Abstract discussion will be held on Wednesday, February 17th at 7 PM in the MCC (Stokes 106).

**Jedi:**

**An Honor Council Academic Trial**

**Released Spring 2016**

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:**

Confronting Party: Professor Obi-Wan  
Confronted Party: Anakin Skywalker  
Class: Jedi Training 200

**Summary/Pre-Trial:**  
[Anakin Skywalker] contacted Honor Council after being confronted by Professor [Obi-Wan] concerning plagiarized material in his take-home exam for [Jedi Training 200]. [Anakin] studied from an exam he had been given from another student who had taken the same course the previous year, something which Professor Obi-Wan allowed. With little time left to complete the exam, [Anakin] made use of the exam he had been given and copied 2 verbatim answers from it during the open-book and closed-book sections of his exam. During the trial, it came to light that there were various circumstances, including deaths in the family, mental and physical medical troubles, and heavy time pressure that led to the violation. The jury ultimately focused on fostering Anakin’s restoration to the Haverford Community given his imminent graduation.

**Fact Finding:**

Anakin began by stating that when he was approached by Obi-Wan concerning a violation on the midterm exam, he was confused and had no idea on what grounds he had cheated. When Obi-Wan explained that the answers to two of his questions on the exam had come from a student’s test the year before, Anakin went back to see how the violation occurred. Due to a variety of circumstances, including him being diagnosed with a medical condition, ongoing insomnia and a relative being in the hospital, Anakin had very little time to take his exam when he got back from visiting his relative the night the test was due. He returned with only 90 minutes to complete the 2 hour exam. Anakin explained he did very well on the early...
parts of the test but he felt himself struggling more as the exam went on. Eventually, he felt the need to use his notes. These notes included his friend’s exam from the previous year and a blank exam that had been provided by the professor as a study tool. Anakin said that in utilizing these notes he did copy some text directly from his friend’s previous test but added to those answers. Anakin said this was certainly a violation of the Honor Code and that he wished to be held accountable and restored to the Haverford Community.

Obi-Wan then recounted the series of events from his perspective. He echoed what Anakin had said. Obi-Wan first noticed that there was a potential violation when he saw a comment and grade already present for a problem in Anakin’s exam, which was a Word document (it was the grades/comments for Anakin’s friend the previous year). When Obi-Wan first confronted Anakin, Anakin seemed confused. However, a while later, Anakin asked to meet again. Obi-Wan then said Anakin was extremely mature and apologetic about the situation. Obi-Wan decided to give Anakin a 0.0 on the exam and to ask him to contact Honor Council.

The jury began asking questions. Obi-Wan did not feel that Anakin asking his friend for his answers to the exam was itself a violation of the Honor Code. However, Anakin had only changed small parts of those answers. Anakin kept much of his friend’s answer structure and wording the same. Apparently Anakin was unaware that Obi Wan’s Word document comments were on his friend’s exam. It was reiterated that half of the test was open note and half was closed and that Anakin had made use of this exam by copying verbatim on one question in each section. His actions would have constituted plagiarism in the eyes of the professor on both the open section and the closed section of the exam.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**

The jury felt that a violation had occurred. One juror asked if it would be a violation even if he hadn’t used his notes on the closed note portion of the exam. The rest of the jury said that it would still have been a violation since it constituted flagrant plagiarism.

The rest of the discussion focused on the wording of the statement of violation. The jury wanted to be clear that there were two violations: a failure to follow exam instructions and plagiarism. There was also some debate on whether to separate out the two portions of the exam that were violated. The closed-book portion contained both plagiarism and a violation of exam instructions, whereas the open-book represented only plagiarism. Following these deliberations, the jury came to this statement of violation:

> [Anakin] violated the Honor Code by failing to follow exam instructions through using a disallowed source and by representing another’s work as his own. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)

**Circumstantial Portion:**

Anakin began by saying he recognized that he could have asked for an extension or help
prior to the violation and hoped people would realize they can always ask others for help. He wanted resolutions that included writing letters to Obi-Wan and the Haverford community. His main goal with the trial was to make things right and regain the respect of the community. Anakin reiterated much of what he said in fact-finding with regards to circumstances. He had been diagnosed with a medical condition two weeks prior to the exam and had spent much of his time at the hospital dealing with this. Further, Anakin had recently been prescribed antidepressants and was dealing with insomnia. Anakin had also had 6 deaths in the family that year alone, with one relative being in the hospital during the period he was to be taking the exam.

The jury then began to ask questions. One juror asked whether his relative’s illness had prevented him from studying, and if that had contributed to the violation. He said that while it had prevented him from preparing for the test, he had attended all classes, participated in class, and completed all readings. He was therefore familiar with the material and was relatively well prepared for the test.

Another juror asked what else Anakin was doing to support his mental health. Anakin responded that he had a phone number to make an appointment with a psychologist and that he would continue to adjust his medications as his doctor saw fit. He realizes the social stigma that can be associated with needing psychological help, but thinks that it is not a bad thing to seek this help. Anakin said that his main goal was to make this right and to restore himself to the Haverford community.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:**

After Anakin left, the trial chair went over the trial goals that the jury should consider when crafting resolutions. These include holding Anakin accountable, restoring him to the Haverford Community, restoring his relationship with Obi-Wan, and educating him and the community. Obi-Wan had not submitted any proposed resolutions, but had given Anakin a 0.0 on the exam.

The jury began by discussing accountability. They felt that Obi-Wan had already started to address this. They then decided to discuss what grade change they would recommend had Obi-Wan not taken the matter into his own hands. They felt that a 0.0 on the exam was appropriate as the circumstances were such that it felt punitive to recommend that he fail the class, and the violation seemed too great to recommend he fail only the questions he plagiarized.

One juror pointed out that when crafting resolutions the jury should keep in mind the fact that Anakin would be graduating at the end of the semester. At this point, the jury moved on to discuss restoration and education. The jury agreed with Anakin’s suggestion that he write letters to Obi-Wan and the community. One juror suggested that a face to face meeting might be more productive. However, since Anakin had said he wanted to write a letter, and and there had already had productive confrontations, the jury decided have him write one. Finally, the jury discussed whether or not this trial should be considered a disciplinary proceeding in reporting to institutions of higher learning. The jury felt this trial had not been disciplinary in nature, while
Anakin’s violation of the Honor Code was serious, the jury felt the circumstances greatly mitigated it and it did not represent Anakin’s overall attitude toward academic integrity. Further, the jury felt the resolutions were not disciplinary, with the possible exception being the resolution supporting a grade change that had already happened. In light of this, the jury decided they did not want to report this trial to graduate schools. Following these deliberations, the jury came to the following tentative resolutions:

1. The jury supports [Obi-Wan’s] decision in giving [Anakin] a 0.0 on the midterm exam. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)
2. The jury supports [Anakin] in utilizing external resources to promote his mental wellbeing going forward. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)
3. Anakin will write a letter to [Obi-Wan] for the purposes of continued restoration. This letter will be completed prior to graduation. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)
4. [Anakin] will write a letter to the community reflecting on his experiences and sharing the insight he has gained. This letter will be completed prior to graduation. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)
5. Honor Council will create a guide for the community regarding resources available, academic and otherwise, for students in moments of stress or crisis. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)
6. The jury recommends this process not be considered a disciplinary proceeding for the purposes of reporting to institutions of higher learning. (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)

Resolutions as a whole (10 jurors consent, 0 stand outside)

Finalizing Resolutions:

One juror was not present for this meeting. Anakin began by saying that he had looked over the resolutions and was generally in agreement. He was unsure what the resolution regarding institutions of higher learning was about. The Chair clarified that the Dean of the College is sometimes asked on graduate school applications whether an applicant has been involved in a disciplinary proceeding and the resolution, and this was only a recommendation that they mark “yes” or “no.” Anakin said that writing his letters was his number one priority coming out of this trial, and that he would be able to get it done quickly. He was asked if there was anything else he was hoping to get out of the trial. He responded that he liked how the trial had gone, and was appreciative of the jury’s understanding throughout the process.

At this point Anakin left and the jury turned to discussing resolutions. Given that every juror was comfortable with the current resolutions as stood, they made no changes and consented to the following resolutions:

1. The jury supports [Obi-Wan]’s decision in giving [Anakin] a 0.0 on the midterm exam. (9
jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

2. The jury supports [Anakin] in utilizing external resources to promote his mental wellbeing going forward. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

3. [Anakin] will write a letter to [Obi-Wan] for the purposes of continued restoration. This letter will be completed prior to graduation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

4. [Anakin] will write a letter to the community reflecting on his experiences and sharing the insight he has gained. This letter will be completed prior to graduation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

5. Honor Council will create a guide for the community regarding resources available, academic and otherwise, for students in moments of stress or crisis. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

6. The jury recommends this process not be considered a disciplinary proceeding for the purposes of reporting to institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Resolutions as a whole. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Post-Trial:
The trial was not appealed.

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

Coming to Haverford I never thought that one day I would break the Honor Code. I chose to go to Haverford because I believed, and still believe, that the trust between students and professors at this school is truly one of a kind. When I took the actions that ultimately led to my confrontation I was in a state mentally and physically that I needed help. The oldest of 4 siblings I was always taught to internalize my problems to hide weakness. Throughout High School this process of leading by example but never talking to anybody about my mental problems worked. I was a part of honor council, an athlete and a good student. My actions had a profound effect on my siblings, giving them the confidence to succeed as well.

Arriving at Haverford I took the same mentality as High School, never talking about my battles with depression, insomnia, and mood swings. At first I could keep my actions in check. I studied hard and with the support of my family did well. Unfortunately over the past year the fabric of my family began to tear. In a span of 10 months our family lost 6 relatives. Mentally and physically these deaths wore me down. Traveling back and forth between school and home while juggling sports and academics the stress became unbearable. My depression increased to a point where it was hard to get out of bed. Instead of getting help I continued to push through.
In the days leading up to the violation I was diagnosed with a rare blood disease, and my aunt, who was a second mother to me, went on life support after a failed hip surgery. I could not take it anymore. I gave up on myself and the hope that everything would be ok. I spent most of the week in the hospital completely forgetting I needed to turn in an exam by weeks end. Rather than get help from my dean or professor I pushed through. In the closing minutes I took an act of desperation. I used a disallowed source, copying a previous student’s work as my own. Rather than getting help I believed I could illegally make my own break.

A week after the violation my aunt passed and I sank to a point so low that I finally reached out for help. I was the best decision of my life. I began medication for my blood disease and my depression. When I was confronted by my professor I had completely forgotten about my previous actions. I approached Honor Council and I would like to say how impressed I was with their organization, openness, and understanding. The trial went about carefully and the decision that was made reflected the severity of the violation.

Moving forward I regret my decision to violate the Honor Code. I made a poor decision at a low point in my life. I am grateful that the professors and honor council have given me a second chance. I know that life can be stressful but when you need help you need to take action. As we all know there is a social stigma against the use of antidepressant medication but if there is a chemical imbalance in your brain you should take action. After spending my life internalizing my problems I finally got help and I wish I had done it sooner. The professors, deans and mental health programs here at Haverford are meant to help you. Rather than put your problems off, take action before you make a decision you regret.

Discussion Questions:
1. What could Anakin have realistically done once he realized he was running out of time on his test?
2. What can the Haverford community do to ensure that those in need of mental health support can access it, especially if they perceive a stigma surrounding issues of mental health?
3. Should there be a difference in resolutions if a party admits to their violation before being confronted by a professor?
4. Do you agree with the jury that this process wasn’t disciplinary in nature? Given that the violation of the Honor Code was plagiarism, should the jury have recommended it be disclosed to graduate schools?