A. Pizza, Professors, and the Code

1. Introductions - name, class year
2. Jack: I’m curious how professors see the Honor Code in general.
3. Curtis: It’s ever present. It is a major part of Haverford and many students are attracted to Haverford because of it.
4. Phil: It fundamentally changes how we teach our classes. It turns into us learning together rather than me just teaching you.
5. Chris: To build on what Curtis said, when building tests and classes it gives us freedom. It removes some of the burden, we’re not the police.
6. Chris 2: I’m curious how it shapes your learning practices, how it affects student life.
7. Curis: It’s a central way of how I teach. In math, students help each other learn, and what goes on outside the classroom is critical. Our courses are structured so students are sent away with things to do and we expect them to talk and learn, but also expect them not to turn in work that’s not their own. How I organize my class and assignments depends on that.
8. Dela: I wonder if the Honor Code affects how any of you, with experience teaching at other schools, see the students?
9. Chris: I don’t feel as responsible for controlling every aspect of how they handle themselves academically. Nice to be able to walk out on a class of students taking an exam.
10. Matt: I’ve taught at places with and without Honor Codes. I once taught a class with 500 people in it. Not only were there proctor exams but there were all sorts of regulations. It completely affected the class. It’s a very different atmosphere. The assumption there was if students are working together they’re working together too much, which is different from here. You have to approach exams at other schools in a completely different way from here.
11. Alison: During my study abroad experience, I was in large classes. They held finals at the Dublin Fair Grounds, in rooms with 2000 people. There were proctors patrolling up and down, you had to...
have your student ID or you wouldn’t get let in. It was a completely
different experience coming from Haverford, and one that I would
not like to repeat.

12. Kevin: I would like to add on to the idea of trying to get away with
something. One of the things I appreciate about Haverford is that I
never feel like I’m trying to sneak something past the professor.
That’s a place where it makes me feel like an adult. I appreciate
being able to “man up” or “adult up” and take some responsibility. I
feel like the professors know that I’m not likely to be trying to sneak
something past them or cut any corners. That makes me feel more
adult. When you set a bar high, I’m going to want to go above that.
When you’re being policed it becomes an us vs. them mentality.
You might get more lazy or try to cut corners. The environment has
helped me be a more productive student and mature person.

13. Dela: I think a lot of Haverford students talk about the benefits of
the academic honor code being take-home exams and things like
that, which is great. But one of my favorite experiences was in one
class I had to keep a daily log, and I was really bad about keeping
up with it. When I went to write my paper, I could have just
remembered what happened and written a paper. But I emailed the
professor and asked him if I could write based on subjective
experiences, and the professors was totally fine. Professors don’t
assume you’re making up an excuse.

14. Robin: I think something interesting in my academic experience
was not ratifying the code two years ago. At that time I was taking a
class with a first-year professor, and the way that class changed
was huge when we didn’t ratify the honor code. When it came back
we went back to the way it was before, but we started having
proctored quizzes, we started having to do assignments in class
and stuff like that. The class changed a lot. A more experienced
professor would have had a different reaction, but this first-year
professor didn’t feel like he could hold them accountable.

15. Dela: Was it that the idea we hadn’t ratified it, or that he thought we
didn’t have one?

16. Robin: I don’t think he knew it hadn’t been ratified. Also, I’d like to
hear from professors since you’ve probably had many experiences
with the code not being ratified.

17. Phil: I don’t change anything. I think your conscious is still going to
keep you in line. I don’t think it’s the ratified code that allows that to
happen, it’s the atmosphere.

18. Curtis: It’s strange because I don’t remember much about it at all. I
remember anxiety about ratifying it, but I don’t remember it not
being ratified except for a couple years ago. I think that might be
because I just keep on doing what I’m doing.

19. Robin: Do you think thats reflective of the change? It happened 9
years ago, and then 7 or so years before that.
20. Curtis: Maybe I was on sabbatical then
21. Jack: It’s funny because looking back it pretty much fails every 6-8 years.
22. Dela: It’s sort of when it slips out of institutional memory.
23. Jack: One other question. I’ve heard from some professors that there are ways they see the code stifling students. They don’t want the code to stop you from collaborating on things you should be collaborating on.
24. Chris: I’ve had once or twice had students anxiously asking about collaboration and collaborations they’ve done but I don’t think it stifles collaboration for the most part.
25. Curtis: I don’t think that’s too big a problem. We really encourage you to collaborate and to ask us if you have questions.
26. Phil: The only place I see it stifling is seniors in lab meeting. Lab meetings are meant to be a free exchange of ideas, and when they’re going well, they can be a little, free exchange-y...And I think students sometimes don’t feel like they can really criticize or ask questions because they’re worried about being offensive. But that’s a particular situation where it’s designed to be open and chaotic and intellectually rowdy. And many students are not really comfortable with that level of having their ideas or experiments challenged. That’s the only place I see it.
27. Dela: I think that’s a broad, good comment about the social code. It should encourage people to raise issues respectively and allow people to confront, but sometimes it can result in people not bringing things up.
28. Dan: I’m a math major, and sometimes I struggle during collaborating on problem sets, because if someone really doesn’t understand the problem, how much are you allowed to help them along the way, and conversely how much I’m allowed to ask for help along the way? And professors aren’t always available (even though you guys are really available!) and you can’t ask them all the time, so it’s really a personal thing you have to decide.
29. Curtis: I wonder if other disciplines expect students to collaborate outside of class. If there’s a line and you don’t get on the right side of it, that’s absolutely ok with us, because for us it’s so important that you do that outside of class. On tests it’s a different matter. There’s a big difference between behavior on tests. Do other disciplines collaborate like that?
30. Matt: They better! But I don’t think they do enough. I tell them that no one in the world does this by themselves. I’m not sure if it’s the Honor Code, but sometimes people are too nice to each other. If you’re not challenged enough, and you don’t have to defend your ideas that can be a problem especially when you get into more real work, like your thesis and beyond. And for smaller assignments, there should be debates outside of class.

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Kylen Solvik and Idun Klakegg, Co-Secretaries. They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council. Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc!
31. Idun: I think it happens sometimes, at least for poli sci, but the majority of it happens in class. Outside of class people might be more polite, but in class you do get challenged.

32. Kevin: I'm a chemistry major, and I'm a TA and the use of TAs in question centers, there's times where, when I was a student in first and second year courses, there would be debates about the answer or how to approach a question. And if you ask them to explain it, sometimes they say "well the TA said it." And then that kind of shuts down the discussion, because the TA has the answer key, so they must be right. But now as a TA, I see a lot of people gather last minute and that back and forth to get it done can lead to questioning and challenging. And during senior seminar or other presentations, sometimes people don’t have questions! When there are questions they’re more general questions instead of challenges. Maybe the collaborative back-and-forth is stifled by the code, which has beneficial elements too.

33. Idun: Adding to what I said before, it happens a lot that people use ideas from class into other discussions, for example in discussions about politics that aren’t directly related to class, which is really cool.

34. Dela: I’ve had a lot of friends who have different majors, and I really like how people maybe want to explain an idea that they’ve been using an idea they’ve learned in class, but in order for people to understand they have to explain the entire idea, and that’s really cool.

35. Matt: If the honor code is stifling debate then that’s a problem, but if it’s just because people are really nice to each other than that’s not the honor code.

36. Curtis: I'm missing something. I don’t see how it’s stifling anything.

37. Irene: I think we’ve heard before that students worry too much that their collaboration feel that it's inappropriate, so they’re not entirely sure of the line between appropriate and inappropriate collaboration, so they avoid it.

38. Ryan: That’s definitely true but also I’ve had conversations that may turn personal, and there was the option to stop it seeing that he was uncomfortable. We ended up arguing about a word in three hours. Having to engage someone and having to be appropriate, that can be a problem.

39. Curtis: So you’re worried about being polite? I understand how that plays in, but it’s not your professors telling you not talk about it.

40. Ryan: That’s the concern with the academic part, but then the social code can play a part in academic discussion where people are told to be polite and respectful all the time.

41. Matt: When you talk about something that’s all about uncomfortable topics, that’s a challenge.

42. Tori: Something I’ve observed, as a senior, is that there’s an
element of fear implied by breaking the Honor Code in some way. You don’t want to do it, it’s here to keep our community safe, so to break it is something that you’re afraid to do, and the fear of doing it does things like prevent you from collaborating at all, since you know at some point collaborating is not appropriate so you’re afraid that you’re going to get there and not know it. That fear, from both academic and social, afraid of offending your friends, even if it’s in the spirit of friendship. But in a sense that’s not fair to have to be afraid of the rules that keep you safe. You shouldn’t be so afraid about following the rules that you’re limited and constricted. And if you do end up breaking it, there’s the stigma of how you come back. To the people who were involved or knew about it, it’s like a scarlet letter. You get stigmatized. How can we as a community work to break down that stigmatization after something that maybe was investigated and wasn’t a breach of the honor code? There’s an element of you’re afraid to be like them because maybe you’ll end up doing the same thing.

43. Ryan: There’s a sense that if you break the code there’s something majorly wrong with you. I was on council, and when I saw someone who came out of a trial process usually my thought is that there’s someone who would never break the code again. There’s a feeling that you don’t want to become one of those people by breaking the code, but people who have gone through trials are almost head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to being conscious about the code.

44. Dela: I’m also on Council, and I think that’s not an understanding that’s shared with the rest of the community. Maybe if you’re on Council, or have been on a jury, you feel this incredible amount of compassion and that you they’re not going to do it again. People who haven’t been involved in that process would feel very differently. I think you might think that process might be more stigmatizing than the people who actually go through it. Also, if I could ask if any professors wanted to say anything about the ways that you think about honor code violations, or maybe is there anything you do because you are afraid of honor code violations? I guess anything about that in your life as a professor.

45. Curtis: Yes, there are some things. My experience with cases, and this is only the academic honor code, although I realize there are issues within our classes that follow the scope of the social honor code. My teaching changes, the way I organize classes and structure my exams. It’s always greatly impacted by code violations. I think in the sciences more people are giving in class timed exams, and that’s partly the result of our experiences with violations. Also I would say that some of my experiences with trials have been very positive, and others have been negative to the point that’s a mistrial. But it restored my faith to see that people in
the community responded to those situations where those involved with the code saw issues and tried to remedy it.

46. Phil: I’ve only been involved with one trial. It was awful, except that it was really good. Honor Council did a really good job even if they were harsher than I would’ve been. The student and I didn’t have too much trouble restoring trust with one another. But as Curtis said it definitely affects how you structure assignments for the next few years.

47. Chris: I’ve had both great and terrible experiences with the trial process. I think in the end I was satisfied with how it resolved.

48. Dela: I’m really interested and glad that a few of you brought up the idea of restoration with the student. I think that’s one of the hardest things to do, to make both people feel the trust they felt before.

49. Phil: The student screwed up. They recognized that. What are you going to do? Make sure that no one else got hurt by it.

50. Kevin: I wonder how that changes in different circumstances. If there’s a confrontation and someone immediately opens up, and the student and prof see eye-to-eye. But what if the student has a different interpretation or doesn’t admit to it.

51. Phil: Definitely. We had a case a few years ago. The student said I didn’t do that and it was dead obvious that the student had cheated. Honor Council said “you cheated”. The student still denied it. Honor Council followed through. Looking at that we said “that student’s not going to work in my lab”. You can’t trust them.

52. Curtis: There was a situation a few years ago where if a student said they did it they treated them very harshly, but if they didn’t say that then they didn’t do anything at all. That was a period of crisis for several years. I think we’re out of that now.

53. Irene: So we can wrap up since it’s 7:30.