Abstract discussion will be held on Wed 4/5 at 6.30pm in the DC Faculty Dining Room.

Neutral Milk Hotel:
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 did not consent to the release of the abstract. The confronted party did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Jeff Mangum: Confronted Party
Professor Frank: Confronting Party
Aviation: Department
Aeroplanes 400: Trans-Oceanic Navigation

Summary:
This trial involved unintentional plagiarism on a draft of a thesis. The violation resulted mainly from a lack of knowledge about citation standards and paraphrasing. Because of this, and the confronted party’s forthcoming and honest participation, the resolutions focused mainly on education for the confronted party and on promoting similar education for the community.

**Because of the loss of the trial chair’s report for this trial, this abstract was written based on the memories of the abstract writers and other members of the jury**

Pre-Trial:
In his statement, Jeff admitted that he had modeled his paper too closely on another author’s paper on a similar topic. Jeff explained that he hadn’t been trying to fool Professor Frank, especially because the plagiarized work was one that they both had studied intensively together throughout the thesis process. Professor Frank both corroborated the facts of Jeff’s statement and expressed that he believed that Jeff had not intended to “pull the wool over his eyes.” Because the parties seemed to have their trust in each other mostly restored already, there was some discussion within Honor Council whether to send the case to trial at all. Ultimately, they decided that there could be valuable resolutions focusing on educating Jeff on plagiarism
and academic standards, and consented to send the case to an academic trial.

Fact Finding:

The jury began by asking Jeff what he thought had happened, and what had gone wrong. He admitted that he had made a mistake in his citation format, and had realized that once he had met with his professor. He expressed that he definitely had not meant to deceive his professor, and that he would not have been able to, as they had spent extensive time discussing the paper, as it was the main work he was using for his thesis. He mentioned that he still did not have a full understanding of the differences between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The jury felt that this was anomalous, but would decide what the truth was after talking to the professor.

Professor Frank expressed that he completely believed Jeff that the violation had been unintentional, for many of the reasons above. Furthermore, he mentioned that he did not feel that his relationship with Jeff had been damaged, as they had been able to meet in a productive fashion to talk about the assignment, and Jeff had actually rewritten the entire work in order to correct the incorrect or missing citations. The one aspect of the case he remained concerned about was the violation of the community’s trust, especially the academic community. He mentioned that some of his departmental colleagues felt much more strongly that Jeff’s actions had constituted a much more serious breach of the Honor Code. He felt that a grade change would be sufficient academic accountability in the case of Jeff’s violations

Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

The jury was fairly unified in the opinion that while they did not believe the violation was a significant or particularly egregious one, they did feel that a violation of the code had occurred. There was a brief discussion of whether unintentionally violating the code was a violation of the spirit of the code or not, but eventually it was decided that this should not affect the statement, although one juror stood outside in disagreement. With this in mind, the jury consented to the following statement of violation:


[Jeff] violated the Honor Code by including work that wasn’t his own in his paper without proper citation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

Circumstantial Portion:

During this meeting, the jury asked Jeff more about what the circumstances were that resulted in him being insufficiently educated in the practices of the honor code. He explained that since his major was not one that had extensive writing assignments, he had not had many opportunities to interact with the code in practice, outside of the theoretical instruction he had received in International Student Orientation, his writing seminar, and through customs. He also noted that his writing seminar did not involve many assignments where citations were required, and because of this, he had not had an opportunity to practice proper paraphrasing techniques
and still had only a loose understanding of when quotes needed to be used compared to when paraphrasing was appropriate. Additionally, because of the format of the thesis (an expansion of a previously written paper on the subject), the mis-quoting and mis-paraphrasing had been more extensive.

In the subsequent meeting, Professor Frank reiterated that he believed that Jeff’s mistake had been egregious, but unintentional, and believed him that he had not received sufficient instruction on avoiding plagiarism, especially since the paper he plagiarized was one they had worked with extensively together and discussed in depth throughout the semester. He also expressed that he trusted the jury would provide balanced resolutions.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:

The jury was surprised at the low level of education that Jeff had received on proper paraphrasing techniques. Considering the fact that Jeff had taken a very small variety of classes that had offered him little education on plagiarism, the jurors felt that it would be most appropriate to focus on resolutions addressing education, as Jeff’s relationship with his professor seemed intact, and the problem of his lack of knowledge seemed to be more of a problem with the community’s failings than his own. Nonetheless, the jury still felt like some restoration with the community was needed, and felt that a letter to the community would be an appropriate way to address this. In regards to a grade change, the jury discussed a few options. They felt that a grade of zero would be excessively punitive, especially considering the fact that Jeff had re-written the assignment in accordance to the code. However, they also felt that giving him full credit for the rewrite would be unfair to other students in the class, who did not get the chance to rewrite the assignment. With these in mind, the jury consented for Jeff to receive half of the credit he would have received for the rewritten assignment.

With these points in mind, the jury consented to the following resolutions:

1. The jury recommends that [Jeff] receives 50% of the grade he earned on the revised draft of the assignments. (10 jurors consent)
2. [Jeff] will write a letter to the community to be included in the abstract. He will write this before [date]. (10 jurors consent)
3. [Jeff] will read Maud McInerney’s essay “Plagiarism and How To Avoid It”. (10 jurors consent)
4. After completion of Resolution 3, [Jeff] will meet with a Writing Center tutor to discuss any questions he has about academic integrity. He will do this before [date]. (10 jurors consent)
5. [Jeff] will work with the International Students Services Office to discuss how to better educate international students on Haverford’s standards of citation. (10 jurors consent)

Resolutions as a whole: (10 jurors consent)
The jury consented on the following statement about reporting to graduate schools with virtually unanimous agreement:

*Due to the unintentional nature of the violation, and [Jeff’s] lack of education on citation standards, the jury recommends that this not be considered a disciplinary hearing. (10 jurors consent)*

**Finalizing Resolutions:**

Two jurors were unable to attend the finalizing portion. Jeff consented to run the meeting with eight jurors. Jeff stated that he thought the resolutions were reasonable, and especially appreciated the one regarding international students. Jeff then asked for an explanation of the grade-change resolution, and the jury explained that they felt like a zero would not take into account an appreciation for his prompt correction of his mistake, but giving full credit on a plagiarized assignment would have been inappropriate. After hearing this, Jeff said that it seemed fair. Once Jeff left, the jury didn’t feel any changes needed to be made to the resolutions, and consented to the following:

1. *The jury recommends that [Jeff] receive 50% of the grade he earned on the revised draft of the assignments.* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
2. *[Jeff] will write a letter to the community to be included in the abstract. He will write this before the end of the [semester].* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
3. *[Jeff] will read Maud McInerney’s essay “Plagiarism and How To Avoid It”.* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
4. *After the completion of Resolution 3, [Jeff] will meet with a Writing Center tutor to discuss any questions he has about academic integrity. He will do this before [date].* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
5. *[Jeff] will work with the International Students Services Office to discuss how to better educate international students on Haverford’s standards of citation.* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Resolutions as a whole: (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Statement on reporting: *Due to the unintentional nature of the violation and [Jeff’s] lack of education on citation standards, the jury recommends that this not be considered a disciplinary hearing.* (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

**Post-Trial:**
The resolutions were not appealed.
Discussion Questions:

1. Should juries be able to require confronted parties to work with resources outside of Honor Council (e.g. the Writing Center, OAR, ISSO)?
2. What more can be done to ensure that all students, especially those in non writing-intensive majors, be sufficiently educated on the Honor Code?
3. In what circumstances should Honor Council drop cases? Should Honor Council be able to craft resolutions for dropped cases?
4. How should someone’s prior experience with plagiarism education impact the jury’s understanding of a violation? Is a student’s status as an international student relevant to this?
5. Should incoming international students receive specific education about plagiarism? How can plagiarism education be improved for students in general?