

# Honor Council

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

Public Portion Minutes from December 6, 2009

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**Members Present:** Dan, Emily, Carolyn, Noah, Susanna, Hazel, Josh, Anna, Emma, Ryan, Dana, Gabe, Sam, Hope, Silas, Seth

**Members Absent:** Inez

**Guests:** Yost, Will, Papa, Andy, Eleanor

I. Moment of Silence

II. Public Portion

- 1) Welcome to second ever big name public portion!
  - a) Inez is in NY taking Japanese Proficiency Exam
- 2) Committee Reports
  - a) Student Outreach
    - i) T-shirts will have to be next semester
    - ii) We had abstract discussions last week
    - iii) We have Abstract discussions this week
      - (1) We have had some complaints that we haven't been advertising these well
      - (2) We should have a Go! thread and everyone bump it
  - b) Abstract Committee
    - i) We may or may not have met
  - c) Faculty outreach
    - i) Haven't met
    - ii) Survey still in the works
      - (1) Gabe will be looking at questions, to be continued next semester
      - (2) We don't need IRB approval
  - d) Will asks: why do we always ask about abstract committee when they can never say anything?
    - i) So that people know that abstract committee exists!
  - e) JSAAPP met Thursday, Ryan wasn't able to be there
    - i) Talked about events of weekend
  - f) Safety and Security
    - i) Trying to promote counseling services for students

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- ii) For finals, and also just in general
  - iii) Needs to be more advertisement for H1N1
  - iv) Question: why is psychological help a Safety and Security issue?
    - (1) May have to do with alcohol incidents
    - (2) Also S&S is intermediary after hours
  - v) Talked about date rape drugs, overview of current program of responding to sexual assault
    - (1) Will work more with SOAR
    - (2) Advertise women's ctr. more
  - vi) We have posters to put up reminding community about the Code during finals
    - (1) Stokes and Chase especially
- 3) The Pragmatics of Confrontation (Big Name Public Portion!)
- (1) Who should confront who? Who are we supposed to confront? The issue of pride? Thoughts on the word "confrontation"
    - (a) Ryan: The word confrontation itself is not effective
      - (i) Carries far too much of a serious connotation
        - 1. People jump to conclusion it must be something formal
    - (b) Dana: agrees there is a negative connotation and serious tone outside of Haverford
      - (i) Word used differently here than outside world, so when freshmen get here, they don't know how we use it differently
      - (ii) People assume that there has to be some sort of structure
        - 1. And that it will go to Honor Council
      - (iii) Just ask people
  - (2) Susanna: think it's an issue in general that if you...
  - (3) Eleanor: people avoid confrontation, and it's disheartening
    - (a) What about replacing the word "confrontation" in the Honor Code? Lots more words
      - (i) Something like having a dialogue
        - 1. "Haverfront"
  - (4) Gabe got an email earlier with the suggestion Confuntation
- ii) Susanna likes the word confrontation
- (1) Educate that away
  - (2) The same way you adjust to a nickname

- iii) Need something that expressed that confrontation is serious and meaningful
- iv) Instead of trying to switch the word, go thru a campaign that this is not some scary system
- v) Even like multiple choice posters
  - (1) Like the ABC thing
- vi) What if we changed the word? Dialogue, discussion. But discussion is a word that is used all the time
- vii) Do we want a word that is part of everyday speech, or do we want a word that stands out, carries some weight, think of embodying Trust, Concern, Respect
- viii) Noah has a different idea of confrontation
  - (1) Easy to just let it go
  - (2) And the whole point is that you don't do that
- ix) The bigger problem is that people avoid discussion in the first place, rather than that word is problem
- x) Eleanor: What if we made a video about confrontation, something that demonstrates rather than just writing about it, something that goes beyond Customs week
- xi) Anna: there is a borderline between keeping people informed and telling them what to do
- xii) We use the example of turning down music, but Susanna feels that that is more personal
  - (1) It seems like we need to talk more about what to do when your friend does something that upsets you
- xiii) Sometimes when someone is hurt by another person's actions, is it okay for someone else to confront in their place?
  - (1) In the Code, it says that we can have HC member as a proxy
- xiv) Carolyn: hard to come to a fruitful conclusion through proxies
- xv) Sam: that may be true, but maybe if you just feel uncomfortable broaching the subject
  - (1) Like the role of the Customs team for freshmen
- xvi) Community member suggests: what if we had a practice your confrontation day?
  - (1) Everyone go out of your way to be an ass
  - (2) And then practice confronting
- xvii) On the subject of someone else confronting or helping confront

- xviii) Dana: you can tag team on what you're trying to talk to the person about
- b) What about anonymous confrontations?
  - i) Gabe was confronted anonymously once and it irked him
    - (1) The ACBs
  - ii) But is there ever value in having a confrontation be anonymous?
    - (1) Confrontation is a learning process and that simply cannot happen when anonymous
    - (2) You have to remember that there's a human being on the other end
    - (3) Anonymous there's a tendency to be aggressive, face to face forces you to stop and be more rational
  - iii) Anna agrees but... what if she doesn't realize she's doing something wrong, even if not phrased well, it might bring an issue to mind
    - (1) A lot of self-reflection with a confrontation that is not emphasized and should be
  - iv) Eleanor: we always focus on the person bringing a confrontation
    - (1) What about the receiving end? How to react when you are confronted?
  - v) Noah: Someone could also be over-apologetic and nice
    - (1) It should be a compromise, not just the confronted yielding and saying, oh no, I was completely wrong
      - (a) Usually they will have some reason for acting the way they did
  - vi) Hits on an interesting issue of pride
    - (1) It can be a difficult thing to overcome your pride
      - (a) On receiving end, on the person doing the confronting even
    - (2) How can we overcome this?
    - (3) Not sure it's something that has to be completely overcome
      - (a) Your pride is burst and sometimes that can be valuable
    - (4) Noah: first impulse is that you should practice confrontation, but when?, people wouldn't want to do a workshop every semester or anything
- c) How do we make confrontation a more feasible option?
  - i) Encouraging confrontation is a good thing
    - (1) Someone talks about experience with roommates
    - (2) Everyone's life would have been so much better if there were a confrontation
  - d) Noah: big campus event of some sort a good idea
    - i) For something like the situation Emma was talking about, advertising someone who can mediate discussions, not necessarily Honor Council

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- (1) Anna: Isn't that kind of the dean's job?
- ii) Josh feels like that point is driven home by Customs people
  - (1) The point that you can talk to them if you need help with issue
- iii) Susanna: depends, what if not comfortable with those people, emphasizing with deans a good thing
- iv) Susanna: what about some kind of phone line?
  - (1) That could be useful here
  - (2) Gabe says we've had several iterations of that in the past
  - (3) STUMP
    - (a) Student mediation panel
    - (b) A spinoff from Honor Council
    - (c) Problem that nobody actually used Stump, even though advertised pretty well
- v) Emma: the problem is that people don't really want to confront
  - (1) Hard to talk to someone anonymous who isn't involved when it's such a small campus
- e) Identify barriers to confrontation
  - i) It's awkward
    - (1) Uncomfortable and time consuming
    - (2) There's not an easy way to phrase some of these things
    - (3) Starting with the dialogue is the hardest part
  - ii) Dana: people are afraid to confront because they think of it as being time consuming
    - (1) Maybe people take it one step too far thinking it's going to go to Honor Council
  - iii) People feels like it ruins dynamics
- f) Community members: what do you think are barriers?
  - i) Yost: in some cases people think that it's making a bigger issue out of things that aren't
  - ii) I don't want to seem like being too nitpicky about something, perceived as acting like jerk
- g) Hope agrees that that is a problem
  - i) We need to show people that it's okay to confront, that it doesn't have to be seen as you being a jerk
- h) Eleanor: You feel like you kind of get one shot at it and if it doesn't work, well, I tried

- i) Emma: people should realize that if you've asked them every day for a month and it never works, at that point it does become a reasonable thing to bring to Honor Council
  - i) What if problem continues but it's not an issue of disrespect?
    - (1) Can get creative in solutions
    - (2) Post signs reminding person that you try to sleep at a certain time so reminder not to play loud music
  - ii) Someone comments that confrontation is not really a natural thing
- j) For the most part people aren't that bothered when you do ask them
- k) When are we supposed to confront?
  - i) What qualifies as a confrontation? Is there a barrier?
    - (1) Anna: thinks it has to do with utility: how much is this affecting me?
      - (a) If 20 people are having a party and it's bothering me minorly...
      - (b) Am I hampering what they do as an individual?
        - (i) Maybe just a difference in identity
    - (2) Eleanor: A question of phrasing sometimes, less of a demand, and more of what we can do to make us both happier?
  - ii) Dana: utility is really interesting
- l) Dana: Often the person doing the confronting has a LOT of concern for the person being confronted
  - i) Should I really ask this person to change what they're doing because of something I want?
    - (1) It's your pride, this is how I am, I need to do this in my own interest
  - ii) Papa: you maybe confront people about issues when it's more difficult to tolerate than confront
  - iii) Dana: when it's a repeated thing, then it becomes more of a concern
    - (1) That person didn't reciprocate the concern
- m) Sam: also a difference between social and academic confrontations
  - i) Less of a question of tolerating, more like if you see someone cheating, you confront
  - ii) Social confrontations don't need to be militant, you just confront when something bothers you
- n) Anna disagrees about academic being more straightforward: what about collaboration, projects, etc.
  - i) Even plagiarism, do you quote one word?
- o) Eleanor: some of that falls under the student/professor relationship

- p) What if you hear someone talking about an exam?
  - i) Who do you tell in what order, do you just remind them of not talking about content etc., do you approach professor?
  - ii) Some people don't know: being a freshman, people would sometimes start beginning to talk about a test, small things like, oh, it took me a long time, etc.
  - iii) And the Customs people had to say "No, actually you can't do that"
  - iv) This is something not always clear to freshmen
- q) When making the confrontation guidelines that HC recently released, we didn't want to specify how this conversation would go
- r) Still, there is sort of an idealized confrontation, how do things proceed, what does it look like
  - i) Ideally hey, you're doing something that bothers me, ok I'll stop
  - ii) Is more discussion good?
    - (1) To actually see where someone is coming from
    - iii) "my reaction to x is such and such"
    - iv) Noah: we all say understand where someone is coming from
      - (1) We all give music example
      - (2) But maybe not
      - (3) Music thing maybe a request
    - v) Anna: but a request fits into a broad definition of confrontation
      - (1) If we want to make it not scary, we have to include these not scary things
    - vi) Susanna: agrees that turning down music is a confrontation, but shouldn't be the example we always go to
- s) Gabe: I personally view confrontation with a much lower threshold as to what qualifies as confrontation
  - i) Many times during this meeting people have disagreed
    - (1) Almost views that as a kind of confrontation
  - ii) We've all been asserting one's opinions, but is that just Haverford?
- t) So many people say that the Honor Code prevents people from asserting themselves
  - i) But Susanna feels that this conversation shows that the Code allows us to talk about ideas
  - ii) And that this isn't exactly confrontation
- u) It could be a confrontation if something really bothered you
  - i) Otherwise, I just agree with you
- v) Dana: both Anna and Sam used the word bother

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- i) The degree to which something bothers you changes your personal view of success
- ii) Dana: I think that the hardest confrontation is when you are confronting someone about their personal well-being
- iii) If you think someone has a drinking problem
  - (1) How is that discussion going to be successful, how is that going to be resolved?
    - (a) Is it, you're over 18 and I've expressed my concern
    - (b) Or is it when that person cuts back?
  - iv) Is it once you feel okay with their behavior or is it once you've said your piece? That goes back to the bothering
- w) Emily: An idea forming about having people post confrontation experiences in some way
  - i) A confrontation stories box on Go!
  - ii) Something in new Go! boards
  - x) Posting on bathroom stalls?
  - y) Conversation of the day
  - z) We could all volunteer to submit our own first
    - aa) Should be anonymous: and we will have to read through before we post them
    - bb) This idea generally met favorably

### III) Private Portion