

Harry Potter

A Joint Honor Council-Administrative Panel
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Introduction

After a foul odor disrupted a campus event, many attendees were concerned that they had been exposed to a harmful substance. Safety and Security officers investigated the disruption, and suspected that Harry Potter had been involved. They and the Dean's Office confronted Harry about the incident. When Harry admitted to planting a foul-smelling substance at the event, the issue was brought to Honor Council. Honor Council came to consensus on a suspicion of violation, sending the case to a Joint Honor Council-Administrative Panel.

Statement of the Parties

Statement from Safety and Security:

After reports of a strange smell at a campus event, Safety and Security officers found the source of the odor, but could not positively identify the substance. The speaker told them that she believed someone was playing a prank on her by disrupting the event. Harry, who left shortly before the odor was detected, was identified as the most likely suspect for planting the foul-smelling substance. When Harry was first confronted by Safety and Security, he denied knowledge of who may have caused the disruption. Safety and Security explained the seriousness of the incident, as many attendees feared that they had been exposed to an unknown hazardous substance, but Harry still claimed ignorance. Shortly after this confrontation, Safety and Security received an anonymous note stating the exact substance used in the disruption, that it was meant to be a prank, and that the writer did not believe that the substance posed a health hazard to people at the event.

Eventually, Harry admitted to the Dean's Office that he had caused the disruption. Officers from Safety and Security were impressed with his honesty, and they felt he was very forthright in dealing with this issue. However, people at the event were very concerned about their health after the disruption, and Safety and Security felt the incident showed gross negligence on Harry's part, especially in light of world events.

Statement from the Dean's Office:

Once Harry was confronted by the Dean's Office, he readily confessed to causing the disruption. He said that he had initially denied involvement because he was afraid that some of the attendees would be very upset with him. The disruption was intended to be a prank on the speaker at the event, but most of the attendees also stayed until the completion of the event.

Student's Statement:

Harry said that the disruption was intended to be a harmless prank, which he now

sees as ignorant and stupid. He was on good terms with the speaker, or else he would not have attempted such a prank. He described the substance used to create the foul odor, and stated that he did not believe it was actually dangerous in the way he used it. He meant simply for the event to be moved once people smelled the vile smell, and was completely surprised when people stayed there for the entire event. Although he did not think anyone was harmed, he expressed concern that there could have been health effects that he did not anticipate. He never meant to scare or harm anyone; it was simply a joke that was over the line and got out of hand. Once he heard that people were worried about health risks from the event, he wrote a statement for Safety and Security, to let them know that it was a prank and that people were never in danger. Harry said that he now realizes his actions made people both uncomfortable and scared, and he regrets the incident.

Panel Questions

The Panel asked the confronted and confronting parties several clarifying questions. A representative of Safety and Security said that this incident did not require much physical clean-up, but that officers have had to calm people's concerns about a substance with unknown long-term health effects. Some attendees have told Safety and Security that they are convinced their health has been affected by this substance. Harry was asked to describe what could have happened at the event, in a worst-case scenario, and he now realizes that there could have been unanticipated serious health effects. When asked why he did not remove the substance when the disruption did not go as he planned (the event was not moved), Harry said that even if he had remained there and considered it, the smell was already in the air. He claimed that he left the event early only because he had another commitment.

The panel asked how Harry had acquired the substance in question, and he assured them that it was not property of Haverford College. He got it from another institution a couple days before the incident, when he began planning the disruption. The panel started to discuss how Haverford's Honor Code would apply to taking the substance from another institution, but this discussion was postponed until Panel Deliberations. Harry said that he has talked to people at that institution since the incident, and they are not upset.

Harry felt that he unintentionally violated the social Honor Code because his disruption became harmful when it really scared people.

Panel Deliberations

Though they agreed that the actual seriousness of the health hazard was uncertain, the panel was very concerned by Harry's apparent lack of consideration for others in planning and executing this disruption. Although he meant to affect only one person, his actions affected many people indiscriminately. He disrupted a campus event for many attendees and caused them to worry about their health. Even though he had a few days to really think about his actions before going through with them, he still disrupted the event and left before seeing the results (with the substance still there). The panel felt that his actions violated trust within the community, and that Harry had been irresponsible in not considering the potential consequences of his actions. The panel also discussed whether Harry should be held accountable for wrongly obtaining the materials used in this incident, even though he did so at another institution. They agreed, however, that these actions were outside the jurisdiction of the Haverford Honor Code. The panel then came to consensus on the following statement of violation, with one member standing outside (This member

could not attend the proceedings at the last minute, but the panel agreed to continue with that member counted as standing outside for the rest of the trial):

Statement of Violation:

The student violated the Code by committing a premeditated act that violated the atmosphere of trust, concern, and respect in the Haverford community.

Resolution Deliberations

The panel brainstormed ways to address education, repairing the breach of trust, and accountability. Some ideas included a dialogue with the Dean's Office to inform him of people's reactions to the disruption, and having Harry give a presentation about the risks involved in this incident. Because he already seemed to be very knowledgeable of the substance in question and the potential outcomes of this incident, it did not make sense to have him do more research on this. The panel discussed the feasibility of a mediated dialogue between Harry and concerned attendees, but this would breach confidentiality. Creating resolutions was difficult because several attendees who had voiced complaints to Safety and Security did not want to be part of the trial process. The panel did not know how to address their concerns while maintaining confidentiality. Ultimately, the panel decided that they could only address the community in general in the resolutions. Harry was already in the process of repairing his relationship with the speaker, and had been held accountable in that capacity.

The panel considered separation, but felt it was not appropriate in this case. The panel wanted something between a letter to the community (which they felt would not fully address the severity of this incident) and separation (too severe). They felt Harry was at fault for miscalculating the degree of risk with this substance, people's reaction to the odor at the event, and the emotional impact of this incident.

The panel came to consensus on the following resolutions, with one member standing outside (for the reason described above):

Resolutions:

1. **The student will write a letter to the community addressing:**
 - a) **his disrespect toward community events and traditions**
 - b) **how actions aimed at one person can affect the whole community**
 - c) **his failure to consider the potential consequences of his actions**

2. **The student will write a 10-15 page research paper, covering the following topics:**
 - a) **the legal, medical and psychological ramifications of biological and chemical terrorism, accidents, and hoaxes**
 - b) **how this relates to community reactions to his actions**

The paper will be due ... and will be presented to a panel consisting of a member of the Dean's Office, a member of Safety and Security, and a member of this joint panel...

(Some details of this resolution have been changed to protect confidentiality.)

3. **If the student is brought before Honor Council for similar actions in the future, that panel will be informed of this abstract after coming to a statement of violation.**

Presentation of Resolutions

The panel presented these resolutions to the parties. A representative of Safety and Security expressed concern that the resolutions did not adequately address the grievances that some attendees had voiced to Safety and Security and the Dean's Office. However, he agreed that the resolutions were appropriate given that these attendees had declined to participate in the trial. There were no further questions or concerns from those present.

The panel came to final consensus on **the original resolutions**, with two members standing outside (both members were absent).

Questions

1. Should a jury address concerns of community members who are affected but do not want to participate in the trial?
2. When, if ever, should a Joint Panel consider a student's conduct at another institution?
3. What constitutes a prank?