Tamino

Summary

Tamino contacted Honor council, at Prof. Sarastro's request, and admitted to copying two of four problems off of another student's homework assignment in his course on the supernatural. Honor Council reached consensus that a trial was necessary. The jury found Tamino in violation of the Honor Code and resolved the following: Tamino's grade will be lowered by 2/3 of a point, Tamino will tell the student he copied from what happened, and he will write a letter to the community about an aspect of this situation which he personally felt was educational or relevant.

Fact-Finding

After Prof. Sarastro and Tamino arrived, Prof. Sarastro described the situation, pointing out similarities between Tamino's assignment and the assignment of another student, Papageno. While correcting the problem sets, Prof. Sarastro noticed that the first two of four questions on Tamino's assignment looked like Papageno's. At the next class meeting, he asked Tamino if he had worked with anyone on the assignment, and Tamino said he had worked with two students in the library. Since Papageno was not one of these two students, Prof. Sarastro told Tamino to contact Honor Council. Their discussion ended. Five hours later, Tamino called Prof. Sarastro at home and admitted to taking a student's completed homework from the bin where they turn in assignments. He used this assignment to get an idea of where to start his problems, however, he ended up copying. At the end of this phone conversation, Prof. Sarastro again asked Tamino to contact Honor Council.

Tamino agreed with this account. He explained why he didn't tell Prof. Sarastro the truth right away. He had been up all night the night before and was exhausted. He wasn't thinking clearly, which led him to tell a half-truth (he did work with students in the library, but not on the first two questions). He said he went home after their initial conversation, slept for five hours, and then immediately called Prof. Sarastro.

Prof. Sarastro told the jury that Tamino had copied half of the assignment and that there were ten assignments throughout the semester, worth a total of 40% of the final grade.

The jury noticed a good rapport between student and professor; they seemed to be reconstructing the story together.
Deliberations

The jury quickly reached consensus on a statement of violation:

Tamino violated the Honor Code by copying half of another student's homework assignment and presenting it as his own.

Circumstantial

This portion of the trial began when Tamino arrived (Prof. Sarastro could not attend). Tamino began by talking about the circumstances surrounding the violation. He said that he went to talk to Prof. Sarastro the day the assignment was due, but he was not in his office. The completed homework of another student (Papageno) was at the office. Tamino recalled that it seemed like a good thing to do at the time and was the easy way out. Tamino stressed that he wasn't trying to make excuses. What he did was stupid.

The jury then asked Tamino for possible resolutions that would address Education, Repairing the Breach of Trust, and Accountability. Tamino suggested that he:

1) talk to the student he cheated from.
2) fail the homework assignment.

He requested that the jury not lower his grade in the course because it was already low, and because he had been working really hard to bring it up. His grades had been steadily improving, and he did not want to finish the class on a bad note.

The chair then shared Prof. Sarastro's suggested resolutions that resulted from a conversation earlier that day. Prof Sarastro offered some possibilities:

1) fail the course. He said he could benefit from retaking it. At the same time, he did not want him to be "off track" in terms of fulfilling the requirements as a Supernatural major (Tamino's most likely major).
2) write a letter to the community discussing a) cheating because of the drive to do well and/or b) the accessibility of cheating at Haverford, a place where professors trust their students.
3) redo the assignment.

After hearing these possible resolutions, Tamino urged the jury not to fail him in the class.

Deliberations

The jury did not want to fail Tamino in the class because, even though it might be a good idea for him to retake the course, it would be too punitive for this violation. The jury felt that some lowering of Tamino's grade would address accountability and repairing the breach of trust between Tamino and Prof. Sarastro. The jury debated at length lowering the grade by 1/3 of a point or 2/3. Eventually, the jury decided on 2/3 of a point for the following reasons:
1) It would send a strong message to Tamino that this is a serious violation (plagiarism). Lowering by 1/3 of a point seemed more like a token gesture, not a concrete action.

2) Other students may have failed the homework honestly; ensuring Tamino's overall grade be lowered, and not just the homework, seemed fair.

3) It would bridge the gap between Tamino's desire to have his grade unaltered and Prof. Sarastro's suggestion of failing the course. Some jurors were surprised that Tamino suggested his grade be unaltered. It seemed that the two of them worked well together during Fact-Finding, but had completely different perspectives concerning the resolutions. Hopefully, this would bring the two of them closer together and help repair the breach of trust.

4) Though 2/3 of a point seems like a lot to most Haverford students, one juror pointed out that the effects of 2/3 of a point in one class are minimal when calculating the overall grade point average.

5) Though the jury felt that 2/3 of a point was appropriate, it did not want Tamino to fail the course. So, in case Tamino's grade was 1.3, the jury added that his grade not fall below a 1.0.

The jury then discussed Papageno who was unknowingly involved. The jury felt that a resolution addressing the other student would hold Tamino accountable for his actions and also repair the breach of trust with this student. Because he did not specifically copy off of a Papageno, the jury thought it might be appropriate for Tamino to write a letter and send it anonymously to the community. This would make it a "universal" case, and serve to educate the community. The jury then decided it would be best for Tamino to contact Papageno directly because, even though he does not know what happened, the situation still affects him.

The jury also discussed a letter to the community. The jury felt that the first two resolutions were adequate in addressing Education, Repairing the Breach of Trust, and Accountability, and no further resolutions were necessary. However, the jury also felt that the community could greatly benefit from a letter that discusses aspects common to all students. The jury finally decided to require this resolution, with the understanding that the letter could be brief and about any aspect of the situation Tamino wished.

The jury debated further resolutions about talking to Prof. Sarastro and redoing the homework assignment. Most jurors felt that the two would talk regardless of whether or not it was a resolution, and it was therefore unnecessary. Even though redoing the homework would be helpful, the jury also felt that this would be overkill. Too many resolutions might undermine the effectiveness of the other resolutions.

The jury tentatively reached consensus on the following resolutions:

**Resolutions**

1) **The jury recommends that Tamino's grade be lowered by 2/3 of a point, but will not fall below a 1.0.**
2) Tamino will have a discussion, mediated by an Honor Council member, with the student whose work he copied.

3) Tamino will write a letter to the community addressing aspects of this experience.

Presentation of Resolutions

The trial reconvened when Tamino and the jurors arrived. Tamino began by saying that he was generally satisfied with the resolutions. He urged the jury to reconsider the grade lowering. He suggested giving Prof. Sarastro the option of lowering the grade by 1/3 or 2/3 of a point.

The chair had spoken with Professor Sarastro the day before over the phone. The chair shared with the jury that Prof. Sarastro was happy with the resolutions.

After Tamino left, the jury discussed Tamino's suggestion. The jury was hesitant to give Prof. Sarastro a choice because it is not his responsibility to make resolutions. The jury felt that by being ambiguous it would be shirking its duty. The jury also felt that if it gave Prof. Sarastro a choice, and he lowered his grade by 2/3 of a point, Tamino and Prof. Sarastro's relationship might be strained.

The jury reached a final consensus on the resolutions unchanged, and the trial ended.

Questions:

1. Do you agree with the jury's statement of violation/resolutions?
2. Do you think that a grade lowering of 1/3 would have been appropriate?
3. Should Tamino have failed the class, as Prof. Sorastro suggested?
4. Other comments

Note: If you have further comments or questions about this abstract, Honor Council offers the opportunity for you to discuss this abstract with an actual juror from the trial. Please contact the Honor Council Chair for more information. If you have general comments about this or any other abstract, please contact your Honor Council Representative.

Send comments, problems, or suggestions to: code@haverford.edu

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