been expected to follow Estella’s rules.

_Statement of Violation:_

After discussion the jury came to consensus on the following statement of violation:

Pip violated the Honor Code by presenting fabricated or extrapolated data as his own observed data, against the specific instructions of the professor.

Both parties were comfortable with the statement of violation and the jury moved on to the circumstantial portion of the trial.

Circumstantial and Proposed Resolutions:

Pip informed the jury that at the time of the actions in violation, he was enduring very harsh personal problems that were accompanied by a lack of sleep. He stated that his mental state at the time did not enable him to stop himself or realize that what he was doing was wrong. Pip also proposed that for resolutions he write a letter to the community addressing the issues at hand. He pointed out the counseling that he was receiving would help his overall mental state and, in turn, his place with respect to the Honor Code.

Professor Estella understood that Pip was undergoing personal hardships and that these hardships could have accounted for his poor performance in the class. Professor Estella felt as though a lack of understanding led to the problem and that she never thought Pip intended to deceive her. She added that she felt comfortable with the current state of her and Pip’s relationship. Estella felt that giving Pip a 0.0 on the labs would be appropriate, at most giving him a total lab grade of 0.0. Estella thought it was also important that Pip somehow address data fabrication and its seriousness in letter form to act as an educational tool for the community as well as the natural science division.

Deliberations:

The members of the jury admired the fact that Pip was prepared to be held accountable for his actions in the matter. In forming resolutions, the jury kept in mind the three goals of resolutions:

1) *Education* of the individual and the community
2) *Repairing the breach of trust* between the individuals directly involved and the individual and the community
3) *Accountability*

All members of the jury felt that the lowering of the entire lab portion of the class grade was too substantial and felt that a 0.0 would be enough to account for the fabrication and/or extrapolation. The jury wished to have a resolution that allowed Pip to speak both personally to the community and especially to classes of the sciences like this one. Finally, the jury wished to have something that the faculty would be able to use in order to educate students on the significance of fabrication and extrapolation of data.

Resolutions:
1. Pip will receive a grade of 0.0 for the lab reports containing extrapolated or fabricated data.
2. Pip will write a letter to the community addressing if and why fabrication/extrapolation of data is in general a violation of the Honor Code, and how he can repair his personal breach of trust with the community, and his reflections on the trial process.
3. Pip will work with Professor Estella to create a document addressing the issue of data fabrication/extrapolation in relation to the Honor Code and to the philosophy of science. This document will be made available to NA faculty, and the jury strongly recommends that this document be used as a resource for future classes.

Presentation of Resolutions:

After the jury came to consensus on these resolutions, both Professor Estella and Pip were presented with copies of the resolutions. After a 24-hour break for reflection, the jury reconvened to reach a final consensus on the resolutions and address any remaining questions. Professor Estella had some questions concerning how the work on the document would be divided between the two. The jury determined that Pip would complete the majority of the work with the assistance of Professor Estella, and also that the document would be made available to social science faculty.

The final jury deliberation was short. The jury was content with the resolutions, and after a final consensus, the trial ended.

Questions:

1. Do you think extrapolation and/or fabrication a violation of the Honor Code?
2. Do you think the jury’s resolutions were fair?
3. How should natural science courses deal with extrapolation and fabrication within the context of the Honor Code?