Mika:
An Honor Council Academic Case
Released Spring 2021

This abstract was not released in accordance with the timeline specified by the Students’ Association Constitution. The confronting party did not consent to the release of the abstract. The confronted party did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronted Party: Billy Brown
Confronting Party: Professor Grace Kelly
Other student: Paloma Sanremo
Course: Glam Rock 250

Summary:
Billy Brown contacted Honor Council because he had plagiarized Paloma Sanremo’s assignment in part of his album review for Glam Rock 250 with Professor Grace Kelly. In his statement to Council he cited issues with his physical and mental health and being behind on coursework as circumstances leading him to plagiarize for this assignment. Billy and Professor Kelly met and agreed that he should receive a 0.0 on the review. Billy also apologized to both the professor and Paloma. He noted that he had met with his dean and his major advisor about the issue, in addition to seeking help for the health issues he felt led to his plagiarism.

Professor Kelly said in her statement that she noticed Billy had used the exact words in his review as Paloma. She also noted that Billy had used similar language and ideas to Paloma’s in a previous album review. In her meeting with Billy, they discussed both assignments. Professor Kelly felt that Billy was forthright and honest in their conversation and that they were on the same page.

Council Deliberations:
At first, Council generally felt that the trial goals of restoration, education, and accountability had been met and were comfortable with dropping the case. A Council member asked a question that sparked an extensive discussion of whether or not this case was about one instance of plagiarism (the album review which sparked the confrontation) or about Billy using similar ideas and language as Paloma in a previous assignment as well. This lack of clarity surrounding the issue prompted more Council members to be in favor of sending the case to trial. Other Council members still felt that the case should be dropped, citing Billy’s mental health,
which they felt would contribute to a trial being more harmful than beneficial. Council revisited the trial goals; they were confident that education and accountability were achieved, but there was now some uncertainty about if the trust between Billy and Professor Kelly was restored. There was further discussion about if the clarity that would come from a trial was necessary for restoration. Eventually, Council recognized that as a whole they were equally comfortable with sending the case to trial as they were with dropping the case. Honor Council consented to drop the case with the recommendation that Billy Brown and Professor Kelly have a conversation mediated by a member of Honor Council.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. To what extent should mental health be considered when making decisions surrounding Honor Code violations?
2. Are academic trials inherently harmful to the confronted party? How can trials be more restorative?
3. What is the implication of Honor Council recommending a mediated conversation while dropping a case?