Abstract discussion will be held on DATE at TIME in LOCATION. Community Forum will be held on DATE at TIME in LOCATION.

Trees

An Honor Council Academic Trial

Released SEMESTER

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 Elm
Confronted Party: Magnolia Willow
Course: Arboretum 352

Summary/Pre-Trial:
Professor Elm contacted Honor Council in the [redacted] semester about a case of suspected plagiarism. Council reviewed statements and consented to send the case to an academic trial. Due to Honor Council’s caseload at the time, the trial was not run until the start of the [next] semester.

Fact Finding:
The meeting began with Magnolia, a Bryn Mawr student, and Professor Elm each giving an account of what happened from their perspective. Professor Elm described the assignment—an annotated [leaf] that would summarize research that students intended to use for their final [branch]. She noted that they spent a great deal of time discussing the assignment in class and that students were also expected to meet with her at some point during the process of developing the [leaf]. Professor Elm said that because she taught Magnolia in a couple of courses, she had become familiar with Magnolia’s writing style and, through her own work in academia, is familiar with the scholarly norms for summarizing texts like the ones Magnolia was working with. Thus, she became suspicious fairly quickly of the language and style with which Magnolia was summarizing articles for her [leaf]. She began googling phrases and found significant amounts of plagiarism (about \(\frac{2}{3}\) of the entire [leaf]) much of which was pulled word-for-word from abstracts and press summaries of [branches], and some of which had a few words changed.
Magnolia noted that she had been dealing with some family difficulties during the time she was completing the assignment, causing her to travel home often. She also had several other assignments due at the time, which led to her not allocating enough time to complete the assignment for Professor Elm’s course. Magnolia described searching on TriPod for articles and taking notes as she went, with the intention of going back and paraphrasing the summaries later on. She did not believe upon turning in the assignment that her work was plagiarized, but realized after being confronted by Professor Elm that it was.

Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

The jury spent a few minutes reviewing Magnolia’s assignment with Professor Elm’s annotations highlighting the plagiarised portions. The jury unanimously felt that a violation of the Honor Code had occurred. They spent some time discussing whether Magnolia had read any of the articles at all, and decided to ask about this as well as her relationship to campus resources during the Circumstantial meeting. The jury consented to the following statement of violation:

*Magnolia violated the Honor Code by plagiarizing significant portions of her [leaf] (10 jurors consent, bi-co liaison approves).*

Circumstantial Portion:

The jury met with Magnolia and discussed the circumstances surrounding the violation. Magnolia described feeling very intimidated by Professor Elm throughout the semester. She noted that Professor Elm’s policy on extensions was also quite strict, so she did not feel comfortable asking for an extension despite not feeling like she was in a place to complete the assignment. She noted that she has a good relationship with her dean and in the past has used him and the counseling office at Bryn Mawr when things had been particularly stressful. However, it didn’t occur to her to reach out to those offices when she was working on this assignment. Since the incident Magnolia noted being more cautious, checking her work for plagiarism by googling sections of it and asking friends to read assignments over before turning them in.

As far as her relationship with Professor Elm, Magnolia said that she had not had much of a relationship with her prior to the incident and didn’t feel that there was much to rebuild. She noted that she had avoided taking Professor Elm’s classes this semester and likely would continue to avoid them in the future, but that this was more of a product of her experience in her classes than the violation.

When discussing potential violations, Magnolia noted that she would prefer to receive some credit for the course as it is a requirement for her major and a course that she put a lot of effort into. She noted that after this incident, she worked hard on her final [branch] and enjoyed writing it.
**Jury Deliberations:**

Magnolia left and the jury began to deliberate. They began by brainstorming some educational resolutions that would help Magnolia better understand how to avoid plagiarism and manage her time. The jury all felt that working regularly with someone at the Writing Center who is trained in citation and good writing practices would be useful. They also felt monthly check-ins with her dean would be a good way of ensuring that Magnolia was keeping someone in the loop if another stressful period were to arise. They also decided that Magnolia should work with a research librarian to discuss how to more efficiently find articles relevant to one’s research, which they believed would be useful as Magnolia began work on her thesis. One juror pointed out that Magnolia did not realize initially that the work she submitted had been plagiarized and that some other comments she had made during the trial seemed to suggest she didn’t have a full understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. After toying with a few ways of broadening Magnolia’s understanding of plagiarism, the jury decided that she should read a few trial abstracts that dealt with different types of plagiarism, then meet with the Honor Council Librarian to discuss them.

Next, the jury discussed restoration. A few jurors noted that they would feel comfortable being in a class with Magnolia, which they felt was a good indicator of restoration with the community. The idea of writing a letter to the community was floated but people felt somewhat divided on how necessary it was. As far as some kind of meeting between the parties, the jury contemplated the usefulness given Magnolia and Professor Elm’s limited relationship prior to the violation. Several jurors felt that something should be done to address the breach of trust between the two of them, but were unsure of what would be productive. They discussed having the meeting be mediated by a juror/member of Honor Council or possibly having them write letters to each other. They did not come to a decision on this before the end of the meeting.

The jury then turned to the issue of a grade change. Most jurors felt that Magnolia should not fail the course, but that she should receive at least a 0 on the [leaf] assignment. Since the jury was somewhat unsure of how connected the final [branch] and [leaf] were, and had also not heard from Professor Elm, they felt that they could not come to a decision in this meeting. They decided the chair would reach out to Professor Elm, and they would reconvene.

**Jury Deliberations II:**

The chair began the meeting by reading an email from Professor Elm summarizing her thoughts. She noted that she believed Magnolia should receive a 1.0 in the course and that some steps needed to be taken to further her understanding of plagiarism as Professor Elm felt some of Magnolia’s responses during fact-finding demonstrated a continued lack of knowledge about plagiarism prevention. She also noted that Magnolia’s work in the course up until the assignment in question had been average and that her final [branch] would have received a 2.7.

The jury felt they were largely on the same page as Professor Elm as far as educational resolutions were concerned and proceeded to discuss a grade change. One juror noted that since
this course was a requirement for her major, receiving a 1.0 would mean that Magnolia would still have to take another [foresting] course to complete the major, since a 2.0 is the minimum grade required for courses to count toward a major. The jury discussed giving her a 2.0 instead, but ultimately decided that given her performance in the class thus far this wasn’t a significant enough grade change. Furthermore, several jurors expressed that having her only [foresting] course be one in which she plagiarized felt wrong. Others also noted that taking another course did not strike them as particularly punitive and could actually be beneficial in conjunction with the other resolutions. The jury briefly discussed the possibility that she get a 0.0 in the course, but some jurors were concerned that this might prevent her from reaching the 32 credit requirement and wanted her to be able to graduate on time.

The jury then discussed possible restorative resolutions. They decided that since Magnolia would not be taking another class with Professor Elm and she had not expressed interest in building a relationship with Professor Elm that a meeting between the two didn’t seem particularly useful. They thought they might suggest to Magnolia in the finalizing meeting that if she would like to write a letter to Professor Elm, Honor Council could help facilitate that, though they did not feel it necessary to write a formal resolution on it. The jury felt a letter to the community would be a good way of addressing restoration with the community.

As far as a statement on reporting, a few jurors expressed confusion about what qualified something to be reported and one juror felt that the resolutions would leave Magnolia in a place where this violation would not need to be reported. However, most jurors felt that this act would result in disciplinary action at other schools, so they wrote a statement expressing these thoughts.

Tentative Resolutions
1. The jury recommends that Magnolia receive a 1.0 in the course (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
2. Magnolia will read three abstracts, selected by the Honor Council librarian to demonstrate different types of plagiarism, and meet with the Honor Council librarian to discuss them in the next two weeks (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
3. Magnolia will meet with her dean once a month for the rest of the semester. The jury strongly recommends that she continue to do so in the [following] semester (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
4. Magnolia will meet with a writing center tutor about every major written assignment in courses required for her major in the [current and following] semesters (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
5. Magnolia will meet with a research librarian about effective research strategies for her thesis (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
6. Magnolia will write a letter to the community to be released with the abstract by [date] (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
Resolutions as a whole: 9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves.

Statement on Reporting
While some members of the jury are unsure of whether this should be reported, our recommendation is that this incident be reported to other institutions of higher learning (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).

Finalizing Resolutions:
The jury met with Magnolia who asked some clarifying questions about the resolutions and then left. The trial chair then shared an email from Professor Elm, which stated her support for the resolutions and expressed concern about the statement on reporting. She felt that, should Magnolia complete her resolutions, she would be in a position of better understanding and preventing plagiarism. Thus, this incident should not follow her into the future. Several jurors noted that this aligned with some of the discomfort they had been feeling but could not express at the last meeting. Other jurors worried that it may be dishonest to not report the case. Thus they landed on a statement that both expressed the severity of the violation as well as their desire to not see it reported. They consented to the following set of resolutions.

1. The jury recommends that Magnolia receive a 1.0 in the course (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
2. Magnolia will read three abstracts, selected by the Honor Council librarian to demonstrate different types of plagiarism, and meet with the Honor Council librarian to discuss them in the next two weeks (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
3. Magnolia will meet with her dean once a month for the rest of the semester. The jury strongly recommends that she continue to do so in the [following] semester (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
4. Magnolia will meet with a writing center tutor about every major written assignment in courses required for her major in the [current and following] semesters (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
5. Magnolia will meet with a research librarian about effective research strategies for her thesis (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).
6. Magnolia will write a letter to the community to be released with the abstract by [date] (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).

Resolutions as a whole: 8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves.

Statement on Reporting
While we acknowledge the severity of the violation, since the jury and Professor Elm believe Magnolia will not be involved in another incident of this nature, we recommend this not be
reported to other institutions of higher learning, provided successful completion of the resolutions (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia, bi-co liaison approves).

Post-Trial:
The resolutions were not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. How do Bryn Mawr students interact with Haverford’s academic Honor Code differently from Haverford students?
2. Does a student’s experience with the Honor Code (first-year, sophomore, junior, senior) affect how they treat it and interact with it?
3. What is the impact of a statement on reporting?
4. How should restoration between a student and professor be achieved when they are unlikely to meet again?
Dear Community,

Violating the honor code is something that I never intended to do during my college career. As a student that has always been careful of the work that she produced, purposefully plagiarizing was never my intentions; however, I do recognize that I made a mistake. Going through the trial made me realize that I am not super women and that if I am unable to produce my best quality of work because of my mental state, it is okay to ask for help.

Additionally, I feel as though the resolutions created post the trial was fair. It gave me an opportunity to go over different ways of plagiarism, so that I can avoid this incident in the future. Although in the beginning process of the trial I felt a little intimidated, I appreciated the fact that the honor board committee gave me the chance to explain myself which made me feel a little bit more comfortable.

Lastly, I would like to apologize to the community as a whole for my misconduct. Although, I did not intend to plagiarize and my action was a genuine mistake, this does not excuse that I violated the honor code. I am fully aware of the seriousness of this offense. Going through this trial has definitely changed me for the better and has allowed for me to grow as a person. Once again, I am truly sorry and this will never happen again.

Sincerely,

[Magnolia Willow]