Abstract discussion will be held on Wednesday, 10/29/14 at 7:30 PM in Ryan Gym.

Dexter’s Laboratory:  
An Honor Council Academic Trial  
Released Fall 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 consented to the release of the abstract. (The addition of this disclaimer began in Spring 2010).

Key:  
Dexter: Confronted Party  
Professor Dee Dee: Confronting Party  
Lab Superpowers 301: Course  
Cartoon Questions: Online question-and-answer forum  
Inventions and Sibling Rivalries: Other courses in which Dexter used Cartoon Questions

Summary:  
A student taking a [Lab Superpowers] exam noticed that a classmate had posted an exam question on [Cartoon Questions], an online question-and-answer forum. [Professor Dee Dee] showed the class a screenshot of the [Cartoon Questions] page and asked that the student come forward, but nobody did and [Professor Dee Dee] ultimately discovered that [Dexter] had posted the question. Also relevant in the case were questions from [Inventions] and [Sibling Rivalries] classes that [Dexter] had posted on [Cartoon Questions]. The jury agreed that [Dexter] had violated the Honor Code by posting questions on [Cartoon Questions] and by failing to report himself after being confronted. When crafting resolutions, the jury deliberated at length as to whether or not to recommend reporting this incident to other institutions of higher learning and ultimately was unable to consent to a unified recommendation.

Pre-Trial:  
A student in [Professor Dee Dee’s] [Lab Superpowers 301] course contacted her professor and Honor Council after she found an exam question posted verbatim on [Cartoon Questions], a question answering website. (While internet use on the exam was allowed, collaboration or asking for answers was not.) In her email to Honor Council, this student shared the screenshots of the question and said that she did not want to be involved further in the matter or participate in any trial.

[Professor Dee Dee] requested that a Dean come to her class to stress the importance of the student who posted the question coming forward. The Dean also invited the Honor Council Co-Chairs to the class to answer any questions about the Code.

Ten days after [Professor Dee Dee], the Dean, and the Co-Chairs visited the class and showed
the students the screenshot of the questions, [Professor Dee Dee] went on [Cartoon Questions] and saw that [Dexter], a student in her class, had originally posted the question, which had been removed. She passed along this information to the Dean, who confronted [Dexter] and asked him to bring himself to Honor Council. In the meantime, the Honor Council Co-Chairs discovered by looking at [Dexter’s] [Cartoon Questions] profile that he had posted and received answers for questions in [Inventions] and [Sibling Rivalries] classes from previous semesters and years.

Honor Council reviewed statements from [Dexter] and [Professor Dee Dee] and consented to send the case to an academic trial.

Fact Finding:

[Professor Dee Dee] explained that the students in [Lab Superpowers 301] were mostly [Lab Superpowers] majors. The midterm was open-book and open-note, but the students could not consult with anyone else for information.

[Dexter] explained that he started the exam the night before it was due and had only a few of the more difficult questions left. He had never taken an exam in which everything was open and thought [Cartoon Questions] was an acceptable resource; it had not occurred to him that it was collaboration. A short while later, he realized what he’d done was not appropriate and deleted the question, relieved that no one had answered it. He said it was not his intention to cheat or abuse exam privileges and that his mistake came out of sleep deprivation and confusion. He felt badly that his classmates thought there was someone dishonorable in the class and that it had put emotional stress on [Professor Dee Dee] and wanted to repair the breach of trust.

Professor [Dee Dee] said that the intent in asking someone else, regardless of whether he received an answer, was a violation. [Dexter] said it was the same as texting someone for the answer but then telling them not to answer because you realized it was wrong. [Dexter] said that he had thought about coming forward after the matter was brought up in class but still felt that he hadn’t done anything wrong since he deleted the question. [Professor Dee Dee] said that her issue was that [Dexter] had not turned himself in. [Professor Dee Dee] had only gone online days later because it had affected her relationship with her students, some of whom were coming to her office to reassure her that they had not done it.

When asked whether he had considered contacting [Professor Dee Dee] when he took the question down, [Dexter] said he hadn’t because there was no response; he may have thought differently if a response had been posted.

[Professor Dee Dee] asked [Dexter] if he really didn’t mean to violate the Honor Code, and he said he didn’t. She said that unless [Dexter] gave her reason to be suspicious again, she would not be suspicious and they could move on. Since the class knew about the incident, she felt that they should somehow be informed of the outcome of the matter, to which [Dexter] agreed. A juror asked if [Dexter] had signed the Honor Code pledge, and he said that he had because what he turned in was entirely his own work. Another juror asked [Dexter] if he would have used [Cartoon Questions] on a homework assignment, and he said that he would have if he thought it was okay.

After [Professor Dee Dee] left, the discussion moved to the [Sibling Rivalries] and [Inventions] questions [Dexter] had posted on [Cartoon Questions] in earlier semesters. [Dexter] said that he knew the [Sibling Rivalries] questions were okay because any resource was allowed. One of the jurors said that in her training as a tutor for the [Sibling Rivalries Help Center] she had been told never to give a student the answer; the role of that resource is to ask guiding questions to help the student learn. [Dexter] said that he had received direct answers from [Sibling Rivalries TAs] and students familiar with
[Sibling Rivalries] in the past. The Trial Chair explained the importance of working with people instead of putting information on the internet because it is difficult to know what is someone else’s intellectual property.

**Jury Deliberations I:**

The jury decided to consider the postings for [Lab Superpowers], [Inventions], and [Sibling Rivalries] separately. The jury largely agreed that the [Lab Superpowers] posting was a violation of the Honor Code, as was not coming forward himself after the matter was brought to the class and consented to the spirit of a Statement of Violation for the [Lab Superpowers] incident.

For the [Inventions] and [Sibling Rivalries] postings, jurors felt that more information was needed. Some people felt that the other incidents were definitely violations and were not sure how major they were—if they were minor, inclusion in the Statement of Violation could be enough, but resolutions might be required if the violation were more severe. Ultimately, the jury decided that the Trial Chair should discuss the issues with the professors of the [Inventions] and [Sibling Rivalries] classes while preserving [Dexter’s] confidentiality, and that they could decide what to include in the Statement of Violation based on the professors’ input.

**Jury Deliberations II and Statement of Violation:**

The Trial Chair explained his discussions with [a professor of Sibling Rivalries] and [two professors of Inventions]. [The Sibling Rivalries professor] said that while the situation was iffy and she would not recommend using [Cartoon Questions] as a resource, she said it was not a violation of the Honor Code. [The Inventions professors] said that it was a violation but would only result in a zero in that portion of the assignment, and that they would remind students that it was not acceptable to post questions on the internet. The jurors then agreed that in addition to the [Lab Superpowers] exam question posting, the Statement of Violation should also include the [Inventions] question posting and [Dexter’s] failure to report himself to Honor Council. They also decided that the [Sibling Rivalries] posting was not a violation. The jury then consented unanimously to the following Statement of Violation:

[Dexter] violated the Honor Code by posting an exam question to an online question forum in an attempt to solicit inappropriate help, which was against his professor’s instructions about consultation on the exam. (3.04.1)

Additionally, [Dexter] violated the Honor Code by failing to “report [his] own breach” after his professor explicitly expressed her concerns to the class. (3.05)

He further violated the Honor Code by soliciting unauthorized help from an online question forum for his [Inventions assignment]. (3.04.1)

**Circumstantial Portion**

The jury met with [Dexter] for the Circumstantial portion of the trial since [Professor Dee Dee] elected not to attend. [Dexter] asked why the [Lab Superpowers] posting was a violation when the [Sibling Rivalries] posting was not. Jurors explained that they had consulted with professors from each department and the professors’ opinions had shaped their feelings. The [Sibling Rivalries] professor had explained that while there was a difference in her expectations between a first and second draft of a writing assignment, she would tell the student but would not bring it to Honor Council if she saw the posting. The [Inventions] professors felt that it was something they should bring up to the entire class to
say that posting questions on the internet was against the rules. While the jury felt that it was important for them to clarify in their statement of violation what was and was not allowed, they did not see the [Lab Superpowers] and [Sibling Rivalry] incidents as being equal in severity and would not address them in the same way.

[Dexter] explained that he had pulled an all-nighter the night before taking his [Lab Superpowers] exam and was stressed because he knew he would get very little sleep because of the exam, which in total took him sixteen hours to complete. He had not reported himself to Honor Council after the professor had brought it up because he felt that he had self-policed and righted the wrong. He didn’t know how to repair the breach of trust but jumped at the chance when the Dean contacted him. When asked if there were other circumstances surrounding his exam, [Dexter] explained that he had been considering going to CAPS for anxiety. Following a discussion on asking for help, jurors explained that it was more helpful to go to professors with questions instead of posting on [Cartoon Questions] because professors could help you learn the material, while online answers were impersonal and there was no way of knowing how accurate the answer was.

The Trial Chair then read aloud [Professor Dee Dee’s] emailed proposed resolutions. She reiterated her opposition to the jury recommending a grade change, a desire to meet with [Dexter] to repair their relationship, and that [Dexter] should somehow accept responsibility to the class because of the class confrontation. She was unsure of how this would occur but suggested that [Dexter] co-sign a letter to the class with her indicating that the issue has been resolved. [Dexter] agreed with [Professor Dee Dee’s] ideas but expressed his desire to keep his address to the class anonymous because he knew that the incident had not stayed in the class and he did not want his confidentiality to be breached.

For education, [Dexter] asked if there were resources other than the OAR that he could use. Jurors suggested the Academic Integrity Tutorial and essays on plagiarism by Professors Maud McInerney and Jenni Punt as well as tutoring through each department. [Dexter] thanked the jury for their suggestions.

Jury Deliberations Meeting I

Jurors first agreed that [Dexter] should not be separated from the community. On the subject of recommending a grade change, jurors ultimately agreed with [Professor Dee Dee] that a grade change was not warranted because neither his answer nor his grade on the exam was affected by his posting the question on the internet.

The discussion moved to the issue of reporting to institutions of higher education. Some jurors felt that it was not appropriate to report the incident because [Dexter] had gained no benefit from it, there was no grade change to be explained, it was not intentional, and other incidents could go uncaught. Other jurors felt that it was unbecoming of a Haverford student to fail to report him or herself to Honor Council after the professor had brought it up to the class as she did and some were unconvinced that the incident had been unintentional. Some jurors saw the failure to report as a major issue for Haverford and not for graduate schools which are more competitive and less collaborative. The jury then decided that they needed something different from grade change or reporting to graduate schools for accountability because of the social dimension of the violation.

At this point, one of the jurors felt she could no longer participate in consensus for personal reasons. For the remainder of the trial, she stayed in the room but there were only 9 consenting jurors.

Jury Deliberations Meeting II

For restoration and education, jurors discussed the idea of having [Dexter] complete a
long-term project that emphasizes the ease of making mistakes with the internet or the effects of not turning oneself in. The jury struggled with the trial goal of accountability because it seemed difficult to separate the academic and social components of this violation. Ultimately, they decided that the Trial Chair should email [Professor Dee Dee] asking if [Dexter] not coming forward had an academic effect on the class and whether she thought an action addressing that would be appropriate.

Jury Deliberations Meeting III

The jury first discussed whether or not [Dexter] should write a letter to the community and decided to leave him the option and that the letter’s content should be up to him. After reading [Professor Dee Dee’s] feedback to the jury’s question, the jury consented not to address [Dexter’s] grade in their resolutions with one juror standing outside.

Opinions were still mixed on the issue of reporting the incident to graduate school. Some jurors felt that the issue of not reporting oneself to Honor Council was a big deal to Haverford but not to other institutions, while others felt that not recommending it would be equivalent to lying. After much discussion, the jury decided to include reporting the incident to graduate schools in the tentative resolutions. The jury then consented to the following tentative resolutions:

1. [Dexter] will meet with [Professor Dee Dee] twice, once before the end of this semester and once at the beginning of next semester, aiming to repair the breach of trust. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)¹
2. Over break, [Dexter] will write a letter to the class reflecting on his actions and their effect on the members of the class. He and [Professor Dee Dee] will discuss this letter in their second meeting. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
3. [Dexter] will meet with an OAR staff member to discuss academic stress management and proper use of academic resources. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
4. [Dexter] will take the Academic Integrity Tutorial and will draft a set of questions for it that are pertinent to his situation. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
5. The jury offers both parties the opportunity to write a letter of reflection to the community to be released with the abstract. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
6. The jury recommends that this be reported to other institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)

   Resolutions as a whole: 9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside

Finalizing Resolutions

The jury met with [Dexter] to finalize the resolutions and [Professor Dee Dee] elected not to attend but emailed the Trial Chair expressing her agreement with the resolutions. [Dexter] asked the jury to clarify their resolution about the Academic Integrity Tutorial. Jurors explained that they thought it would be a good exercise for him to think about what people should know with respect to academic integrity as well as explain why certain courses of action are better than others.

[Dexter] then asked the jury why they consented to report the incident to institutions of higher learning. One juror explained that what stuck out to him was [Professor Dee Dee’s] comment that the incident wasn’t as major for her because she didn’t know [Dexter]; had she written a recommendation for him, she said she would have felt like she was lying. Jurors explained that their decision was only a

¹ One juror felt that she could not consent for personal reasons. See Jury Deliberations Meeting I.
recommendation and that there would be the opportunity to explain the incident on applications. [Dexter] said that while it was difficult to disagree that an incident had occurred, he feared that it would hurt his chances of getting into graduate school when that had been his goal. He said that he made a mistake and violated the Honor Code but didn’t think he cheated and had tried to correct it; he felt that it should not keep him out of graduate school and affect the rest of his life.

[Dexter] asked if the jury had discussed another way to address accountability other than reporting to graduate schools. Jurors explained that it was their longest discussed issue and that separation and grade change did not seem appropriate. When asked for his input, [Dexter] said that he had thought about it and it was a difficult issue, but that there was accountability in writing a letter to the class, and that he did plan to include a letter in the abstract.

[Dexter] clarified that he did not want to avoid accountability. Jurors reassured him that this was not how they saw him and that the case had not been black and white; while reporting to grad schools would be difficult, he would have the opportunity to explain himself and meet with his Dean for more information. [Dexter] asked the jury to consider seriously the possibility that reporting the incident could keep him out of graduate school and thanked the jury for their time and for making the experience comfortable for him.

**Jury Deliberations Meeting I**

Jurors were moved by [Dexter’s] emotional argument but still felt unsure as how they should proceed. One juror said that a Haverford degree represents someone having Haverford ideals at the time they leave Haverford and it shouldn’t be disclosed to graduate schools if at one point these ideals were compromised. Another juror disagreed and said he didn’t agree with [Dexter’s] feeling that his violation was a stupid mistake and that if it is a mistake of the nature that a graduate school would want to know about, they had a duty to report it to them. One juror said he did not feel strongly one way or another because [Dexter] could still get into a graduate school, but maybe not the graduate school of his choice.

A juror suggested that it could be better if they let the Deans decide. The Trial Chair expressed discomfort with this option because if the jury made no recommendation, the Deans would only have the chair’s report to rely upon when making their decision and he could inaccurately represent the feelings of the group. Overall, jurors felt discomfort with making a recommendation that could affect [Dexter’s] future. Some jurors expressed the opinion that a trial was as close to disciplinary action as Haverford has, but others disagreed. One juror suggested having each juror write their opinion and reasoning to the Deans without the jury as a whole making a recommendation.

Since the jury could not come to a decision, they decided to adjourn and revisit the discussion in another meeting after discussing the matter with the Deans and [Professor Dee Dee].

**Jury Deliberations Meeting II**

In the time between the meetings, the Trial Chair and an Honor Council juror met with the Dean and [Professor Dee Dee]. The Dean presented the option that two members of the jury meet with the Dean and explain what happened in the trial so that the Dean would have context with which to make a decision. [Professor Dee Dee] said that while she agreed with the jury’s tentative resolution to report the incident, she was also okay with them not reporting.

After lengthy deliberations, the jury decided that it could not come to a unified recommendation on reporting the incident to institutions of higher learning and decided that two representatives from the jury and the Trial Chair would meet with the Dean and discuss how the violation should be reported.
The jury then consented to the following final resolutions:

1. [Dexter] will meet with [Professor Dee Dee] twice, once before the end of this semester and once at the beginning of next semester, aiming to repair the breach of trust. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)²
2. Over break, [Dexter] will write a letter to the class reflecting on his actions and their effect on the members of the class. He and [Professor Dee Dee] will discuss this letter in their second meeting. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
3. [Dexter] will meet with an OAR staff member to discuss academic stress management and proper use of academic resources. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
4. [Dexter] will take the Academic Integrity Tutorial and will draft a set of questions for it that are pertinent to his situation. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
5. The jury offers both parties the opportunity to write a letter of reflection to the community to be released with the abstract. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)
6. The jury recommends that this be reported to institutions of higher learning. Due to the diversity of opinions held by the jurors, two members will meet with a dean to discuss how this incident might be reported on [Dexter’s] application. All members of the jury are encouraged to write their own opinions in a letter to complement this discussion. (9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside)

Resolutions as a whole: 9 jurors consent, no jurors stand outside.

Post-trial:
Neither party appealed the resolutions.

Dexter’s Letter to the Class:
I am writing to you to address the issue that came up in [Professor Dee Dee]’s [Lab Superpowers] class. I would like to use this opportunity to apologize for the consequences of my actions and to explain myself to you.

My posting of the question online was an innocent mistake which resulted from lack of sleep, stress, and confusion about what it meant in the directions on the exam that “no discussion” was allowed. My confusion arose from the fact that I at first interpreted “no discussion” to exclusively refer to talking to other students about the exam. I categorized the use of [Cartoon Questions] in my head as falling under the rules of “open internet” and thus posted the question. A short time later I realized that this was probably not allowed, and immediately logged back on to delete the question. It had been left unanswered, and seeing as I had caught my mistake relatively early as well as not having gained an advantage through doing so, I continued with my exam as normal.

What I did was a very foolish but completely innocent oversight that came from the fatigued brain of a stressed-out student late at night. I can honestly say that I had no intention whatsoever to cheat, break the rules of the exam, or give myself an advantage over my classmates. Had I realized before hitting the “submit” button that what I was doing was not allowed I never, ever would have done it. I hope you can believe me when I say this. Honor Council does, as does [Professor Dee Dee], and I am so

² One juror felt that she could not consent for personal reasons. See Jury Deliberations Meeting I.
grateful that I go to a college in which I have the opportunity to explain myself.

The other issue at hand here is not only the breach of trust that occurred between myself and my professor—which is being resolved by periodic meetings between us—but the position I put her in in terms of her relationship with the class. Before going through the Honor Council trial, I did not come forward and turn myself in—I was emailed by a dean and asked to meet. As a result of this, I put [Professor Dee Dee] through a great deal of emotional struggle as well as compromised her relationship with you by allowing suspicion to continue to occur.

I want you to know that I have never been sorrier for anything in my life. I have had a lot of time to think about my actions and I will be the first to admit that they were most unHaverfordian. Suspicion and unease is certainly not the type of student-professor and student-student relationship that Haverford fosters, yet I allowed it to occur. You, [Professor Dee Dee], and this institution deserved better on my part, and I did not come through. Again, I want to apologize: I am so, so sorry—I cannot emphasize this enough.

I have had a while to think about what I did as well as what about myself allowed me to act in such a way. I was asked what flaw in my character caused me to not come forward right away, and I wanted to answer this question not only for you but for myself. After a significant period of self-reflection, what I have come up with is that I was afraid and foolish, I tried too hard to be “perfect” and lost sight of what is important, I was focused on some unresolved issues and a small tragedy at home, and a touch of confusion about what to do, because I had done this innocently and deleted my question before it had been answered.

As a result of all of this, I have learned a great deal about myself, the Honor Code, and the unwavering commitment that Haverford and its students have to maintaining an atmosphere of trust, concern and respect. This experience has opened my eyes to a campus that I feel I had, prior to all of this, begun to float through without much thought. I want to apologize once more for the snowball effect that my actions have caused and express my gratitude to have had the opportunity to explain myself to you. Thank you for taking my apology into consideration.

[Dexter’s signature]

I have met with Honor Council and with the student involved. I believe that this letter is an accurate and honest description of what has occurred and the student's response. I am happy to be part of the process of restoring trust and I strongly encourage all of you in the class to do the same.

[Prof. Dee Dee’s signature]

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What is the ideal form of confrontation when a professor suspects a violation but is unsure who committed the violation?
2. Should juries consider information outside of the immediate case, such as (in this instance) the questions from the [Inventions] and [Sibling Rivalries] classes?
3. Is the use of online question-and-answer forums collaborating? How can these sites be utilized in productive ways for academic work?

4. Is it acceptable for a jury not to make a recommendation on reporting to graduate schools? How should a jury proceed when it is unable to make a decision?

5. What is the role of self-policing and self-reporting in the Honor Code? What does a failure to report oneself constitute?

6. What does a degree from Haverford represent?