

Honor Council

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

Pizza, Professors, and the Code Minutes, October 21, 2009
Alumni Edition

Guest Professors:

David Lippel '94- Mathematics Professor

Wendy Smith '87- Athletic Director

Howard Glasser '00- Science Education Professor at BMC

Ken Koltun-Fromm '88- Religion Professor

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Ken:
 - a) 2 negative memories about the Honor Code
 - i) As a student, he felt that there was a difference between those on Honor Council and regular students, that those on HC were somehow morally superior.
 - b) He remembers a time that the Honor Code failed to be re-ratified twice, and they kept meeting until it was finally re-ratified. He remembers thinking that it was somehow inevitable that the Code be re-ratified, and that this defeated the purpose of deciding whether or not to re-ratify the Code. It seemed like it wasn't really the decision of the students. Perhaps it would have been healthy for them to live without the Code for a while to see the effects.
 - c) Part he always hated: "obligated to confront"
 - i) But now he sees why this is important.
 - ii) If something bad happens and you don't confront, you start to talk about it with your friends, rumors sprout.
 - iii) Parable of the person who protects bread v. the person who uses it to make something wonderful.
 - (1) The Honor Code is a document you have to enliven.
- 3) Howard:
 - a) Part he values most: confrontation is not a negative action
 - i) Saw pp here engage actively in confrontation
 - (1) Outside of Haverford, people avoid confrontation (exacerbates)
 - b) Differences between Haverford and Bryn Mawr
 - i) Confrontation not part of Bryn Mawr Code
 - c) Continuing to live out and embody confrontation
- 4) Wendy
 - a) Being cornerstone of community

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- i) It is everything that Haverford is
 - ii) You come here and expectations are high → different level of maturity, permeates everything
 - iii) Tells recruits that Honor Code, community are vital parts
 - iv) Expectations at another school that you can't throw mimeograph in garbage because students would go looking through the garbage for the answers
- 5) David
- a) Honor Code represents best hopes for the community
 - i) Sometimes things fall short, implemented in imperfect ways
 - b) Time at Haverford
 - i) Three very serious Abstracts came out
 - ii) People on campus thought that the Honor Code was breaking down
 - (1) There was no way to track repeated violations
 - c) Many well-intentioned students work hard to make this work
 - d) Other institutions
 - i) Three universities, then return
 - ii) Amazing how different expectations are at other schools
 - iii) Attempts at cheating
 - (1) Engineering students breaking into buildings at night and trying to "beat professors" in a kind of competition
 - (2) The sort of environment that that behavior engenders is quite toxic
 - (3) Having an honor code makes the community that much better
- 6) Student question: after being at Haverford, how did you find other academic institutions, and expectations of trust?
- a) Wendy: students in her dept. cheated, didn't even really try to hide it
 - b) Ken: was supposed to meet kid at 3:00
 - i) Kid said- I was there at 3:00- An impossibility
 - ii) Feels like he doesn't know at other places
 - (1) If kids were cheating, figured it was them hurting themselves
 - c) Howard
 - i) Didn't hear a lot about cheating
 - ii) Lots of independent work
 - iii) When teaching, assumed not much cheating, but sometimes flags would be raised
 - (1) Plagiarism websites
 - iv) Different procedure for taking exams
 - (1) Professor in room
 - d) David
 - i) As grad student, other grad students were serious and weren't going to cheat themselves
 - ii) But when taught undergrads as TA, got the feeling that some students saw education as a game, how to outsmart professor

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- (1) Had to change approach to teaching to a certain extent: multiple versions of exams
- (2) Had incident of outright copying of exam
- (3) A professor decided to print all exams in white (normally diff exams were color coded)
 - (a) A student foolishly copied multiple choice answers for another version
 - (i) Some professors were overjoyed to have “caught the student in the act: they won”
 - (ii) Idea of competition between students and faculty
- e) Ken thinks social Honor Code more important
 - i) Particularly in context and in relation to other institutions
 - (1) A year in Edinburgh
 - (2) A sense of respect for others that is assumed here
 - (a) A fraternity atmosphere else here
 - (b) Why did you come back? Comfortable
 - (3) There is the concern that social honor code sometimes has inhibitory effect
 - (4) A concern that some students don’t come here because of the Honor Code
 - f) But
- 7) Other professors asked to touch on social aspect of Code
 - a) David asked: Has there been a social trial in the past few years?
 - i) Existence of a different procedure might be good?
 - b) Ken hates the idea of trials, violations
 - c) Howard says when he thinks of Code, it is not about trials and violations
 - i) When thinks of Code linked more to community aspect
 - ii) Helps breed self-selected kind of student: attracts a certain kind of student
 - (1) Brings these people together
 - (2) With the result that social interactions were of a certain nature
 - iii) Ken: can’t enforce virtuous behavior, but you can model it
 - (1) Thinks that is what Social Code does
 - (2) Modeling a certain kind of behavior
- 8) Question: has living with Code for 4 years impacted how you’ve gone on with your life?
 - a) Prior to Honor Code, was used to a specific way of doing schooling
 - b) Haverford introduced him to a different way of doing things
 - c) Would fall back on piece of confrontation
 - i) Asking questions a good thing, has to remind himself that others are not necessarily used to this
- 9) Question: We are in the Haverbubble: what happens when we leave Haverford and go into big bad real world? Can we hack it?
 - a) Wendy: people appreciate moral conviction bred at Haverford
 - i) With economy downturn, a lot of articles written about how business schools need to do more with teaching morals
 - ii) Idea of educating whole person

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- iii) When you go out into big bad world, you bring this whole culture into it
 - b) Ken: You can't play that game and if you try you will lose
 - i) So you just don't play the game
 - c) Howard:
 - i) There are settings where...many places not set up like this community
 - ii) How Code has benefitted him is still being realized
 - iii) People make decisions he would not be comfortable with, ways to get ahead
 - iv) He has found that he has to just carve out own way
 - v) How has Haverford equipped him for world in a way other places would not
 - (1) Made more independent
 - (2) Other people from other programs had been fed stuff
 - (a) He was better equipped with tools to carve out academic path, pursue knowledge
 - (b) Other professors sometimes not comfortable with students like him
 - (c) Haverford helped him in those settings
 - d) David
 - i) There is a bubble
 - ii) It's just a matter of making adjustments, not throwing everything away
 - iii) So many idealistic people who felt let down by Haverford a week after arriving
 - (1) Based on what they saw as prospective → arrived and were let down, saw as utopia
 - (2) You don't have that when you leave Haverford
- 10) Question: how has Honor Code affected athletics, being director?
- a) It is about doing the right thing
 - b) You are faced with choices, and you can cheat or do right thing
 - c) Self-selected community again, people want to be here
 - d) Coaches come here for that community atmosphere
 - i) Honor Code creates culture of expectations
- 11) Howard asked a question: one thing that has been on my mind... way Honor Code plays out on both campuses, unproctored exams... idea of grades, grade inflation... problem here and at other institutions
- a) Grade inflation as a violation of academic integrity
 - i) Has that conversation been raised in relation to Honor Code?
 - b) Responses
 - i) Because we don't talk about grades, it would be difficult to determine whether grade inflation was going on
 - ii) Sometimes students would say that they can't believe they got grade because they worked so hard...
 - iii) Students comfortable approaching professors thinking they wanted another grade
 - c) Ken: lots of gray area when grading
 - i) two kinds of students: what did I do wrong, and I deserved grade I got
 - ii) Religion dept. statistically tougher than other departments

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- (1) If had been other dept., that grade would have been higher → not fair, student claimed
 - (a) Interesting question
 - d) David: committees do look at grades across depts., etc. on a statistical basis (Middle States)
 - i) Hasn't been hounded into changing a student's grade
 - ii) Is grade inflation an Honor Code issue?
 - (1) How students and faculty interact
 - (a) Students respect grade given by faculty, and faculty would have earned that trust
 - (b) If grades creeping higher in dept. → a potential integrity issue
 - e) Howard: faculty member has responsibility to not let grades creep up and up
 - i) But often not phrased or seen in that way
 - ii) Seen as outside of honor issue
 - f) Honor Code all about trust
 - i) Certain amount of trust in faculty that they will get the grades we deserve
 - ii) Faculty are not really under the Honor Code, though
 - iii) A built-in asymmetry
- 12) As former students, and now professors, how does that asymmetry seem?
- a) Ken would argue that they are committed to Honor Code, even if not bound
 - b) Sees himself as someone who "ought to be obligated" by the honor code
 - c) Quaker ethos affected him
 - i) Curious to know what the faculty who didn't go to Haverford' relation to Code is
- 13) Broaden question: not a part of Code in same way
- i) Don't go to Plenary
 - b) David: The faculty values the student government process
 - i) Students entrusted with management
 - ii) Allowed to make mistakes and figure it out
 - iii) Whether Honors should be mentioned at Graduation
 - iv) Basic respect faculty has for students
 - (1) Staying out of it not "opting out" but a respect that "it's yours (the students)"
 - c) Howard: Cycling in different orbits
 - i) The Bryn Mawr students with their code
 - ii) Haverford students with their code
 - iii) Faculty
- 14) Why are some faculty members very against the code?
- a) Ken: because it is inhibitive, prevents diversity of students on campus
 - i) Certain conversations don't happen because of Code
 - (1) Rather than it being groundwork that allows conversation to occur
- 15) So how do you fix that while staying true to what we are as a community?
- a) How do you make people
 - i) People are afraid of confrontation here

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- b) Ken: right now teaching class “blacks and Jews”
 - i) Have to create a safe space in which students feel comfortable
 - ii) How do you do that? Model it
 - iii) Be able to disagree, argue, and then go out for a beer afterward
 - (1) Problem when it ends up being personal
 - iv) Need to have enough students willing to risk themselves
 - c) Science dept. modeling disagreements
 - i) Frustrated when students won’t argue in class
 - ii) Want to model this with debates between faculty in political science dept.
- 16) Anything we can do as a student body?