Abstract discussion will be held on Wednesday, March 22nd at 5:30pm in the Faculty Dining Room.

Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2017

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 consented to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronted Party: Arthur Dent
Confronting Party: Professor Ford Prefect
Other student in class: Marvin
Course: Exploring The Galaxy 105

This case was reviewed by Honor Council, though ultimately dropped instead of being sent to trial, as Council felt that the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration had already been met.

In his statement to Honor Council, Arthur expressed that when he arrived for his Star Identification quiz for Exploring the Galaxy 105 (one of several throughout the semester) he was very stressed about the amount of schoolwork he was dealing with that week; when he realized he didn’t know one of the stars he was supposed to identify, he glanced over at his classmate Marvin’s quiz and copied his answer. Later that day, he and Marvin received an email from Professor Prefect, asking about their identical answers to the question. Upon receipt of this email, Arthur responded promptly, apologizing and explaining his circumstances, while taking responsibility for his actions and expressing a willingness to make up for them. He also emailed Marvin to apologize and explain what had happened. Professor Prefect, in his statement to Honor Council, made it clear that he felt that he and Arthur’s relationship was not damaged because of the incident, citing Arthur’s willingness to take accountability and sincere apology as restorative acts, and the loss of the quiz grade as sufficient academic consequence.

For these reasons, as well as the small scale of the violation, (this quiz was representative of a fraction of a percent of the student’s final grade) Honor Council felt that the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration had been met by Arthur’s actions and his meeting with
the professor. They therefore felt a trial might be redundant and consented to drop the case.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Should cases of academic dishonesty always go to a trial? Is Honor Council sufficiently representative of the Haverford community as a whole to make this type of decision?
2. How important are professors’ feelings when determining whether trial goals have been met?
3. Do you think the scale of a violation affected Honor Council’s decision of whether to send this case to a trial? Should this matter?
4. Should the circumstances of a violation be taken into account when deciding whether a case should be sent to trial? For example, should the fact that Arthur was very stressed when taking the exam have been a part of Honor Council’s consideration of whether to hold a trial or not?