Shirley was confronted by Diane for alleged plagiarism on Shirley's first English paper of the semester. An inquiry was convened to address the situation.

After the Chairperson read the relevant portions of the Code, Diane related the incidents which had caused her to confront Shirley. The students in Shirley's class chose their own topics about a specific reading for the paper in question. The paper was not graded. Diane and Shirley discussed in a "give and take" fashion various concepts, some of which were contrived solely by Diane. This went on for about half an hour before Shirley began writing the paper. Shirley incorporated two of these Diane-initiated concepts in her paper without citing her discussion with Diane.

While Shirley was writing the paper, she needed quotations to bolster her argument, and asked Diane whether she could provide any. Shirley received aid from Diane twice, again without citing Diane. Diane also suggested some transitional phrases to improve the flow of the paper, and she pointed out some grammatical problems.

At this point, Shirley asked Diane whether she thought what they had done was a violation of the Honor Code, and together they agreed that they did not think so. At a later date, Diane had a conversation with her HCO about what constituted plagiarism. The phrase "representing someone else's ideas as your own" caused her to believe that the matter of Shirley's paper should come before Honor Council. Shirley agreed with Diane's account of what happened, and added that she thought Diane helped to clarify some ideas for her. She thought that what was done was due to ignorance. Her professor, Hawthorne, had not told the class whether it was necessary to cite conversations with other students if those people supplied ideas. Nor had she said anything about citing another's investigatory work of finding quotations.

Diane and Shirley left the room, and the jury debated what constituted plagiarism. Some argued that because the Freshman English course is designed to stimulate discussion, discussing the material without citing the discussion did not represent a violation. However, it was pointed out that in the absence of specific instructions by the professor, the students were obliged, under the Honor Code, to cite whatever information and major ideas were received from others.

The jury did not think that Diane's helping with grammatical corrections or transitional statements was problematic. The fact that Diane had provided her with major ideas for the paper and quotations to support these ideas without Shirley's citing her concerned the jury a great deal. Some jurors argued that the act of finding quotations is an act of scholarship, and that by including those quotations in her paper without giving due credit,
Shirley was misrepresenting another's scholarship as her own. After much discussion, Shirley was found to have committed an act of plagiarism.

The jury came to consensus that a violation had occurred. During the circumstantial part of the trial, a juror asked Shirley what she thought she had learned from this experience. She responded that she thought she should have written the paper on her own. The juror quickly pointed out, to the contrary, that it was acceptable for her to have discussed the paper while working on it, but citations were missing.

The jury discussed various resolutions with Shirley; Diane thought that perhaps she was at fault herself because she had discussed the paper with Shirley. The juror pointed out to Diane that she was not at fault and that there need not be a resolution for her. The possible resolutions that were discussed included re-writing the paper, working with the professor, and writing a letter to the community or to the faculty. Shirley did not voice an objection to any of these.

Diane and Shirley left the room. The jury continued to discuss resolutions, and came to consensus that the Honor Council, not the jury, would write a letter to the faculty asking them to discuss with students what they need to cite in written work.

The other part of the resolution requires Shirley to speak to Professor Hawthorne about what had happened. She should bring the paper with her, and go through with her what she did and point out where and how she should have cited Diane's assistance. The jury felt that Shirley had "gotten the message" in the trial, and that she did not have to re-write the paper. Telling the professor where the footnotes belonged would suffice.

Shirley and Janice were informed of this tentative resolution and the time that the jury would meet the next day. When the jury reconvened it came to consensus on the resolution adopted the night before. Diane and Shirley agreed that the resolution was fair.

They left the room again, and the jury reached final consensus on the above resolution.
To: Honor Council
From: Stephen Finley and the Freshman English Staff
Re: Statement concerning procedures in Freshman English to be appended to the "Shirley" Abstract
Date: November 14, 1986

Mutual sharing of ideas is central to any academic community, but this activity is particularly crucial to the Freshman English program, which is based on ideas shared not only in class discussions of texts but also in tutorial discussions of student papers. In these tutorials, student essays are treated as works in progress, and students are expected not simply to receive comments from other readers about their papers but, often, to incorporate these comments into revisions of their own papers. This activity, moreover, does not end with the tutorial hour, nor is it expected to, just as one does not expect the exchange of ideas between students to end when each class is over. Thus, the conduct of our courses necessarily involves urging groups of freshmen to behave as an intellectual and scholarly community: to share ideas, to give advice, to read each other's work in drafts, to participate in collective revising, to consult and collaborate.

By its very nature, such a community ought to abide by the principle of attribution and acknowledgment. At the same time that we encourage students to help one another, to share, to teach and to be taught, we do not condone the usurping of another's idea for one's own (whether "another" be a student or a published critic), and we stress the importance of acknowledging the contributions of others. The rule of thumb on acknowledgment is made from respect and common sense. Students should acknowledge significant contributions to their work by others, while citation of every possible source of aid to one's own ideas would exhaust the mind of both writers and readers.