

# Honor Council

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

Public Minutes from March 30, 2008

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**Members Present:** Daniel, Carolyn, Katie, Lily, Cody, Jamey, Nick, John, Anastasia, Sydney (late), Sarina, Luke, Jackie, Benji, Katia, Jake

**Member Absent:** Susanna

**Guest:** Dennis Norris, Daniel Kent, Dana Eiselen

I. Moment of Silence

II. Public Portion

A. Discussion of Anonymous Confession Boards:

It is acknowledged by all that postings on the anonymous confession boards over the past week have sometimes resulted in distinct breaches of trust/lack of respect among community members. The co-chairs received several e-mails to the effect that community members were concerned about this, especially in view of the fact that, since the boards are anonymous, direct confrontations cannot take place. The central issue discussed during this meeting regarding the boards was whether Honor Council had a duty to do anything about the boards, and if so, what was to be done.

--the question was raised as to whether or not the honor code extended to online spaces, and so whether Honor Council had jurisdiction over the anonymous boards; certainly a commitment to the honor code exists on Go.

--the issue was raised that the opinions of the twenty or so people in the meeting may not accurately reflect the opinions of the entire campus, and so to take the boards down altogether would not be condonable without first polling the student body to get their opinions; conversely, the point was made that even if one person wanted to confront someone about a post but couldn't because the post is anonymous, then that is a failure of the Honor Code and so must be addressed by Council

--the point was brought up that the boards do have value; they create a space in the Haverford community that allows one to confess one's thoughts and opinions, and possibly ask for help, without signing one's name. additionally, the people who posted offensive things were thinking those things beforehand in any case, and now at least a dialogue had been opened up about them. The Honor Code explicitly states that students should engage in dialogue without "self-censorship" and the anonymous boards lend themselves to free expression.

---conversely, the point was made that although the Honor Code exhorts students not to self-censor, it simultaneously stresses accountability; one must not self-censor, but one must always be able to be held accountable for what one says. Confrontation is the process of accountability, and the anonymous boards promote a space where direct confrontation and accountability are not possible.

---in the end, Council decided on the course of action detailed in Sunday night's e-mail to the community (temporary shutting down of the boards to re-write terms of use and create a login mechanism)

B. Committee Reports

(1) Faculty Outreach: Pizza, Profs, and the Code to take place next week

(2) Student Outreach: shirts are being worked on

III. Private Portion and Moment of Silence