Matilda and Miss Honey: 
An Honor Council Mediation 
Released Fall 2013

This abstract was released in accordance to the timeline specified by the Students’ Association Constitution. 
(The addition of this disclaimer began in Spring 2010).

Summary: This case involved an academic confrontation by Miss Honey to Matilda over an assignment submitted in Supernatural Powers 101. Matilda inadvertently obtained the telekinesis paper her research partner, Lavender, wrote while writing her own, and then proceeded to use the paper as a reference when writing her own work without permission or acknowledgement of the help she had received.

Statements brought to Honor Council:

(This is a summarized version of the statements that combine the statements of Miss Honey and Matilda.) Matilda received an extension from Miss Honey and an incomplete on a telekinesis paper that she had already turned in to Miss Honey’s bin outside her office. Upon receiving the extension, Matilda went to go pick up her paper from the bin and inadvertently also picked up her research partner’s paper. As Matilda continued to work on her paper, she consulted that of her research partner, double checking research they had conducted together in class and consulting some of her magic documentations to make sure she was on the right track. After Matilda turned in her completed paper, Miss Honey confronted Matilda for an academic Honor Code violation, which she immediately admitted to and apologized for. Later, in writing her statement to Honor Council, Miss Honey commended Matilda for her willingness to partake in the restorative Honor Council process that would as a result occur. Miss Honey also submitted the statement on the condition that Matilda’s ability to graduate or graduate school admissions would in no way be jeopardized.

Before the mediation:

In the middle of the second week of finals, Honor Council received statements from Miss Honey and Matilda Wormwood concerning an Honor Code violation in Miss Honey’s Supernatural Powers class. Given that Matilda was a senior who intended to graduate that following weekend, Honor Council was forced to take immediate action. Since classes had ended, Honor Council operated on
summer procedure and five members met to consent to send this case to an expedited academic trial. However, soon after consenting to an academic trial it became evident that it would not be logistically possible to conduct the trial prior to graduation. That same night, the members of Honor Council who consented to send the case to an academic trial reconvened and consented to instead send the case to an academic mediation, given that it seemed that the goals of the trial would be met. There was a unanimous feeling among the members of Honor Council who consented to change the case from an academic trial to a mediation that this was out of mandated council regulations, but given the statements and the importance of expediting procedure, was the most appropriate solution.

Mediation:

The mediation began with an explanation by the mediators about the importance of keeping community members accountable for Honor Code violations and providing a channel to work towards restoration. With this purpose in mind, Miss Honey commended Matilda for her immediate ownership of her Honor Code violation and genuine wish for restoration upon confrontation. Matilda’s appreciation for the Honor Code showed Miss Honey that the goals of Honor Council procedure had been met. Miss Honey explained to the Honor Council mediators that she refused to bring this case to Council if there was any chance that Matilda’s ability to graduate would be affected or that graduate schools would be notified of this incident. Miss Honey only agreed to the grade change that she would institute at her own discretion. Given Miss Honey’s insistence on this resolution, Matilda’s consent, and the urgency of the situation, the mediation was resolved on this note.

Questions:

- Should “minor” incidences of Honor Code violation that result in grade changes be treated differently than more serious incidences when making recommendations on reporting misconduct to graduate schools?
- To what extent should the opinion of professors on tentative resolutions limit or guide Honor Council in designating final resolutions?
- Given the time pressure on the case, was it appropriate for Honor Council to proceed in the manner that it did?