Moana:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2019

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Key:
Confronted Party: Moana
Confronting Party: Professor Maui
Course: Sailing 123

Summary/Pre-Trial:
This case involved improper citation in large sections of a final paper. Due to Moana’s lack of understanding of citation expectations for the course, she wrote a paper containing plagiarized, copy-pasted sections. The sections were improperly cited and copy-pasting more broadly was not allowed for the assignment. The relationship between Professor Maui and Moana did not seem to be negatively impacted, so resolutions focused mostly on the goals of accountability and education for the parties. While the jury never felt that they quite understood where Moana’s lack of understanding exactly stemmed from, they felt that knowing there was a lack of understanding in some way was enough to proceed without knowing specific details.

Fact Finding:
Due to extenuating circumstances, the trial was run with 9 jurors instead of 10. Professor Maui started off by emphasizing that he was not angry about this situation, but he thought it was something that needed to be discussed. Moana said that she tried her best to do her work in accordance with the Honor Code, and that if any violation happened it was because her understanding of the citing process was not as accurate as she thought it was. The jury asked Moana about the copy-pasting process. Moana said that she intentionally copied and pasted those sections, but cited the sources from which the copy-pasted material came from at the end.

Professor Maui mentioned that even though small quotes and paraphrasing of others work with proper citation was allowed, copying and pasting large paragraphs into an essay was not allowed ever. Moana said that she thought she was following Professor Maui’s citation handout and did not at any point realize she was not allowed to copy large sections of text. Moana said that she
thought using ending footnotes and distinguishing language such as beginning a sentence with “I think” compared with “This article says” was enough to differentiate her own thoughts and those of others. Professor Maui acknowledged that he had expected students to already know not to ever copy large portions of text regardless of citation, but that in the future he would try to be more clear in instructing students on what constitutes plagiarism as well as how to paraphrase effectively.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**
Some jurors felt that it was clear a violation had occurred, citing the fact that large chunks of text had been copy-pasted and furthermore were then improperly cited. However, some jurors were hesitant about whether or not a violation occurred. They felt that she had done her best effort to follow the citation guidelines and that if she had plagiarized, it was unintentional and it felt wrong to punish someone for that. While acknowledging that they also felt that Moana had not intentionally plagiarized, other jurors emphasized the fact that coming to a statement of non violation would not allow the jury to help educate Moana about citations so that she would not repeat this in the future. Some jurors disagreed with the idea that a statement of violation would be made simply to educate. Others reiterated that beyond hoping to educate Moana, they still felt that a violation had occurred, even if unintentional.

Though the jury recognized that Professor Maui viewed any copying of large blocks of text as unacceptable, the jury felt most comfortable focusing on Moana’s failure to properly cite in accordance with Professor Maui’s expectations. They felt that there was too much ambiguity in defining how much text was too much to copy, even if cited. While some jurors who had previously been uncomfortable with a statement of violation felt more comfortable given the wording specifying failure to follow citation expectations, one juror still felt uncomfortable overall with the statement of violation because they felt that Moana had done her best to cite sources in her paper in a way she thought was correct. Additionally, they were worried about this process being overly punitive toward Moana. However, they felt that their concerns had been adequately discussed, and they recognized that the most jurors felt that a violation had occurred. The jury consented to the following:

**Statement of Violation:**
“The jury believes that [Moana] violated the Honor Code by failing to properly cite sources for large portions of her paper in accordance with her professor’s expectations.” (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

**Circumstantial Portion:**
Professor Maui was unable to attend the circumstantial meeting, but he provided some thoughts over email. He wanted Moana to redo the assignment without plagiarism and offered to help in
the process. Additionally, he emphasized that the most important thing to him was that Moana would come to understand how she had plagiarized before and why that wasn’t acceptable in any discipline. However, he felt that his relationship with Moana was unchanged and did not feel any negativity between them.

The jury asked Moana if she had ever written a paper for this discipline before, and she replied that she had not. Moana said that she did not think Professor Maui’s referencing guide was entirely clear, and that she thought she was following its instructions for citations. When asked if she had gone to Professor Maui for help on the paper, Moana replied that she had not sought help because she felt she understood the assignment and did not think she needed help with citations. The jury asked about Moana’s relationship with Professor Maui. Moana said that she felt it was normal and did not perceive any negativity between the two of them, which was consistent with Professor Maui’s interpretation.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:**

Consistent with Professor Maui’s suggestion, many jurors felt that Moana should rewrite the assignment. Some jurors suggested that Moana work with someone other than Professor Maui on the assignment, such as someone at the Writing Center or a research librarian. However, given issues of confidentiality and the specific nature of the assignment, the jury eventually decided to ask Moana to work with Professor Maui on the rewrite.

The jury discussed at length what they wanted to recommend for the grade on the original paper as well as the rewrite. Some jurors felt she should get full credit for the rewrite since the violation on the original paper had been unintentional. However, others responded that it seemed unfair that if someone could have not plagiarized and got a lower score with no chance at a rewrite. One juror suggested a weighted average of the original and the rewrite. Others felt that the jury should leave grading entirely up to Professor Maui. However, the jury did want to make a recommendation of some kind. Some jurors liked the idea of Moana getting a fresh slate and being able to start over without thinking about the first paper as influencing the second one. However, other jurors emphasized that the first paper still happened, violation and all, and should not be disregarded entirely. Finally, the jury decided on a compromise between two earlier discussed options: recommending a weighted average grade for the original and the rewrite (suggested higher weight to the rewrite), but acknowledging that specific weighting should be ultimately determined by Professor Maui.

Some jurors noted that they felt Moana had not said a lot to the jury about where the violation came from and suggested that Moana write a reflection so that she would engage more deeply with this situation. Additionally, this reflection should address how Moana learned from this situation and how she would actively work to follow the Honor Code and citation expectations in
the future. The jury consented to the following tentative resolutions.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

1) [Moana] will meet with [Professor Maui] to create a reference guide for herself for citing sources in the [Nautical Studies]. The jury suggests that this reference guide be given to future sections of this class. This guide should be completed before finals week of the semester. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

2) After creating the reference guide, [Moana] will rewrite the assignment. The grade she receives on this assignment will be a weighted average of the first paper and the rewrite. The jury suggests a weight greater than 50% for the rewrite, but leaves the specific weighting up to the professor’s discretion. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

3) [Moana] will meet with [Professor Maui] to discuss the reference guide and a draft of her rewritten paper before completing the assignment. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

4) After completing Resolutions 1-3, [Moana] will write one page reflecting on her original paper and her gaps in understanding. Additionally, she will reflect on the measures she has taken so far and will continue to take in order to prevent violations from happening in the future. This reflection will be appended to the abstract. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

5) Resolutions 2-4 should be completed by the end of the semester. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

**On resolutions as a whole:** 8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia

**Statement on Reporting:**

*The jury recommends that this case not be reported to institutions of higher education.* (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

**Finalizing Resolutions:**

Moana said that she was concerned about the weighted grade since her first paper had received a very low grade. One juror replied that the jury had suggested a greater weight be given to the rewrite and that they believed Professor Maui would likely follow this suggestion. Professor Maui couldn’t attend the finalizing meeting, but provided feedback over email saying he felt comfortable with all of the resolutions. However, he was concerned about the amount of work assigned to Moana, given that Moana would also be working on regular coursework during a relatively short time frame. He suggested extending resolution deadlines to the beginning of the next semester rather than the end of the current semester. Moana agreed that this extension would be helpful for her. Additionally, Moana felt that the reference guide should be specific to Sailing and Boat Making, since Nautical Studies beyond those two fields may use different
methods of citations. In accordance with the discussed changes, the jury edited the tentative resolutions and consented to the following:

**Final Resolutions:**

1. [Moana] will meet with [Professor Maui] to create a reference guide for herself for citing sources in [Sailing] and [Boat Making]. The jury suggests that this reference guide be given to future sections of this class. This guide should be completed before finals week of the semester. (9 jurors consent)

2. After creating the reference guide, [Moana] will rewrite the assignment. [Moana] will meet with [Professor Maui] to discuss the completed reference guide and a draft of her rewritten paper before its submission. (9 jurors consent)

3. The grade she receives on this assignment will be a weighted average of the first paper and the rewrite. The jury suggests a weight greater than 50% for the rewrite but leaves the specific weighting up to the professor’s discretion. The rewrite should be completed by [date]. (9 jurors consent)

4. After completing Resolutions 1–3, [Moana] will write one page reflecting on her original paper and her misunderstanding of citation expectations. Additionally, she will reflect on the measures she has taken so far and will continue to take in order to prevent violations from happening in the future. This reflection will be appended to the abstract. It should be completed by [date]. (9 jurors consent)

**On resolutions as a whole:** 8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia

**Statement on Reporting:**

The jury recommends that this case not be reported to institutions of higher education. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

**Post-Trial:**

The trial was not appealed.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How should the suggestions of professors factor into resolutions?
2. Should the intentionality of plagiarism be considered when determining whether a violation occurred? Should intentionality be considered when determining resolutions?
Letter to the Community

To the Haverford Community,

My experience with all this event and the Honor Council was quite hectic since it is the first time ever I was put into such a situation. But the Council was really helpful and understanding; they helped me a lot through this by providing all the insights and specific guidelines. Although the plagiarism was unintentional, I understand my mistakes and actions for letting this happen. My understanding of the citation process wasn’t accurate and I didn’t realize it until after submitting the assignment. Also, I didn’t get my draft checked since I was sure about it and didn’t feel the need to. Now, for all the classes, if I have a paper to write, I go see the professor and ask about specific formatting and citation methods even though I don’t feel like it’s necessary. This way I intend to avoid any future citation issues. This incident taught me a lot and I hope all my fellow fords try their best to avoid getting into such a situation.