Summary

Professor Jones suspected one of his students, P.J., of lying about an overdue assignment in order to get an extension for another assignment. P.J., a member of Honor Council, called Professor Jones moments before she was planning to leave campus for a weekend Honor Council retreat. She assured Jones that the first assignment was completed and asked for an extension on the second. P.J. said she would turn in her first assignment as soon as she returned from the retreat. Concerned with P.J.'s tenuous academic standing and history of turning in overdue work, Professor Jones asked P.J. to take up the extension matter with her dean. The dean advised P.J. to hand in the "finished" assignment immediately and to forfeit her weekend with Council in order to work on the second. When P.J. was then unable to produce the work she had claimed to have done, Professor Jones confirmed his suspicion of P.J.'s dishonesty. Furthermore, he believed that P.J. had exploited her membership on Council.

An inquiry was held, from which a jury of eight Honor Council members and four random community members concluded that P.J. had violated the Code by lying to the professor. However, the twelve jurors did not believe that P.J. had intentionally exploited her involvement with Council to facilitate her academic cover-up.

The jury came to the following resolution:
1. Although we cannot mandate that P.J. seek professional counseling, her self-assessment leads us to strongly recommend that she pursue this form of support.
2. Due to P.J.'s infraction and how it has undermined the integrity maintained by the community, the members of the jury feel that P.J. should no longer serve in her present position on Honor Council. Further, the jury feels P.J. needs this time to tend to her academic predicament.
3. P.J., Professor Jones, and two members of the jury will formulate a set of questions focusing on the "systemic revisions" Professor Jones suggested during the trial, the faculty's participation in confrontation, the faculty's expectation of Honor Council members, the relationship between students' diligence and the faculty's trust in students, and the tension between the academic Honor Code and the faculty ("scholarly") code. These issues and questions will be the basis of a faculty/Honor Council discussion. A corresponding forum, featuring the same questions, will be open to both students and faculty. The minutes of these meetings will be distributed among the faculty and placed on reserve in the library.
4. P.J. will keep a journal during the remainder of the semester. This journal will detail her views on her violation of the academic Honor Code and her actions.
Fact-Finding

Professor Jones began the fact-finding segment of the trial by providing his version of the phone conversations between himself, P.J., and the Dean in which P.J. had lied about the first of the unfinished assignments. Jones explained that, even when he had believed the first of P.J.'s overdue assignments was complete, he felt uncomfortable granting an extension to a student with such a history of turning in late, inadequate work. Professor Jones advised P.J. not to go on the weekend retreat, urging her to stay at Haverford to catch up on her schoolwork, but he left the final decision to the judgement of P.J.'s dean. The dean also advised that P.J. give up the retreat. Jones asked that P.J. immediately deliver the finished paper and begin work on the second assignment.

Although Professor Jones requested the first assignment be turned in that day, P.J. argued that it would make more sense to hand in both assignments on the next day. Despite his surprise at P.J.'s reluctance, Professor Jones acquiesced, not suspecting that the first paper was unfinished. The next day, P.J. arrived at Professor Jones' home, thirty minutes late, and presented not the first assignment that Jones expected but, instead, the second. The first paper was yet to be completed.

In response to the professor's account, P.J. admitted that she had lied about the condition of the first assignment but had felt pressure to go on the Council trip. She was afraid she wouldn't be allowed to go if the professor knew of her academic predicament. Needing to show something to Professor Jones, P.J. put off seeing him until the next morning so that she could spend that night preparing the assignments. Though P.J.'s "telephone lie" entailed the said completion of the first assignment, she worked on the second assignment that night because she was more familiar with the material to which the second pertained. P.J. said she was well-aware that her arrival at the professor's house without the first assignment would seem suspicious.

In basic agreement concerning the events surrounding the phone calls and the blundered attempt to deceive the professor, Jones went on to explain why he thought P.J. had willfully manipulated her position on Council to obtain preferential treatment in receiving extensions. Jones illustrated a number of incidents over the course of the semester when P.J. had requested extensions and mentioned Honor Council "in the same breath." The professor said he granted P.J. a number of extensions because of her "unique and valuable role" in the college community, extensions he would not have granted to other students. Professor Jones contended that P.J.'s attempt to use the Council retreat to cover-up her academic negligence was a gross abuse of her position on Council.

In response, P.J. insisted that she had never intended the mention of her role on Honor Council to procure such
preferential treatment and was unaware that Jones was granting the extensions because of his exceptional respect for a Council member's responsibilities. P.J. never thought the time demanded by Council justified any special privileges. She compared her obligation to that of a student with athletic, Thespian, or any other sort of extracurricular commitment. She vehemently denied any intent of using the mention of Council to solicit extra trust or special treatment from her professor.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL

After deciding that a violation had occurred, the jury invited Professor Jones and P.J. back into the room to discuss the circumstances surrounding the violation.

P.J. explained that her semester had been a difficult one and she had been unable to keep up in any of her classes. The further behind she fell in Professor Jones' class, the more frustrated she became with it. Although she wanted to stay at Haverford that weekend and do her work, P.J. felt an obligation to Honor Council and the community to participate in the retreat. Calling Professor Jones with only an hour before it was time to leave, she panicked when Jones asked her whether she had finished the first paper. This is when P.J. lied. The jury was confused as to whether P.J. had called with the goal of getting an extension. After several questions from the jury, P.J. admitted that she had indeed been hoping for the extension. When it was denied to her, and she didn't have the first paper to hand in, she asked to hand them both in the next day, hoping she could "pull it off" that night. P.J. stayed up all night, but, rather than writing the first paper, she worked on the second because it pertained to subject matter more recently studied.

After discussing the pressures of Honor Council and her difficulty in budgeting her time, P.J. said she "just wanted help." She wanted to be able to pull herself together, to be given another chance.

In describing the semester, Professor Jones said that P.J. had never handed an assignment in on time. P.J. did not take advantage of help offered to her during Jones' office hours, and she was late to class and study group, if she came at all. Although illness could explain some of P.J.'s absence, she did not return to Jones' class after her recovery. (However, she was attending her other classes.) Professor Jones also said that he had been struck during the semester by the number of times P.J. had brought up her involvement in Honor Council. Professor Jones interpreted this repeated reference not as a reminder of P.J.'s time commitment, but as an entreaty for a higher trust, one less stringently bound by academic deadlines. Thus, Professor Jones gave P.J. extensions, feeling manipulated by P.J.'s "power" as a Council member. Jones said, "I am going to have to seriously rethink my whole policy towards
extensions, and, quite frankly, my trust in the Honor Code and especially Honor Council members."

After both parties left the room, the jury began to discuss an appropriate resolution, taking both P.J.’s and Professor Jones’ stories into account. Three central issues were discussed: how serious a violation was P.J.’s lie, whether academic irresponsibility constituted an Honor Code violation, and whether Council members should be given special treatment.

The jury understood Professor Jones’ dissatisfaction with P.J.’s lack of respect for his class, but decided this did not constitute a violation of the Honor Code. The jury agreed that every student has the right to skip class and do shoddy work but should expect to be held accountable for such actions. It was decided that the issue of P.J.’s academic performance should not exacerbate the severity of the violation. P.J.’s violation of the Honor Code was limited to the lie she told Jones. This, agreed the jury, was an attempt to dodge her responsibility to the community and its standard of integrity.

The jury also discussed the special attention Professor Jones granted to Council members. Although Council members should be allowed extensions if some activity is particularly time-consuming, a professor or dean should make this decision with the same consideration he or she would give other students involved in extracurricular activities. The jury did not think that Council members should be trusted anymore than others. All students share an equal responsibility to the community standards outlined in the Code. While Council members do accept an extra responsibility to discuss and confront issues, such involvement should never suggest to the community, or the members of Council themselves, that they are more moral or trustworthy than their peers. Instead of being granted special privileges, the jury thought Council members should accept extra burdens.

Uncomfortable with Professor Jones’ interpretation of what membership in Honor Council entails, the jury decided that his attitude probably reflects that of other faculty members and decided that part of the resolution should, via discussions with faculty and students, address the role of Council members in the community.

After much discussion, the jury decided that P.J. should resign from Honor Council. Since P.J. herself had emphasized her inability to organize her life and had repeatedly mentioned the extra burden of Council, the jury decided P.J. should be relieved of this burden in order to pay more attention to her academics. The jury was uncomfortable having a community member who had just committed a violation serve on Council, yet this did not mean that P.J. would never be capable of serving in the future. But all agreed that P.J. needed time to reflect on her actions. Furthermore, several jury members expressed
their discomfort at the prospect of going before a jury member who had recently violated the Code.

Taking all of this into consideration, the jury formulated a set of resolutions that they felt best bridged the breach of trust between P.J., Professor Jones, and the community. After adjourning for 24 hours, during which time two jury members presented the tentative resolution to P.J. and Professor Jones, the jury met to reach consensus once again on the resolution as it stood. After doing so, they invited P.J. and Professor Jones back into the room to discuss the tentative resolution. The resolution was not altered and was considered final.