

# Honor Council

H A V E R F O R D C O L L E G E

Abstract Discussion Minutes from September 23, 2009

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**Abstract:** Tommy and Professor Zordon (Honor Council Academic Trial)

**Present:** Jared, Sarina, Madeline, Remy, Lisa, Becca, Jacob, Jacob, Kristi, Allison, Christina, Jen, Maria, Sam, Liza, Dana, Greg, Emma, Emily, Susana, Sam, Silas (Sorry to anyone whose name we may have been missed! But thank you all for the AMAZING turnout and engaging discussion!)

1. Summary
  - a. Tommy was caught cheating off another test by his professor. After confessing to Honor Council, he was in suspicion of violation.
  - b. Emma: In fact finding, Tommy said that while he was working on the exam, he knew that there was a great deal that he would fail the exam due to being bogged down with work.
  - c. Resolution: Tommy would re-sign the honor code, have his grade lowered to a 2.0, write a letter to the community and have a zero on the exam.
2. Resolutions are only recommendations by Honor Council
3. Question
  - a. Should honor council recommend grade changes?
    - i. Sarina believes that Honor Council should hold the student to full accountability and Honor Council
    - ii. Madeline felt that it is not okay to cheat and regardless of class standing, Tommy should have failed the course. She also questioned how much accountability should Honor Council place on freshmen.
    - iii. Jen feels that it is great that Honor Council does not deal with precedent, but rather on a case-by-case basis.
    - iv. Sam felt that Honor Council needs to decide what to accomplish when recommending actions. He also believes that Tommy did not deliberately “take Haverford for granted” when he made the poor decision and did not feel that separation would have been warranted.
    - v. Madeline questioned whether Tommy should have notified the student whose test he stole.
      1. In response, Jen said that it was important not to break confidentiality and reveal the identity of Tommy to the student. Hence, confidential is the top priority of Honor Council.
    - vi. Susana felt that Tommy was unaware of the gravity of what he did.

- vii. Jacob felt that stealing an exam brings out another issue of theft from another professor, thus bringing out two violations instead of one.
    - b. How much should Tommy's class standing (as a freshman) be taken into account?
      - i. Emma felt that class should be taken into account due to Freshmen not living that long with the Honor Code
      - ii. Sam believes that the transition to college is a big one. And freshmen are going to need to figure out how to live at Haverford. He thinks that even though Tommy did not have any known issues, Sam believes that freshmen should be given the ability to see what they have done and not be given a harsh penalty.
      - iii. Susana said that until freshmen read their first abstract, they do not know the severity of cheating.
      - iv. Jared feels that there is no excuse for cheating since students should take responsibility for their actions regardless of class year
      - v. Marina felt that it is imperative among HCOs that they work with their freshmen on establishing knowledge of the honor code so that ignorance would be alleviated.
    - c. Reflective Essay: what did it accomplish?
      - i. Maria felt that the letter's priority did not seem to be restoring trust and that it was a punishment to write a letter.
      - ii. Dana felt that it was important, that writing a letter to the community is educational. She also felt that the community needed to hear the voice of the student.
      - iii. Someone felt that the letter did not include as much reflection on the honor code as it should have. The community must be educated by having students in violation write about the honor rather than just give an account of what they did.
4. Disclaimers
- a. Being in suspicion of a violation does not necessarily mean that the code has been violated.
  - b. When a case is brought to Council, Council only consents on a "suspicion of violation," and whether or not it should go to a trial/panel/mediation, or whether the case should be dropped.
  - c. It is for the members of a trial or panel to consent on whether or not the Code has been violated when they come up with a "statement of violation." It is possible for the trial/panel to convene and decide that no violation of the Code has occurred.