

Honor Committee Report 2016-2017

The Honor and Discipline Committee reports to the College each year about the nature of the cases it has heard, the judgments made, and the penalties it has determined. This report covers the meetings of the committee that reviewed cases during the 2016-2017 school year. Following this report is a summary of disciplinary activity in the Dean's office.

- 1) Two seniors were brought to the committee due to concerns about an exam. The professor's attention was drawn to these exams because they were highly similar in form and content, including identical mistakes. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that both students had violating the honor code by discussing exam questions when it was explicitly forbidden. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the course for both students.
- 2) A first year student was brought to the committee due to concerns about portions of a paper that were taken directly from a website. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by taking material directly from outside sources verbatim without quotation or proper citation. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the assignment.
- 3) Three first year students were brought to the committee due to concerns about collaborating on an assignment. The professor's attention was drawn to these assignments when he noticed that the students submitted work with multiple portions of nearly identical text. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that all 3 students violated the honor code by jointly writing computer code on a lab assignment where such collaboration was explicitly forbidden. The committee agreed on a sanction of failure in the course.
- 4) A senior was brought to the committee due to concerns about collaborating on an assignment. The student explained that while he did look at another student's computer screen, he believed at the time that he was looking at an authorized source of information (a sample assignment provided by the professor); he reported that he was not aware that he was looking at the student's response to the current assignment. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by collaborating with another student on a project when the instructions explicitly prohibited such collaboration. The committee was split in their recommendation about sanction (failure in the course versus failure in the assignment). The Dean imposed the sanction of failure in the assignment a

- 5) Two juniors were brought before the committee due to concerns about collaborating on a programming project that was structured as a take-home exam. The instructions made clear that students could consult their text, notes, lab work, and course-related online examples and web pages, but no other sources for code. The professor's attention was drawn to these students' programming projects because there were portions of it that were either identical or highly similar to each other. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that both students violated the honor code by collaborating on a project when the instructions explicitly prohibited such collaboration. The committee agreed on a sanction of failure in the course.
- 6) One junior and two sophomores were brought to the committee due to concerns about their responses on a midterm exam. Specifically, the professor noticed striking similarities between the responses of all students on one item; not only were the responses to this item highly similar (including the same word choice, axis labels, and general presentation of data), but they were incorrect in the same highly idiosyncratic way. Indeed, no other student in this large class answered those items in this manner. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that there was not a preponderance of evidence to determine that the junior student had willingly collaborated on the exam. Instead, they were convinced that the junior was an unwitting source of information for the two sophomores. As a result, the junior was found not responsible for violating the honor code. The committee did find a preponderance of evidence that the two sophomores had deliberately shared information during the exam. Because the students were not forthright in the meeting, the committee decided on a sanction of failure in the course and 2 semesters of disciplinary probation.
- 7) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about plagiarism. The professor noted that sections of several papers appeared to come directly from online sources. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, they determined that the student violated the honor code on multiple occasions by using ideas and direct quotations from other sources without citation. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the course.
- 8) A senior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about whether he might have used unauthorized materials during an exam. A professor brought the issue forward after being alerted by another faculty member that the student's reading packet was found in a bathroom adjacent to the exam room. Because the student had used that bathroom during the exam, the professor felt obligated to consider the possibility that he had used the reading material during a closed book exam. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee did not feel that there was enough evidence to suggest that the student had violated the honor code; he was found not responsible.
- 9) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concern about his final paper. The professor's attention was drawn to the paper when he noticed some unusual

features in the bibliography (retrieval dates that did not fit with the time frame for the assignment), as well as an overall sense that the style of writing seemed out of character with previous examples of the student's written work. A google search revealed that portions of the paper were highly similar to sources found online. The committee concluded that the student violated the honor code by not only using an unacknowledged source in his paper, but also by including a false citation. As a result, the committee voted, after careful deliberation, on a sanction of failure in the course and disciplinary probation for two semesters.

- 10) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about two projects. The professor was concerned about some of the highly technical aspects of the assignments; when she explored examples of this kind of assignment found online, she discovered that large portions of the student's work were nearly identical to those found on an online source. The committee determined that the student violated the honor code by using an online source for an assignment without attribution, and agreed on a sanction of failure in the course.
- 11) A sophomore was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about the language and content of a paper submission. The professor felt that the student was unlikely to have been able to produce such a paper without outside sources. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee did not feel that there was enough evidence to suggest that the student violated the honor code by using uncited phrases or knowledge from an outside source.
- 12) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about a class project. The professor's attention was drawn to the assignment because it included a table that was identical to that of another student in the class, and was a screen shot rather than an originally crafted table. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by submitting the work of someone else as her own, and recommended a sanction of failure in the course.
- 13) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about whether a student might have used a calculator in an exam when such use was expressly forbidden according to exam instructions. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee found the student's explanation for how he came to respond to the question in the way he did to be credible, and did not feel that there was enough evidence to suggest that he violated the honor code by using a calculator.
- 14) Two first year students were brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about an exam. Specifically, the professor noticed that some portions of the students' answers seemed identical (in idiosyncratic ways). Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee did not feel that there was enough evidence to suggest that the two students violated the honor code by collaborating with each other.

- 15) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about a problem set. The TA noticed that the student's work matched almost word for word the textbook solutions. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student had violated the honor code by using the solutions manual, and recommended a sanction of failure in the course.
- 16) Two juniors were brought to the Honor Committee due to concerns about similarities between their problem sets. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee did not feel that there was enough evidence to suggest that they had violated the honor code by deliberately copying information from each other.
- 17) Two sophomores were brought to the Honor Committee when the professor noted that sections of their problem sets were nearly identical to each other. After hearing the case and deliberating, the Honor Committee found that the students had violated the honor code by collaboratively writing the answers to the assignment when the honor code for the course explicitly prohibited it. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the homework portion of the grade for this course.
- 18) A senior was brought to the Honor Committee when the professor noted that his problem set included some unusual language. The professor noted that a nearly identical solution had been posted online. Following the hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the Honor Code in this course by copying material from an online source and submitting it as his own work. Because this was a second honor code violation for the student in question, the committee recommended a sanction of failure in the course, with a one-year suspension from the College.
- 19) A senior was brought to the Honor Committee when two professors simultaneously noted concerns about writing assignments in two separate courses. In one case, the professor discovered that a section of the student's paper was highly similar to material found on two websites. In the second case, the professor noticed that the overall structure and supporting arguments of the student's paper were highly derivative of 2 sources. Although the student cited the sources in relation to specific sentences in the text, she did not acknowledge that the overall structure, examples, and ordering of arguments presented in your paper were borrowed directly from these sources. After hearing the cases and deliberating, the Honor Committee found that the student violated the honor code in both cases. In the first case, they recommended a sanction of failure in the assignment. In the second case, they recommended a sanction of failure in the course.
- 20) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee when the professor grew concerned about her response to a take-home exam. The instructions for the exam made clear that consulting outside resources was not allowed. The student's response was notable because it began with a missing letter in the first word, ended with a random single letter, and included imbedded references. Upon checking, the

professor found an identical paragraph on a Wikipedia site. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by using an outside source on an exam when no outside sources were allowed. The committee recommended a sanction of failure in the course.

21) A junior was brought to the Honor Committee when a professor noted that his problem set was identical to that of a solution that had been posted online. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by copying large sections of code from an online source. The committee agreed on a sanction of failure in the course.

22) A sophomore was brought to the Honor Committee when a professor became aware of the fact that his multi-file project was identical, almost in its entirety, to another set of files available online. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that the student violated the honor code by copying large sections of code from an online source and submitting it as his own work. The committee agreed on a sanction of failure in the course.

23) Two first year students were brought to the Honor Committee when the professor became aware of the fact that large portions of their papers were nearly identical to each other. One of the students acknowledged that he was under considerable personal pressure and had a hard time keeping up with his coursework. He contacted the other student and asked if he would be willing to share his paper in order to give him a sense of how to get started. Ultimately, the student borrowed large sections of the text directly from his classmate, and then turned them in as his own work. Following the Honor Committee's hearing and deliberations, the committee determined that one student violated the honor code by submitting the classmate's work and claiming it as his own. The committee voted, and agreed on a sanction of failure in the course. The committee determined that the other student was not aware that his paper would be used in this way; he was not found responsible.

In addition to these hearings, several cases were brought to the attention of the Faculty and Student chair that did not, ultimately, go to a hearing. Typically in these cases either someone had been heard talking about cheating but that person could not be identified, or there was a concern regarding student work that turned out to be a problem with the work that was not covered by the honor code.

DISCIPLINARY CASES HEARD BY THE COMMITTEE

The committee heard no disciplinary cases for the 2016-2017 academic year.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ASSIGNED BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE

For the 2016-2017 academic year, 5 students were suspended for one semester for violations of the College's Code of Conduct with regard to illegal drug possession, distribution, and property damage. Twelve students were placed on disciplinary probation due to violations involving disruption, property damage, and minor altercations.

An additional 181 students received warnings about minor violations related to unregistered parties, underage drinking, marijuana possession/use, disruption, copyright infringements, and property damage.