Abstract discussion will be held on Wednesday 11/11 at 7pm in the MCC (Stokes 106).

**Ratatouille:**

An Honor Council Academic Case

Released Fall 2015

This abstract was 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.

**Key:**

Remy: Self-Confronting Party  
Pasta Cooking 101: Physical Education class  
Chef Lou: Professor of Pasta Cooking 101

**Summary/Pre-Trial:**

[Remy] contacted Honor Council after lying about the hours he had spent [cooking pasta] for [Pasta Cooking 101]. At the end of each week, [Chef Lou] asks students to report the number of hours spent cooking pasta, and although Remy had done nothing, he reported that he had met the minimum number of hours. Honor Council consented to not send the case to trial on the basis that the goals of trial—accountability, education and restoration—could be met without a trial.

**Remy’s Statement:**

Remy contacted Honor Council to confront himself about a possible Honor Code violation. In his statement, he said that at the end of the first week of class, Chef Lou asked students to report how many hours they had spent cooking pasta for Pasta Cooking 101. Although he had not cooked pasta at all, Remy reported having completed a certain number of hours, in order to not lose credit for the quarter and because he did not respect the PE requirement. However, upon learning that the Honor Code treats PE courses as it does any other class, he decided to contact Honor Council. In his statement Remy admitted that his resentment for the PE requirement was no excuse for lying. He also noted that he had not yet contacted Chef Lou.

**Council Deliberations:**

Council deliberations first focused on the question of whether or not a violation occurred. Discussion began as to whether the Honor Code applies to Physical Education classes. The
weight of the room felt that the Code does apply, considering that the Honor Code is intended to
govern all aspects of life at Haverford. The focus then shifted to whether or not this counted as
an academic or social violation. Many Council members compared the violation to a student
lying about the completion of a homework assignment for the week. One member pointed out
that the violation was in some ways greater, because the self-reporting Physical Education
classes depend greatly on students’ honesty. By this point, there was a general agreement that
Council was suspicious that an academic violation had occurred.

The discussion then shifted to whether or not a trial would be productive in this case.
Attention was directed to certain portions of the Students’ Association Constitutions describing
Honor Council’s rights in deciding whether or not to bring a case to trial. Article VII states,
“[c]ases of suspected academic dishonesty can only be resolved outside of a trial if Honor
Council believes that the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration have already
been addressed...” (Article VII Section 1(a)). Some discussion occurred as to whether or not the
goals of the trial had already been addressed. Members felt that Remy’s statement about learning
that the Honor Code applies to PE classes showed that the goal of education had been met. In
addition, members felt that his decision to self-report showed a large degree of accountability,
and that a meeting with Chef Lou could serve as restoration to the community. One member
brought up the issue of education for the community, since much of Council recognized a
misconception within the community that the Honor Code does not apply to Physical Education
classes. Members responded with the idea of asking Remy to write a letter and still publishing an
abstract, even if the case was not brought to trial, in order to educate the community about the
case.

One Council member suggested that since Council was not certain that all the goals of a
trial had been met, the case should still go to trial. At this point Council was reminded of the
interpretation clause for Judicial Powers, where it is noted that Honor Council has the freedom to
interpret “sections of the code, as well as Article VI and Article VII, that leaves room for
flexibility. It is, for example, Honor Council’s responsibility to decide if a situation warrants the
convening of a trial or if it can be resolved on a less formal basis” (Article VI, section c(i)).

Overall, members felt that bringing the case to trial would not serve to further the goals
of education, restoration, and accountability. Council believed that the trial goals had been for
the most part met, and consented on a “suspicion of violation that would best be resolved outside
of a trial,” on the condition that Remy contact Chef Lou and write a letter to the community. It
was specified that if Chef Lou and Remy were not able to come to resolution on their own, they
could then bring the case back to Honor Council. Chef Lou was also given the option of writing
a letter. Fifteen Council members consented to this decision. One Council member stood outside,
due to a feeling that academic violations should be resolved in a trial unless the trial goals have
already been met.

[Remy]’s Letter to Community:
Haverford Community,

I'm afraid I breached your trust. On the first week of my [Pasta Cooking 101] PE class, I lied about the hours I [cooked pasta]. I hadn't [cooked] at all that week, but I reported [cooking] the required three hours.

I did this to ensure I would get PE credit, obviously, but also because I do not respect the PE requirement at Haverford. I resent it in fact. I don't think I should be required to prove that I am an active and healthy human being for three hours each week for six quarters. I plan to talk to community members to see whether there is a broad desire to change the PE requirement. But I don't want this to be a rant.

Regardless of my feelings towards the PE requirement, I shouldn't have cheated. If I didn't like the system, I should have worked to change it rather than weasel my way out of it. Every student is expected to take PE, and was selfish of me, and unfair toward my peers, to shirk this requirement. In doing so, I disrespected the trust of the community as a whole. I sincerely apologize.

Yours,
[Remy]

[Chef Lou]'s Letter to Community:

For the past few years I have coordinated Haverford's [pasta cooking program] at [Paris], providing students an option to complete their PE requirement in order to graduate. Students typically enroll in a seven-week course and are required to [cook pasta] three hours per week. At the conclusion of each week they report their hours to me via email. On occasion, a student will be unable to complete her/his three hours, and I usually allow them to make up their time over the remaining weeks so that they can successfully finish the requirements of the course.

On [date] learned that one of my [cooks] (a [class year]) approached the Honor Council, admitting that he had reported hours to me that he, in fact, did not [cook]. He then came to my office to inform me of his dishonesty. At the time, he asked whether he could remain in the class. I agreed that he could continue and that he could gradually make up his missed hours. A few days later, however, the student changed his mind and withdrew from the class. My sense is that this underclassman simply did not anticipate this semester's rigorous academic demands and became aware that "something had to give" so that he could meet those demands. His [cooking] obligations became that "something." Please understand, I am not attempting to excuse his behavior; rather I'm just trying to explain what I believe happened.

During my twenty-one years at Haverford, this case regarding an Honor Code violation is one of only two with which I've personally been involved. It has served to confirm my faith in our
college community's Honor Code, a belief which has been repeatedly affirmed in a wide variety of ways during my long tenure at Haverford. Bottom line: the student in question approached the Honor Council on his own volition, highlighting that when we invest trust in a person's character, that individual ultimately will dignify that investment with honest behavior. This case also has made me consider that perhaps I should encourage underclassmen to wait until they are more acclimated before enrolling in such a time-consuming athletic activity. While most of my enrollees really enjoy [cooking] and find it a positive way to reduce stress and to stay healthy, they need to acknowledge that it is also a very time-consuming pursuit. At the very least I will emphasize to all students that with the [travel to Paris] and the time actually spent in the [kitchen], a significant part of their day will be absorbed. They should consider the demands of their academic schedules before enrolling in this course in order to fulfil their PE requirement.

Thank you for asking my opinion.

With all best wishes,

[Chef Lou]

Discussion Questions:

1. Should Honor Code violations in Physical Education courses be treated identically to violations in more traditional academic courses?
2. Should all academic violations be resolved in trial? When is it appropriate for a case to be resolved outside of a trial?
3. How much flexibility should Honor Council have in interpreting the Constitution?