1988 HONOR COUNCIL ABSTRACT: JOSHUA

Summary: Samuel, a grader for Professor Gilead, confronted Joshua for a possible academic violation of the Honor Code. Two answers on Joshua's homework paper were similar to answers on another student's paper. At the inquiry, the jury determined there had been a violation, and decided upon a four-part resolution:
1) Joshua was to meet with two jury members to discuss the case. Following the discussion, he was to write a letter addressing a statement he made during the trial.
2) Two jury members are to speak with the professor to brief him on the case and to relate the inadequacy of resolutions settled privately between students and professors.
3) The jury suggested that Joshua speak with Professor Gilead to clarify the situation between them.
4) The two problems on the homework were unacceptable academic work.

I. FACT-FINDING

Confronting party: At the inquiry, Samuel explained that as he was correcting the homework assignment for Professor Gilead, he noticed a similarity between Joshua's and Isaac's homework. One answer was wrong on both, and another answer had the same logic. The professor's policy was that students were allowed to discuss homework in the abstract but were not to discuss specific problems, nor were they to work together or copy answers. Samuel handed the papers to Professor Gilead and notified him of the problem.

Confronted party: Joshua said that there had been ten problems on the homework assignment. He did eight of them on Wednesday; the other two he could not do. On Saturday he talked with Isaac and got help on the two he could not finish. He borrowed Isaac's paper to study, and after examining Isaac's method, Joshua returned the paper and did the last two. He wrote a note on the homework saying that he had "received assistance", then turned it in on Monday.

Samuel said that while he had been correcting papers, he had not seen any note on the homework. According to Joshua, the note was on a different page than the one the two questions were on.

Samuel received the paper back from Professor Gilead a few days later and found on his paper that he had not received credit for the two questions. Professor Gilead instructed Joshua to mediate the problem with Isaac. Joshua rewrote the problems and returned them to his professor.

After discussing the two statements, the jury agreed it needed the professor's account to clearly determine whether there had been a violation or not. When contacted, Professor
To: members of the Honor Council & Joshua jury members.  
From: Joshua  
Re: Resolution  

Before I begin to reflect on my experience about the honor code trial, I would like to express my thanks to each of you who sat on the trial. I am grateful for the understanding and friendliness that you showed towards me during the trial. Not knowing what to expect, I was nervous on the first day. But I realized that you were not out to get me by bombarding me for information. I felt a part of the whole procedure; especially because I knew exactly what was happening. Of course I regret my actions regarding the law assignment, but the experience of being on a trial is one that I do not regret. At Plenary on Sunday, Mimi Blum spoke about the last trial that she was on. She said how she felt "empathetic" to the student on trial. It is this empathy that I want to thank you for.  

While at Plenary, I was able to think about the trial and put it into perspective. I had previously thought about it, but my thoughts were somewhat jumbled. Many of the other speakers said how students come to Haverford without having a good sense of the Honor Code. Although this may be true, I think that this is the only way a student can get a good sense of it. Only through the experience of being at Haverford can someone truly understand the code.
When I signed the Honor Code card after being accepted to Haverford, I thought I understood it. I guess in some ways I did, but in other ways not. Today I signed another card to clarify the Code for next this year/next years. Because of the truth, I had a new sense with which I could sign and accept the responsibility. Everything happened at the appropriate time. My new belief faith in the Code could be acted out by being able to sign the card.

Of course my understanding is not 100%, but then again, I'm sure it never will be.

In regard to your decision, I do understand why you came to it. I am relieved to know that you realize that I did not attempt "to deceive the professor." Even though I felt that I was not making a violation, I accept the resolutions with a positive spirit. I know that these resolutions can only serve to educate me. After speaking with Dave and Mimi, I realized the full extent of my action. I know that "a professor specific instructions are indeed a part of the Honor Code-they are a large part in fact. In regard to writing, I see how it can cause a problem. I would only hope that un the abstract you would convey this to the community. I do not think that students realize the full impact of this.
During the trial, I tried to see if I felt a breach from the community; and if I did, could I feel a part of it again. I did feel a breach, and I also realized that I would be foolish not to try and join the community again. I did not come to Haverford to stay for a semester. I knew I had to be a part of the community again. I hope that this letter convinces you of my sincere desire to be a part of Haverford and of my new understanding of the Honor Code. My goal to stay true to the community has a new strength, that I guess was not present before.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

"Joshua"