

# Honor Council

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

**TOM SAWYER ABSTRACT DISCUSSION** Minutes from December 12, 2010

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**Members Present:** Emily Dix, Jacob Axelrod, Phil Drexler, Liza Alpert, Hillary Schwartz

I. Moment of Silence

II. Read Intro, Fact-Finding, and Statement of Violation

Emily: Do you think they should have come to a statement of violation?

Jacob: Quotes are supposed to be used then analyzed. Tom used large sections.

Liza: The problem is the lack of quotation marks.

Emily: Is there an intention? Is intention important?

Liza: Intention isn't important when it comes to the statement of violation

Jacob: It would have been very different if he had used the wrong citation method....at least would have given recognition

Emily: Juror thing was weird... Missed a juror but had fact finding, realized it didn't fulfill multi-cultural juror requirements. What do you think of that in terms of procedure?

Jacob: Ideal world, should have realized they didn't meet the requirement, and should have figured it out, but it probably didn't matter that much

Emily: But was it the requirement or that they only had 9 jurors?

Liza: Really only mattered that they were in disagreement with the Plenary resolution

Phil: Realized they only have 9 jurors...

Jacob: If you're missing one, regardless of multicultural, you need 10 jurors.

Phil looks thoughtful...

Phil: I almost want to say they should have redone the fact finding because I feel like that 10th juror could have had an important question to ask. There's a reason there's 10 and not 9. That 10th juror is important so to just say that this is what happened in the fact finding portion, might as well read statements.

Emily: Also true that this person is determining that this was or was not a violation without talking to them. There's a reason Honor Council comes to a suspicion and we decide on whether or not there was a violation after talking to the person. But should 1 person hold up the whole trial?

III. Circumstantial:

Emily: Did the assignment how he interpreted it. Now understanding it better, would do it differently. How do you guys read that sentence?

Jacob: Regretted it now but with his current level of understanding, wouldn't have done anything different.

Emily: He understood it as an article summary and it was intended to be more of a review and have analysis. Do you think that's a legitimate way to write an article summary? Or is it still problematic?

Jacob Horn: I don't know what's been said. But you should have an intuitive sense of, if you've produced an entire page of stuff you've taken basically word for word from another source I think you should be wondering what the nature of the assignment was. I

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think that's the point you start asking questions and go to the professor for clarification. Difficult to divorce my intuition and what you expect from someone else. A lot of warning signs for Tom that something was not right about this and he should know to pay attention.

Emily: The code tells us to ask for clarification but how do you claim someone should ask for clarification if they didn't know they need it? If you're getting those signals, you need to ask.

Jacob Horn: Extending that, I wonder if things are really worked out between him and the teacher if he still has no clarity on what the assignment was.

Emily: I interpreted the problem less of an article summary vs. analysis but more you're taking someone else's ideas...

Jacob: If he had cited it and simply done the assignment incorrectly, it wouldn't have been an Honor Council matter. He plagiarized and that's the issue at hand.

Phil: I feel like, if you're using another source, you have to cite it. If you're in an English class and you're using a book you read in class, you still have to cite it. And once you cite it, you see "I've taken a lot of what I'm saying directly from the article..."

Emily: Professor ended up giving him a D instead of an F. Do you agree with that decision?

Phil: Yes

Jacob: I understand either way.

Emily: Do you think any of the blame falls to the professor in this situation?

Jacob: Probably should have mentioned a citation style. At the same time, you should know at least to cite it or quote it or something. Not just to put full sentences or paragraphs in.

Jacob Horn: Ideally, a professor should write things in a clear fashion. Certainly, if the assignment instructions were vague, that's something you mention in evaluation or something like that. As far as the code process is concerned, it's not like any of the blame sits with the professor. I was maybe just a little concerned at how the professor didn't necessarily seem.. but I guess I pin it on Tom, Tom doesn't necessarily see what the problem is. Some of that might be Tom's confusion about plagiarism or Tom's confusion about the assignment or could just be him refusing to face the facts. I don't get a strong sense that the professor was doing a lot to work with him on that. If it was something that prompted his concern in the first place, which clearly it did, the professor could and should engage more throughout that process.

Jacob: I tend to agree but I feel like part of it's Tom's apathy. I feel like the professor got the sense that maybe it wasn't worth his time...

Phil: Other thing about Tom- almost seems to hide behind the idea of restorative justice. With restorative justice, sometimes it can feel like a punishment but that's not the goal of the resolution. Honor Council can ask you to do something and it's going to be something you don't want to do. Goal is not to make you suffer, it's to help you understand. It seems like he was trying to get the least amount of resolutions possible. Goes back to the same point, he's apathetic. Doesn't care about getting restored to the community- cares about being done with the trial.

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Emily: Good point- what is restorative? What does it mean to be restorative? Not without accountability and consequence- but what's the different between consequence and punishment?

Phil: You can argue that prison is a form of restorative justice but also as a form of punishment.

Jacob: Telling him to write a letter, I don't understand how you'd think that a reflective letter- it's useful for you it's useful for the community. No resolutions.

Jacob Horn: Essentially, he didn't think anything was appropriate. Which means he didn't think he did anything wrong. Which I think was the fundamental problem.

ONLY CAME FOR PIZZA. THANKS JACOB!

Emily: We talk about blame on Tom and the professor, but was this a problem with the jury not saying "We don't think you understand what the problem is"

Jacob Horn: Doesn't seem to understand the problem, which is systematic, but what more can you do? There's a limit on what's appropriate. Even though I'd define it as a failure of the process, I don't know if I'd hold that against the jury.

Jacob: Agreed, do you want to get the jury together and assemble a power point? There's a point at which the trial expects that the confronted party takes some value in the process, which Tom didn't. That's really how the system works best. Only so much a jury can do. You can talk to him, but you're not going to get him to have a vested interest with any level of expedience.

Jacob Horn: Thinking through it, what if they had made him rewrite his Honor Code essay? Then I thought that that might not be a great idea. It's not that he was unwilling to restore himself, but that he felt he hadn't done anything wrong.

Emily: What if they made him redo the assignment in the way it was supposed to be done. I feel like then he could have contrasted

Hilary: Still would have thought it was just a different assignment...

Jacob: Honor Council's job isn't to teach you how to write a paper. That's what the writing center is for. There's only so much Honor Council should do. Certain level of initiative and responsibility being a Haverford student. And that's Tom's responsibility, not Haverford's or the Honor Council.

Jacob Horn: Don't like Tom's attitude toward the process or I'm indifferent, but where he says he doesn't want to help others, not a direct restoration but a great way of making it up to the community and he said that's not fair but I will do it if you force me- I don't read that well.

Jacob: Flat out said, I don't want to do the letter, I don't want to do any resolutions. If that's what will end the trial, I'll write a letter.

Phil: Helping others is only half the letter. The more important part of the letter is the reflecting and actually saying... Writing a letter to the community helps you understand what you did wrong. And to help you understand that.

Emily: I feel like just being part of this community, you should have a general willingness to have others in that situation whether or not you have gone through the trial process.

Jacob: Maybe that got lost...

Emily: Maybe that's not why he came here...

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Emily: The problem he sees it that he was confused on the assignment and not that he plagiarized

Jacob Horn: I'm surprised they didn't make him read Maude's essay.

IV. Letter

Emily: Reading the letter again made me feel like he knew that he did plagiarize

Phil: Or he knew what to write

Emily: Was it simply a bitter juror who wrote the abstract?

Liza: Or maybe he legitimately reflected.

Jacob Horn: I think to a certain extent he was putting down on paper what he was told he did. But from his response at being told he had to do this, it seems like he didn't feel like that was wrong. Maybe he reflected...

Emily: What do you think of the guidelines they came up with for avoiding unintentional plagiarism?

Phil: Two of them are the same. One's basically ask your professor if have questions. One's about your writing and one's about your bibliography.

Emily: What do you think about the publishing comment?

Hilary: Was weird and unnecessary...

Jacob: Seemed to misinterpret what the professor was saying. I don't think her was trying to say "I would like to publish this response paper..." It was a matter of the expectations of academic writing. He missed the point. If it makes it feel like he'll now be careful, then good for him. But I think he missed the point.

Emily: I think the way he interpreted it missed the point of plagiarism again.

Phil: I think he took a good lesson from the point, but I don't think that's the point the professor was trying to make.

Emily: What do you think of the question "Do different types of essays...call for different definitions of plagiarism?"

Hilary: Miscitations perhaps- difference between social science papers for instance, but I would still be citing. no reason not to cite.

Phil and Jacob: Supposed to put it in your own words. That's the point of a summary.

Final Thoughts?

V. Moment of Silence