

A Comparative Study of Honor Systems

In the summer of 2002, a 15-question survey was sent to the Caltech Board of Control as well as students and administrators at 30 universities that governed their students with honor systems. A total of ten different schools responded: Haverford College, Lawrence University, Rice University, University of North Carolina, Vanderbilt University, Princeton University, University of Maryland, Stanford University, Georgetown University, and Caltech. The remainder of this report is paraphrased from responses to that survey.

Introduction to the Schools and their Honor Codes

Haverford College in Pennsylvania has an undergraduate population of 1130 and has had an honor code since the 1890's. At Haverford, the Honor Code is a student run, student-administered document/philosophy encompassing both a Social Code and an Academic Code. Because it is a code of the students and by the students, it does not apply to faculty or staff members. When students enroll at Haverford, they send in a card stating they will abide by the Honor Code in lieu of a deposit. All exams are unproctored and self-scheduled. Collaboration on homework is governed by the professor's instructions, and students must simply acknowledge when they receive assistance from others. The social aspect of the honor code emphasizes the Quaker ethos of tolerance and respect. The Honor Code encourages students to resolve conflicts amongst themselves, but about 4 violations each semester are reported to the Honor Council.

Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin has an undergraduate population of 1300-1400 students and their Honor Code dates back to the 1960's. At Lawrence, the honor code only applies to students. There is a signed agreement on their applications and they must sign a document after matriculating and attending an explanatory session. The honor code at Lawrence applies only to academic work, but fits into a larger Social Code. The number of cases varies from 6-30 each year.

Rice University is located in Houston, Texas and has approximately 2700 undergraduates and 1300 graduate students. The Honor Code was adopted by a vote of the student body in 1916, and all members of the Rice University community are bound to the honor system, which applies to all aspects of academic work. During Orientation

Week, the Rice Honor Council gives a presentation to all new students and they are each required to sign a matriculation card. Later in the week, the students must take a test on the Honor System and they must retake and pass the Honor Code test before being allowed to register for classes. Abiding by the Honor Code depends on each professor's expectations. Rice students are afforded the luxury of take-home tests, unproctored exams, and collaboration on some assignments. Social aspects do not fall under the honor code, but are governed by a Code of Student Conduct. The number of violations varies greatly, but does not commonly exceed 40-50 a year.

The **University of North Carolina** enrolls about 25,000 students and has had an Honor Code for over 200 years. At UNC the honor code governs academic work, mandating that students not lie, cheat, or steal. A campus code governs conduct, stating that students will not act to significantly impair the welfare or educational opportunities of others. The honor code applies to all students, and they must sign a pledge on all written work. About 350 violations are reported each year and 150 reach a hearing, with approximately 85% of those students found guilty.

There are approximately 5,900 undergraduate students at Tennessee's **Vanderbilt University**, where an honor code has existed since 1875. The Vanderbilt Honor Code is governed by separate undergraduate and graduate honor councils. The agreement to abide by the code is implicit in matriculation. However, the undergraduates have organized a ceremonial Signing of the Code for incoming freshman for the past five years. The Honor Code governs all academic work and collaboration must be cited. Non-academic matters are handled by the Conduct Council. Between 20 and 80 violations are reported each semester, and most of those go to a hearing. More than half of the hearings end with guilty verdicts.

Princeton University enrolls 4,500 undergraduates. An Honor Code was established there in 1893 in response to rampant cheating on campus. Faculty members had lost trust in students and the honor code was established as a pact between students and the faculty whereby the students would monitor and proctor themselves and faculty members would leave the testing room during examinations. The Princeton honor code applies only to in-class work and is limited to undergraduates. Tests are not proctored, and students must write, "I pledge my Honor that I have not violated the Honor Code

during this examination” on their exams. Other academic work is handled by the Committee on Discipline. There are 15-25 violations reported per year, with 5-8 resulting in hearings.

<i>School</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Code Since</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Sign</i>	<i>UG Enroll</i>	<i>~Convicts / Year</i>
Haverford College	Haverford, PA	1890	Conduct	Enroll	1130	8
Lawrence University	Appleton, WI	1960	Academics	App & Enroll	1350	18
Rice University	Houston, TX	1916	Academics	Enroll & Test	2700	40
University of North Carolina	Chapel Hill, NC	1800	Academics	Work	25000	130
Vanderbilt University	Nashville, TN	1875	Academics	Cere- monial	5900	50
Princeton University	Princeton, NJ	1893	Exams	Work	4500	7
University of Maryland	College Park, MD	1990	Academics	Work	22000	70
Stanford University	Stanford, CA	1921	Academics	Enroll	6500	60
Georgetown University	Washington, DC	1996	Academics	App & Enroll	6000	70
California Institute of Technology	Pasadena, CA	1910	Conduct	None	900	25

Table 1: Aspects of Honor Codes

There are 22,000 undergraduate students at the **University of Maryland**. The University adopted a code of academic integrity about 12 years ago that applies to all its students. Understanding of the code is implicit in matriculation, but the school has recently adopted an Honor Pledge to be signed on all written work. The code applies to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating academic dishonesty. 290 cases of academic dishonesty occurred over the 2001-02 school year. Of those, 97 went to a hearing and about 70% of the students were found responsible.

At **Stanford University**, which enrolls about 6,500 undergraduates, there has been an Honor Code since 1921. At Stanford, the honor code governs all students and

they must sign the honor code upon matriculation. The honor code is also printed on blue books and many faculty have students write or sign an honor code statement on take-home exams and papers. However, the Code applies to all academic work whether or not such a statement has been signed. Honor Code policy is set by a Board on Judicial Affairs (composed of 6 faculty, 6 students, and 3 staff). Any changes to the Judicial Charter must be approved by the student body. In 2001-02, there were 85 Honor Code cases reported. 63 went to hearings and 60 resulted in finding that the student was responsible.

Georgetown University enrolls about 6,000 undergraduates in Washington, DC. There has been a centralized honor system there since 1996; prior to that each undergraduate school ran its own system. Georgetown University Honor Pledge is an explicit statement, “In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, / I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: / To be honest in any academic endeavor, and / To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together, / Faculty may at their discretion require students to include a signed version of the pledge with their assignments.” It only applies to undergraduate students, and they each have to sign the pledge twice: once on their application and again when they matriculate. They also all recite the pledge at New Student Convocation. The Georgetown honor system does not extend to theft or personal conduct, but it is not limited to academics. In addition to cheating on exams or committing plagiarism, falsifying academic documents, abuse of library privileges, and abuse of shared electronic media fall under the honor system. The Office of Student Affairs administers the Code of Conduct that governs other disciplinary matters. Around 70 honor system violations were reported last year and almost all lead to conviction.

The **California Institute of Technology** enrolls just over 900 students and an Honor Code has existed there since 1910. Caltech’s honor code is summed up in a simple statement: “No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the community.” The honor code applies to both academic and non-academic issues, and is applied to faculty and staff as well as students, although only the students have explicit governing bodies. There is no written agreement associated

with the Caltech honor code; it is implicit with matriculation. Each year, there are 20-30 honor code violations reported.

Dealing With Violations

At **Haverford College**, the Honor Code encourages an opening of dialogue between the confronting and confronted parties. Only if the parties cannot resolve the issue themselves is the Honor Council involved. The council is composed of 16 students, 4 from each class. Once a case is reported to the Honor Council, the accused parties are notified and asked to submit a statement. Upon review of these statements, the Honor Council may reach a consensus to move forward with a trial. If a trial is opened, all interested parties are notified. The judiciary body in these trials is composed of 6 members of the Honor Council and 6 randomly selected jurors from the student body. All decisions must be unanimous and in the case of conviction, the sentences are not specified at all by precedent. The jury must decide on actions that address accountability, repairing breaches of trust, and education of the party found in violation. All decisions may be appealed to the President of the College.

At **Lawrence University**, honor code violations may be reported to a member of the Honor Council, the instructor of the class involved, or the Honor Council advisor. The 10-student Honor Council is nominated by faculty. Each member goes through interviews and mock hearings with the Council, and an interview with a panel of faculty and students makes the final appointments to the council. When a violation is reported, the chair of the council and the advisor meet with the complainant and decide if there is sufficient evidence available.

If the decision is made to move forward, the suspected student is notified. If it is the first violation and the student admits to the charges, he/she may opt for a “sanctioning conference” where the student formally admits to the charges and two council representatives determine the sanction according to precedent. If the student does not admit to the violation, the case goes to a hearing. A quorum of the council must be present at a hearing, and both the complainant and respondent are present throughout the hearing. The respondent may bring along a friend for support, but the friend cannot speak during the hearing. The respondent is also assigned one council member as a

procedural advisor and the other council members serve on the hearing panel. The complainant and respondent may bring witnesses or other evidence. Everyone involved in the trial must maintain strict confidentiality. The hearing panel makes decisions by a majority vote, first deciding whether or not a violation has occurred then discussing and voting on an appropriate sanction. The sanctions are decided based on precedent, and records from several years are maintained for this purpose. Appeals are made directly to the President of Lawrence University.

At **Rice University**, violations can be reported to any member of the Honor Council or to the Judicial Programs office. The members of the Honor Council are elected student representatives, both undergraduate and graduate, and ombudsmen. All representatives are elected in campus-wide elections for year-long terms. The Council members elect officers amongst themselves. Accused students are notified by an e-mail from the Chair within 48 hours of their scheduled investigation. They are assigned an ombudsman to assist them, whom accompanies them to an investigative meeting. A Presiding Chair, an Investigator, and two other Council members are present at the investigative meeting. The Investigator is charged with collecting any pertinent evidence, and must inform the accused of all evidence collected. At the investigative meeting, all evidence is presented to the accused and they are given a chance to respond. They do not have to say anything, but are asked to write a written statement. The four council members review the evidence and the statements of the accused and make a decision whether or not to proceed to a hearing.

If the decision is made to proceed to trial, the accused may ask the Investigator to collect evidence on his/her behalf. Nine council members, including the chair, form the judicial committee for a hearing. The accused student is asked to plead either “In Violation” or “Not In Violation” and is allowed to make an opening statement. The council asks any questions of the accused that they want, and witnesses are called according to a predetermined schedule. This phase of the hearing concludes with the accused making a closing statement, which cannot be followed by additional questions. Secrecy is of the utmost importance in these hearings, and the identities of all participants are expected to remain confidential. After closing statements, the council deliberates and they can find a violation of the honor code only by unanimous vote (9-0, no abstentions).

If no such consensus can be reached, the student is found Not in Violation. If a student is found In Violation of the Honor Code, the Honor Council begins deliberations on penalties. Each year, the council must adopt a Consensus Penalty Structure. For the 2001-02 year, this structure was two-tiered: the maximum penalty for a violation worth less than 10% of a course grade is an F in the class, while the maximum for an assignment worth 10% or more is an F and a two-semester suspension. These penalties may be reduced by mitigating circumstances, cooperation with the council, severity of the violation, and severe emotional distress. There are two levels of appeal, first to the Assistant Dean of Student Judicial Programs, and second to the President of the University.

At the **University of North Carolina**, faculty members are obliged to report violations to either the Dean of Students or the Student Attorney General, who is appointed by the Student Body President. The Attorney General's office is comprised solely of students and they are charged with investigating complaints. Defendants are notified when they are being investigated. The Student Attorney General determines if there is sufficient evidence to proceed to Honor Court, and both the defendant and complainant are notified of the charge decision. If the case proceeds to Honor Court, the defendant is assigned a student counsel. The university interest is represented by an investigative council. All hearings are confidential unless the student requests an open hearing. The Honor Court consists of five students, and their verdicts are decided by majority vote. The Court can either conclude guilty beyond a reasonable doubt or not guilty. If the student is found guilty, the hearing moves to a sanctioning phase. Academic violations, drug violations, and sexual assault all have mandatory or minimum sanctions. On all other violations, the court can determine a sanction it finds reasonable and appropriate up to and including a recommendation of expulsion. Appeals are handled by a special panel chaired by an administrator that includes two students and two faculty members.

At **Vanderbilt University**, individuals have a choice of what to do when they suspect an honor code violation. They can issue a personal warning, notify the professor, or notify the president of the Honor Council. If it reaches the Honor Council, two student members are assigned to investigate the suspicion. The investigators immediately notify

the accused student and try to collect as much information about the situation as possible. They create a final report of the case and submit it to the president of the Honor Council, who makes a decision whether or not to hold a pre-hearing. The accused students are assigned advisors, who are not members of the Honor Council, to guide them through the process. At the pre-hearing, a panel votes whether or not to move to a full hearing. This decision is made by a majority vote after a presentation by the investigators.

There are two types of hearings: a small panel, which is generally used for students who plead guilty, and a large panel, which is generally used for students who plead not guilty or have particularly serious charges brought against them. The small panel consists of the president of the Honor Council, another student member, and a faculty advisor. The only people who testify are the accused student and a character witness. The possible penalties at a small panel range from failure in the course to suspension for one semester. The Honor Council president and the other student must be unanimous in their decision. Large panels include the Honor Council president and eleven other council members, as well as a faculty advisor who does not vote. The investigators present evidence and call witnesses during the hearing. The accused student may also call a character witness and has the right to present any new evidence or other information. The accused student is always the last person to testify. The panel deliberates privately, and at least ten votes are required for a guilty verdict. If the student is found guilty, the panel decides an appropriate penalty, ranging from failure in the course to expulsion, by a majority vote. The penalties are decided based on three criteria: truthfulness of the student to the Council, flagrancy of the violation, and premeditation of the violation. Guilty verdicts can be appealed to the Appellate Review Board, an organization involving faculty and students who act independently of the Honor Council. If an appellate hearing is granted, the Board may overturn the decision, have the Honor Council re-try the case, or reject the appeal outright.

At **Princeton University**, suspected violations of the Honor Code must be reported to the Chair of the Honor Committee. The Chair then assigns two members of the Honor Committee to investigate the report further. During the investigation, the reporting witness is contacted first and other witnesses are interviewed as necessary. At the conclusion of the investigation, the student in question is contacted and informed of

the investigation, and the two investigators and the Chair jointly determine if a hearing is warranted. Strict confidentiality is maintained throughout this process. If a decision is made to go forward with a hearing, the reporting witness and the student in question are notified. The student in question is not allowed to present during the hearing, but a defense advocate is present throughout to ask questions on the student’s behalf. The investigators bring forth witnesses who corroborate the testimony of the reporting witness and the student in question is able to call both material and character witnesses.

The judiciary body is composed of the Honor Committee Chair and six other members of the Honor Committee. In the determination of guilt or innocence, a vote of 6-1 or 7-0 is needed for a guilty verdict. In the case of a guilty verdict, a penalty is decided by simple majority. Penalties are one, two, or three-year suspension; one, two, or three-year required withdrawal; expulsion, or probation. Probation is only used with extreme extenuating circumstances and expulsion is required for a second Honor Code violation. Appeals can be made to the President of the University on the basis of harmful bias or procedural unfairness. The class presidents for the freshman through the junior classes serve on the Honor committee. Additionally, the sophomore class president serves on the Committee through senior year, serving as the Clerk junior year and the Chair senior year.

<i>School</i>	<i>Investigate</i>	<i>Student Council</i>	<i>Conviction Vote</i>	<i>Precedent</i>	<i>Appeal</i>
Haverford	Statements	Yes	Unanimous	No	President
Lawrence	Student & Administrator	Yes	Majority	Yes	President
Rice	Students	Yes	Unanimous	No	Dean
UNC	Students	Yes	Majority	No	Committee
Vanderbilt	Students	Yes	10/11	No	Committee
Princeton	Students	Yes	6/7	Yes	President
Maryland	Student & Administrator	No	Majority	Yes	Committee
Stanford	Administrator	No	5/6	Yes	Committee
Georgetown	Faculty	No	Majority	Yes	Dean
Caltech	Students	Yes	3/4	No	Dean

Table 2: Honor Code Violation Processes

At the **University of Maryland**, violations of academic integrity must be reported to the Office of Judicial Programs and Student Ethical Development with a written referral letter. Alleged evidence may be attached to this letter, and these materials are used to establish reasonable cause. The student Honor Council is generally charged with making this determination, and if reasonable cause is established, the respondent is contacted and asked to make an appointment for a preliminary interview. This interview is conducted with an administrator from the Judicial Programs office, and the purpose of the meeting is to devise the best way to resolve the allegation of academic dishonesty. Whether the problem is resolved or it is determined that a hearing is necessary, the complaining party is notified of the outcome.

The judiciary body at hearings is the Student Honor Council. A normal board consists of a presiding officer, three other members of the Honor Council, and two faculty members, for a total of six people. Unless an open hearing is requested, the hearing is closed to the campus community and all hearing materials are destroyed promptly following the proceeding. Factual witnesses are called and evidence is presented during the first phase of the hearing, which is an investigative phase. The board deliberates after this phase is concluded, and decides, by majority vote, on one of two outcomes, either responsible or not responsible. If the student is found responsible for an honor code violation, the hearing proceeds to a sanctioning phase. The standard sanction is a grade of XF for the course, which means “failure due to academic dishonesty.” The board may deviate from that standard if they feel there are significant aggravating or mitigating circumstances present. Findings of responsibility or of specific sanctions may be appealed to the Office of Judicial Programs within 15 business days from the notification of the outcome of the hearing. The opposing party is also given an opportunity to respond to the appeal. The Executive Committee of the Student Honor Council hears appeals from the respondent. The complaining party also has the right to appeal the sanction, but those appeals are reviewed by the Senate Committee on Student Conduct.

Honor code violations at **Stanford University** are reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The Judicial Officer, a University employee, is responsible for investigating all cases and determining whether or not there is sufficient evidence to

charge the student. If the Judicial Officer decides it is appropriate to move forward, the student is notified of the charge, and a Judicial Panel of 4 students and 2 faculty or staff is formed. The accused student is asked to write a statement and the Judicial Panel reviews this document, along with the charge letter, initial letter of concern, evidence, and other submitted documents before the hearing begins. During the hearing, witnesses can be called by the judicial officer, the panel, or the accused student. After closed-door deliberations, the panel must vote either 5-1 or 6-0 in order for a student to be held responsible. The burden of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt. If the student is found responsible, the same panel of 6 determines an appropriate sanction. All sanctions are reviewed by the Dean of Students for consistency with the Penalty Code and past practice. The Dean can only ask the panel to reconsider a sanction, and cannot overturn their decision. A recommendation for expulsion immediately goes to the Provost for review. Appeals can be made to the Office of Judicial Affairs within 30 days of the final decision. A new panel of 6 reads appeal documents and decides the appeal.

Faculty members at **Georgetown University** are obligated to report apparent violations of the Honor System and students are strongly encouraged to report violations as well. Librarians, lab assistants, and other staff members may also report honor system violations to the Honor Council. Faculty on the Honor Council take on the role of Investigating Officers when a case is reported. They first notify the student and arrange a meeting. They also talk with the person who reported the case and evaluate the evidence. To conclude their investigation, they write up a brief report and if there is sufficient evidence, present their findings at a hearing. Hearings are adjudicated by a hearing board composed of Honor Council members. The board consists of one dean from the student's school, two students, and two faculty. A majority vote is sufficient to decide whether or not the student is in violation. The board then decides on one of five sanctions: Letter of Reprimand, Letter of Censure, Notation on Transcript, Suspension, or Dismissal/Expulsion. The board's recommendation for a sanction is sent to the Dean of Students, who makes the final decision. Students may appeal to the Executive Committee of the Honor Council in the case of new evidence or a procedural violation and they may be granted a new hearing. Students may also appeal to the Dean of Students for lesser sanctions.

Every member of the **California Institute of Technology** community is responsible for reporting possible honor code violations. They may be reported to any member of the Board of Control (BoC), the Dean of students' office, or the Conduct Review Committee (CRC) co-chairs. The Chairman of the BoC, Dean of Students, and CRC Co-Chairs form the Routing Group, which decides whether a case should be handled by the Board of Control, a committee of the student government which has complete jurisdiction over academic matters, the Conduct Review Committee, an Institute Committee composed of students and faculty, or in an more informal manner, perhaps simply a consultation with the Dean of Students. If the matter is sent to the Board of Control, either the Board of Control Chair or the Secretary then serve as an investigator, along with another Board member. The investigators talk with TA's, professors, friends, and the accused, seeking to ascertain the facts of the case. At the end of this investigation, the Chair and the Secretary decide whether or not to proceed to a full Board hearing.

At least seven out of the nine Board members must be present at a full hearing. The first step is a presentation of the case in abstract, after which the Board may decide to dismiss the case. If the hearing moves forward, witnesses are called by the Board. The defendant is not present while witnesses are interviewed and does not have the right to call his/her own witnesses. The Board deliberates at the end of the hearing and after thorough discussion, motions can be made to dismiss the case or convict the defendant of an Honor Code violation. A conviction must be agreed upon by a 3/4-vote of the Board. If a conviction is rendered, the Board moves into a phase of Nullification. During this phase, the Board does not seek to punish, but simply to remove the unfair advantage gained. The final step is Protection, where actions are taken to protect the community from possible future violations. There is no absolute precedent for these actions, but they generally take the form of suspension from the Institute for a period of time. A 3/4-vote is required for all Nullification and Protection decisions. The Board will then summarize its main line of reasoning and the defendant will then be notified of the decisions and asked to arrange a meeting with the Dean of Students.

At this meeting, the defendant may voice any concerns they have about the case or the final decision. The Dean may then decide to overturn the result or send it back to

the Board of Control. If the Dean upholds the decision, it is final. The Conduct Review Committee has very similar procedures to the Board of Control, except that after conviction, the CRC enacts punishments according to the policy of the Student Affairs Department. CRC decisions may be appealed to the VP for Student Affairs and ultimately, to the President of the Institute.

Conclusions

Overall, the honor systems at the different schools surveyed had a lot in common. Every school uses their Honor Code as a method to encourage students to regulate cheating and have implemented explicit procedures that involve students in investigating and adjudicating violations. Differences between schools arise in the scope of the honor system at each school and in details of the investigation and adjudication process. Since this is an appendix to a report on self-governance at Caltech, the bulk of my analysis will focus on the Caltech honor system. Readers at other schools may draw their own conclusions from the data I have collected.

The schools with honor systems most similar to Caltech in this study are Haverford and Rice. The three schools are unique in that students have the majority of their exams take-home. All three honor systems are also administered solely by students. The Honor Codes at Haverford, Rice, and Caltech were all established around the beginning of the 20th century, and the three schools are among the smallest in the sample.

Caltech and Haverford both have honor systems that encompass all of student conduct. The major difference between the two systems is that at Caltech, all violations of the honor system must be reported. At Haverford, parties are encouraged to resolve the issue themselves. Other than that difference, there are remarkable similarities between the two systems, as student committees hold hearings and have sanctions defined in phases. At Haverford there are three considerations: accountability, repairing breaches of trust, and education of the party found in violation. At Caltech, Nullification works to repair breaches of trust and Protection works towards education.

I believe there are a few things that Caltech could learn from the Haverford system. First, although it still seems prudent to require all academic cases to be reported to the BoC, it may be beneficial to loosen this requirement for non-academic cases. The

idea of encouraging parties to resolve difference on their own would lessen the burden for the BoC and CRC and would create a system that is more trusting. A self-governing community should seek to solve problems on a local level when possible, and the strict requirement that all violations be reported runs counter to that philosophy.

Also, I rather like the system Haverford employs of inviting 6 randomly selected jurors from the student body to serve on each case along with 6 members of their Honor Council. With such a small student body, I believe this would make the honor system a more prominent part of the Caltech community. It may also serve to pull back the veil of secrecy that dominates the average student's perception of the Board of Control. Perhaps The BoC could simply implement a rotating pool of volunteers similar to the CRC, but I feel that an expansion of the pool of BoC Reps would be uniformly positive. It would increase awareness while reducing the currently heavy workload for BoC Reps.

Haverford is a college with traditions based on the Quaker religion, so Caltech may find its philosophy more in line with Rice, a small school with a historical focus on engineering and even a similar housing system. Rice requires all new students to take a test on the Honor Code and doesn't let students register until they pass the test. Caltech currently suffers from some widespread misconceptions about the honor system, and some method of actively educating the student body might be very useful. The Rice Honor Council also gives defendants certain rights during the hearing process that one would expect in an American judicial system, but are missing from Caltech's BoC procedures. First, defendants are guaranteed to be notified when they are being investigated and are assigned an ombudsman to assist them through the process. During the hearing, defendants are allowed to ask an Investigator to collect evidence on their behalf. At the end of the hearing, the defendant is allowed to make a closing statement. The Board of Control at Caltech has recently been moving toward more defendants' rights, but there is certainly more that can be done.

Of all the schools in this study, Caltech has the most ambitious honor code, seeking to resolve all disputes on campus through a formal system. We also do not share a common religious tradition or even force our students to sign a formal statement.

Despite its broad scope and procedural complexity, the Caltech honor system can be rather imprecise in its operation. A lot of this is purposeful, as many things at Caltech

are intentionally vague and thus flexible. However, one thing I noticed when reading responses from other schools was that other students were much more careful with saying “hearing” instead of “trial” or “confidentiality” instead of “secrecy.” Honor systems around the country have come under fire as the American legal system has encroached on university campuses, and many schools have tightened their procedures in response. Although Caltech has been relatively lucky so far, a careful evaluation of our own honor system may be long overdue.

In particular, there are four modifications to the Caltech system that could be borrowed from other schools. BoC Reps have lamented the lack of an informal procedure since the 1970’s, and it is clear that every minor conflict need not go before the Routing Group. A mechanism for informal conflict resolution would clarify a currently ambiguous situation and would give students somewhere to turn before having to make a formal report. A larger pool of BoC Reps would alleviate the heavy workload for the current Board and would further publicize the workings of the Board of Control. A more formal system to educate students on the honor system would certainly help to reduce violations out of ignorance and would improve faith in the system. Finally, a BoC and CRC case procedure that is more fair towards defendants would bring the Caltech honor system more in line with the contemporary American legal system as well as honor systems at other schools. None of these modifications would be particularly difficult to implement, and I believe each of them would greatly improve our honor system.

Honor System Survey (Sent to 30 universities in August 2002)

1. Briefly describe the honor code at your school:
2. Whom does the honor code apply to? Is it limited to undergraduates? Does it extend to graduate students? Faculty? Staff?
3. Is there a written agreement associated with the honor code? Do students have to sign anything?
4. What does the honor code apply to? Does it apply only to examinations? Does it apply to writing essays? Properly citing references? Seeking assistance on homework assignments? Does it extend beyond academics? How so? Does it apply to theft? Interpersonal relations?
5. What happens when there is a suspected violation of the honor code? Who is responsible for reporting it? Who do they report it to?
6. What body is in charge of investigating a reported violation? Is this body comprised of students? What is involved in this process? Are potential defendants notified?
7. Is there a transition from the investigation phase to a trial phase? Who decides whether or not cases go to trial? Are potential defendants notified? Is the person who reported the case notified?
8. What is involved in a trial? Do defendants have access to any counsel? How are witnesses called? How important is secrecy in the trial process?
9. Who serves as the judiciary body in these cases? Is this body composed completely of students? How are verdicts reached? Do decisions need to be unanimous? What are the different verdicts that can be handed down?
10. Is there a sentencing phase after the trial? Is there an explicit system to decide the sentences associated with each case? What body handles the sentencing phase?
11. Is there a procedure for appealing a decision? What body handles appeals? What happens in the appeals process?
12. What other bodies are there involved in the honor system? How is the school administration involved? How is the student government involved?
13. What is the total undergraduate population of your school? How many violations are reported each year? How many go to trial? How many end in convictions?
14. How strongly do you believe the general undergraduate population trust in the honor code? Is there more or less trust than in the past? How long has your school had an honor code?
15. Would you consent to the use of your name in my final report? If so, please leave your name, title (with regards to the honor system), year of graduation, and school here:

Survey Respondents

Stephen Spaulding, Honor Council Co-Chair, Class of 2005, Haverford College.

Martha K. Hemwall, Dean of Student Academic Services, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Lawrence University.

Joan Shreffler, Honor Council Chair, Class of 2003, Rice University.

Dave Gilbert, Assistant Dean of Students, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

Peter McHenry, Undergraduate Honor Council President, Class of 2003, Vanderbilt University.

Catherine Farmer, Honor Committee Chair, Class of 2003, Princeton University.

Andrea Goodwin, Office of Judicial Programs & Student Ethical Development, University of Maryland College Park.

Laurette Beeson, Judicial Advisor, Dean of Student's Office, Stanford University.

Sonia Jacobsen, Assistant for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost; Executive Director, The Honor System; Georgetown University.

Harris Nover, Board of Control Secretary, Class of 2004, California Institute of Technology.

Eric Cady, Lloyd House Board of Control Representative, Class of 2005, California Institute of Technology.