Abstract discussion will be held the week of November 30, 2015.

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Fall 2015

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 did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronting party: Professor Willy Wonka
Confronted party: Violet Beauregarde
Department: Chocolatiering
Citation format used by department: Chocolatiers’ Citation Convention (CCC) format

Summary/Pre-Trial:
[Violet], a Bryn Mawr senior majoring in [Chocolatiering] at Haverford, contacted Honor Council after being confronted by Professor [Wonka] regarding suspected plagiarism on her thesis draft. Professor Wonka became suspicious that Violet had plagiarized when he noticed an inconsistency between professional sounding and poorly written material. In addition to that, Professor Wonka noticed that the well written parts of the paper did not seem in line with his impression of Violet’s understanding of the topic. Indeed, Professor Wonka found that numerous portions of Violet’s paper could be found verbatim or nearly verbatim in published works. Honor Council consented to a suspicion of a violation and sent this case to an academic trial. The jury found Violet in violation of the Honor Code. During the trial, Violet attributed the violation to a lack of understanding of proper citation and to her belief that since the assignment was only a draft, she could fix any mistakes she made before turning in the final version. Resolutions were aimed at educating Violet on academic integrity and restoring the breach of trust between Violet and Professor Wonka, as well as between Violet and the Bi-Co community.

Fact Finding:
Violet began by explaining why she believed the violation to have occurred. She suspected that the words taken from published papers had gotten mixed up with her own words during the writing process, and as a result, she must have forgotten to cite some of these passages. She also added that she knew that this draft was not going to be graded and that she didn’t realize it would be “criticized.” She asserted that she tried her best but admitted that she “messes up.” In Professor Wonka’s statement to the jury, he expressed that some paragraphs in Violet’s paper were completely taken verbatim from published works. He noted that Violet included a lot of citations but failed to use quotation marks when needed.

A juror asked Professor Wonka if Violet’s draft would have been acceptable if she had properly quoted and cited information. Professor Wonka explained that in the field, it isn’t typical that one repeats the words of a researcher, but if one decides to do that, it is a requirement that one use quotations and cite those words. He said that if Violet had submitted the paper with proper citations and quotations, he would have given her different feedback. The feedback would not have been positive, but it would not have been an issue of plagiarism.

A juror then asked Violet about her education on proper citation. Violet said she assumed that she was provided a formal education on proper citation in her ESems1 at Bryn Mawr freshman year, but added that that was four years ago. She did say though that she was taught how to properly use CCC citation format, the format used by the Chocolatiering department, and had never had a problem with improper use of CCC citations until now. She said that she was used to using CCC format, which was why she did not think of using direct quotes. Jurors and Professor Wonka went on to point out that quotations are in fact required by CCC when quoting a source directly. Violet claimed not to have ever known this and mentioned that she thought plagiarism was just copy and pasting verbatim.

Violet went on to admit that she wrote the paper very roughly in order to hand it in on time, which she thought would be okay since it wasn’t going to receive a grade. She explained that she was planning to go through everything after she got the draft back. A juror asked Violet whether she realized that there were unquoted passages taken verbatim from other sources in her paper when she turned it in. Violet responded that she knew that her paper was “really rough.” She said that she did not think she had such verbatim passages in her paper, but that there were parts of her paper that she didn’t truly understand. She added that her main priority was handing it in on time.

Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

All jurors were in agreement that Violet had plagiarized and thus violated the Honor Code. One juror pointed out that according to the Honor Code, students are responsible for knowing how to cite properly. The jury consented on the following statement of violation.

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1 ESems (Emily Balch Seminars) are writing intensive seminars taken by all Bryn Mawr freshmen.
[Violet] violated the Honor Code by extensively plagiarizing throughout the first draft submission of her thesis. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison absent)

Circumstantial Portion:

Violet did not have any circumstantial statement that she wanted to add to the information she had provided during Fact Finding, so the jury began to ask her questions. One juror asked her to clarify what she meant during Fact Finding when she repeatedly referred to her draft as “messy.” She responded that she knew that she had not cited everything properly and that she knew the paper was of poor quality. She also said that at the time of submitting the draft, she did not think she was committing a violation of the Code because the paper was an ungraded draft, and she did not think she was misrepresenting others’ work as her own.

She also clarified that she had been thoroughly taught how to use CCC format citations in her freshman and sophomore Chocolatiering courses. Violet emphasized that although she was less confident in her knowledge on the topic she hadn’t significantly changed her writing style between previous papers she had written for Chocolatiering and this draft and had never been confronted by a professor before regarding citations. A juror then asked Violet whether there were any circumstances going on in her life at the time that she was writing the paper that may have influenced her to violate the Code. She responded that she had been having issues with her family and her boyfriend at the time, but she emphasized that she did not want to make excuses for her actions and that she wanted to take ownership of what she did. Another juror then asked Violet what it would mean to her to be restored to the Haverford community. She began by answering that she didn’t think she had to restore herself. She then talked about how important Haverford was to her, evident in her decision to major at Haverford. She said that she would hope that Haverford would forgive her and that she believed that everyone deserved a second chance.

At this point, the trial chair brought up a suggested resolution that Professor Wonka had proposed via email. Professor Wonka had suggested the possibility that Violet be given the opportunity to rewrite her thesis draft for at least some, but not all, credit. Violet was eager to do this and said that anything was better than a zero. She also said that she felt this could be a good way to earn back Professor Wonka’s trust. She added that she was truly interested in the topic she had chosen, and that she would like to be able to prove that she could complete this assignment.

The trial chair then asked Violet for any suggested resolutions that she had in mind. Violet said that she would do anything to restore her trust with Professor Wonka. After listening to further suggested resolutions proposed by the jury, Violet expressed interest in rewriting her thesis draft for some credit, taking the Academic Integrity Tutorial, reading about plagiarism, and speaking with Professor Wonka to restore trust.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:
The jury began by discussing the possibility of recommending that Violet be given the opportunity to rewrite her thesis draft for some credit. Jurors felt that since the violation had occurred on a rough draft, allowing her to rewrite it for some credit would be reasonable. They decided, however, that Violet should only be granted this opportunity under the condition that she first demonstrate to Professor Wonka a significant understanding of plagiarism and an acknowledgment of the severity of her actions. The jury decided on several resolutions to address Violet’s apparent need for education regarding academic integrity. Nevertheless, some jurors expressed that her claimed lack of education on how to cite properly was hard to find credible, since students learn how to use quotation marks as far back as middle or high school.

Since the jury felt that Violet could not be fully restored to the Bi-Co community without first completing all of the previously discussed resolutions, they felt that Violet should not be allowed to graduate until the completion of all mandatory resolutions. The jury also discussed the fact that separation is often required for cases of plagiarism, but they felt that separating Violet in the middle of the semester would be punitive, and since she was a second semester senior, the option of separating her for a subsequent semester did not exist.

The jury consented on the following tentative resolutions.

1. [Violet] will read the Haverford Honor Code, take the Haverford Academic Integrity Tutorial, read Professor Maud McInerney’s essay “Plagiarism and How to Avoid It,” and sign the Haverford Honor Pledge before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
2. After completing the above resolution, [Violet] will write a reflection on how her paper was an act of academic dishonesty and the importance of academic integrity to be submitted to Professor [Wonka] before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
3. The jury recommends that [Violet] meet with Professor [Wonka] to discuss the breach of trust that occurred between them and ways to restore that trust. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
4. If Professor [Wonka] feels that [Violet] demonstrates a significant understanding of plagiarism and an acknowledgement of the severity of her actions through her reflection process (written reflection and discussion with Professor [Wonka]), the jury recommends that [Violet] be given the option to rewrite her paper on the same or different topic at the discretion of [Violet] and Professor [Wonka]. At the discretion of Professor [Wonka], the jury recommends that [Violet] receive a maximum of half of the numerical grade on the 4.0 scale that she would have originally received if the paper were her original submission. (For an example, a 4.0 would translate into a maximum of a 2.0). In order for her to receive credit, the jury recommends that this will be completed by the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
5. [Violet] will meet with the Bryn Mawr Academic Support and Learning Resources
Specialist to discuss time management and work habits before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

6. [Violet] will go the Haverford or Bryn Mawr Writing Center to discuss approaches to writing a research paper, citation format, and plagiarism avoidance before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

7. [Violet] will write a letter to the Bi-Co Community to be released with this abstract to restore her breach of trust with the Bi-Co community before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

8. The jury recommends that the Bryn Honor Board inform the Bryn Mawr community of the release of this abstract. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

9. The jury recommends that [Violet] not be allowed to graduate from Bryn Mawr College until the completion of all mandatory resolutions. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

10. The jury recommends that this incident be considered a disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of reporting to institutions of higher learning. (8 consent, 1 stands outside, 1 stands outside in absentia)

11. The jury recommends that Honor Council continue to investigate ways for Haverford plagiarism education to be extended to Bryn Mawr students enrolled in Haverford classes. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Resolutions as a whole: 9 consent, 1 stands outside in absentia

Finalizing Resolutions:
Professor Wonka was not in attendance but emailed his thoughts on the tentative resolutions to the trial chair. Violet did not have any criticism to offer on the tentative resolutions. The trial chair brought up that Professor Wonka had pointed out that the resolutions did not include a recommendation for what grade Violet should receive on her thesis in the event that she did not rewrite it. Upon consideration, the jury concluded should this happen, Violet should receive a zero. The jury consented on the following final resolutions.

1. [Violet] will read the Haverford Honor Code, take the Haverford Academic Integrity Tutorial, read Professor Maud McInerney’s essay “Plagiarism and How to Avoid It,” and sign the Haverford Honor Pledge before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

2. After completing the above resolution, [Violet] will write a reflection on how her paper was an act of academic dishonesty and the importance of academic integrity to be submitted to Professor [Wonka] before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

3. [Violet] will meet with Professor [Wonka] to discuss the breach of trust that occurred
between them and ways to restore that trust, provided that Professor [Wonka] is willing. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

4. If Professor [Wonka] feels that [Violet] demonstrates a significant understanding of plagiarism and an acknowledgement of the severity of her actions through her reflection process (written reflection and discussion with Professor [Wonka]), the jury recommends that [Violet] be given the option to rewrite her paper on the same or different topic at the discretion of [Violet] and Professor [Wonka]. At the discretion of Professor [Wonka], the jury recommends that [Violet] receive a maximum of half of the numerical grade on the 4.0 scale that she would have originally received if the paper were her original submission. (For an example, a 4.0 would translate into a maximum of a 2.0). In order for her to receive credit, the jury recommends that this will be completed by the end of the [current] semester.

   If the thesis is not rewritten, the jury recommends that [Violet] receive a 0.0 on her thesis.

   (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

5. [Violet] will meet with the Bryn Mawr Academic Support and Learning Resources Specialist to discuss time management and work habits before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

6. [Violet] will go the Haverford or Bryn Mawr Writing Center to discuss approaches to writing a research paper, citation format, and plagiarism avoidance before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

7. [Violet] will write a letter to the Bi-Co Community to be released with this abstract to restore her breach of trust with the Bi-Co community before the end of the [current] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

8. The jury recommends that the Bryn Honor Board inform the Bryn Mawr community of the release of this abstract. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

9. The jury recommends that [Violet] not be allowed to graduate from Bryn Mawr College until the completion of all mandatory resolutions [1, 2, 3 (with agreement of Professor [Wonka]) 5, 6, 7]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

10. The jury recommends that this incident be considered a disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of reporting to institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

11. The jury recommends that Honor Council continue to investigate ways for Haverford plagiarism education to be extended to Bryn Mawr students enrolled in Haverford classes. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports)

Resolutions as a whole: 9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison supports
Post-Trial:
The parties did not appeal the resolutions.

Violet’s Letter to the Community:
Dear Haverford Community,

This was one of the most stressful and mentally draining processes I have ever done. It really made me question my role as a student and my role as an honorable person. I kept asking myself, how could I have been so irresponsible? I have never done this before, why me? Upon answering these questions, I realized I had to fix myself. I had a lot of outside factors influencing me such as family and friends, and I lost control of balancing my academic and social life. I realized I needed to step back and reevaluate myself.

After going through all of the final resolutions, I now have a greater understand of plagiarism and the different forms of it. So in a way, it is never too late to brush up on your skills of integrity in writing. Whether it is good writing or bad writing, it is your own work. If there is one thing I have learned from this experience, it is to make sure you are proud of what you’re handing in. That is, make sure the work you’re handing in, whether it is an ungraded rough draft or an important presentation, is completely written in your own words. I have apologized to my professor and have had the opportunity to re-write my paper. [Professor Wonka] has given me a second chance which I am forever grateful for. So I hope you all can give me a second chance too. This was truly a restorative process and I hope everyone can keep being true to yourself. I am sincerely sorry for my dishonesty and hope I can be accepted back into the community.

Discussion Questions:
1. Should the fact that the assignment on which Violet plagiarized was a draft have contributed to the jury’s resolutions? If so, how?
2. Should Violet have been allowed the opportunity to rewrite her thesis draft?
3. Violet seemed to not remember very well the plagiarism education that she received as a freshman. Should Haverford and Bryn Mawr require students to receive more regular plagiarism education throughout their four years in college, or should students be expected to take ownership of maintaining their knowledge of what constitutes academic disintegrity?
4. Are there situations in which separation/the temporary withholding of graduation of a second semester senior might be beneficial? Do you think this may have been beneficial in this case?