Phineas and Ferb: 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 first confronted party consented to the release of the abstract. The second confronted party did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronted Parties: [Phineas] and [Ferb]
Confronting Parties: [Professor Perry] and [Professor Candace]
Course: -Inator Making 240

Summary/Pre-Trial:
[Phineas] and [Ferb] contacted Honor Council after being confronted by Professors [Perry] and [Candace] about a possible Honor Code violation in their [laboratory] assignment. After reviewing statements from both parties, Honor Council consented to send the case to an academic trial. Due to a heavy caseload at the time, Honor Council consented to run this trial with nine jurors and an experienced Honor Council member as the trial chair.

Fact Finding:
Due to scheduling conflicts, Professor Perry was unable to make this meeting, but one of the jury members met with him earlier to collect copies of the assignments involved and he noted that he had nothing to say that differed from Professor Candace’s account. Professor Candace said that while grading assignments, Professor Perry had recognized that about 10 or 12 [lines] of Phineas’s [-Inator code] were identical to Ferb’s. It was ultimately found that there were 7 identical [lines of code] between the two assignments. After going over the assignments in their entirety, he noticed that about 200-300 lines of the [-Inator code] were similar although he noted this could likely be due to heavy collaboration that is allowed by the collaboration policy, although perhaps not best for their educational experience. Midway through the semester, Professor Perry had mentioned that this collaboration was probably too strong for their own good, but was still allowed. The collaboration policy encouraged talking about higher level concepts and even some more details about the intricacies of the [code], but students should be able to replicate the [code] on their own without referencing any notes they had written. Ferb spoke then saying that he agreed with everything Professor Candace had said and added that he had allowed Phineas to copy these lines with the understanding that they would not be included...
in any graded work. Phineas then said that that time in his life had been incredibly stressful and he knew he would be unable to complete the assignment, and just wanted those lines of [code] so that he could come back to them to get a better understanding of what he should do in case these ideas came up on the midterm. He also noted that he ended up not using these notes at all, and because they were [not a part of his final -inator construction], he completely forgot about them. He emphasized that there was no malicious intent, which Professor Candace noted that she believed. More generally, both Phineas and Ferb believed that since the lines would not be a part of the grade and were just to increase understanding, that the section of the collaboration policy pertaining to sharing [code] did not apply. Professor Candace then expressed sympathy for Phineas and Ferb and hoped that the process hadn’t left them too anxious.

The jury then spoke with Professor Candace alone. When asked to specifically state what she believed the violation to be, Professor Candace responded that the collaboration policy specifically states that work done in collaboration should not be copied, and Phineas freely admitted that he had copied those lines from Ferb and that Ferb had let him. Professor Candace didn’t think it made sense that he would have copied the lines and turned them in since there was nothing he could really get educationally from copied [code]. She said that she believed the letter of the Code had clearly been broken, but since she was new to Haverford, she couldn’t really say if the spirit had been. When asked about their relationship, Professor Candace said that Phineas and Ferb had entered the class struggling a bit, but were hard workers, and while she worried that the stress of the trial might discourage them from taking a class with her or Professor Perry again, if they wanted to, she would welcome them. One juror asked what her opinion would be about a grade change to which Professor Candace replied she didn’t think there should be a substantial grade change since she had no way of knowing if more than the few initially discovered lines had been copied, and that even if there was a grade change on the assignment, it’d be unlikely to affect overall grades.

The jury then spoke to Phineas and Ferb together without Professor Candace. They reaffirmed that they were on the same page with Professor Candace. When asked about their relationship, Ferb said he was primarily stressed with a lack of communication and the general slowness in the trial process. Phineas said that while Professor Perry had always been kind, Professor Candace had seemed a little stern over email, but that she had been nicer than Phineas was expecting in fact finding. More generally, his primary concern was that this whole thing was just in a time when his mental health was bad and this had made it worse. One juror noted that the collaboration policy also specifies citing collaborators which neither party had done, to which Phineas responded that since the professors had always known very explicitly about their collaboration, he didn’t think it was necessary. Finally, Phineas was asked about the opportunity he was given to redo the assignment. He said that his dean had contacted the professors and he had been able to redo 3 of his labs, but he just focused on this one because it was influential on a future assignment. It was noted that at the time he originally turned in the [code], though he did not know he would have the opportunity to redo it.
The jury then spoke with Ferb alone. When asked if there was a violation of the Honor Code, Ferb said there clearly was for those few lines, but with no malice. He said that he had been comfortable with the collaboration throughout the course in that he never thought Phineas was using him, but that he regretted giving the lines and wouldn’t do it in the future.

The jury then spoke with Phineas alone. He talked about how he thought his relationship was good with Professor Candace and Professor Perry now and that he would take classes with them. When asked about the methods while working together, Phineas said that they would sit facing each other with their computers (which Professor Candace explicitly mentioned they should not be open during collaboration) and would talk about the [code]. He said that after writing the lab, he wouldn’t have been able to explain what he did to someone, but that is why he redid it, since he wanted to understand. When asked about whether there was a violation, he agreed that the copying of the seven lines definitely was.

**Jury Deliberations:**

The jury then debriefed. One asked whether their approach of going over [code] line by line was okay, to which another juror said that it’s somewhat normal to go over [code] in a line by line manner since it is about structure, and that it’s similar to writing a mathematical proof. When asked for their overall thoughts, one juror said that they thought that the letter of the Honor Code had been breached but not the spirit, since the copying had been done with the purpose of education and not a grade. Another juror responded that the professor had noted though that Phineas had copied something he didn’t understand and had submitted it, which didn’t seem to make sense educationally as Professor Candace had mentioned. One juror expressed concern since he didn’t think it was intentional, but another juror mentioned that intentionality didn’t matter when it came to a statement of violation and that this could possibly be addressed in resolutions.

After checking in, it was clear that all jurors believed there was a violation by both Phineas and Ferb. They then crafted the following statement “Phineas and Ferb violated the Honor Code by directly copying seven lines of [code] during a period of close collaboration. The jury strongly emphasizes that all parties involved believe that a violation occurred”. However, they couldn’t consent to it since the BiCo liaison was not present, so the jury broke for the night.

**Deliberations II**

The jury deliberated any changes they might want to make to the statement. One juror mentioned wanting to add the specifics in that Ferb gave Phineas the [code] (willingly) and Phineas directly copied it. The statement of violation was then altered to the following:

**Statement of Violation**

* [Phineas] and [Ferb] violated the Honor Code when [Ferb] gave [Phineas] seven lines of [code] that [Phineas] directly copied during a period of close collaboration. The jury strongly*
Circumstantial Portion:

All in all, not much new information came up during circumstantial. Phineas reiterated the stress he had been under during the time of the violation, and Ferb mentioned he largely was driven by the desire to ease his friend’s stress. Phineas mentioned that while he hadn’t known it existed at the time, he later used peer tutoring much more and asked for extensions. When asked about possible resolutions, Phineas mentioned he didn’t want Ferb to take any blame for it, and also really thought a 0 on the assignment would be harsh since he had worked so hard on it. Additionally, in terms of their relationship with Professor Candace, both Phineas and Ferb reiterated their appreciation for her having been more understanding in fact finding than they had expected, but they were still concerned that she hadn’t been the most kind and approachable over the course and confrontation process. They talked about how their understanding of collaboration had changed and how they now really understood that it was just for their own understanding and how working as closely as they had could undermine this, and that they already had changed this in the course they are currently taking together. Sentiments expressed by the professors over email were then shared—they suggested that a 10% reduction (on the low end) would be fair as they had violated the Code, but that receiving no credit was too harsh. Phineas and Ferb agreed this seemed fair. They then talked about how this had mainly happened because the course had been so difficult and they didn’t see this coming up again. They also expressed confusion over the differences between Haverford and Bryn Mawr’s Honor Code. Next, discussion of Bryn Mawr’s psychological services revealed that they only allowed for a few free sessions but that there were mindfulness campus groups available, and Phineas mentioned an appreciation for Haverford’s Quaker meeting. Next, Phineas was asked about the possibility of doing a semester blueprinting to deal with when future stressful periods came up and he said this might be helpful but that he could probably do this on his own.

Deliberations I

The jury then discussed an outline for possible resolutions. To make sure that Phineas and Ferb understand the collaboration guidelines better, one juror suggested that they write a clarification that the [Machine] department could use about collaboration and also about the role of comments in facilitating educating. Next, an interaction with Professor Candace was discussed to try and improve their relationship. Some thought that having prompts involving some level of mentorship in the [Machine] department was floated as well as making it more personal to improve their actual relationship. Additionally, it was suggested that both parties write letters to one another which would be less awkward then an in-person meeting. The option of suggesting that they blueprint their semesters was brought up (to prevent stress). One option involved using BMC’s version of the OAR, another just had them turning in versions to the council support person, but most jurors were supportive of them doing this with deans which would allow for
additional support should they notice a particularly stressful time period. Next, suggestions involving improvements to their mental health were debated. Since BMC’s psychological services would require payment, the jury was much largely in favor of suggesting that they at least try out on-campus groups or encourage Phineas to attend meetings more often. Then, it was suggested that there be some measure to try and get clarification on the differences between Bryn Mawr and Haverford’s Honor Codes since neither Phineas nor Ferb seemed aware of it despite having taken numerous Haverford courses. Next, one juror expressed extreme discomfort with how Phineas and Ferb kept referring to how the copied section was not for credit, but that it was to get a better understanding which would then be used to get a better grade, but they didn’t know how to address this concern. Another juror suggested perhaps addressing this in a discussion question appended to the abstract. Finally, the 10% grade change was discussed. Some jurors thought this seemed about fair and mentioned they did not want their overall grade to change. Other jurors thought something more in the 30% range would reflect the intentionality behind the infraction. One juror thought that perhaps a change in the participation grades might reflect how their collaboration being too close reflected poor quality of engagement with the course work. Jurors expressed an interest in ensuring that their overall grade did not change so the meeting was adjourned to get more information from the professors.

**Deliberations II**

The jury met again to solidify tentative resolutions. In terms of the grade change, jurors felt strongly that a grade change of at least 10% on the lab was necessary, and the majority were most comfortable with a change in the 15-20% range. However, jurors also felt strongly that they did not want Phineas and Ferb’s overall course grade to change. Given this, there was some concern that any changes made to the grade on the lab itself would be somewhat arbitrary, and ultimately leaving a range for the professors to decide on with the stipulation that course grades would not change was decided upon.

For the sake of education and restoration, jurors wanted Phineas and Ferb to write something clarifying the nuances of the [-Inator Coding] collaboration policy while also including comments on what was allowed but also perhaps not best for the sake of education. Ideally, jurors thought this could be used to help future students.

Jurors also expressed concern that Phineas and Ferb still did not feel comfortable around Professor Candace, and they wanted to see some measure to restore their personal relationship. First, having a meeting was considered, but jurors didn’t want this to feel forced, and they thought it was important that Professor Candace initiate this to show her effort to connect with the students. Letters were considered, however, this didn’t seem like it would be personal enough.

For measures of education, accountability, and restoration, the jury wanted Phineas and Ferb to have some measure to encourage better planning for future stressful situations and also some way of making sure that they regularly focused on their mental health. Jurors suggested
that blueprinting their semesters specifically with their Deans would provide the opportunity to plan in advance if they would need extensions and have support in asking for them. Based on all of these desires, the jury came to the following set of tentative resolutions.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

1. The jury recommends that [Phineas and Ferb] receive a grade deduction on the [code] between 15-20% at the professor’s discretion. This grade change should reflect the severity of the violation, but should not have an impact on their overall grade in the course. (9 jurors consent)

2. [Phineas and Ferb] will write a reflection on the [Machine] department collaboration policy clarifying what productive collaboration looks like in [Machine] courses and how it can be most educationally beneficial. The jury encourages the [Machine] department to use this reflection as an educational tool for future [Machine] students regarding collaboration (9 jurors consent)

3. If [Professor Candace] is willing, the jury suggests that she initiate a meeting with [Phineas and Ferb] where they can discuss
   A. Their experience in the course
   B. Any advice she might have for their continued education in the [Machine] department
   C. What they enjoy about [Machines]

   With the intent of restoring their personal and professional relationship (9 jurors consent)

4. [Phineas and Ferb] will meet with their Deans at the beginning of each quarter for the duration of their time in the BiCo to blueprint their semester and prepare for any busy areas of concern in their schedules (9 jurors consent)

5. The jury encourages [Phineas and Ferb] to utilize resources that they feel would help promote their mental well-being such as, but not limited to, attending Quaker Meeting and mindfulness-based clubs on campus (9 jurors consent)

**Resolutions as a whole (9 jurors consent)**

**Finalizing:**

When they met with the jury, Phineas and Ferb asked a few clarifying questions about how the first resolution would not change their grades. They also thought that meeting with their deans every quarter seemed a bit too often, and they also expressed that it was slightly unfair that Ferb was being held to doing this considering it had not been his failure to plan that had led to the violation. Additionally, both Phineas and Ferb expressed strong discomfort in the meeting with Professor Candace, saying that they think that her surprisingly kind approach to fact finding had been enough to restore the feelings they had had towards her before notification of the violation, but that they had never been all that fond of her, and that this is just how some relationships with professors are. Next, emails from the professors were read in which they
expressed confusion with it being somewhat pointless to change their grades on the lab while explicitly trying to maintain that their overall grades wouldn’t change. Additionally, they mentioned that they would love to get feedback from Phineas and Ferb about the collaboration policy, but that they liked to keep the policy itself brief in order to ensure that as many students as possible actually read it. Finally, Professor Candace mentioned that she wanted Professor Perry to be at the meeting because she thought that Professor Perry was more familiar with the policy and could speak more to it (the jury noted that this request seemed to imply that Professor Candace didn’t truly understand the reasoning behind the meeting as the policy itself really wasn’t to be a topic of conversation). Unfortunately, the tone of this conversation in general left the jury with the feeling that Phineas was being somewhat disrespectful and that since the resolutions had not been all that punitive, he didn’t really care and was just trying to get it all over with.

The jury then discussed the concerns raised. The confusion on behalf of the professors combined with the jury feeling like Phineas’s comments about not caring about the first resolution if it wouldn’t change his final grade caused the jury to eliminate the part of the first resolution mandating that the overall grades not change. While they were fairly certain it wouldn’t, this removal seemed both symbolically and logistically important. The jury agreed that Professor Candace and Professor Perry probably knew what was best for encouraging reading of the policy, but they wanted the possibility for professors to recognize changes that might need to be made to the policy, so the jury decided their note would go to all [Machines] professors. Thirdly, the jury felt that Phineas and Ferb’s discomfort with the third resolution combined with believing that Professor Candace would never truly understand the point behind the meeting, as well as feeling like restoration had already occurred to the level their relationship had been before the confrontation all meant that the third resolution was unnecessary and could in fact cause unnecessary stress. For the fourth resolution, the jury largely agreed with Phineas and Ferb’s feelings that blueprinting was only necessary once a semester. They also agreed that Ferb shouldn’t be required to blueprint, but since he had also expressed nervousness over scheduling, the jury decided to suggest that he do it.

**Final Resolutions**

1. The jury recommends that [Phineas and Ferb] receive a grade deduction on the [code] between 15-20% at the professor’s discretion. This grade change should reflect the severity of the violation. (9 jurors consent)

2. [Phineas and Ferb] will write a reflection on the [Machines] collaboration policy clarifying what productive collaboration looks like in [Machines] courses and how it can be most educationally beneficial. The jury suggests that a pseudonymized version of this reflection be distributed to [Machines] faculty to be used to assist the department in any future revisions or amendments to the collaboration policy. (9 jurors consent)

7 of 8
3. [Phineas] will meet with his Dean at the beginning of each semester for the duration of his time in the BiCo to blueprint his semester and prepare for any areas of concern. The jury suggests that [Ferb] do the same. (9 jurors consent)

4. The jury encourages [Phineas and Ferb] to utilize resources that they feel would help promote their mental well-being such as, but not limited to, attending Quaker Meeting and mindfulness-based clubs on campus (9 jurors consent)

Resolutions as a whole (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

Statement on Reporting:
While the weight of the room feels that this incident should not be reported to other institutions of higher learning, the jury emphasizes that this does not trivialize the severity of the violation that occurred and expresses concern over withholding information from these other institutions. (9 jurors consent)

Post-Trial:
The trial was not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are the differences between Bryn Mawr and Haverford’s Honor Codes and how can we better educate students about these differences?
2. Should a department’s collaboration policy be lengthy and comprehensive, or would this discourage students from actually reading it?
3. If the jury recommends no overall course grade deduction, how can the course grade be maintained while ensuring that the weight of this misconduct is still understood by the confronted parties?