

Honor and Discipline Committee Report for 2008-09

1. A junior was accused of violating the Honor Code by copying solutions from an online source for his/her weekly assignments in a math class. At the hearing, he/she admitted to using answers from the solution manual that he/she found online. The student was very contrite. The Committee recommended that, because of his/her past Honor Code violation, he/she be suspended from the College for the rest of this academic year and that, after he/she returned, he/she be placed on disciplinary probation until graduation. The student also received a failing grade in the course.
2. A senior was accused of consulting a website where specific questions to a math exam were posted, then using the answers and representing them as the product of his/her own work in the exam. The student maintained that his/her use of the website was permitted under the instructor's open book exam policy. The Committee, on the other hand, believed that the professor provided additional instructions for the exam ("You must do your own work on this exam without any form of consultation with any other person") that made clear that answers to the questions had to be the product of the student's own work. The Committee unanimously agreed that the student's use of the online forum did not constitute doing "your own work." The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that he/she receive a failing grade in the course and that he/she be placed on Disciplinary Probation until you graduate.
3. A sophomore with a past honor code violation was accused of violating the Honor Code by directly copying portions of text from an unattributed source for a paper in an Africana Studies course. The student expressed great regret but also contended that he/she had taken notes carelessly and had unwittingly incorporated verbatim material from an online source. Members of the committee noted that while this might be true, the paper also showed evidence of the student's having cut and pasted portions of the online source. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that he/she receive a failure in the course, be suspended for the remainder of the academic year, and be placed on Disciplinary Probation when he/she returns until graduation.
4. A senior was accused of violating the Honor Code by consulting and using nearly verbatim passages from a source on the internet without attributing it in a paper for an English class. The student contended that, while he/she did use these unattributed passages, and that while he/she regretted his/her actions, he/she did so without knowing that he/she was plagiarizing. The student explained that the carelessness was likely the result of a personal loss he/she had experienced. The Committee expressed condolences but also recommended, as sanctions, that the student receive a failing grade in the course and be placed on Disciplinary Probation until he/she graduates.
5. A senior was accused of violating the Honor Code by submitting work in a Theatre course that was substantially the same as work that he/she had completed in another Theatre course. The student apologized for his/her actions and said that, although he/she did not know that submitting the same work to different courses was an honor code violation, he/she accepted responsibility for his/her actions. Several members of the Committee understandably wondered why he/she never talked to the course professors about what he/she was doing and how, even if he/she didn't know there was an honor code violation at work, the student wouldn't have at least thought it was an unusual thing to do. The Committee took the student at his/her word, however, and recommended that he/she should receive a failing grade in only one of the two courses, and not

- both. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that he/she receive a failing grade in one of the two courses and be placed on Disciplinary Probation until graduation.
6. A sophomore was accused of violating the Honor Code by taking text from an online source and both using it and representing it as his/her own work in a class presentation in a German class. During the hearing, the student alternated between admitting that he/she had violated the Honor Code and contending that the Honor Code did not apply to the assignment and that the assignment did not fall under the purview of the Honor Committee. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that he/she receive a failing grade and be placed on Disciplinary Probation until the end of the fall 2009 semester.
 7. A first-year student was accused of violating the Honor Code by representing work from an outside source as his/her own in a homework assignment for a French class. The student accepted full responsibility for his/her actions but explained that the material came from a French instructional book he/she owned that was not assigned in the class. He/she had memorized large portions of this book as a way to improve his/her language skills, a method he/she had used in learning English before coming to college and in beginning to learn another language at Williams. He/she contended that he/she had not understood such regurgitation of memorized texts to be a violation of the Honor Code but now did grasp that. The Committee was persuaded by the student's argument and recommended that he/she be sanctioned with failure on the assignment and receive a disciplinary warning from the Dean.
 8. A senior was accused of violating the Honor Code by using text -- both verbatim and paraphrased -- from an online source without proper attribution for an essay in an Economics course. The student maintained throughout the hearing that he/she had problems with using Microsoft Word to arrange the footnotes correctly but denied plagiarizing any material. The Committee found direct evidence of plagiarized text, however, that were unrelated to the arrangement of the footnotes. The Committee recommended as sanctions that he/she receive a failing grade in the course and that he/she be placed on Disciplinary Probation until graduation. The student did not graduate with his/her class.
 9. A first-year student was accused of violating the Honor Code by representing another person's work as his/her own in a Philosophy class. The student acknowledged that what he/she did violated the Honor Code, but that it was unintentional and he/she did not aim to deceive the professor. The student explained that he/she started the paper the night before and had not given himself/herself enough time to write it. But he/she also noted that he/she had felt overwhelmed by the class at times. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that the student receive a failing grade in the course and be placed on Disciplinary Probation until the end of the spring semester 2010.
 10. A junior with a previous honor code violation was accused of violating the Honor Code by representing others' work as his/her own (both verbatim and paraphrased) without proper attribution in a German class. The student accepted full responsibility for the violation. The student noted that, while he/she had felt overloaded by the academic pressures of the semester, he/she also understood that he/she needed to change the way that he/she approached academic work. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that the student receive an "E" in the class, be suspended for the 2009-2010 academic year, and be placed on Disciplinary Probation until graduation once he/she returns.
 11. A senior was accused of violating the Honor Code by using text - both verbatim and paraphrased - from an online source without proper attribution for the final paper in a Political Science class. The student admitted that he/she was under a great deal of academic pressure and was trying to

make the minimum required length for the paper. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that the student receive a failing grade in the course, and the student did not graduate with his/her class.

12. A first-year student was found guilty of violating the Honor Code in a Philosophy class by representing others' work as her own (both verbatim and paraphrased) without proper attribution in a paper. On the one hand, the student admitted that he/she had done a sloppy job writing the paper and the student had also reached out for help from his/her professor and TA. But the student also contended that the professor's instructions about attribution were not clear and that he/she did not receive the kind of help he/she needed from the TA in the course. The Committee nonetheless determined that he/she had committed an Honor Code violation, but the Committee could not agree on a sanction (or, to put it more specifically, no proposed sanction received the requisite vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students present). The Dean determined that the student should receive a failure in the assignment and a letter of warning.
13. A junior was accused of violating the Honor Code by representing others' work as her/her own in an Economics course without proper attribution. The student took full responsibility for his/her actions. The Committee recommended, as sanctions, that he/she receive an "E" in the class.

Report of the Discipline Committee

The Discipline Committee consists of all members of the Honor Committee plus four additional members of the faculty. All members of the Committee vote. The Discipline Committee heard no appeals during the 2008-2009 school year.

Dean's Office Action

For the 2008-2009 academic year, there were twelve disciplinary actions taken by the Dean's Office;

1. Two students were suspended for exhibiting behavior not in accordance with the College's Standard of Conduct.
2. Seven students were placed on disciplinary probation exhibiting behavior not in accordance with the College's Standard of Conduct.
3. Four students received written reprimands for exhibiting behavior not in accordance with the College's Standard of Conduct.

The Security Department conducts initial discussions with students about underage drinking and marijuana smoking; these discussions are not a part of the students' disciplinary record. There were 63 such discussions. In especially problematic cases, or in the case of repeated warnings, the student is referred to the Dean's Office