House on the Hill:  
An Honor Council Academic Case  
Released Fall 2019

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 consented to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronted Party: Jenny LeClerc
Confronting Party: Professor Longfellow
Course: House Exploration 118

Summary:
This case was reviewed by Honor Council and dropped instead of being sent to trial. Although Honor Council believed that plagiarism had occurred, they decided that the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration had already been met. Council recommended that Jenny take advantage of resources regarding proper citation practices available on the Honor Council website and from the Writing Center to continue to educate herself.

In his statement, Professor Longfellow said that he believed Jenny plagiarized in a draft of one of her essays for House Exploration 118. He said that there were six places where Jenny had copied verbatim or close to it. According to Professor Longfellow, she cited these sources in the footnotes but did not include quotations. Jenny also copied several other sentences in a sample essay discussed in class. Professor Longfellow and Jenny initially met to discuss the potential violation and twice more to discuss proper note-taking techniques and citation practices. Professor Longfellow noted that he and Jenny were continuing to work on building Jenny’s skills in these areas to avoid plagiarism. He also said that he thought they had a good working relationship and were on the same page.

Jenny’s statement largely confirmed Professor Longfellow’s. She explained that she was rushed when working on her draft, which led her to improperly cite portions of her essay. She also said she intended the sentences of the sample essay to be placeholders. Jenny noted that while she did not intend to plagiarize in the moment, she recognized that it was still plagiarism. Jenny also referenced her meetings with Professor Longfellow and new strategies to prevent future plagiarism. She agreed that she and Professor Longfellow were on the same page.
Council Deliberations:

Council members reviewed the statements and were in agreement that a violation of the Academic Code had occurred. Since Jenny started both educating herself about plagiarism and repairing her relationship with Professor Longfellow, Council members felt that the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration had been met. One Council member expressed concern about there being more details regarding the situation that would only be revealed by a trial process. However, they felt comfortable dropping the case because Professor Longfellow did not believe a trial was necessary. Council also discussed the possibility of recommending a mediated conversation between Jenny and Professor Longfellow, but decided that this would not be necessary due to their extensive previous conversations. Finally, Council wanted to support Jenny in her continued efforts to avoid breaches of the Honor Code, and thus decided to recommend several educational resources on citation and avoiding plagiarism.

Discussion Questions:

1. If Council provides recommendations in a dropped case, does that mean the case should have gone to trial?
2. How strongly should Council weigh the opinion of the confronting party in determining whether or not to drop a case? How strongly should they weigh the opinion of the confronted party?