Merry and Pippin
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2014

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Key:
Professor Arwen – Confronting Party
Peregrin Took (Pippin) – Confronted Party
Meriadoc Brandybuck (Merry) – Confronted Party
Mushroom Hunting 101 – Class
Elvish Tomes - Vast Information Network
Ringbearing - Department
The Prancing Pony - On-campus public location
Rivendell - Pippin’s Dorm
Isengard - Off-campus location
Gandalf Grant - Financial aid program

Summary:
[Meriadoc Brandybuck (Merry)] and [Peregrin Took (Pippin)] were students in [Professor Arwen's] [Mushroom Hunting 101] class. Professor [Arwen] confronted them when she suspected them of inappropriate collaboration, telling them that their final exams looked suspiciously similar. They told her that they had indeed collaborated, and they agreed to contact Honor Council. Honor Council consented to send the case to an academic trial. Throughout the trial [Merry] and [Pippin] were apologetic and eager to repair the breach of trust with the community, and Professor [Arwen] emphasized that she felt trust was restored between her and the two students. After the jury had written the tentative resolutions, which included a semester of separation, [Merry] and [Pippin] objected to them and presented a list of alternative resolutions that they felt would be more appropriate than separation. This list was discussed at length and the jury ultimately decided to incorporate some of their ideas, removing separation from the resolutions.

Fact Finding:
Fact-finding began with Professor [Arwen] explaining her final exam grading practice, in which she selects exams that have "outlier" answers and sets them aside. She had noticed, grading one page at a time, that two exams kept ending up in the outlier pile. In her view, the answers were incorrect in such a markedly similar way that cheating was likely. She then showed the exams to a colleague who shared her suspicions. She emailed [Merry] and [Pippin] separately, alerting them of the similarities between their exams and asking them to contact Honor Council. Professor [Arwen] expressed her belief that no outside sources were used, since [Merry] and [Pippin] could have easily found correct answers by consulting the [Elvish Tomes].
[Merry] and [Pippin] summarized their experiences surrounding the violation. They said they had seen each other in line before picking up their final exams, and began talking, telling each other that they were both about to take the [Mushroom Hunting 101] exam. They both decided to take the exam in the [Prancing Pony]. Upon entering, they did not sit near each other and individually began their tests. [Merry] and [Pippin] both said they felt caught off guard by the problems; [Pippin] said that after ten minutes, both his and [Merry’s] frustrations were evident. Since no other students had entered the classroom, they left the [Prancing Pony] and went back to [Pippin’s] room in [Rivendell]. Once in [Pippin’s] dorm, they proceeded to work through the exam together. They both stated that they did not use any outside materials and submitted the exam separately. When a juror asked whose idea it was to leave the [Prancing Pony], [Merry] said that it was his.

The jury asked why each of them was taking the class, and both [Merry] and [Pippin] responded that they were using it to fulfill a distribution requirement. Both students said they were not doing well in the class, and they were extremely frustrated. [Pippin] had decided to take the class pass/fail. They emphasized how difficult they felt this class was, in comparison with other entry-level classes they had taken previously.

Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

After the parties left, the jurors agreed that a violation of the Honor Code had occurred, and they worked on refining a statement of violation. One juror said that collaboration on the final exam was a failure to adhere to the professor’s instructions, which therefore made the collaboration inappropriate. The jurors also discussed that it could also be considered plagiarism, since they were representing their shared work as individual work. From this discussion, the jury wrote and consented to the following statement of violation:

[Peregrin Took] and [Meriadoc Brandybuck] violated the Honor Code by collaborating inappropriately on the [Mushroom Hunting 101] final exam, thus failing to adhere to the professor’s instructions and representing shared work as individual work. (9 jurors consented, none stood outside1)

Circumstantial Portion:

One juror was absent and could not be reached, so the jurors and the confronted parties consented to move forward without her. The juror was absent for the rest of the trial. Professor [Arwen] chose not to attend this portion of the trial. The meeting began with the co-chair asking [Pippin] and [Merry] to describe the circumstances of the violation. [Pippin] began by saying that he was clearly in the wrong, but that the class was one of the most difficult classes he had ever taken. He felt that the course material and style of presentation was too advanced for an introductory course. He felt that the class relied heavily on the use of TAs, which he found unproductive and confusing. The workload was also more than he felt appropriate for a 100 level class. After doing poorly on the midterm, [Pippin] decided to meet with Professor [Arwen] to discuss ways to improve, but he continued to struggle. [Pippin] acknowledged that there was plenty of help available, but said that the material never clicked.

[Merry] began by saying that he considers his violation to be the biggest mistake of his life. He shared [Pippin’s] assertions about the class being difficult, frustrating, and unrewarding. He also

1 This trial was conducted with a reduced jury (9 jurors instead of the usual 10) with the consent of all parties involved, due to the lack of availability of an extra Honor Council juror.
mentioned the class’s emphasis on collaboration; he felt that it was often the only way to get through the task at hand. When asked, [Merry] said that he had never spoken to Professor [Arwen] about the difficulties he was having in class but that he had spoken to the TAs.

[Merry] said he was acutely aware that people’s trust in him had been permanently chipped away by his violation. [Pippin] agreed; he felt weird talking to people in the community knowing that he had broken their trust, and as such he felt separated from the community.

When asked about whether they had had individual work in the class before, [Pippin] replied that the midterm -- which they had both done poorly on -- had been the only such work all semester. Having collaborated on work before, they felt that collaborating on the exam was not as bad as using the [Elvish Tomes].

The jury asked why they cheated, and [Merry] responded that failure wasn’t an option. He feared what his father would say if he failed a course. He was also very stressed on the day of the exam, as he was very involved in his final paper for his major. [Pippin] indicated a similar feeling, since he was currently applying for jobs and saying that failing a class would seriously damage the interviewing process. He also said that he had never been in academic trouble before.

One juror brought up the possibility of separation, to which the confronted parties replied that this was their biggest fear. They also expressed that they felt it wasn’t merited in this situation because of their honesty and that they had not tried to hurt anyone in the broader community. [Merry] continued by saying that separation would put his [Gandalf Grant] in jeopardy, and he said that just being involved in this trial alone severely decreased the likelihood of receiving it.

One juror asked what each of them would have done if they hadn’t been caught. [Merry] said he would have brushed it under the rug or turned himself in, but he was really unsure. He knows that he would have had serious reservations about the situation. [Pippin] said he was unsure, but that he would have felt guilt upon returning to Haverford. One juror asked what possible resolutions they felt would be appropriate. [Merry] said that he felt a letter to the community and perhaps a warning about the class would be good resolutions. [Pippin] mentioned an interest in service to the community, and perhaps breaking his confidentiality in a letter to the community.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:

The jury expressed significant concern that [Merry] and [Pippin] were not fully aware of the effects of their actions on the community, since they had said that they “didn’t hurt anyone” by collaborating on the exam. The jury also discussed the family pressures felt by [Merry] and the job pressures [Pippin] felt as major influences in their decision to cheat, but they concluded that these reasons were not excuses for their behavior. However, as a result of [Merry’s] anxieties, the jury felt that a resolution suggesting CAPS as a resource on campus would be appropriate.

The jury then moved on to discuss goals that the resolutions should meet. Firstly, the jury felt that [Merry] and [Pippin] should understand and be held accountable for how their actions affected the community as a whole. The jury then put together some tentative resolutions that could be readily agreed to, including a 0.0 on the final, a 0.0 in the class, writing a letter to the community in the style of the Honor Code essay used for admission, a recommendation to visit the OAR, and attending 5 community forums. This last resolution was designed to help the confronted parties engage with the Honor Code and contribute to the community.

The jury moved on to discuss separation. One issue that was presented was the needs of the

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2 The goals of an Honor Council trial are accountability, restoration, and education.
community versus the needs of the confronted party. One juror felt that it would be inappropriate not to separate them because of the severity of the violation, and was worried about the example it would set for the community if they were not separated. The juror also mentioned that the Honor Code states that plagiarism normally results in separation unless under extreme circumstances. Several jurors thought that stress, in this case, was not an extreme circumstance.

Several jurors expressed concerns about the logistics of separation in this case. Most of these issues stemmed from the fact that [Pippin] and [Merry] were in different years; [Pippin] was graduating at the end of the current semester, while [Merry] was not. Since separation is typically meant to be used for active reflection and preparation for return to the community, it did not seem to make sense to separate [Pippin], since he would not be returning to the community afterwards. Many jurors felt very uncomfortable with the idea of separating one [hobbit] but not the other, given that the violations were virtually identical. One juror presented the idea that [Pippin] should somehow interact with the college during his separation, to make separation more meaningful. Another juror mentioned that this would also answer [Pippin's] stated wish to do some sort of service to the school.

Jurors then felt more comfortable with the idea of separating both [Pippin] and [Merry]. One juror expressed that this continued involvement was more restorative as a form of separation than making an "example" for the community. The jurors shared these sentiments, stating that separation was now more constructive and less punitive.

There were still concerns about when [Pippin] would receive his diploma and how separation would affect [Merry’s] thesis schedule in upcoming years. According to college policy, the diploma could not be issued until the following May. According to departmental rules, [Merry] would have to wait a full year before beginning work on his thesis for his [Ringbearing] major (which the [Mushroom Hunting] class was not a part of). The trial chair agreed to ask the head of the [Ringbearing] department and the Dean of the College about these two issues. The jury decided to move forward without this information, given that changes could be made later on based on any new information.

The jury consented to the following tentative resolutions, with the absent juror automatically standing outside consensus on all resolutions:

1. **The jury recommends both [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] receive a 0 on their [Mushroom Hunting 101] final exam.** (8 jurors consented, 1 stood outside.)
2. **The jury recommends both [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] receive a 0 as a final grade in [Mushroom Hunting 101].** (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside).
3. **[Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will attend at least 5 Honor Council sponsored discussions including at least one public forum and one abstract discussion.** (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)
4. **[Peregrin Took] will be separated from the community for [the upcoming semester].** (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)
5. **In order to reenter the community, [Pippin] will compose an Honor Code essay in response to the prompt used in admission. This essay will be submitted to Honor Council before [date redacted] (to be released with the abstract).** (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)
6. **In order to maintain the restorative aspect of separation because he is not returning as a student, [Peregrin Took] will continue his involvement with the Haverford College community during his separation.** (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)
7. The jury recommends that [Meriadoc Brandybuck] consider CAPS as a support system here on campus. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)

8. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] will be separated from the community for [the upcoming semester]. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)

9. In order to reenter the community, [Merry] will compose an Honor Code essay in response to the prompt used in admission. This essay will be submitted to Honor Council before [date redacted] (to be released with the abstract). (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)

10. The jury recommends that this incident be reported to institutions of higher learning. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside.)

All jurors present consented to the resolutions as a whole.

Interim:

The trial chair emailed the parties the tentative resolutions and asked for reactions and recommendations. [Merry] emailed the chair asking if a character reference would help his case. The chair responded saying that he was welcome to submit one, but that his character was not in question during the trial. [Pippin] did not respond to the resolutions. Professor [Arwen] did respond, expressing concerns that separation and reporting to graduate schools were too harsh for the nature of the violation. She made it clear that their trust with her had already been fully restored, although she understood the jury’s reasons for choosing to separate. She also expressed concern about having [Pippin] interacting with the community during his separation, since she felt it was a contradiction.

Finalizing Resolutions:

The jury met about 20 minutes before the confronted parties were expected so that they could review the responses from [Merry] and Professor [Arwen]. When the confronted parties arrived, they began by expressing their discontent with separation. The jury then discussed each resolution with the confronted parties. When the chair got to the resolutions concerning separation, [Pippin] stated that both he and [Merry] disagreed with these resolutions and had alternatives that would fulfill the same goals as separation. [Pippin] felt that Resolution 6 (concerning community involvement during separation) was unfair, since it addressed how he would spend his separation, and he felt very strongly that he should not be separated in the first place.

[Merry] and [Pippin] then presented copies of past abstracts in which the confronted parties were dishonest or uncooperative with the process, and were not separated from the community. Their point was that they had been honest and cooperative through the entire process, and yet, according to the tentative resolutions, they were still being separated. The chair then mentioned that Honor Council is not a precedent based body. The chair told them that while the jury appreciated their honesty and openness throughout the trial process, honesty is expected of all parties in the trial process, and it doesn’t necessarily preclude separation.

[Merry] then addressed the issue of a character reference. He said that, “In my mind, whether or not trust can be restored is about what we can think and do in the future. I don’t think that restoring ourselves to the community can be a separate discussion from our character.” [Merry] said that he felt that he is and will continue to be a positive influence on campus. He had led community service trips for his sport, and had done other volunteer activities on campus. Last summer, [Merry] had spent two months working on an intensive service project in [Isengard], which gave him new perspectives on
poverty, justice, community, and restoration. He also mentioned that he felt that separation would not be good in this case, because it would be complicated by family issues.

Pippin then stated that he and [Merry], with Professor [Arwen's] support, drafted a set of resolutions that they felt better addressed the trial goals than separation would. These resolutions included speaking to Customs groups about the Code and the trial process, re-signing the Honor Pledge, retaking the Moodle academic integrity tutorial, writing reflective essays comparing Haverford’s system to those of other institutions, designing and displaying anti-cheating posters, assisting Honor Council, helping with Plenary, writing a letter to their major advisor making them aware of the situation, taking future exams proctored, going to every abstract discussion for the rest of the year, and speaking to their respective sports teams. Both [Merry] and [Pippin] expressed interest in breaking their confidentiality for the sake of being a resource to students on the trial process and how to prevent cheating and plagiarism. [Merry] also expressed great interest in being on a jury, but due to constitutional procedures, this wouldn’t be possible. The chair asked both of them if they would have come up with a similar list if separation had not been proposed. Both responded affirmatively. With that, the jury ended the finalizing portion with the parties with a moment of silence.

**Jury Deliberations on Finalizing Resolutions:**

The jury discussed these new resolutions. Jurors felt that, at this point, [Merry] and [Pippin] did realize the full effects of their actions on the community, and that the resolutions should be changed accordingly. A juror mentioned that [Merry’s] family issues was a new piece of information that needed to be taken into consideration. A few jurors expressed concern about a performance aspect to their resolutions and felt that the resolutions needed to address the silence and reflection aspects of separation.

The jury went over the resolutions that [Pippin] and [Merry] had proposed, along with the jury’s tentative resolutions. They decided to table speaking about graduate school reporting and separation until after this list had been discussed.

A juror expressed a concern that the parties had produced this list only as an attempt to avoid separation. Another juror pointed out that while this was possible, it was also possible that these resolutions stemmed from a legitimate desire to be restored with the community, and that it may not be productive to speculate. Several jurors said that they felt uncomfortable consenting to any resolution that would require the parties to break confidentiality because they felt that breaking confidentiality would distance [Merry] and [Pippin] more from the community; also, it is not within the jury’s power to dictate that anyone break their confidentiality. Therefore, all other jurors agreed any resolutions which contained public speaking would not be kept in the final resolutions.

There was a discussion about whether or not [Merry] and [Pippin] should write letters directed to athletes. Some jurors felt that this wouldn’t be appropriate because athletics were not a contributing factor in the violation. One juror felt that singling out athletes would mean unfairly targeting a community at Haverford. Other jurors felt that it was not so much an issue of singling out athletes, as allowing the confronted parties to speak to a subset of the Haverford community with which they were particularly familiar. However, all the jurors felt it would be productive for athletic teams and other communities on campus to discuss the Honor Code. There was also some discussion about sending out letters to prospective athletes before admission, but a number of jurors felt that this was inappropriate.

At this point the discussion returned to the issue of separation. The jury felt that the resolutions suggested by [Merry] and [Pippin] helped to address the issue of accountability. Many also felt that the attitudes they had displayed, and the new information that had come to light during the finalizing
resolutions discussion, had demonstrated that the parties understood the full effects of their actions on the Haverford community. These considerations, combined with the continuing issues raised by [Pippin’s] approaching graduation and [Merry’s] thesis timing, made the jury feel that separation was no longer appropriate. Jurors emphasized that the logistical problems raised by separation were not the primary reasons for removing these resolutions, but that the genuine understanding of the breach and willingness to repair it weighed much more heavily.

After eliminating separation and any resolutions that would require breaking confidentiality or had a “performance” aspect, the jury consented on the following resolutions:

1. The jury recommends both [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] receive a 0.0 on their [Mushroom Hunting 101] final exam. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
2. The jury recommends both [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] receive a final grade of 0.0 in [Mushroom Hunting 101]. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
3. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will attend at least 5 Honor Council sponsored discussions including at least one public forum and one abstract discussion. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
4. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will re-sign the Honor Code pledge. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
5. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will complete the online academic tutorial offered on Moodle. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
6. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will work together to create anti-cheating and anti-plagiarism posters for the community. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
7. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent, for the following)
   I. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will write a letter to the community reflecting on:
      a. What a community is
      b. How they experience community
      c. The process of restoration to a community
   II. This letter will be distributed to the community in an email to the student body before [date redacted].
   III. The jury encourages small groups (e.g. sports teams, clubs, customs groups, etc.) to discuss the letters and their themes of community in facilitated conversations.
8. [Meriadoc Brandybuck] and [Peregrin Took] will compose an Honor Code essay in response to the prompt used in admission. This essay will be submitted to Honor Council by [date redacted] (to be released with the abstract). (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)
9. The jury recommends that this incident be reported to institutions of higher learning. (8 jurors consent, 1 absent.)

All jurors present consented to the resolutions as a whole.

Post-Trial:
The trial resolutions were not appealed.
Merry & Pippin’s Letter to the Community:

Dear Fellow Community Members,

We found that before taking the time to really sit down and contemplate what a community means, it’s hard to understand just how integral the feeling of community can be to your personal development. The two of us come from two different backgrounds that have both molded our personal understanding of community in different ways.

I’ve recently been reflecting on the community that I, [Pippin], grew up in. From this I’ve realized just how influential it was to my childhood development. To be straight, before arriving at Haverford I’d given little consideration to the importance of community. I’d lived through my youth concentrating on moving away from home and seeing what else was out there. The globalized world always intrigued me and living in a stereotypical suburb I felt contained. My understanding of community was quite simple. It was the buildings or strip-malls comprising my town. It was the schools I attended and kids I met. My community was the sum of exterior physical presences. It wasn’t until arriving at Haverford when I got a sense of what a true community is. The feelings of trust, respect, loyalty and admiration that constitute a family's bond are the same characteristics that comprise a community. A community is something you can rely on. It is something you can look back on with good memories. It encourages an openness. It makes you who you are.

I ([Merry]) had a similar experience. To me, community had never really been felt in a consistent way. Family was important of course, but no one other than my siblings and parents ever connected to us as a real community member should be able to. You could say that there was always an isolated feeling out in the world. Occasionally I would fall into situations where there was this wonderful communal feeling of content, but these were from temporary living arrangements such as summer camps. The trust and fulfilling feeling associated with a thriving community first became a consistent, wonderful part of my life once I started Haverford.

Even though we came from different backgrounds we had very similar entrances into Haverford. We were both athletes and the immediate impact of being part of a varsity team was a moving experience for both of us. More than the teams though, the Haverford community has become part of our identities. Starting at customs week, Haverford has offered an insightful perspective to understanding community. And that perspective is that we are all on the same side. A community is when an arboretum grounds-crew member shoots you a wave and offers a ride to class in a golf cart because you’re late, when one of the DC staff makes a fun side conversation, when the student government recognizes issues and addresses them in an open forum.

Feeling legitimately restored is an incredible experience. Looking back on it we appreciate how smoothly and professionally the system handled our case. This could be attributed to the procedural details but more realistically relies on one thing; honesty. To anyone ever caught in a situation like this we can only say this, be honest. We were up front about the entire issue right off the bat and that recognition of guilt and deep seeded need to fix it is exactly what’s needed to grow from the situation. And never forget, the point of anything that happens to you in life is to grow, learn, and be better for it. We are appreciative and fortunate that Haverford recognizes this and can only hope to carry this outlook with us into the world after our time at Haverford is over.

[Merry] & [Pippin]
Merry’s Honor Code Essay:

I can imagine a person going their entire life without truly becoming part of a community built on trust. Yes, Haverford provides an excellent education, but the reason I appreciate my college is the recognized pulse of fraternal instinct found all across campus. This pulse may not be felt every moment, but it’s always there to provide support for any that need it. As a freshman, orientation to the college revolved around this idea and most first years come away with a generally solid understanding of what to expect the next four years. I was one of those people, but through a direct experience with the Honor Code I’ve had to adjust my perspective in ways I hadn’t anticipated.

I screwed up and Haverford could have taken me out at the knees. During finals week I took a self-scheduled exam and grew so frustrated that a friend from the same class and I decided to leave the testing area to work on it together in his room. It was not a decision that I took lightly but I did it. Two days later my professor contacted me and suggested reporting myself to Honor Council as appropriate. This started a lengthy process that had me more stressed than I’d ever been in my life.

I come from a somewhat atypical family in the South. We support each other as any family should, but there has always been an isolated feeling out in the world. We aren’t religious and we didn’t have a group of family friends that we regularly saw. It grew to a point that my father and brothers and I began to resent the people and places around us. We would complain about the stupid Republicans and jump to judge anyone that supported something we didn’t. Somewhat intentionally, I believe that we used this as motivation to get away and travel. I’ve been lucky in so many ways and I’m thankful.

Through soccer and my father’s job, I’ve gotten to see 6 continents before I was 21. I appreciate this more than anything else in the world but there is always a cost. For me, this cost has been compounding over the years and the most obvious results are two traits in my character. The first is that I am good at making friends. I am good at forming legitimate bonds with people that I care about and this is one of my proudest abilities. The second is that I can be a fiercely stubborn loner who hates and squirms at having to ask for help. With these qualities, fitting into a place like Haverford has been interesting. Up until my incident I had fallen in love with Haverford because it encouraged me to interact and help good people out. Leading up to my decision to cheat, I entered a role reversal that deeply bothered me. I’d never really needed academic help before so I didn’t ask for it when I should have. Aside the cheating itself, this was the worst decision of the entire ordeal.

Coming into Haverford I had no reason to doubt my self-worth. I had no reason to lower my eyes to the people that were supposed to be my peers. At the most basic level, I had never experienced true shame. The last few months have been a harshly reflective period for me and I have come out thankful. My experience with Honor Council had its terrifying moments but I was honest and because of that I was encouraged to grow and learn from this mistake. I have since reconciled with my professor, my campus, and my family. These were vital, but the most important issue was reconciling with myself. It’s always a process, but at this point I not only feel closer to my school, but I feel stronger. I know that my friends have my back, but more importantly, I rightly know I have theirs. I know I’m not supposed to say that I’m glad I cheated but after everything, I know that I am a better person than I was so I can’t help but be positive about the experience as a whole.

Pippin’s Honor Code Essay:

Nearing the culmination of my four years at Haverford I have very much come to appreciate,
admire, and respect the way our community here at Haverford exists within the Honor Code’s framework. Over the course of my undergraduate education I have had the good fortune to meet some really incredible people both at Haverford and off-campus as well. It has been in my conversations with those unfamiliar with our Community’s standards that I have come to realize just how special our dynamic here at Haverford really is. Those who have not lived the Haverford experience cannot understand the Haverford experience and experiencing that phenomenon fascinates me. At Haverford the Honor Code truly does “engender a climate of trust, concern, and respect” in every aspect of our daily life. In visiting friends who attend other universities, I always leave thankful that I chose Haverford. I truly believe our community is “different” in the sense that there is an overwhelming feeling of warmth and welcome throughout the campus. Friends of mine that visit Haverford always leave affirming my belief for me.

Arriving as an 18 year old freshman I knew relatively little about myself compared to what I think I know now as a second semester senior. However, one thing was always sure in my mind, the importance of loyalty. Whether it be to myself, my family, my friends or my passions, I have always been certain of the importance of loyalty to each. I came to Haverford not just as an excited student, but also as a recruited athlete. Having played my sport my entire childhood, it was very much a part of my personal identity. Not all, but many of my closest friendships had been forged on the athletic field. Of all my friendships, none is more important to me than my relationship with my younger brother. Over the course of my time at Haverford my relationship with my younger brother has become stronger than ever. For it wasn’t until my sophomore year here, his senior year in college, that I learned just how he felt about me.

My younger brother had always played the same sport as me, but as a result of our 2 year age difference we never had the opportunity to play together on the same team in youth leagues. Speaking to him on the phone one autumn day about his college plans he revealed something I never once knew about him. I had just finished advising my brother against applying early decision to Haverford because I thought another school presented a better opportunity for him. He threw my advice to the side and responded by admitting to me that his dream and goal in taking up the same sport as me was so that someday we would be able to play on the same team together, as brothers. His admission into Haverford would have made his dream a reality. A dream which I wasn’t going to stand in the way of.

As all prospective Haverford athletes must do, my brother submitted an early decision application under the confident recommendation of my then coach. Having explained to the coach that my brother received a guaranteed ‘slot’ position from a NESCAC school, guaranteeing his admission, my then coach still said he was confident enough in my brother’s application and the pre-application read he received from an admissions officer to still apply early decision. My brother was subsequently rejected from Haverford College.

This of course was taken as a shock to my brother, parents, and myself. However, Haverford is an extremely prestigious institutions with rigorous acceptance standards and my family was well aware (as was the case in my admittance process) that nothing in terms of admission is guaranteed via athletics. My family alway knew there was a risk that my brother may be rejected and thankfully today he finds himself in a great collegiate situation.

In my opinion what was most disappointing about the entire situation wasn’t the sadness my brother must have felt, for he persevered, but the way in which my then coach handled the situation. My coach simply ignored it completely. My younger brother’s rejection letter arrived precisely at the beginning of Haverford’s winter break. Therefore, my coach had an entire month to address the issue to my brother, myself and family. My then coach never once personally reached out to my younger
brother.

In one month my then coach never took the 5 minutes to pick up the phone and call my younger brother, a 17 year old boy, to just give him a conversation with some potential closure to an unfortunate situation; let alone lend assistance in garnering him acceptance from another college. In one month my then coach never took the 5 minutes to pick up the phone and call me, one of his own players. I’d expect an individual, whose position of Head Coach elevated him to ‘father-figure’ status amongst his players, would take action in resolving, communicating, and moving forward after an issue arises. As a Haverford student I have benefited firsthand from students taking the initiative to confront one another about issues that arise from living with one another. There’s no other academic environment that I’ve been acquainted with that produces such resolution and feelings of goodwill between individuals in the same manner Haverford is able to.

The same way the Honor Code facilitates life on-campus, over the past four years I have found myself relying upon the Honor Code to navigate my life off-campus as well. Over the course of that winter break in which my brother received his rejection letter I was exposed to feelings and thoughts I previously had never felt or considered. For the first time in my life the thought entered my mind to quit an athletic team that I was a member of. A team that I had worked my entire life to join. I had to consider what kind of impact my departure from the team would have on my friends that remained playing. I had to try to imagine what my life would be like without my sport, which really had become a significant part of my identity.

After taking the month to reflect, upon returning to campus to start the second semester I decided that for myself the proper course of action would be to leave the team altogether. I really credit the Honor Code with providing me the inner-strength to make such a drastic life decision and change. The Honor Code helped provide me with the solace to try and do what I thought was right and necessary for myself and most importantly my brother. I miss playing my sport in an organized intercollegiate format, there’s no doubt about that. However, what I gained from leaving the team in the form of the relationship I now have with my brother, as well as what I learned about myself as a person growing/maturing through my college career I will be forever thankful for.

Dutifully,

-A Haverfordian, a Community Member, a Brother

**Discussion Questions:**

1. [Merry] and [Pippin] brought several abstracts to the attention of the jury after receiving the tentative resolutions. How should this figure with Honor Council's policy of not being a precedent-based body?
2. The jury accepted several resolutions proposed by the confronted parties that they felt fit the trial goals better than separation. How should party input be incorporated into resolutions?
3. What are some resolutions that you feel could adequately replace separation in cases like this?