Abstract discussion will be Thursday, April 3rd at 8:00 pm in Ryan Gym.

DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA: An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2014

This abstract was not released in accordance to the timeline specified by the Students’ Association Constitution. The confronting party consented to the release of the abstract. The confronted party was not available to consent to release of this abstract. (The addition of this disclaimer began in Spring 2010).

Key:
Professor Don Quixote - Confronting Party
Sancho Panza - Confronted Party
Marcela - Trial Chair
Chivalry - An Academic Department
Tilting at Windmills 200 - Course

Pre-Trial:
When [Professor Quixote] was grading finals for [Tilting at Windmills 200], he noticed that two students had unusually similar answers to a particular question about how to combat a windmill. For one of them, the answer as written was highly unorthodox – each student taking the final had been provided with a different type of [lance] which had to be used in the question, meaning the question required different answers from every student. Thus it appeared that one student had incorrectly used a technique appropriate for another student’s lance. Due to timing issues as well, [Professor Quixote] concluded that [Sancho Panza] had copied another student’s work on the final exam. The Professor then confronted [Sancho], who brought himself to Honor Council. Honor Council originally decided a summer academic trial should take place, but due to complications and delays the trial began in the following fall semester.

Fact Finding:
At the fact-finding meeting [Professor Quixote] and Sancho Panza were both present. [Sancho] spoke to the jury first, reiterating the points he made in his statement: that he was very ashamed of his actions, that he hoped to “work tirelessly” to redeem himself, and that he had been meeting with a CAPS counselor since he had returned to campus.

[Professor Quixote] then spoke to the jury. He explained in detail how he had noticed the cheating in [Sancho]’s final exam, which was limited to the questions for which computer use was allowed. He then went back and checked other exams for similarities. After finding the similarities in another student’s exam, he confronted [Sancho], who promptly confessed.

The jury then began to ask questions. They first asked [Sancho] how much of the final was his
own work. He stated that on the on-paper questions, he did all his own work. However, on the computer-based questions he mostly used another student’s work, minimally changing the strategies he got from another student’s computer files.

The jury then asked [Professor Quixote] questions about how he was able to determine that [Sancho] had copied from another student, and not vice versa. He explained that materials needed for the exam were stored on [Chivalry] department computers, and so he had checked which computers had been accessed when. He first consulted the student he believed had been copied from and asked when she had last worked on the final. When [Professor Quixote] checked, the computer had been visited after that date. He therefore concluded that [Sancho] had copied from the other student’s final.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**

Since [Professor Quixote’s] statement and [Sancho]’s both pointed to a violation, the jury composed the following Statement of Violation:

[Sancho] violated the Honor Code by representing another student’s work as his own on several of the questions on his [Tilting at Windmills 200] final exam.

**Circumstantial Portion:**

The jury then met with [Sancho] for the circumstantial portion of the trial and to discuss tentative resolutions. [Sancho] related to the jury that it was hard to imagine why he had cheated, but the events had been linked to his depression the previous year. He explained that a number of things had been making him really unhappy at the time, including a surgery, breaking up with his girlfriend, and issues with friends. Instead of speaking to someone who might have helped him, he internalized how he was feeling; he cut corners where he shouldn’t have. He was already feeling unhappy when he went to take the [Tilting at Windmills] final, which he knew he would not do well on. He did not feel as if he had any energy left after taking the non-computer portion of the exam. Again, instead of asking someone for help, he convinced himself it was a good idea to cheat. He also explained to the jury that he wanted to use his mistake as an opportunity to grow, and did not want to just push it to the back of his mind as though it had not happened.

Jurors asked [Sancho] about his relationship with [Professor Quixote]. [Sancho] expressed that the relationship was being mended, but that it was still hard to interact sometimes. It was very hard for him to come to terms with the fact that he abused the trust of [Professor Quixote], who was his academic advisor and now thesis advisor.

The jurors then asked [Sancho] about any potential resolutions he had in mind. [Sancho] suggested that he stay in CAPS, which he found helpful, get a zero on the exam, write a letter to the community, and then write a letter to [Professor Quixote]. [Sancho] left and the jury moved to deliberations.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

The jury consented unanimously to the following resolutions:

1) *In light of what the jury sees as sincere reflection, willingness to take responsibility for his actions, and active efforts towards education, accountability, and restoration, and although separation is the community standard for cases of plagiarism, the jury feels that*
[Sancho] should not be separated.

2) The jury recommends that [Sancho] continue to meet with CAPS.

3) The jury recommends that [Sancho] receive a 0.0 grade on his [Tilting at Windmills 200] final exam.

4) [Sancho] will write a letter to the community addressing both his experience as a whole and the process of restoring trust with [Professor Quixote] specifically.

5) In collaboration with the [Chivalry] department, [Sancho] will write an open letter to students in [Chivalry] classes that reflects on the challenges of adhering to the collaboration policy and the consequences of not following it. This letter should be completed by the end of the semester. The jury recommends that it be posted on the [Chivalry] department website and, at the discretion of the professor, distributed to classes along with the collaboration policy.

6) Honor Council will send a memo to the [Chivalry] department, expressing concern about public file storage, and the potential plagiarism-related issues this may cause.

Resolutions as a whole: All jurors consented.

Finalizing Resolutions:

[Professor Quixote] sent an email to the trial chair [Marcela] about the tentative resolutions. [Professor Quixote] expressed some concerns about the last tentative resolution. The first concern had to with the use of the word “cause.” He felt that while the system of public file storage opened up the possibility of cheating, the cause of cheating fell squarely on the student. He recognized that this is not what the resolution likely intended to mean, but felt that “allow” was a much more appropriate word choice. He also expressed some frustration with the fact that a memo was being written to his entire department. He felt that it was unfair for his entire department to learn about the problems with his decision to leave file access open, when such lengths were taken to protect the identity of the student. He felt this was a little “heavy handed.” He did appreciate the intent to improve things but felt this was not the right way to go about it.

The jury then met with [Sancho]. [Sancho] discussed his wish to break his own confidentiality and work with Customs about what to do when you feel trapped. Though it seems easy not to cheat, [Sancho] stated, with stress it often becomes very complicated. However, he also said that he did not want to do so without [Professor Quixote]’s consent (so as to protect his confidentiality) and the approval of the Customs program. The jury then asked [Sancho] to clarify what he wanted to do because they were unsure if he wanted to work with the freshmen directly or with the HCOs during pre-Customs. They agreed to the latter.

In jury deliberations, the following finalized resolutions were consented to:

1) Although separation is the community standard for cases of plagiarism, in light of what the jury sees as sincere reflection, willingness to take responsibility for his actions, and active efforts towards education, accountability, and restoration, the jury feels that
[Sancho] should not be separated.

2) The jury recommends that [Sancho] continue to meet with CAPS.

3) The jury recommends that [Sancho] receive a 0.0 grade on his [Tilting at Windmills 200] final exam.

4) [Sancho] will write a letter to the community addressing both his experience as a whole and the process of restoring trust with [Professor Quixote] specifically.

5) In collaboration with the [Chivalry] department, [Sancho] will write an open letter to students of [Chivalry] classes that reflects on the challenges of adhering to the collaboration policy and the consequences of not adhering. This letter should be completed by the end of the semester. The jury recommends that it be posted on the [Chivalry] department website and, at the discretion of the professor, distributed to classes along with the collaboration policy.

6) Honor Council will express concern to the [Chivalry] department regarding public file storage and the potential for plagiarism it attracts.

7) At [Sancho's] request, he will speak to customs teams during their training about his experience, thus breaking his own confidentiality. This resolution is contingent upon the consent of [Professor Quixote] and the appropriate Customs administrators.

Resolutions as a whole: All jurors consented.

[Sancho’s] Letter to the Community:

Dear Haverford Community,

This past spring I broke the academic honor code by representing another student’s work as my own. I am extremely ashamed of my dishonest act and its consequences. I have never felt such shame and remorse before, and while I will never forget what I have done, I have used it as an opportunity to grow both as a student and person. While in this sense I have gained from this learning experience, it is at the cost of the trust of a professor and community for whom I have the highest respect and regard, despite what my dishonorable actions may suggest.

I faced more stress last year than I usually do, and I did not use the proper avenues to deal with that stress. I went through some traumatic experiences that shook me, but instead of reaching out to the resources Haverford provides (Advisors, Deans, CAPS) I internalized my struggle, making several mistakes in my life, including my infraction of the honor code. School, both academically and socially, can be quite stressful, and knowing how to deal with that stress can go a long way towards being successful. I hope my experience serves as a warning of how mismanaging stress can lead to more serious consequences.
For a while, the consequences were unbearable. [Professor Quixote] has been a wonderful professor and advisor, and knowing I have betrayed his trust brings me the greatest pain. Upon seeing him at the beginning of the semester I was overwhelmed with guilt and shame to the point I could not look him in the eye. It is one thing to be frustrated with my own actions, but knowing I had such disregard and showed such disrespect for someone I hold in the highest regard has brought me a great deal of self-disgust. While the honor code provides us with a lot of freedom, with it comes a great amount of responsibility. By breaking the code that I held to my name, I devalued my honor and the relationship I have with [Professor Quixote].

I hope to redeem myself by working tirelessly to restore the trust I abused. I have been reflecting on my actions since I committed them, and will continue to reflect through my Haverford career, and onward into my life after Haverford. Through communication with [Professor Quixote] I have embarked on that path to redemption, and while I cannot forgive myself for what I have done to our relationship, I hope to build a stronger relationship and become a better person in spite of my actions.

Sincerely,
[Sancho]

Discussion Questions:
1. What role does/should contrition play in how a jury makes its resolutions?
2. Should Haverford academic departments take steps to prevent cheating (such as disallowing public file storage), or should they count on students to be honorable, and deal with errors in judgement as they come up? What role should concepts such as trust, security, precedent, and the Honor Code play in such decisions? Is there a gray area?
3. In cases where the confronted party has an idea for a resolution which the jury would not have otherwise considered, should the jury consent to enforce that resolution, or simply just “recommend” its completion? Should the onus for the confronted party’s ideas for further action stay with the confronted party?