Honor Council Meeting Minutes from 11/23/14

Members Present: Michelle Parris ‘16 (Co-Chair), Chris Hadad ‘17 (Co-Chair), Kylen Solvik ‘15 (Co-Secretary), Kyle Albagli ‘16, Erin Lipman ‘17, Rory Kennison ‘18, Santiago Laverde ‘18, Irene Evans ‘16, Madison Arnold-Scerbo ‘18, Melissa Lee-Litowitz ‘15, Kevin Liao ‘18, Adela Scharff ‘16, Sarah Brody ‘15

Moment of silence to start.

1. Committee Updates
   a. Community Education & Outreach Committee
      i. Community forum with TIDE. 30+ people came. Overall people agreed that it was a great forum.
      ii. Nothing this week, but the week after there will be Pizza, Profs, and the Code. Pretty much everyone has been confirmed.
      iii. Discussed more about t-shirt designs and videos. We have almost complete script for first video. Have a video camera rented for IITS. We want to videotape part of a council meeting so that people can see what honor council meetings look like. The sound would be cut out. Also want to explain what each committee typically does, with humor!
      iv. Website relaunch planned before finals week. Bio questions will be sent out to council members soon.
      v. Starting to look into mediation training.
      vi. Will be sending out a faculty survey about the Honor Code soon.
   b. Plenary Resolutions Committee
      i. Met after last week’s meeting and finalized a list of resolutions. Three resolutions: international juror requirement, mediation, and a big one with procedural changes. The writing has been divided up within the committee and they are working on them.
      ii. Chris also has written up a transparency clause for the constitution, which basically covers things we are doing already. Other members raised that it might not be completely necessary as future honor councils can determine what actions to take for transparency. Also there may come a time when the student body does not want more transparency. There was also discussion about confidentiality vs. transparency. The resolution will be sent out to the full council and they can then make comments. This led to a discussion of what trends will be posted

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The current plans is: total number of cases sent to council, # of those sent to different types of trials/panels, breakdown by departments, Bryn Mawr, international Bryn Mawr, average # of parties per trial. It was suggested that we test out the trends this semester and then defer adding it or not adding it to the constitution until next semester. We need to be aware of how we are leading discussions surrounding issues such as the department breakdown and Bryn Mawr/Bryn Mawr international student stats. There is the potential for departments to take action, e.g. move away from take-home exams. The discussion was tabled until next week.

c. College & Student Organizations Committee
   i. Santiago brought the questions to send to affinity groups. They were passed out to council members to look at. Each question was discussed, with some wording changes. Council members also suggested including multiple choice options in addition to a text boxes so that survey takers aren’t turned off by all the text boxes and so that it’s easier to process results.
   ii. Rory has been in contact with the writing center. The first meeting about the workshop will be after Thanksgiving.

2. Social Code & Race Discussion
   a. Changes to the Social Code?
      i. TIDE is considering moving forward with a plenary resolution that will include language addressing marginalization and other issues into the social code.
   b. Changes to Honor Council Procedures related to discrimination/microaggressions
      i. Mediations/Types of Mediations
         1. Could a certain type of mediation address these issues? Perhaps something akin to a scaled-down SFP. Possibility of different types of mediations. For these issues we could have a mediation where there are binding resolutions. There could be a process with more than one “mediator” in cases where there were binding resolutions. Members asked why not just use SFP? There are issues with SFP’s. They’re long and bulky processes. We could change the SFP process instead of making a new one.
         2. New proposal: one mediator and then the parties would have to consent to any resolutions.
         3. Having one mediator raises issues of the parties not approving of mediator. Perhaps we could give the parties...
a list of alternates. Some suggested following similar procedures to the current jury selection/approval process.

4. Another issue is the extent to which Honor Council members are trained on issues of diversity. Chris proposed inviting TIDE to the Honor Council retreat to give a presentation or host a discussion on diversity. A council member suggested potentially making use of the expert witness clause in such cases, although council acknowledged that this is not a perfect solution. If we will send something to a mediation, it will first be discussed in council, where hopefully there is someone with experience with issues raised by the case who could serve as mediator.

5. Madi emphasized the concern raised at the TIDE discussion that council members are not trained enough. Another issue is that many cases of marginalization or microaggression are products of the established system, which we are part of and so that could create problems of trust.

6. A member pointed out the value of a mediation in emphasizing that a conversation needs to be had and that a productive conversation will be had. Others agreed. This is particularly relevant when there are imbalances of power involved.

c. ISO Abstract Discussions/Orientation

i. Denise Alison was very much in support of having this as part of orientation, and would be willing to provide funds for council members to come back early to help with this. She asked us to come up with some sort of plan with a list of possible abstracts. Santiago and Michelle are going to work on it.

ii. A member noted that perhaps there shouldn’t be emphasis placed upon the Tempest, as that is an outlier. At the same time, it deals with a lot of issues that should be discussed with international students and their experience with the Code and relationship with Honor Council. Members disagreed about whether or not it should be included. We’re not trying to scare new international students straight, but it is an important and relevant abstract. Two members agreed to chat about it after the meeting.

3. Discussion of BSL postings

a. Dean Denney asked us if we wanted to discuss the blackout board in the DC, and if we had ideas for a better way to have this discussion. Members of Honor Council felt that while certain comments were very
strongly worded, those voices should be brought to light and that it doesn’t run into problems with the Code. Dela expressed that the discussion we had with TIDE was good, particularly in conjunction with the board. Chris felt that we should keep moving forward with what we’re working on with TIDE, and that there doesn’t seem to be a need for us to force ourselves into this particular issue. Michelle raised the issue that some of the comments were very offensive and the fact that they were anonymous made people feel more comfortable voicing those opinions, which could be problematic. There was agreement that the ends were good, but some discussion about the means and whether the lack of accountability could create problems. One member pointed out that these good “ends” might not have been possible without the board being anonymous. These are good things to hear that might not have been said otherwise.

Ended with a moment of silence.

*Italicized* = Private Portion

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