Robert was confronted by Stephanie and Melvin for an alleged violation of the academic Honor Code. There was a question of academic dishonesty regarding Robert's conduct on an economics quiz and an astrophysics examination. It was determined that a violation had occurred in the economics quiz, but that no violation could be determined of the astrophysics exam. The resolution included, among other things, that Robert fail the quiz, write a letter to the community via the News and a mediation would take place with the confronted and confronting parties.

I. FACT-FINDING

Stephanie told the jury that Robert said he had "spent hours on" his economics quiz after having completed it. She knew that the quiz had a one hour time limit with unlimited recopying time once the work was completed. Stephanie and Melvin were worried by this comment. Furthermore, Melvin saw Robert change something on his economics exam as he recopied it.

When Stephanie and Melvin went to see how Robert was doing on his take-home astrophysics exam, they found out that Robert had started at 4:00 pm, and so he should have finished by 7:00 pm. Stephanie went into Robert's room at 7:16 to confront him for a possible violation of the Honor Code regarding his economics quiz. At this time, Robert was still taking the astrophysics exam.

Robert explained that he had started to take the quiz the night before it was due, but had not written out his final answer. The next morning he had taken "a few minutes" to write out the answer. Robert also told the jury that as he recopied the economics quiz he deleted one word.

Regarding the astrophysics exam, Robert told us that he indicated to the professor on the exam that he went over the three-hour time limit. Robert said he had stopped taking the exam at this point, and had noted on the exam that 10 extra minutes were used. Robert also stated that he realized that his behavior during the economics quiz was "not within the rules."

After both parties left the room, the jury came to consensus that Robert had violated the professor's specific instructions on the economics quiz. The actions in question were the deletion he made while recopying the quiz, and the fact that he took the quiz in two sittings.

However, the jury had a difficult time reaching consensus on whether Robert's conduct on the astrophysics exam violated the Honor Code. Although he went over the time limit, he had made a note of it to the professor. Also, although Robert told us that he thought he exceeded the time limit by ten minutes, Stephanie maintained that he was in his room sixteen minutes after the time limit. We found it difficult to reach a decision because of these two factors. There was a debate centered around two issues. First, that a time limit is a specific instruction and should not be extended. Second, that a time limit could be extended if the student marked where the extension occurred and exactly how much time was taken.

The jury eventually came to consensus that a violation could not be determined, and offered the following statement: Robert was wrong to take it upon himself to extend the time of the exam. Yet by indicating such, he has not committed a breach of trust with the professor. He has provided the professor with the opportunity to seek what he deems an appropriate response to his actions.
Robert told the jury that he had intended to take the economics quiz on Thursday night. Robert started taking notes on the questions and formulating his answers from approximately 8:00-9:00 on Thursday night. He also took a few minutes on Friday to write down his answer. He stated that "at the time I didn't see any harm in it."

When he rewrote the quiz, Robert deleted the word "either." He told the jury that he realizes now that he should have made a note of the deletion.

When asked if it had occurred to him to make a note to the professor regarding the way that he took the quiz, Robert replied that "it entered my mind to make a note to the professor, but I wouldn't have known how to phrase it."

Melvin told the jury that he and Stephanie were concerned about Robert's "casual attitude" about the Honor Code.

One of the jurors asked Robert if he saw how his action gave his an advantage. He said that he understood how it could, but maintained that he had not benefitted from taking the quiz in two sittings.

Robert had in the past told Stephanie and Melvin that he wasn't "orthodox" about the Honor Code, and that he wanted to live by the Code, not under it. However, Stephanie and Melvin see a responsibility to be orthodox about the Code, and considered his conduct on the economics quiz "the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back."

Robert told the jury that his action wasn't premeditated, and that it is not a habit.

III. RESOLUTION

Based on a three-point resolution that Robert proposed, the jury came to consensus on the following tentative resolution:

1. that Robert write a letter on the following statement: what is the difference between living by the Honor Code or under the Code, and how does this pertain to a professor's specific instructions on tests?

2. that the confronting and confronted parties meet with two members of the jury;

3. that Robert meet with the professor of the economics course. As Robert had proposed, a meeting with the professor would help promote a dialogue and would to some extent help reconcile the breach of trust between the student and the professor.

4. that Robert's quiz is graded on the work that he did in the first sitting in which he took the quiz.

5. We recommend that Robert participate in the upcoming Honor Code retreat.

6. In light of his experience in this trial, Robert should be more aware of following the specific procedures regarding tests.

The jury broke and would meet again in "one but no more than two days"
After the days waiting period, some jurors began to express doubt about whether the quiz should receive credit at all. It was agreed by all the jury members that the quiz was unacceptable academic work since it did not meet the specific instructions of the professor. However, some jurors began to question the validity of the fourth point of the tentative resolution altogether, believing that we cannot simply demarcate the acceptable portion of an unacceptable quiz.

The jury felt that Robert's notes should not be graded. We felt that Robert needed to take responsibility for the quiz he submitted, since the other students in the class were being graded for what they submitted. However, the jury preferred that it recommend to Robert to present his notes to the professor rather than suggest to the professor to examine the notes. This way, Robert would have a substantive medium through which he could initiate a dialogue between his and the professor, and it was her decision whether he wanted his notes to be examined. Nevertheless, one juror felt that there was not much point in the professor's examining the notes, yet the juror did not oppose this decision.

Final: in light of the discussion above, the jury came to consensus on the following final resolution (note the changes made in points three and four):

1. that Robert write a letter on the following statement: what is the difference between living by the Honor Code or under the Code, and how does this pertain to a professor's specific instructions on tests?
2. that the confronting and confronted parties meet with two members of the jury;
3. that Robert meet with the professor of the economics course. In the interests of opening a dialogue, we suggest that Robert present the notes from the first sitting as evidence of what could have been legitimate work;
4. since Robert willingly submitted a quiz that transgressed the professor's specific instructions, this quiz is unacceptable academic work, and should receive a failing grade.
5. We recommend that Robert participate in the upcoming Honor Code retreat.
6. In light of his experience in this trial, Robert should be more aware of following the specific procedures regarding tests.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Is it appropriate to extend a time limit? If you do indicate a place on the exam and the extra time taken is it a violation? Do you see a difference between living by and under the Code? Why or why not?