

# The Honor Code

## Article III of the Constitution of the Haverford College Students' Association

### Section 3.01 Preamble

As Haverford students, we seek an environment in which members of a diverse student body can live together, interact, and learn from one another in ways that protect both personal freedom and community standards. If a diverse community is to prosper, its members must attempt to come to terms with their differences; this goal is only possible if students seek mutual understanding by means of respectful communication. By holding us accountable for our words and actions, the Honor Code acts as an educational tool, instructing us to resolve conflicts by engaging others in dialogues that yield greater awareness for all parties involved. By encouraging respectful conduct, we hope to create an atmosphere conducive to learning and growing.

### Section 3.02 Introduction

We believe the values articulated in the Honor Code create an open and supportive environment that promotes personal and community growth; hence, we ascribe to the principles in the Code.

### Section 3.03 Community Standards

The Honor Code depends for its effective operation on our personal concern both for each other and for ourselves, along with our collective concern for the maintenance of the community standards reflected in the Code. These three concerns (regarding ourselves, others, and community standards) are central to the functioning of the Code, and have meaning only as they form the basis for the conduct of our daily lives. When we speak of "community," we imply the student body, faculty, staff, and administration, each of which contributes to the collective conception of community standards. The Code makes it possible for a climate of trust, concern, and respect to exist among us, a climate conducive to personal and community growth. Growth arises from honest exploration and analysis. Only by treating ourselves with dignity and self-respect can we experience genuine honesty with ourselves and others.

#### (a) Confrontation

In order to maintain the atmosphere of trust, concern and respect, we must be willing to face situations that may be uncomfortable. We cannot always expect to feel at ease when confronting another student about his/her actions. Despite the difficulty sometimes entailed in challenging the behavior of a fellow community member, we must take upon ourselves individually the responsibilities stated in the Code, or be ourselves in violation of the Code because of our failure to act. As confrontation is often a matter between two individuals or parties, it is advisable to exercise discretion and respect privacy accordingly when initiating a dialogue. Confrontation is one of the primary means by which community members can learn from one another and thereby facilitate the realization of a truly diverse environment. It should often take the form of a constructive, engaging discussion, especially in non-academic concerns. "Confrontation," in the Haverford sense, can be defined as initiating a dialogue with another community member, with the goal of reaching some common understanding by means of respectful

communication. It should be understood that achieving a common understanding does not necessarily mean reaching agreement.

### **(b) Honor Council**

Although we are each responsible for doing our part to uphold the standards of the community, some administrative responsibilities must be carried out by a community body. In addition we may sometimes be unable to resolve conflicts with others or actions may occur which breach the trust of the community in a very serious way. It is Honor Council's task to manage the administrative aspects of the Honor Code and to help resolve difficult situations and apparent violations of the community's trust. Honor Council is charged with interpreting the sections of the Code that leave room for flexibility. It is, for example, Honor Council's responsibility to decide if a situation warrants the convening of a trial or if it can be resolved on a less formal basis.

### **(c) Consensus**

All decisions made by Honor Council, including those approving Council publications, are made by consensus. This method depends on reaching unity; it is time-consuming and requires that all present avoid obstructionism in a common search for agreement, but it has the great advantage of not leaving behind an unhappy minority. It should be noted, however, that unity does not necessarily require unanimity. When discussion has reached a point where the chairperson proposes a decision that clearly has the support of the "weight of the group," remaining dissenters can withdraw their disagreement in order that unity be achieved. If the disagreement is fundamental, and becomes a matter of conscience, the dissenter may block consensus and discussion must continue with the object of finding a new formulation that is satisfactory to all. If consensus among all jury members cannot be reached after lengthy discussion, then, with the agreement of all jury members, consensus can be declared with any dissenters being recorded as standing outside of it. There can be no more than two dissenters.

### **(d) Confidentiality**

As confrontation is often not a public matter, Honor Council will keep all cases brought before it in the strictest confidence. This allows individuals in the community to bring issues to Honor Council without fear of attaching a public stigma to parties involved.

### **(e) The Pledge**

We realize that as part of the Haverford College community, our actions affect those around us and the spiritual quality of this institution. We understand that membership in the Haverford community is dependent on commitment to the Honor Code, as illustrated by our signing the Honor Pledge card, which states: "I hereby accept the Haverford Honor Code, realizing that it is my duty to uphold the Honor Code and the concepts of personal and collective responsibility upon which it is based." We all must sign the Honor Pledge prior to our admission or readmission to the college, and our withdrawal from this commitment will result in separation from the community.

## **Section 3.04 Jurisdiction**

The Honor Code applies to both the academic and social realms of Haverford College. All students at Haverford, including Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and University of Pennsylvania students enrolled in Haverford courses, are obligated to adhere to the Code, and are under its jurisdiction while on this

campus, and while doing work for Haverford courses. Haverford students studying abroad are also compelled to behave in accordance with the Code.

#### **(a) Academic Concerns**

As students we are responsible for proper conduct and integrity in all of our scholastic work. We must follow a professor's instructions as to the completion of tests, quizzes, homework, and laboratory reports, and must ask for clarification if the instructions are not clear. Students should not give or receive aid when taking exams, unless the professor specifies this practice as appropriate. In addition, students should not exceed the time limitations specified by the professor. If a student represents "another person's ideas or scholarship as his/her own" (p. 53 Faculty Handbook), that student is committing an act of plagiarism. Students are expected to properly cite (in footnotes, quotations, and bibliography) all sources used in the preparation of written work, including examinations, unless otherwise instructed by the professor who assigned the work. It should be noted that some professors consider the memorization and reproduction of material without citing its source as an act of plagiarism.

It is each student's responsibility to find out exactly what each of his/her professors expects in terms of acknowledging sources of information on papers, exams, and assignments. An act of plagiarism constitutes a student's withdrawal from the commitment to the academic honesty required by the Honor Code, and will normally result in separation from the community.

#### **(b) Social Concerns**

Our social relationships should be based on mutual respect and concern. We must consider how our words and actions may affect the sense of acceptance essential to an individual's or group's participation in the community. We strive to foster an environment that genuinely encourages respectful expression of values rather than unproductive self-censorship. Upon encountering actions or values that we find degrading to ourselves and to others, we should feel comfortable initiating dialogue with the mutual goal of increasing our understanding of each other. The social concerns of the Code extend to all forms of communication, including, but not limited to: spoken discussion, posted writing, and internet discussion forums. If a violation of the code occurs, it should be resolved via face to face confrontation.

### **Section 3.05 Upholding the Honor Code**

As individuals who are also members of a community, we are obligated to examine our own actions as well as the actions of those around us in light of their effect on the community. If it becomes clear through self-reflection or through expressions of concern by others, that either our academic or social conduct represents a violation of community standards, we are obligated to report our own breach to Honor Council, even if doing so may result in a trial and the possibility of separation from the college.

Similarly, we must confront others when their conduct disturbs us. Ideally, conflicts like this will be resolved through an initial stage of respectful communication and dialogue. When we confront another student whose behavior has disturbed us, we must recall that this process is a dialogue in which each party first tries to understand the standards and values of the other in order to avoid self-righteousness or the appearance of moral superiority. Additionally, a member of Honor Council may act on behalf of

another student in an initial confrontation if this process would cause the student involved undue emotional anguish or place him/her in physical danger (i.e., cases of physical assault). The Code and confrontation with the intent for a trial are not to be used as threatening devices against people. To do so would go against the spirit and purpose of achieving mutual understanding. If a problem arises which cannot be resolved by the students involved, the confronted student is asked by the confronting party to contact an Honor Council member to help. If a confronting party has asked the confronted student to contact an Honor Council member, and a Council member has not acknowledged this report to the confronting party within one week of the request, then the confronting party is obligated to report the matter him/herself.

Members of the faculty follow a similar procedure in cases of suspected academic violations. They first discuss the problem with the student; then, if not satisfied that a breach of the Code did not occur, urge the student to report him or herself to Honor Council. If the student does not do so promptly, the faculty member will take the matter to the Honor Council. Since we do hold ourselves responsible for each other, the failure to confront or to report another student involved in a breach of the Honor Code is itself a violation of the Code.

Honor Council is expected to confront other members of council in cases they witness discrepancies between what Council practices and the procedures outlined in the Honor Code and its guidelines. Council members are obligated to confront each other and the administration regarding errors and points of dissent with proper procedure in relation to the Honor Code and its internal affairs especially if they feel they are not fulfilling their community responsibilities or fully abiding by the Code. Honor Council is responsible to the entire Haverford Community to do so.

### **Section 3.06      Ratifying the Honor Code**

At Spring Plenary there must be a 2/3 vote in favor of ratifying the Code, followed by 2/3 of the student body signing and returning their ratification cards. If 2/3 of those assembled at Plenary do not ratify the Honor Code, the Code fails the first round of ratification and it is the responsibility of the Students' Association to create and sign a petition requesting the collection of a Special Plenary. 40% of the Students' Association must sign this petition conveying their desire for and pledging to attend a Special Plenary. If 2/3 vote in favor of ratifying the Code, electronic ratification cards will be due the fourth and fifth days following Spring Plenary.

Any member of the student body that wishes to submit an Honor Code ratification card will do so electronically at any time during the fourth and fifth days following Spring Plenary. Honor Council will create and actively publicize instructions on how to access and use the electronic ratification cards. During the voting period, at least one Honor Council member will be available at least two different campus locations to answer any questions and receive any criticism of the Honor Code which might arise in discussion. This council member will have a computer with network access at his or her disposal which students may use to ratify the code.

Ratification cards will have three options and a place for comments, questions, suggestions, or criticisms. This place for comments will be required by the electric ballot, and ratification cards without

them will not be accepted by the ratification system. Each student is strongly encouraged under the Honor Code to return the card or communicate to Honor Council reasons why she did not or could not.

**(a) \_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughtfully considered my position on the Code and I vote for its ratification for the following reasons:**

**(b) \_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughtfully considered my position on the Code and I vote for its ratification, but I have the following objection(s):**

**(c) \_\_\_\_\_ I have thoughtfully considered my position on the Code, but I cannot vote for its ratification for the following reason(s):**

If more than two thirds of the student body checks either option "a" or "b", then the Honor Code is ratified. If less than two-thirds of the student body checks either option "a" or "b" but more than two-thirds of the student body returns their cards, then the Honor Code fails, but a Special Plenary will be scheduled to modify the Code in such a way as to enable a two-thirds majority to vote for ratification.

If less than two-thirds of the student body returns their cards, the Honor Code fails. Students should strongly consider the wisdom of convening a Special Plenary. Such a Plenary would be convened only if two-thirds of the student body signs a petition not only asking for the Plenary, but pledging to attend. At such a Plenary, two-thirds of the student body would constitute quorum.

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