Cast Away:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Fall 2018

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:
Confronted Party: Wilson
Confronting Party: Professor Chuck Noland
Course: Spearfishing 218

Summary/Pre-Trial:
Wilson contacted Honor Council about a potential violation in his Spearfishing 218 class after being confronted by Professor Noland. Honor Council consented to send the case to an academic trial. Professor Noland opted not to attend any trial meetings in person, but he did submit a statement to Honor Council and was in touch with the trial chair periodically throughout the trial.

Fact Finding:
Wilson began by sharing his version of the events. He outlined that this was a project proposal for a group project, in which he plagiarized about two sentences by failing to include quotation marks around direct quotes. He noted that Professor Noland had gone over plagiarism guidelines in class and offered students the opportunity to take a few extra days to make edits to their assignments if they were concerned they may have plagiarized some portions. Wilson asked Professor Noland a question related to another citation error he had made. When Professor Noland suggested that that citation error needed to be changed, he took the extension to fix it. During this time, he made use of online citation machines and a friend (who was also a member of his project group) as resources to help fix his citations. He noted being surprised when Professor Noland confronted him about the quotation marks, but that he now saw his mistake. This was very much in line with Professor Noland’s version of the events as written in his statement. Professor Noland also noted that he hoped this trial could focus on education rather than any punitive measures. Wilson noted that he had not had a lot of experience with plagiarism education and citation, but that going forward he plans to be more proactive about meeting with professors and making sure he understands their expectations.
Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

The jury unanimously felt that a violation had occurred. They discussed how to classify the violation and ultimately decided that they felt it was “improper citation.” They largely felt that Wilson had made attempts to properly cite his work, but had some important gaps in his knowledge about citation and its importance. They consented to the following statement of violation.

Statement of Violation:

*Although the jury recognizes efforts on his part to avoid doing so, [Wilson] violated the Honor Code through improper citation in his paper proposal (10 jurors consent).*

Circumstantial Portion:

The jury met with Wilson, who relayed that he had met with Professor Noland earlier in the day to discuss potential resolutions. They discussed that the two should meet before Wilson submits the next two assignments in the project. Professor Noland had also expressed that he did not plan to lower Wilson’s grade. Professor Noland confirmed to the jury that this portion of the project was in fact ungraded. He noted that he had learned a lot about the importance of citation throughout this process, particularly that while he had once believed that citing a lot of sources was a sign of not being able to do the work on his own, he now saw it as a sign of the breadth of his research and preparation. Wilson said that he plans to confer more often with his professors to make sure that he is properly citing in his assignments, especially for writing related to his major, Rafting.

Jury Deliberations:

The jury discussed resolutions to address the trial goals. They agreed with Professor Noland that a grade change did not seem appropriate in this case and the primary area for concern was education. They tried to balance educative resolutions that dealt both with the development of practical citation skills, e.g. making sure he understood the citation expectations that Professor Noland had laid out for the class and the expectations in the field of his major, as well as reflecting on the importance of citation and why we do it, e.g. meeting with someone from the OAR and writing a letter of reflection. The jury was concerned about Wilson’s dependence on his professors when uncertain about citations. The jury felt that this incident should not be reported to other institutions of higher learning, believing that this likely would have been resolved between Wilson and his professor at another institution and the fact that the trial had largely been an educational process. They consented to the following set of tentative resolutions and statement on reporting.
Tentative Resolutions:
1. [Wilson] will thoroughly read Professor [Noland’s] plagiarism and citation resources. We encourage him to discuss them more with Professor [Noland] (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
2. The jury supports [Wilson] and Professor [Noland’s] decision to meet before the submission of the next two [assignments] (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
3. [Wilson] will meet with someone in the OAR once a month until the end of the [redacted] semester to develop an understanding of the importance of citation. One of these meetings could be used to review his understanding of Professor [Noland’s] materials after the completion of Resolution 1, but at least 1-2 of the meetings should focus on the principles of citation. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
4. [Wilson] will meet with a relevant professor of [Rafting], e.g. department chair or thesis advisor, to discuss citation expectations in this field in preparation of writing his thesis before [redacted] break. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)
5. [Wilson] will write a letter to the community reflecting on his changed perspective on citation and why it is important and what he learned throughout the process of completing these resolutions by the start of the [redacted] semester. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

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

Statement on Reporting
The jury recommends that this case not be reported to other institutions of higher learning. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Finalizing Meeting:
Both Wilson and Professor Noland both were in support of the tentative resolutions, and the jury consented to a final set without any changes.

Final Resolutions:
1. [Wilson] will thoroughly read Professor [Noland’s] plagiarism and citation resources. We encourage him to discuss them more with Professor [Noland] (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
2. The jury supports [Wilson] and Professor [Noland’s] decision to meet before the submission of the next two [assignments] (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
3. [Wilson] will meet with someone in the OAR once a month until the end of the [redacted] semester to develop an understanding of the importance of citation. One of these meetings could be used to review his understanding of Professor [Noland’s] materials after the completion of Resolution 1, but at least 1-2 of the meetings should focus on the principles of citation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

4. [Wilson] will meet with a relevant professor of [Rafting], e.g. department chair or thesis advisor, to discuss citation expectations in this field in preparation of writing his thesis before [redacted] break. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

5. [Wilson] will write a letter to the community reflecting on his changed perspective on citation and why it is important and what he learned throughout the process of completing these resolutions by the start of the [redacted] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Statement on Reporting
The jury recommends that this case not be reported to other institutions of higher learning. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Post-Trial:
The resolutions were not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. What tools are appropriate for you to use when you’re uncertain how to cite?
2. How should students balance seeking support on citations for particular assignments with developing independent understanding about how, what, and why to cite?
3. Beyond the technical requirements of citation styles, what should students keep in mind when determining what is appropriate to cite?
4. How can students understand citation beyond the technical details?