Community Forum Minutes from 2/19/15

Members Present: Claire, Melissa, Michelle, Chris, Daniel, Santiago, Erin (B.), Erin L., Maddie, Kelly, Jess, Bill, Geoffrey, Momo, Dela, Sophie, several more students.

A. Post Plenary Discussion 2/19/15
1. What did everyone think of plenary?
2. [Discussion of Brian’s amendments to rules of order]
3. Santiago: Wondering about resolution mentioning gender neutral hall, was surprised it didn’t go through
4. You were shocked that it didn’t go through? Resolution initially surprised me that it would be proposed, this would be creating hall based on selecting for factor
5. Wondering what exactly that meant?
6. Santiago: I think that’s part of why it didn’t go through. I just know it would be gender neutral hall that students would select on applications. Just bathrooms?
7. Melissa: Transformers amendment different that what was brought forward. I think, from what I understand it would be safe space for people identifying outside of gender binary as well as people with interest in that kind of living. While we do what mixed halls, which I think we would still get, this was about creating living space assured to be safe, customs people would have training to understand. I know that people who don’t fit within binary feel incredibly uncomfortable
8. Santiago: People with identity other than male/female might have trouble with roommate in binary
9. Proposed amendment didn’t seem related to proposition, that was confusing.
10. I trust that they know what they’re doing, but I would have liked more time to think about it. I know they were just asking for student body support, but we just got description [of amendment] without time to consider. Sounds like great idea but some people brought up good points. I know that was unavoidable
11. Michelle: I felt like I wasn't sure what was being voted on, just general description. Gender neutral hall of whole plan?
12. Seems like they were also working with res life. Do you think it is still place of plenary to vote?
13. Erin: I think it is. We can all get together and show support since it would effect entire campus
14. Maffie: Good place for support for idea vs. logistical goal
15. Were they any forums before?
16. Melissa: There have been a lot of Transformers discussions last semester, obviously not about resolution since it wasn’t planned.
17. Claire: Do you think there should be more forums about potential resolutions?
18. I’d worry no one would come, people kind of have to come to plenary so its good to gauge interest in certain proposed changes
19. This plays into David’s point about not having enough time to consider resolutions at plenary. Discussions beforehand could fix that
20. Melissa: Resolutions are required to be discussed with SC presidents, those are open. The resolutions are also emailed out in advance, but many people have not read

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Erin Lipman and Kyle Albagli, Co-Secretaries. They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council.
Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc!
21. Daniel: I think it was an issue of this being an amendment that was different from resolution.
22. Erin: That would be cool if we had projection for wording changes.
23. Maddie: Or even restating before votes. Sometimes we don’t know what we’re voting on. Some condensed version of resolution read right before.
24. I would have like too hear amendment read beforehand
25. Google doc could be good since so many people have computers
26. Melissa: This could help with students on campus with hearing disabilities where lots of noise going on
27. Claire: We were thinking about buying entirely new speaker system for plenary. Was this year’s enough?
28. David: Near back of gym I could still hear. It was good.
29. Momo: Google Doc could also be helpful for confusion, like res.8
30. Could also help streamlining getting signatures for [unfriendly amendments]
31. Would it be valuable to have minute to think between closing statement and voting? People might not like introducing more time though
32. Claire: Theoretically moments of silence should do it
33. Might even be helpful to be able to talk to neighbors though. But people ight get distracted
34. Can we talk about the fifth resolution?
35. Daniel: I wanted to bring up discussion of vote on res. 8. Email mentioned discussion modifications to rules of order to avoid that. Packet voting should be shortcut for when majority abundantly clear. But in situation with confusion, I think it would be helpful if there was brief one minute period after vote to contest. They wouldn’t contest one where it was clear so it wouldn’t waste time. Here, people in different parts of room didn’t agree. Only time I’ve seen that happen at plenary. Fact that one person can declare seems like disruption of democratic principles
36. If we’re going GDoc route, we could vote electronically
37. That would require everyone having working laptop.
38. Daniel: Technology isn’t always reliable in practice
39. Melissa: I think there’s something to be said for seeing rest of community vote. Not worried about people corrupting vote but its nice to have community be able to observe. Healthy process for community. That’s one reason I’d be hesitant about electronic vote.
40. Claire: I was seeing electronic vote as followup like paper
41. Daniel: I see contesting period as best solution. Then we don’t have to rely on technology.
42. In terms of contesting period. I disagreed for amendment too res. 8 but didn’t know what to do. I was looking through rules of order to try and find what to do. The fact that there’s no procedure bothers me.
43. Michelle: In terms of unclear procedure, i understand its not clear to determine if vote even passed.
44. [Sentiment that that is a problem]
45. What forum would there be for deciding this?
46. Erin: Plenary on plenary procedure…
47. Claire: Would need to be proposed at the beginning of next plenary, and make then make sure there was more formal process to approve it
48. Daniel: Modifying rules of order should be done at plenary
49. It would make sense to have proposed changes to rules of order printed in plenary packet so we could understand them before hand, like resolution.
50. [Discussion moves to resolution 5 - changes to social code]
51. Momo: I’ve seen people sharing negative thoughts about that one.
52. [Bill reads out amended social Honor Code]

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Erin Lipman and Kyle Albagli, Co-Secretaries. They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council. Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc!
53. Bill: I wrote article for clerk about my concerns about his. I think this is big change to make. I think that if people don’t feel Honor Code is accessible to them, that needs to change, but I think this wording change changes the whole rhetorical character of social code to something focusing on these specific things.

54. Kelly: Since there is so little of social code, this change makes it about that. Changes attitude from “trust concern respect” to “don’t do this, don’t do this.”

55. Is problem with enumeration in itself of the proportion of it. Would it feel different if rest was expanded?

56. Bill: I think original code was intentionally vague. I’m not sure how much expanding on remaining three sentences would change this. What are everybody’s thoughts on how this language changes meaning or intention?

57. Melissa: Personally I see your point and benefit of purposely vague code. But I think we found that significant portion of community though that wasn’t working in terms of assumption of those values. Not sure exactly where I fall, but I like resolution in there and I think that saying social code now mostly about these things is like saying academic code is mostly about plagiarism since specific paragraph on it.

58. Erin: Interesting that first part of code says it is your responsibility to act if you find something offensive, but this makes things objectively against code. This protects groups who aren’t directly represented in our community. Saying discrimination in any form is against code could be useful for future generations.

59. Daniel: I was conflicted originally, but voted for. Analogy to idea that constitution was originally intended to protect all people equally, so people said bills like civil rights act were extraneous or unfairly privileging people. With systematic discriminations, hard to get people to think about them without explicitly prohibiting.

60. Kelly: I get your point but it’s hard to compare constitution and Honor Code since they apply to such different communities. US constitution needs specifics since applies to such large group. Our community is different since we come here with intention of carrying out code. Since we’re more active in system, doesn’t need as many specifics.

61. Melissa: I see your point but don’t think its a realistic impression that students from different backgrounds come with information or goals of, say, avoiding transphobia. When prospective students are reading code, maybe they will think about these specific values and come in with expectation of affirming them.

62. Kelly: That makes sense. But I feel like we’ll always be finding more differences, list will get really long. Broad principle of respect might be more realistic.

63. I had the same initial reaction about listing things. Still conflicted about my decision. Voted for since I see this as coming out of experience of a lot of people who didn’t feel that it was working. Valuable that someone questioned inclusion of ableism since that’s something I hadn’t thought about. Listing things make people think of them, which is good. Principles rather than rules.

64. Momo: I felt similarly. While I understand benefits of listing and that world is imperfect and that students might not understand these terms as acts of discrimination or harassment. But I also though this spirit was implicit in current language of code. But if so many people think there needs to be elaboration on “considering effects of word and actions”, maybe there should be discussions about these issues instead.

65. But the people who need to learn aren’t the people who would show up.

66. Melissa: And people of minority groups then have to be put in a place of educating. That is emotionally exhausting position to be put into.

67. Seems like many people felt they couldn’t confront people for this kind of thing, I think that if this makes people more comfortable, than its a good thing. I don’t see much harm coming from it.

68. I feel though that this might belittle things that aren’t mentioned. Weird to say “these people matter a lot: vs “everyone matters a lot”.

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Erin Lipman and Kyle Albagli, Co-Secretaries. They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council.

Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc! 
69. I wanted to talk about phrase “devoid of respect”. I felt that language was harsh. From the perspective of someone who does need to be educated, that might be alienating from wanting to learn from a mistake. I would have preferred less stark language there.

70. Bill: I had a problem with that language too. On one hand, acts of disc. and harassment are often devoid of respect, but also adds word “violate” to social code where it wasn’t before. This leans towards code as rules versus guidelines. Makes code primarily an antiharassment document and it losses a lot there.

71. Would there be place for separate more specific document? Think it might be valuable having separate anti-harassment document affirmed by student body.

72. Bill: Would that have the same power as Code, if people wanted to take issues of harassment to council. Can think of way separate document would have power of Honor Council behind it

73. Melissa: From practical council perspective, if issues came up during trial, jurors have to read code during preliminary meeting. If concerns were related to separate documents, people might not be aware of them.

74. Erin: There’s types of trial’s section, it could be noted that it is perview of council to deal with these issues

75. No one read those… Honor code is more accessible

76. Michelle: I feel like we keep throwing around “awareness”. I feel like putting something in code isn’t ok way to raise awareness

77. These should be discussed in PAF sessions. Most people don’t do all the PAF sessions, that’s sad.

78. Daniel: I think the reason that this was brought to plenary is that affinity groups feel they are constantly working to spread awareness but mostly end up creating “echo rooms” where they just talk to eachother. I think that the motivating factor hear was that conversations only involving people relevant doesn’t really do anything. I thin conversation that we’re having about how this was put into code are really important discussions and I think best way to deal with this is to have everybody spend a lot of time thinking about this, and if they find something better, they can change it at future plenary.

79. Melissa: One thing I do regret about this discussion is that there doesn’t seem to be anyone from TIDE here.

80. Dela: I was part of resolution writing process. Adapted from section of Bryn Mawr code

81. Is Bryn Mawrs code more specific?

82. Dela: I think its more specific and longer

83. Dela, what purpose do you think this will serve

84. Dela: I think this serves answering concerns many students have had at TIDE forum, since they felt uncomfortable with this not being included since they ware facing these issues all the time. Also showing prospective and current students that we care about these things. Also could serve value in trial process reminding jury of things that may have impacted either party.

85. Do you think there would be a way to write it as principle more than rule?

86. Dela: I dont think phrasing is perfect but I think its what people felt was best representing students that they talked to.

87. Bill: I was one of the ones who had voiced concerns. Much more specific that rest of code, turns into more of antiharassment text.

88. Dela: How does it take away from anything else code says?

89. Bill: As a current HFord student you understand its nuances, but reading it for first time, someone sees central text in the middle as rules and other parts as supporting antiharassment sentence. I think that the sentence and goal of TIDE are good and need to happen, but I think it could be presented differently.

90. Dela: I see that, I think there are some fundimental things that shouldn’t be compromised. I’ve heard people criticie it more fundementially.

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Erin Lipman and Kyle Albagni, Co-Secretaries. They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council.

Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc
91. Geoffory: Would it be valueable to have separate antidescrimination document? [recaps this earlier conversation for Dela and others]
92. Dela: I think having it as separate document might be marginallizing. I see how it could take away from rest of social code, but I do thinkthese are very central values that have a place in the code. These are so central to some people’s experience at Haverford.
93. Bill: I think there is some way to make it central without making it only point
94. Momo: I wanted to comment again on word “violate” [directed at Dela]. I feel the word violate is more punative
95. Dela: We say violate on Honor Council a lot
96. Melissa: I do think that is standard word we use for breach of trust/violation. I think she is bringing up that this word didn’t show up it social code
97. Erin L: About people not having room to learn if they are alienated as soon as they make a mistake
98. Dela: On one hand, that is weird, on the other hand, I don’t disagree with the harsh language. Sometimes harsh truths are uncomfortable
100. Jess: As a freshman, notion of accidently breaking any part of code is scary. Would worry about everything I say
101. Melissa: Skewed view since I feel I have violated social code in small ways but have been able to reflect on it. But don’t think I’ve ever broken in way that should have gone to a trial. I see academic and social code as different in those respects.
103. Dela: I think I see social code similarly to how Melissa described it. I think wording seems to have some understanding that social code is something that gets violated and that people make mistakes and is about working through it. If this changed that, than that is problematic.
104. Daniel: Maybe that would put people who are coming out of ignorance less willing to learn.
105. Geoffery: Does social code say “violation” anywhere
106. Michelle: Noteworthy that before this resolution there was no objective discussion of what violates the social code. Now there is this broad ruling of what is called a violation. This is a very big change.
107. This relates to facilitated confrontation resolution. That could be helpful in this case.
108. [Dela reads wording about confrontation in code, which cites failure to confront as “violation”, also talks about “violation” of trust]
109. Geoffry: Well if failure to confront is violation, I’m comfortable with racism being a violation.
110. What if this addition was separate paragraph. Ie general principle and specific example.
111. [Some possible responses]
112. Gender neutral language added “violation”
113. Dela: Violation has different connotation to Honor Council vs. the rest of the community
114. Jess: Also incoming freshman are big group of readers
115. Its was also brough up earlier whether we would have a continous obligation to list new things.
116. Dela: I was originally opposed to listing things. We were trying to think up phrase that would sum this all up, but nothing covered everything. “Histricaly marginalized groups”, etc

These minutes reflect the interpretations of Erin Lipman and Kyle Albagli, Co-Secretaries.
They are neither reviewed nor approved by the rest of Honor Council.
Questions/comments? Email hccosecs@hc!
117. Jess: “Based on differences in identity or belief” I think that’s a major thing. There’s a lot of differences we couldn’t list out
118. Melissa: I think the aspect of these groups being minority groups is more the purpose. I think that kind of sentiment is important
119. Dela: I don’t think that TIDE owns this sentence
120. Geoffry: Bothered me that things were being listed while resolution was presented.
121. Dela: We originally didn’t want to add things to Bryn Mawr version, but they didn’t have sexism, but then I wanted to add other things, but not just things limited to me…
122. Melissa: I was happy that you added English speaking capability. Being on Council has made me aware of how that can affect people’s interactions with Honor Code
123. I like that we now have this framework to add new things as we become aware of new forms of discrimination.
124. Header acknowledging that social code is set of principles and then explaining rationale for listing identities could remedy some issues “this list is just a reminder”
125. Daniel: Good way of maintaining intentionality of the document
126. [Jokes about holding special plenary]
127. Tangential thing, I’ve thought about what [Melissa] said about violations of social code. For me, I think difference is that academic violation breaches trust of entire community. Do the listed things also fall into that category? Are they distinct in this way?
128. Melissa: We’ve heard sentiment that if we always settle this type of thing on one-on-one basis, community is never educated, but that is a really tricky question. I think that way everyone is raised leaves some gap ignorance of some type of discrimination. There needs to be some nontrial process to settle it
129. Dela: Making mistake doesn’t violate the trust, but someone being confronted and not trying to learn from it probably does violate trust of community
130. Seems like people are hesitant to bring social things to council.
131. I think that’s generally a practical concern of not wanting to go through a trial process. That’s what’s good about facilitated confrontation. Solution in the middle of confrontation and trial.
132. Daniel: Having abstracts for those could ameliorate issue of one-on-one confrontations not being effective.
133. Chris: Anything else before we wrap up discussion.
134. How can we implement some of these things concretely?
135. Melissa: SC office hours, StuCo meetings are open for concerns, I encourage people to pursue these options
136. Dela: The co-presidents are super approachable!
137. [MoSi]