Honor Council Abstract

KELLY

THIS ABSTRACT HAS BEEN WITHHELD FOR AT LEAST A YEAR.

SUMMARY:
Professor Kaplan confronted Kelly, a second semester freshman, for plagiarism in her Western Civ paper. Kelly admitted that she had plagiarized the entirety of her paper, save a few scattered words, from one critical essay. Honor Council decided that the matter had to be resolved in a trial. During the trial, which lasted 10 days, the jury reached consensus on a three part statement of violation and a six-part resolution. The final resolutions were modified by the President of the College.

FACT-FINDING
Professor Kaplan, Kelly, and Kelly's support person attended the trial. The trial began with the traditional moment of silence and an explanation of procedure. Then Professor Kaplan gave his account. He said that Kelly's entire Western Civ paper had been plagiarized verbatim from Jane Jones' Reflections on Simone de Beauvoir. Throughout the semester, he and Kelly had established a close working relationship. Professor Kaplan added that although Kelly's papers were improving, she was not a strong writer. He was, therefore, extremely surprised when he read her paper on Simone de Beauvoir. Professor Kaplan knew immediately that it had been plagiarized because the language was definitely not Kelly's.

Professor Kaplan spoke with Kelly. Although Kelly admitted to him that the paper was not her own, Professor Kaplan later realized that she had lied about the details of the plagiarism. Kelly told him that she had plagiarized from a paper her older sister had written several years earlier. After this initial confrontation, Kelly left.

Professor Kaplan said that Kelly returned to his office an hour later, carrying the book by Jane Jones called Reflections on Simone de Beauvoir. She handed him the book, admitting that she had actually plagiarized from it. She then pointed out the pages she had copied.

Kelly then gave her account to the jury. Although she agreed with Professor Kaplan's account, she wanted the jury to know that she had had very little sleep when she wrote the paper. One juror asked Kelly whether her sister's paper ever played a role at all. Kelly replied that she had spoken with her sister, Melanie, on the phone. When Melanie heard how swamped Kelly was with her schoolwork, she offered to do some research for Kelly and send her the findings by mail. In this mailing, which Kelly received several days after their conversation, Melanie included excerpts from Jane Jones' book. Several days later, Kelly checked this book out of Magill Library.
Professor Kaplan interjected that he was very hurt and upset that Kelly would plagiarize, especially since the two had had a good rapport. He added that he had invited Kelly's class over for dinner several nights before the paper was due, and that Kelly had even stayed later than others to discuss ideas for her paper.

Kelly then continued with her account. In response to jurors' questions, she said that after speaking with her sister and receiving the mailing, she went home both to see her family and to look for her sister's old paper. She said that when she found it, she realized that it was not relevant to her topic. As a result, she checked out Jones' book instead. Kelly began writing her paper at 3:30am Wednesday; the paper was due at 5pm that day.

The jury felt comfortable determining whether or not a violation had occurred, and the fact-finding session drew to a close. Kelly said that "deep down" she knew that what she had done was wrong. Professor Kaplan said "this was the most serious academic crime" he had seen. He called it "a massive act of stealing."

JURY DELIBERATION:

The jury had copies of Kelly's paper and Jane Jones' article in front of them. Except for the most minimal changes, the two essays were exactly the same. The jury quickly reached consensus that Kelly violated the Honor Code. They formulated a tentative statement of violation, which read:

*Kelly violated the standards of our community by copying the body of her paper from a secondary source without citation.*

This statement was later changed due to new information gathered during the trial.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL:

The jury then moved to the circumstantial portion of the trial. Kelly handed out a list of all her commitments during the weeks before her paper was due. She said she had been working on a summer job application that had completely overwhelmed her. She was applying for an internship and the application process was exhaustive. She said that because writing was a struggle for her anyway, completing this application was particularly excruciating and the most significant factor in her academic backlog. She had fallen extremely behind in all her classes and had not slept in days when she sat down to write Professor Kaplan's paper. She said she was not fully "herself."

Professor Kaplan handed jurors new evidence: a copy of a re-write Kelly had turned in two weeks after handing in the original. Kelly turned in this re-write before Professor Kaplan had read the original, with the understanding that he was generally lenient about accepting re-writes.
Professor Kaplan was visibly frustrated at this point in the trial. He pointed out that Kelly's re-write still contained several plagiarized passages, even though it now contained some original ideas as well. Professor Kaplan said that while the original paper was "directly lifted" from the secondary source, Kelly's re-write was a more serious offense because it was an attempt to "cover up" what she had done earlier. He called the re-write a "concerted effort to hide the plagiarism" of the first paper. He then described what disturbed him most: at the bottom of the second paper, Kelly cited her friend Peter as having worked with her on the rewrite. Professor Kaplan felt that Kelly's use of Peter (who was in the same class) to help her "skillfully manipulate" her plagiarism so that it was less obvious was truly exploitative and unfair.

Kelly responded that her intention in re-writing the paper was to remove the plagiarism, not to cover it up. She said that she honestly felt the re-write was more her own thought and that she was trying to "right [her] wrong." Peter spent several hours with her, helping her work in new ideas and cut out parts that did not sound right. She said that Peter never knew he was working on a plagiarized paper. She now realized that she had taken advantage of him and the community.

Kelly continued by saying that the whole incident was extremely "out of character" for her. She reiterated that she had not been sleeping well at the time of the paper and did not really know what she was doing. She added that she wrote a letter of apology to Professor Kaplan after their confrontation because she felt so terrible. She said, "No one can realize how sorry I am for this."

After a recess, the trial continued with more questioning. Kelly said that when she wrote the original paper, all she had on her desk was Jones' book and her computer. She said that although she completed the paper Wednesday morning, and it was due at 5pm that day, she did not hand the paper in until Thursday. She repeated that when she wrote the paper, she did not realize that she was plagiarizing because she was so tired. She asked her friend Eric to proofread it Wednesday afternoon while she was in class, and she handed it in on Thursday. She cited Eric as having proofread the paper.

Jurors were confused as to why Kelly stayed up all night Tuesday writing the paper, but then did not hand it in until Thursday. Kelly said she had a very busy schedule, and so could not turn the paper in on time. Several jurors remained confused.

One juror asked Kelly why she had revised the plagiarized paper rather than completely rewriting it if she felt so bad. The juror explained that in keeping anything from the original (Kelly had kept almost half of the plagiarized portions) she was still plagiarizing because almost nothing in the original was her own. Professor Kaplan called the re-write a "cold-blooded attempt" at deception, but Kelly maintained that the second paper reflected her own work.

Several jurors could not understand Kelly's statement that she did not realize that she was copying from Jones' book when writing the first paper.
After all, Kelly's paper was a word-for-word reproduction of Jones' essay, yet she still maintained that she didn't know she was copying. One juror asked Kelly point-blank whether this was really the case. After a few moments, Kelly said "Yes, I think I knew I was copying." Another juror questioned whether there had been a clear point where Kelly decided to plagiarize rather than write her own paper. Kelly said she just skimmed Jones' article for ideas, "turned back to the beginning, and started copying." It seemed that the circumstantial portion of the trial had come to an end.

JURY DELIBERATION:

The jurors began by discussing the changes in Kelly's story. They then discussed the rewrite, reaching consensus that Kelly's involvement of Eric and Peter constituted a separate violation because it exploited community members. Jurors agreed that Kelly's involvement of her classmates was particularly serious. They felt that Kelly was extremely unfair in allowing them to think they were helping her with honest work.

The jury revised the statement of violation based on their new findings. The new statement read:

Kelly violated the academic and social standards of our community in several respects:

- She copied the body of her paper from a secondary source without any citation, thus committing the act of plagiarism.
- She aggravated the offense by submitting a rewrite, which still contained significant portions copied from the secondary source.
- Knowing that her paper was plagiarized, Kelly showed it to other students and sought their criticism. By involving these other students, without letting them know her paper was plagiarized, Kelly broke the trust of members of our community.

After more lengthy discussion, the jury invited Kelly back for more questions.

MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL

The Chairperson began by reading the new statement of violation. Jurors relayed their discussions, telling Kelly that plagiarism is a particularly serious offense because it is stealing someone else's creative work. Other jurors explained that in using Eric and Peter in the way she did, an act which is dangerous and unfair, Kelly could have easily implicated them in her offense. Even though she had only involved Eric peripherally by asking him to proofread the paper, Kelly involved Peter directly by having him work for hours changing the paper around. Kelly agreed, "Involving Peter was one of the worse things I could have done. He's going to feel really hurt." Kelly was emotional throughout the trial. She apologized for her actions on many occasions and often became flustered when jurors asked questions.
SUGGESTED RESOLUTIONS:

Professor Kaplan indicated that he wanted a chance to suggest resolutions to the jury. Because he had been so hurt by the breach of trust and the plagiarism, the jury agreed to hear his suggestions. Although Kelly was invited to attend, she declined.

Professor Kaplan suggested that Kelly fail Western Civ and write letters to Eric, Peter, and the rest of the students in the class. He also suggested that Kelly write a research paper on a subject that interested her. Lastly, he said that the jury has "to consider separation...the act is so clear-cut...she exploited other people." He quickly added, however, that although the jury should consider separation, he did not feel comfortable recommending it because he was not Kelly's peer. He reminded the jury of 2 important factors as well: 1) Kelly is a first-year-student and 2) Kelly admitted that the paper was not hers when initially confronted.

He then left, and Kelly arrived to present her own resolutions. She felt she should fail the paper, fail Western Civ, write several letters (to the History department, incoming freshpeople, Peter and Eric, the community and Professor Kaplan), and write a research paper. She also said that she wanted to explain everything to Peter and Eric and to apologize for what she had done.

The jury then relayed Professor Kaplan's suggestions at Kelly's request.

DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTIONS:

Jurors discussed Kelly's suggestions, feeling that she had definitely thought them through. However, they did not feel that writing letters was sufficient, nor did it appropriately address the fact that she had plagiarized on two separate occasions and had exploited others. Jurors spent hours discussing whether Kelly honestly understood the seriousness of her violations, or whether she was apologetic simply because she was frightened of the potential consequences.

The jury moved towards a discussion about separation. Several jurors were opposed to the idea because they felt it would be embittering and unproductive. Others felt that it was the only appropriate measure considering the number and gravity of the violations. Many felt that Kelly needed time to slow down and catch up with herself. She had repeatedly rationalized that her plagiarizing was the result of academic and other pressure, and she felt that this pressure was unusual. Jurors pointed out that the pressure Kelly faced was normal college pressure, and that it was likely to recur. They wanted Kelly to be able to deal with pressure in the future in an honest way. They felt that stress was not a valid excuse either for plagiarizing or for using others to get away with it. Kelly's assertion that she was not "herself" and that the circumstances surrounding the violation were unusual did not seem valid to the jury.

One juror pointed out that plagiarism is not an offense specific to a history class, but rather one that relates to the field of academia in general. He said "If we only limit the sanction to saying that Kelly will fail Western Civ,
then we are saying that she failed as a student of Western Civ. This [act] transcends Professor Kaplan's class. It's not that she's written a bad paper, but that she's been a bad scholar." Another juror added that by involving classmates, Kelly abused her role as a community member as well.

That night, the jury spent several hours discussing separation. The jury was determined to stick to the goals of education and repairing trust, as well as holding Kelly responsible for her actions. They decided to think about separation overnight, and to discuss possible alternatives instead. One juror suggested that Kelly write a letter to Jane Jones, who is both the author of the book that Kelly copied from and a university professor as well. Writing a letter directly to the person from whom Kelly plagiarized might force her to confront the seriousness of plagiarism. Others agreed that if Jane Jones wrote Kelly back, she would provide Kelly with a sense of closure. The jury reached consensus on this resolution, agreeing to send Professor Jones a copy of the Honor Code and a copy of the abstract with Kelly's letter to put it in context.

Other resolutions the jury agreed upon were: Kelly should speak with Eric and Peter and explain how she involved them, fail Western Civ, write a letter to Professor Kaplan, and write a personal statement to be included with the abstract.

The next day the jury met to discuss separation again. One juror reiterated that although separation seemed awful, it would ultimately be beneficial to Kelly since it would force her to slow down. Someone brought up Professor Kaplan's point that Kelly was a freshperson. One juror stated, "If she had misfootnoted or something, then maybe we could cut her some slack. But copying pages from a book is wrong even in high school; therefore, I cannot view [her being a freshperson] as relevant." Someone countered, saying it was relevant because she was overwhelmed by her schedule, an occurrence more common with freshpeople. Others disagreed, saying Kelly's need to resort to cheating shows that she cannot handle the pressures of being a college student. This juror felt that Kelly really needed to re-evaluate and take a step back.

The jury spent the next several hours trying to "package" the less serious resolutions to match separation in strength but not in harshness. Ultimately, the jury concluded that separation was appropriate for Kelly: she would have time to reflect on the obligations of completing work honestly, she could slow down, and she could have the necessary distance from the events to begin to repair the relationships.

Several jurors felt Kelly should be separated immediately, forcing her to take the time now to think about her actions, rather than waiting until she finishes the semester. They felt that her academic pressure would not subside (finals were approaching), and that she might work herself into a frenzy to compensate for the F she would receive in Western Civ. Others felt she should finished out the semester, since all her work for other classes was
legitimate. They felt that forcing her to leave immediately would wipe out an entire semester's work, which would be unfair.

In all, the jury spent over 12 hours discussing the issue of separation alone. The jury finally reached consensus, with one member standing outside, that Kelly should be separated immediately (i.e. after a few days). They wanted her to have time to speak with her Dean, Eric and Peter before she left. Jurors agreed that she would receive "Withdrawal" marks for her other classes. Although they knew the resolution was severe, they felt comfortable that they had considered all sides of the decision and that it would benefit Kelly in the long run.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION:
The Chairperson and one other juror presented the resolutions to Kelly alone before bringing her back to hear the explanations from jurors. During the formal presentation, jurors explained why they felt that separation would help Kelly more than hurt her. Kelly was frightened and upset, and she begged them to reconsider their decision. Professor Kaplan also said that he felt the resolutions were too harsh. The group talked for about an hour and the jury explained the appeals process to Kelly. When she and Professor Kaplan left, the jury discussed in great detail what they had heard. The trial had been extremely emotional for everyone involved. After several hours of discussion, the jury re-affirmed its consensus on these resolutions:

1. The jury has decided that Kelly should be separated from the Haverford Community. This separation should begin immediately and continue through the end of next semester. The jury feels that Kelly needs this time away to come to terms with the severity of her violation. We feel that Kelly's separation will be educative; the time away from Haverford will enable her to thoroughly consider both her involvement of other community members and what it means to live by the standards set forth in the Honor Code.

   If Kelly feels ready to re-enter the Haverford Community at the end of this time, she should submit a statement to be considered by both the Admissions Office and Honor Council.

2. The jury recommends that Kelly receive a failing grade in Western Civilization for the semester. Her transcript will indicate that she has withdrawn from her other courses.

3. We ask Kelly to write a letter to Professor Kaplan in the hope that the trust in their relationship will be partially restored. Kelly is encouraged to write a second letter, sometime before returning to Haverford, reflecting any changes in her understanding.

4. Based on Kelly's own suggestion, the jury requests that she inform Eric and Peter of her violation, and of how she involved them, in an attempt to restore the broken trust. We suggest a dialogue facilitated by two jurors. This format is entirely optional.
5. In order to emphasize the seriousness of plagiarism as the theft of another's scholarship, the jury requests that Kelly write a letter of explanation to Jane Jones. In this way, Kelly would take responsibility for her actions with respect both to Jane Jones and the larger academic community.

6. Kelly will write a personal statement to be included with the abstract.

Jury members expressed an interest in keeping in touch with Kelly throughout her separation and after her return. Many indicated that they will write to her.

**ADDENDUM:**

After receiving the Dean's Report (the Chairperson's write-up of the trial that is presented to the Dean of the College), the Dean suggested changes in the jury's resolutions. He discussed them with the jury, and then, ten days later, presented them in writing to the President of the College, who makes the final decision. The Dean suggested that Kelly should not be separated. He added that she should perform community service by tutoring instead. His major reasoning was that Haverford is a special place where students deserve to be given a second chance. He especially felt that, in tutoring others, Kelly would learn first hand how much time and effort is required to help someone else. He felt that Kelly really needed to recognize this quality herself since she had taken advantage of others who were willing to help her. He also felt strongly that Kelly had learned a great deal about herself and Haverford during the trial process itself. He felt that she had begun the difficult process of coming to terms with her actions and would benefit from the College's continuing support.

**FINAL DECISION:**

After receiving both the jury's write-up and the dean's alternative resolutions, the President of the College spent over two weeks contemplating a decision. Finally, he decided the following: He agreed "with the jury that the individual needs time away from Haverford to reflect on her violations and on what it means to live by the standards set forth in the College's Honor Code. I do not, however, feel that immediate separation is required to accomplish this end."

Instead, the President decided that Kelly would finish out the semester, thus receiving grades in her other classes. Her separation would begin the following semester, and she could reapply for the semester after that.

The President ended his letter saying, "In making this ruling, I have kept in mind the severity of the original act of plagiarism as well as its compounding in the process of the revision of the paper. I have also considered the account of Honor Council's deliberations and the individual's own statements during the course of Honor Council's proceedings. With this
modification, I believe that the final resolution of this matter reflects its seriousness and yet is appropriately measured."

The process, therefore, came to a close. This trial, with its 50+ hours in Honor Council deliberations and full month of administrative consideration, represents the longest academic trial to date.

KELLY'S LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY:

My trial was long and difficult and ended in the most painful of decisions, that I be separated from the Haverford Community. I want you to know that I have suffered great anguish and personal loss because of my senseless actions. I am very sorry for what I have done and I humbly ask the student body, faculty, and administration to accept my heartfelt apology and personal pledge that I will never, under any circumstance, compromise my honor again.

During my time away from Haverford, I had a great deal of time to think. My thoughts were always about what a truly special place Haverford is and the many fine people that make it so. I longed to be part of that community and realized how much I had lost. I am filled with remorse and only hope that the publication of the abstract from my trial will help to prevent any further incidents of plagiarism from ever occurring.

I would like to offer some personal advice to any student who, at one time or another, may feel excessively pressured to meet an academic deadline -- get help right away. Remember, when you're exhausted, your judgment may be impaired. Go to your professor and explain the situation. Ask for an extension. If you are having problems, go and speak with your dean. They are more than willing to help you. Always remember that, if need be, it is better to take a failure than to compromise your personal integrity. Take it from someone who really learned the hard way.

Haverford offers so much more than just an academic institution. I know that because of my experience, the Honor Code will always have a profound and lasting effect upon my life. I have learned a valuable lesson at a costly price. It is my hope that I will one day be a credit to Haverford, a community that has not only educated me, but reminded me how to live.

--Kelly

THERE WILL BE A LUNCH DISCUSSION ON THIS ABSTRACT, "LEON," "DARRIN," AND PLAGIARISM IN GENERAL THIS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2 FROM 11:30AM-1:00PM ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE DC. BRING YOUR TRAYS. FACULTY AND STUDENTS BOTH URGED TO ATTEND... (turn ->)
QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please do not hesitate to use a separate piece of paper if you want to keep your abstract intact. Faculty response is highly encouraged.)

1. Were the resolutions fair?

2. Should the fact that Kelly was a first-year-student have influenced the jury's decision?

3. Given the length of both the trial and the administrative consideration, do you think there should be a time limit on
   a) an Honor Council trial?
   b) the administration's consideration?

Many more issues will be discussed on Friday. Please attend.