

**UNIVERSITY OF
VIRGINIA**

**HONOR SYSTEM STUDY
1990 - 1991**

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Genesis of The Study

In May 1986, Sean Folan, the incoming chairman of the Honor Committee, gave a report to the Student Affairs and Athletics Committee of the Board of Visitors. According to the minutes of that meeting Folan told the Committee that the main cause of difficulty with the Honor System was the increasing diversity of the student body. "Non-mainstream" students had become primary targets for honor investigations. Athletes, particularly Black athletes, were investigated at a significantly higher rate than students in other categories. He went on to say that students believed that many minority athletes did not meet the full admission requirements. His report was widely reported in the press and was a matter of considerable concern and discussion within the University.

In July of that year, University President Robert M. O'Neil appointed the Task Force on Afro-American Affairs. It was originally charged to study and make recommendations about the Office of African American Affairs. However it was eventually given a broader charge "to define an institutional policy designed to promote integration and

enhance the educational opportunities of Afro-American students" at UVa. The Task Force worked throughout the 1986-87 academic year and presented its final report, entitled An Audacious Faith, on June 1, 1987. The report included recommendations in each of six broad categories: recruiting and retaining Black faculty, recruiting and retaining Black students, improving academic services, University administrative structure and employment practices, guaranteeing progress in Afro-American affairs, and raising UVa community consciousness on those and related issues. One of the recommendations in the latter area was to hire a consultant to study the application of the Honor System to determine if it provided equal treatment to all racial groups.

In November of the following academic year (1987-88) a Subcommittee on Discrimination was formed by the Honor Committee "To examine the possibility of bias toward Blacks and athletes in the Honor System and make recommendations to the Honor Committee based on our findings." Membership consisted of three Honor Support Officers, one student-athlete, and two at-large students. The Honor Committee, the Honor Support Officers, the Black Student Alliance, the Committee on Asian Concerns, and Student-Athletes were invited to send a representative to participate in the work of the Subcommittee. Their report, entitled A FIRST STEP, was submitted on April 17, 1988. It included, as one of twenty recommendations, the mention of a need for a study by an outside consultant:

1. From our studies we determined a need for a more comprehensive study of underlying issues that may

contribute to bias in the Honor System. We feel that this task requires the resources and expertise of a professional consultant(s). The study should address, but not be limited to:

- a. Further investigation of the perceptions of the community about the Honor System and possible bias within it.
 - b. Exploration of the procedural aspects of the System to ensure that no inherent bias exists.
 - c. Commentary on the applicability of the Honor System to a multicultural University community.
2. We suggest a panel of representatives from concerned groups (Black Student Alliance, Captain's Council, Honor Committee, etc.) select the consultant.
 3. Opportunities to contribute to this study should be made available to all members of the University community.

In early May 1990, the University of Virginia, acting on behalf of its Honor Committee, solicited proposals from advisers in student judicial affairs to provide consultant services to review the University's Honor System. Specifically, the University sought a study of "the processes and procedures of the Honor System to determine if they are applied equitably and consistently." Proposals were reviewed and interviews were conducted over the summer by a committee of students and faculty. The consultant was selected in mid-September 1990. The study began in October.

This is a final report of that study.

Evidence of a Problem

For the past half-decade there have been disproportionate numbers of Black students investigated for and accused of honor offenses. The consultant's selection committee wrote, during the summer of 1990:

Statistics recently released by the Honor Committee Chair for 1989-1990 reveal that 24.6 percent of the 65 cases investigated during the past academic year involved Black students compared to 26.6 percent for the previous year. The total number of accusations involving Black students this year (1989) was six (28.6 percent of the total number of accusations) as compared with 16 (64 percent of the total number of accusations) for the previous year. In spite of these declines the percentages of Black students involved in Honor proceedings is much higher than the percentage of Black students in the population. In the fall semester of 1989 Black students comprised 10.3 percent of the undergraduate and 5.3 percent of the graduate and first professional degree students.

More recent figures suggest that the percentage of Black students among those who have been investigated and accused continues to decline. Of the 55 cases investigated through February 1991, 21.8% involved Black students. Of the fifteen students who have been accused, three (20%) were Blacks. But even though these numbers continue to decline, the problem remains: disproportionate numbers of Black students have been investigated for, and accused of, honor offenses.

There is other evidence of a problem as well. Many Black students and Black student leaders are unequivocal in their reports that many Black students *believe* that they are often treated unfairly. That unfair treatment, they believe, finds expression through the Honor System and hampers their UVa education and experience.

There is unmistakable evidence of a problem. The general purpose of this study was to try more precisely to define the problem for the Honor Committee. What is it? And what is it not?

The Objectives of the Study

The questions posed by the Honor Committee constitute the objectives of this study.

- Is the Honor System equally applied to all racial groups?
- Are the procedures of the Honor System fair and unbiased?
- Are the values, assumptions, and processes of the Honor System germane to a pluralistic university community?
- Are there intergroup issues within the University that are not directly related to the Honor System, but that find expression through it? Is the Honor System a vehicle for such larger issues?

We want to thank the Honor Committee and especially its Chairs Travis Lewis and Donna Lynn Byrd for so expertly and thoroughly helping with the arrangements for the study. Their work was complemented by the added support of the Selection Committee and the offices of the President and Student Affairs. Our every request for access to files and information was met. Complicated visit schedules were well organized and in ways that made for efficient and productive use of everyone's time. Requests for last minute changes were promptly fulfilled. These things were a constant reminder of the high quality of the students who lead and administer the Honor System, the enviable independence that students have and accept, and the solid relationships of trust between student leaders and the administration of the University.

Organization of the Consultation and Study

The consultation was organized into six phases: 1) A review of written materials, 2) a preliminary visit by the consultant, 3) a longer visit by the full consulting team, 4) the preparation and submission of a preliminary report, 5) incorporating comments about the preliminary report from the Honor Committee and others, and 6) the preparation and submission of a final report.

The Review of Written Materials

Before, during, and after the visits written materials provided by the University were reviewed. The Selection Committee specified some

of the areas and documents to be reviewed by the Consulting Team.

These included materials about the:

- history and development of the Honor System;
- procedures of the Honor System;
- organization and structure of the Honor System;
- training procedures for students serving on the Honor Committee, subcommittees, Honor Adviser, Honor Educators, Counsels, Investigators, and hearing panels; and
- Applicable studies recently completed at the University.

In addition, the consulting team reviewed other University documents. These included applicable committee minutes, selected Honor Committee files, news clippings from local and national newspapers and magazines, materials sent by the Admissions Office to applicants and prospective applicants, mailings to newly admitted students, catalogues and handbooks, all current printed materials of the Honor Committee, Honor orientation materials, copies of speeches by institutional officers, and internal memoranda.

More than 145 documents were read, summarized, and catalogued. These provided both a history and a context for some of the issues of the study. Many of the topics and questions for the interviews were framed from the advance reading of these institutional publications and internal documents.

The Honor Committee and the University offices were generous with their time; they responded fully to all requests - no matter how

difficult and even unreasonable. We appreciate their openness, helpfulness, and generosity of time. The Honor Committee was especially forthcoming, even with materials that were not generally available to UVa students, faculty, and administrators. The consulting team was pledged to keep confidential materials confidential.

The Preliminary Visit

The consultant first visited UVa on October 18 and 19, 1990 to organize and arrange for the subsequent and main visit. He met with appropriate University people to discuss, clarify, and agree on the protocols and details of the visit. The members of the Consultant Selection Committee were especially helpful in suggesting students, faculty, administrators, and organizations who should be interviewed during the main visit. The consultant, working closely with the Chair of the Honor Committee, then developed an interview schedule for the main visit.

The Main Visit

The consultant and two of his colleagues¹ visited the University for seven days: November 28 - December 4, 1990. During that visit they conducted approximately 60 hours of interviews, visited a number of student organizational offices, attended some University events, and were conveniently accommodated in the Colonnade Club on The Lawn. They met with at least 240 people, in individual, small group

¹The background of the consultant and his colleagues can be found in the Appendix.

settings, and large open meetings. At times the consultants met with students and others as a team, and at other times each of them met individually for interviews. They also attended and observed an Honor Trial.

Individuals and groups that we met with included The Honor Committee, two members of the Board of Visitors, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the President, senior admissions staff, faculty members, Honor Educators, Honor Adviser, former President Robert O'Neil, Black administrators, Editors of the *Cavalier Daily* and the *University Journal*, members of the Black Student Alliance, members of the Council of Black Student Leaders, the Dean of Faculty, and several students who attended an open forum.

Interviews

There was preparation for the interviews so that each would be as purposeful and productive as possible. These plans resulted from the preliminary visit, advance readings, and the advice of those who helped organize the visit. Interviews were conducted to gather and clarify information, to hear the views of the participants, and to confirm and expand information already obtained. In this regard, a wealth of information already existed because of the work of earlier committees at UVa.

Interview participants were asked to sign a consent form giving their permission to use information from them in the study. Participation

was voluntary and anyone could withdraw from the study at any time. No one did.

Interviews were recorded so that information obtained could be retrieved for analysis and interpretation. Information from each interview or meeting was summarized to help identify themes, information, and questions. This information was used to identify additional questions and issues for later exploration.

The team was very aware of the importance of some of these issues, and the Honor System generally, to the University community. We were aware that, for many, it was a very bold step, even a big risk, to invite a consultant who, along with his colleagues, had no prior connection to the University. Would it ever be possible for "an outsider" to understand the cultures, history, nuances, traditions, and workings of Virginia and its Honor System? That, of course, remains to be seen. Despite these concerns we found people to be very willing to talk, to reflect, to share doubts and deep feelings, and to opine with candor. Despite the occasional comment to the contrary, the Honor System is clearly a conscious part of life at the University of Virginia. People from all groups and roles wanted to talk about it, and in ways that demonstrated their care for it.

Observations

A secondary source of data was observations of programs, events, services, and the physical environments that took place during the visit.

Data Analysis

Throughout the main visit, the consulting team met at least once each day for a debriefing. We discussed findings, determined additional questions that needed answering, identified additional respondents, and evolving conclusions. These discussions continued when we returned to our home campus.

Debriefings were both informal and formal. For example, at the end of most interviews, we summarized what we heard from the respondents, seeking immediate clarification of the interview itself. Before leaving grounds the team shared emerging themes and issues with the leadership of the Honor Committee.

Limitations and Cautions

Reports such as this have limitations that should be kept in mind as it is being read.

- The selection committee was explicit in wanting the issues approached in qualitative ways. Therefore this study used qualitative methods. While there were some quantitative data reviewed, such data were few.
- We did not study athletes in relation to their Honor System even though there is a history of assertions that disproportionate numbers of athletes have been investigated and sanctioned for honor offenses.
- Throughout this report we have tried to use inclusive language, invoking terms of respect for various groups. Some

a study to
evaluate
perceptions
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of these terms are in transition at UVa and elsewhere. For example, some Black people refer to themselves as African Americans or Afro-Americans; yet others describe themselves as Black. We have tried to use the terms most commonly used at UVa: Black. We also chose to avoid the term "minority" in favor of "people of color."

FINDINGS

Are the values of the Honor System germane to a pluralistic University Community?

The Honor Spirit - The Honor System

We found it helpful to distinguish between the Honor "SPIRIT" and the Honor "SYSTEM." The Honor Spirit places the value of honesty as the keystone of the UVa community. It says that students *are assumed to be* honest in their scholarship and in their dealings with others. UVa students are assumed not to lie, cheat, or steal.

The Honor Spirit also places a heavy burden of citizenship on each student to be responsible for his or her own behavior *and* to help maintain the high value of honesty within the University.

Although not always recognized as such, one of the most important early tasks of all who are new to UVa is learning to trust and be trusted.

** honor spirit vs. system*
 * We believe that the Honor Spirit is embraced by all racial groups at UVa. We found no evidence to the contrary. There are differing views, of course. Fourth year students may view things differently than do first year students. And some individual students may wrestle with the burdens of citizenship that accompany the Honor Spirit. We found no students (or any others, for that matter) who even suggested that UVa would be a better intellectual and social


community if personal and scholastic honesty were lesser values. Members of the Black community were resolved and strong in their embrace of the Honor Spirit.

The values of the Honor System

The educational importance of the Honor System is well known to UVa and does not need much discussion here. The Honor System literature is full of phrases like: integrity in one's scholarship, being able to trust and be trusted, honesty in one's dealings with others, and respect for the real and intellectual property of others. We found no individuals or groups who did not fully embrace these values. They *are* core values at the University of Virginia; they are solidly embraced.

The *means* to advance these values are closely tied, perhaps inextricably so, to the strength of community at UVa. Community is the context within which such values are nurtured, celebrated, communicated, advanced, reinterpreted, and acted out. If the community is weak then the values that are its glue are weakened - and vice versa. Hence, the health of the Honor System is inextricably tied to the health of the UVa community. Furthermore, the measure of that health must account for its success as a multicultural community.

Issues of Community

 If there is a theme to this report, it is that the racial issues that find expression in the Honor System are *not* issues caused by, or even primarily related to, the Honor System. Rather, they are community-

wide issues that find visible expression through the Honor System.
Changing the Honor System will not make the issues go away; they
would be there even if there were no Honor System.

On the other hand, some of the core values of the Honor System can *and should* play a helpful role in addressing the issues of race and diversity that are present these days in pluralistic academic communities. Certainly the high values of trusting and being trusted, of being honest in one's dealings with others, and the allegiance to intellectual honesty are among the most important ideological building blocks of a strong pluralistic community. These same ideals are central to the Honor System. They are held in high regard at UVa.

This study was not designed to investigate, describe, or evaluate the fabric of UVa's community. We can, however, offer one basis for beginning such a dialogue: the six principles of community offered in a recent special report of the Carnegie Commission:²

I. First, a college or university is an **educationally purposeful** community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on the campus. (p. 9)

II. Second, a college or university is an **open** community, a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed. (p. 17)

²Boyer, Ernest L., *Campus Life: In Search of Community*, The Carnegie Foundation for The Advancement of Teaching, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990

III. Third, a college or university is a **just** community, a place where the sacredness of each person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued. (p. 25)

IV. Fourth, a college or university is a **disciplined** community, a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good. (p. 37)

V. Fifth, a college or university is a **caring** community, a place where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged. (p. 47)

VI. Sixth, a college or university is a **celebrating** community, one in which the heritage of the institution is remembered and where rituals affirming both tradition and change are widely shared. (p. 55)

The University of Virginia would surely score higher than most schools if it were to be ranked according to Boyer's guidelines. It could be argued that UVa can have an Honor System for that very reason; it is, when compared with other institutions its size, very much a community. But it is not perfect and may not like its own scores in the "caring" and "just" guidelines. It is here that the special demands of a pluralistic community come into play. Having said this, it is also worth mentioning what should be an obvious fact: few institutions of UVa's size even *try* to have an Honor System.

A Pluralistic Community.

A pluralistic community is one that meets the tests suggested by Boyer, and that is also diverse in such things as race, gender, age, sexual preference, social and economic class, geographic distribution of its students, and students who are physically limited. Each institution has its categories of difference, and its demographic statistics. UVa is surely very diverse - not as much as it wants to be, but it is committed and on its way. There is no turning back.

Some of the other tests of a pluralistic community are more troublesome and have ramifications for the Honor System:

- Can one be different in the above ways at Virginia without incurring a social or educational disadvantage?
- Are individuals or groups marginalized - treated less than fully entitled and welcomed members of the UVa community?

Some Black students told us that they strongly believe that they are viewed as different and further that they suffer educational handicaps because of how they are viewed. Some feel strongly that they *have* been marginalized - that they are not welcome, and that they are not seen as entitled to be there. "Sure," one Black student said, "that's the way it usually is in the larger society. Most of us know that and have coped with that throughout our lives. But UVa isn't the larger society. It's better or at least offers the promise that it is and the herald of that promise is the Honor System. Somehow I

feel like I am on the outside looking in on that system - and excluded from the wonderful utopian promise of trust."

These beliefs, of course, strongly affect how some Black students act in situations that are under the purview of the Honor System. We heard Black students report that they would sit next to windows during exams so that when it came time to stretch and turn one's neck, they could look out the window and avoid the risk of being suspected of cheating. Or that one brings extra pencils or pens so that if something drops you don't incur the inevitable suspicion that comes from being Black, leaning over, and picking something up from the floor. Or that a fellow Black should never sit next to another Black student and invite a complaint about cheating. Or that one should not study just with other Black students because that invites complaints about collaboration. We heard many such expressions illustrating the "spotlight" effect that has been so well expressed in earlier reports on these issues. People at UVa use the term "spotlighting" to refer to a phenomenon where Black students and athletes (who are often recognizable because of their fame or size) will tend to stand out and be the focus of attention.

But why the spotlight effect in the first place? Are students of color really seen by their faculty and fellow students as less than fully entitled to be UVa students? More likely to cheat? Do they, for example, have to meet the same admission standards as all other students do? We could not answer those questions beyond noting that many Black students believe strongly that they *are* viewed in

those ways. They fear that some students and faculty believe that students of color are less qualified and therefore more likely to cheat. That, of course, is not something unique to UVa; it reflects an attitude that can be found in abundance in American schools and colleges - indeed throughout American society. But at UVa, that attitude challenges one of the fundamental values of the Honor System: *that students are assumed to be honest - and are trusted without hesitation.* Some Black students believe that they do not share the benefits of that trust and to some extent they are correct. Therefore some Black students were heard to say, "The Honor System is not for us." Their real message was *not* a disavowal of the Honor System; rather it was a statement about the state of pluralistic community at UVa. To some students, as well as some faculty with whom we talked, UVa is a community that continues to marginalize students of color and fails to extend to them the trust that accrues to "full" members of the UVa student body.

This finding, in one or another form, has been repeated often in earlier studies and committee reports. It has been recognized, described, affirmed and reaffirmed, and has served as the basis for an array of institutional efforts that are, frankly, impressive. But the problem does not yield to quick solutions because it bespeaks the attitudes of the society from which UVa draws its members. We have little to offer beyond the several and thoughtful recommendations that have been made over time - especially in the previously mentioned reports that led to this study. What *is* important, however, is that UVa regularly rededicate itself to the

task of creating and maintaining an open, just, caring, and celebrative community that is pluralistic, helps its members learn about human differences as well as commonalties, and embraces difference comfortably. UVa seems to understand well that recruiting a diverse student body and faculty is a small but significant first step. The challenge is to make *all* who come to UVa full members; to make it a community comfortable with and proud of the differences within it.

Recommendation The University of Virginia should regularly rededicate itself to creating and maintaining an open, just, caring, and celebrative community that is pluralistic, helps its members learn about human differences as well as commonalties, and embraces difference comfortably.

The spotlighting phenomenon is a characteristic of the larger UVa community and is not a consequence of the Honor System. Can we say for certain that "spotlighting" accounts for the disproportionate numbers of Black students investigated and accused under the Honor System? While not certain, we are reasonably sure that it is the dominant reason.

There are other possible explanations for why Blacks are disproportionately investigated and accused. One, of course, is that Black students are more inclined to or want to lie, cheat, and steal. We did not pursue that explanation because we did not believe that it was plausible. To the contrary, during our conversations with Black students we heard genuine and powerful pleas to recognize the sense of community among Blacks as well as the sense of honor,

accountability, and caring that the community generates among its members. "Why," we heard, "are the strong social and educational contributions that the Black community brings to UVa so unrecognized?" It is a good question because the contributions have been substantial for those who choose to see them. Indeed, in the minds of some students (Black and non-Black), the Black student communities have a powerful tradition of service to those communities, of communal responsibility and accountability, and sense of civility. More than once we heard that tradition posed in stark contrast to the stereotype of high living, heavy drinking, and frequently partying Greeks on Rugby Road. The point we make here is *not* that the Rugby Road stereotype is accurate. We do not know that it is or is not, or of the extent of the usual flaws in this often heard stereotype. However, we met students and faculty at UVa who believed that many of the values of the Honor System and of an academic community were subverted by the perceived life styles of the Rugby Road Greeks.

Some Black students reported disappointment and even resentment that the Rugby Road stereotype seemed widely accepted as a legitimate quality of UVa's student culture. Especially when they think about the contrast between the values and seriousness of their UVa cultures and the party atmosphere and frivolity that seems to prevail among many Greek organizations. There is obviously less understanding than there needs to be and that assuredly will erode the sense of community that UVa needs to have for its Honor System to work.

We wished that we would have seen more deliberate attempts on the part of student leaders to reach across the boundaries of the several student cultures at UVa. This, however, is not a task that is primary to the work of the Honor Committee. All at UVa must share the task if the University is to achieve a pluralistic community in the face of the increasing size, complexity, and diversity of its student body.

There may be some merit in another reason that was advanced partially to explain why Black students are disproportionately investigated and accused. When someone is marginalized and excluded within a family, they will be hurt and angered. One way to "get back" or to assert a presence is to violate a family rule or value. Could it be that some Black (or other) students run afoul of the Honor System for such a reason? As one student commented, "Since they don't respect my music (meaning me and my culture) I might just as well play it loud when I play it - just to rub it in..."

This could be a consequence of the marginalization that some Black students reported. Could that marginalization also lead some Black students to lie, cheat, or steal? It might, but we seriously doubt that it would account for the disproportionality of the investigations and accusations of Black students. To the contrary, we saw some strong countervailing forces within the Black community itself. Black students knew that they must be extra careful not to transgress University laws. To do so would not only imperil "a lifetime of hard work to get here," but bring disgrace to other Blacks at UVa. There is

a well understood ethic among Black students that one has a special responsibility to celebrate and not to disgrace the Black community. These are powerful deterrents to doing things that contradict the Honor System.

We believe that "spotlighting" is the best explanation of why there have been disproportionate numbers of Black students investigated and accused. If there is inequity in the Honor System, it is not in the inappropriateness of the values of a pluralistic community. To the contrary we believe that the Black communities at UVa have brought added richness to its ideals. And, as we shall report, we do not believe that the processes of the Honor System are unfair or (with two exceptions) seriously flawed.

To their great credit, the Honor Committee and its leaders have solidly committed themselves in word and deed to making the Honor System appropriate for a pluralistic community. So have the leaders within the student communities of color with whom we spoke. As we point out elsewhere in this report, the efforts of student leaders have gotten results. But the Honor Committee and the large organization it leads, strong as it is, is fully engaged in administering the Honor System. The Honor Committee cannot also be asked to bear the burden of making UVa the successful pluralistic community that it wants to be.

The challenges and problems of moving to a pluralistic community, incidentally, are probably no greater at UVa than at other schools we

know. That fact, however, cannot detract from either the seriousness or importance of the work at hand at UVa. The University's Honor System depends on a strong sense of community to work. And a strong sense of community, *especially a pluralistic one*, can be helped immeasurably by a strong Honor System. In this sense, UVa stands apart from the more typical college or university; few institutions have so clearly articulated the ethical and educational values as are embedded in its Honor System.

The "Spotlight Effect" and the myth of waived admissions standards

We heard some faculty and students assert, as true, that admissions standards are waived or stretched for Black students (and athletes). The logic that we often heard went something like this: students who are under qualified will experience considerable stress while trying to meet UVa's academic demands. Hence the stress may reduce their mettle and lead them to succumb to the temptations to cheat, or simply to cheat to survive.

This chain of thought has two serious flaws. While not easily documented, it is widely believed by those who work in student judicial matters that students rarely cheat to survive, to avoid a failing grade. The more usual motive is to protect a high grade or a high grade average; to try to protect an A or make a B average into an A. We found no reason to believe that the motivations to cheat are any different at UVa.

The second flaw in the argument is that it overlooks the true nature of the admissions process at UVa. There is *one set of admissions standards and all who are admitted meet them*. UVa is like other colleges and universities with selective admissions standards. There is no single quantifiable standard. Rather there are parameters that take into account that each student offers a unique profile of accomplishments and experiences. Some students may shine in math, and others in art. Some may present a less strong record of high school studies, but one that may have exhausted the offerings of academically solid courses in a small high school. Others may present a less strong academic record despite having had a rich array of academic offerings in their high school. Some may present mediocre grades but a history of near full-time work throughout high school such as happens when one grows up on a farm. Some may present an impressive array of extra-curricular activities and accomplishments while others may not - perhaps because they were caring for elder parents or younger siblings. We need not belabor the point that numbers alone rarely tell the story of the accomplishments or academic potential of an incoming class or the individuals within it.

This story needs to be told and retold. The Admissions Office judges the record of each applicant on its merits. Professional judgments are made in the case of each entering student that he or she can succeed at UVa. Unlike some schools, admission to UVa is not a license to try. It is and is meant to be genuine invitation to membership in an academic community. Of course all students do

not present equal credentials. The students (including Black students) in the top 10% of a class will have different profiles of achievement than the bottom 10%. Black students are distributed (as are students from other categories such as gender, geography, and ethnicity) throughout a class. *Everyone who is admitted has been judged capable of becoming a successful student at UVa.*

Recommendation UVa should state clearly that everyone who is admitted has been judged able to be successful there. The Admissions Office and the Officers of UVa have made this point. It is a point, however, that must find its way more regularly and assertively into the language and publications of the University. The responsibility to do this rests squarely with the leadership of the University (at all levels) and with the Admissions Office. They should do more in this regard.

It is possible that the current academic demands placed on students may be changing in some departments and schools. We did not investigate this possibility. But if academic standards have been rising, and admissions standards have not, that could compromise the University's ability to say that everyone who is admitted has been judged able to be successful at UVa. If this is a possibility, then the University should check its data on admissions credentials, ethnicity, and students' subsequent academic success.

Are most of the procedures of the Honor System fair and unbiased?

We identified and looked at more than thirty Honor System procedures and placed them into four categories: educating students and faculty, electing and selecting students to administer the system, initiating a complaint, and administering a judicial process once a complaint is made.

Educating Students and Faculty

The education of faculty and students is fair but incomplete. We will note some deficiencies in the orientation of faculty members and in the emphases of the educational program.

Students

The education of students has focused heavily on judicial aspects: how to initiate complaints, what one might be asked to do if called to serve as an investigator or panelist, or what happens when a person is accused. That seemed to be at the expense of questions more akin to those associated with the Honor Spirit: what it means to trust and be trusted, how to trust, and the powerful relationships between honesty and scholarship, and honesty and a supportive community. During our visit we saw and heard of some imaginative techniques (such as situational cases) that were used to help students, especially first year students, confront some of the moral and ethical dilemmas inherent in an Honor System. The Honor Educators were among the most dedicated students we met; they believed in what they were doing and had clearly improved upon the work of their predecessors.

It seemed to us that there is an opportunity to build upon their work and make the role of the Honor Educator even more significant.

Recommendation We recommend that less attention be paid to the trial and strictly judicial aspects of the Honor System and that more attention be paid to what we have discussed as the Honor Spirit - the ideals that are its foundation.

This recommendation poses some tough pedagogical challenges. For example, how can a student only two months beyond high school be taught to trust? Or to understand what it means to be trusted? Or how to manage the dilemmas of the System? This, among other things, is an invitation to experiment and innovate, especially in the context of a pluralistic campus community.

Recommendation We urge the Honor Educators to establish a subcommittee for Experimental Honor Education. That subcommittee should be charged to develop and experiment with more interactive and less passive educational techniques, to consider the use of various media, and to find effective ways to teach newly admitted students about their responsibilities under the Honor System.

The University of Virginia is not one community - it is multiple communities. Even though the organizational paradigm for the Honor Committee is the school, that need not be the basis for organizing the educational activities of the committee. There are many sub-communities: ethnic communities (African American, Asian, etc.), athletic teams, residential, fraternities and sororities, graduate

student organizations, etc. For many students, these sub-communities are where their orientation to UVa really takes place. The Black Student Alliance, for example, plays a significant role in welcoming and helping first year Black students. The views of Black leaders are bound to shape significantly the attitudes of first year Black students. There are surely many examples of where early affinity groups play an informal, albeit significant, role in teaching new students about the Honor System. Why shouldn't the Honor Committee capitalize on this natural phenomenon and turn it to the advantage of all?

Recommendation We recommend that the Honor Educators' leaders work with the leaders of selected student groups (we hope that Black student organizations will be included) to find ways to share responsibility for the orientation of new students to the Honor System. We also recommend that some groups, in addition to individuals, be represented on the Honor Educator Committee.

The Honor Code seemed understated in the materials that were sent to prospective students as well as to newly admitted students. Some of the Honor System leaders wished that the Admissions staff were more enthusiastic and informed about the Honor System. The staff, however, were not aware of this perception. To the contrary, they believed that they knew and lauded the System.. The Honor Committee reported frustration about their inability to get new students more fully informed about the Honor System prior to their arrival. Some students reported to us that the commitment asked at

application and admission time is essentially without substance and is routinely signed without much thought. Not the least problem has been the missed opportunity to tell prospective students about one of UVa's most distinctive characteristics - a *student-run* Honor System that works. We believe that these *are* legitimate concerns and problems that can be resolved by more collaboration and frequent dialogue between the Honor Council and the Admissions Office.

Recommendation The Honor Committee and the Admissions Office should establish a joint committee regularly to inform members of the admissions staff about the Honor System, to discuss how best to explain the significance of the Honor System, to orient new members of the Admissions staff who are not UVa graduates and hence may not appreciate the power and significance of the System, and to review how the Honor System is explained in promotional publications.

Faculty

There is a serious lack of faculty confidence in the Honor System that, if left unaddressed, will undermine the the system.

Surely one of the strengths of UVa's Honor System is that it is authentically the responsibility of students; it belongs to them and it is theirs to make work. That is one of its most distinctive characteristics and a source of pride and strength that transcends the Honor System itself and is generalized to the University. It is a keystone of UVa's culture. What may often be forgotten is that the

Honor System needs the concurrence and support of the faculty to work. Why? If they don't trust students, students don't enjoy the benefits of learning in an environment of trust. The relationship of teachers and students is defined by the Honor System as one of trust unfettered by the need to police, question veracity, or proctor. If there were no Honor System there would be a fundamental change in that relationship. That is why so many students and faculty told us that there is no real alternative to an Honor System. Anything else would markedly lessen the quality of the academic environment.

The faculty we met subscribed to the ideals of the Honor System and appreciate the obvious benefits of having it as a student system; they want it to work. On the other hand, they believed that faculty members should be more involved in making it work well.

Why the lack of confidence? We heard several tales from faculty of mishandled cases, of cases where a violation obviously occurred, but where the student was found not guilty, or in some cases, not even accused. In some of the cases, the "innocent" finding was obviously the only way to respond to mitigating circumstances that could not be invoked because the single sanction was simply too harsh. We use the term "single sanction" to mean the mandated consequence of violating the Honor System: to leave the University.

These are some of the concerns we heard from faculty:

- A belief that the single sanction inhibits the system from working as it should.

- A lack of understanding about the standards of proof that are used.
- A belief that the current environment is more competitive and may be placing more stress on students and the Honor System.
- A belief that the Honor System inhibits collaborative learning; students fear working together. Some faculty would like them to learn to work together more.
- Uncertainty that all students, especially all students of color, have the necessary credentials to succeed; that they have met the admission standards.
- A belief that the Honor System makes it difficult to account for the pedagogical differences between large and small classes - especially taking minimal steps to remove temptations to cheat that sometimes occur in large classes. Examples of such steps might be alternative seating, or distributing alternate versions of the same exam.
- A belief that the processes of the Honor System are unduly time-consuming and complicated and therefore present strong disincentives to making complaints.

Faculty members tended to base their opinions about the Honor System on old or recurring evidence, on incidents that happened during past student generations. Students, on the other hand, had no such perspective. They were not as burdened (or informed) by the past. This provides a difficult challenge for *both* students and faculty when stepping up to the need to calibrate their respective views of

the system and its workings. There is a recurring need to establish and reestablish understandings and common views, something that simply cannot happen if it is only students who shoulder the responsibilities of orientation. Discussions about the Honor System between students and the faculty must be more regular and purposeful than is now the case.

Finally, we were frequently told that there are more faculty than a decade ago. Furthermore, there has been much turnover due to retirements. The newer faculty have not been socialized to the Honor System in the same ways or as effectively as their elders. And the academic cultures have changed for faculty, often with increasing emphasis on research at the expense of activities that bring them into regular contact with the student cultures. Consequently there may be many members of the faculty who give only a passing nod to the Honor System. We found it difficult to understand this as thoroughly as we would have liked. Certainly the results of the Honor Committee survey of faculty that were released in December 1990 suggested only the most modest faculty engagement with the Honor System. The very poor attendance of faculty at a special faculty orientation was another troublesome indicator.

The administration of the Honor System takes Herculean efforts on the part of students. Even though few student bodies are so skilled and dedicated as at UVa in making such a System successful, there are limits to what they can do. And as anyone familiar with the Honor System knows, it is administered better in some years than

others. The current level of organization and dedication is nothing short of outstanding. But even now, students clearly cannot do everything required to make the System work. They need help from the faculty to orient both old and new faculty members well, and to regain faculty confidence in the Honor System.

Recommendation The faculty should be encouraged and even asked to share considerable responsibility for keeping the ideals of the Honor System a reality at UVa. Students and faculty must work closely and regularly together to make it work. This should enhance, not diminish, the fact that students have the primary responsibility for administering the Honor System; it does not diminish their autonomy.

- The Honor Committee should make common cause with the appropriate faculty leadership to strengthen the role of the faculty departmental Honor Adviser (or other organizational entities) in exchanging information about current activities of the Honor Committee, about relevant faculty views and experiences, and orienting new faculty members and TAs.
- Different schools and departments have differing ways of organizing such matters. The Honor Committee, working with the faculty leadership, should experiment with new (or old) ways of involving faculty members in the above activities.
- The Honor Committee itself should meet with faculty leaders two or three times annually to discuss how the Honor System is working, and to share issues of common concern. Faculty members need to hear about some of the issues that students are confronting, and students

need to hear about some of the issues that faculty members encounter.

An Information Gap

There is an absence of systematically collected longitudinal and comparative data about the workings of the Honor System. There are many unanswered questions among UVa students (perhaps too many) about the activities of the Honor System. While the Honor Committee makes periodic reports, the reports often trigger added questions about how the activities of one year or semester compare with those of previous periods. There is also a need for qualitative information such as summary commentary about the kinds of behavior that results in complaints, investigations, and accusations. These questions have not been easily answered because the reporting has not been standardized from one period to the next. It should not be surprising that we often heard confusion about just what has or has not changed, and about what has been happening in the Honor System.

In the absence of empirical data, students and faculty who are interested in the Honor System will sometimes depend less satisfactory sources of information such as rumor, and incidents that they may know about. In the case of faculty, information that happened several student generations ago.

Recommendation The Honor Committee should develop and use a *standard* format of appropriate categories to record activities and decisions related to the Honor System. There are many resources within UVa, such as

the Office of Institutional Planning and Studies, to provide good advice and counsel about how such data can be collected and organized in ways that will be useful over time.

The Process of Adjudication

We believe that the judicial process, once invoked, is fair. Like all good judicial processes there is a presumption of innocence and well established procedures to ensure fairness. Complaints, once made, are subject to much scrutiny and many procedural safeguards. Those who participate in that system do so with a commitment to equity.

Initiating Complaints - A problem area

The process of initiating complaints, however, does not have the safeguards that are built into the rest of the Honor System. We believe that this is the stage where most inequities can and do occur. It is the point of greatest vulnerability to the "spotlighting" we discussed earlier.

Complaints are initiated by individuals and need not be subject to the judgment of others until *after* the complaint is made, and even then, they can be partially insulated from such judgments. We believe that this is a problem. The procedure to complain can relieve the complainant of some personal responsibility so long as there is a possibility that the complainant need not necessarily confront the person being investigated. We acknowledge that complaining and investigating are confidential processes and that an accusation may

never result. But it seemed to us, as it did to some students familiar with the process, that the complainant is too insulated from taking personal responsibility. A faculty member commented figuratively, "We seem to be teaching students to hasten to the phone to complain secretly about their neighbor's noise rather than speak directly and first to their neighbor." There is a legitimate concern here about whether the Honor System, at this point, teaches students how best to interact with each other, or to simply "call the cops." Are students learning how to recognize and resolve conflicts and wrongdoings, or are they being taught always to invoke a third party?

One could ask here about the role of Conscientious Retraction in the general area of encouraging responsibility. Conscientious Retraction encourages a student who violated (or believed that he or she violated) the Honor System to take the initiative to report that to the Honor Committee. Retracting the action immunizes the student from the single sanction if he or she is later reported although it is not consequence free. Conscientious Retraction, then, clearly encourages the individual student to take responsibility for his or her *own* actions. Initiating a complaint in the event of having observed a suspected violation of the Honor System by another is a different kind of responsibility. It requires a student to take some responsibility to do something about the actions of *others*.

The process of complaining probably needs constant attention. This is not an either/or matter; rather it is a matter of balance. Some students reported that the complaint procedures create an unwanted

aura of "big brother is watching you." It can breed fear that can aggravate the already troublesome "spotlighting" phenomenon. Some students questioned whether complaints could be made secretly even though the Honor System rules are clear that they cannot be without good cause. We also heard fears about the possibility of students knowingly making a false complaint as a means to harass. Even though investigations are confidential (and we were convinced that they almost always succeed at that) some students are convinced that word of them sometimes gets out to the jeopardy of the person being investigated. Several Black students were quite convinced that the act of complaining often springs from ulterior motives.

It was clear that exceptions are few; that complainants are routinely told that they should be willing to confront, with testimony, the accused. Those few exceptions met a test of avoiding harmful retribution. But there can be, and are, differing interpretations about what does and does not constitute "harmful" retribution. A complainant's discomfort at the thought of having to provide evidence in the presence of the accused certainly does not meet any test of harmful retribution.

The point where a complaint is made is the point most vulnerable to bias and even prejudice (usually unintentional); it is where the "spotlighting" takes its toll. This is the point where the individual is tested: "Will I report a close friend, teammate, fraternity brother, sorority sister, clubmate, or a member of my own ethnic group?"

"Will I be willing to initiate a complaint - and to take responsibility for having done so?" "Am I willing to risk the career of a fellow student by triggering a process that may result in his or her leaving UVa?" "Do I think that what I saw or think I saw merits separation from UVa?" "Are the values upheld by the Honor System worth doing what I am obliged to do?" These are the tough questions that confront students (and faculty) when they believe that a student may have cheated, lied, or stolen.

Making a decision to complain is the Honor System's most demanding procedure. It often places high values in competition with each other: trust in the face of suspicion, friendship and integrity, loyalty to a group versus loyalty to an individual, and caring for the individual versus adherence to a communal ideal. But most of all, it is an *individual* decision that causes most students to confront themselves in ways that they may never have done before. It tests judgment, character, and courage. That is surely one of the most important reasons why the Honor System has been viewed as so important by generations of UVa students. After all, good judgment, character, and courage are virtues that most good colleges and universities seek to teach and celebrate. The Honor System promises to foster those virtues.

So being willing to complain is at once the Honor System's great strength, yet the point of greatest vulnerability. It is the point that needs the greatest attention and education.

Recommendation The threshold for allowing complainants to complain with the hope or promise of secrecy should be raised to the point where *all* complainants should assume that they will eventually have to confront the person they are complaining about.

Electing and selecting students to administer the system

The functions studied in this category included the: election of the Honor Committee, organization of the Honor Committee, election of Honor Committee officers, appointment of Honor Adviser, appointment of Honor Educators, appointment of Honor Counsels, selection of investigators, selection of jury panelists, and the training and orientation of students in these roles.

The election and selection processes appeared to us to be fair. These processes happen continuously and go beyond the annual election of an Honor Committee and appointment of Honor Adviser, Educators, and Counsels. Even more students are involved as investigators and jury panelists - selections that are made as the year goes along. The ways students are selected to these roles are fair. They reflect the determination of the Honor leadership to involve students from all ethnic and racial groups, academic classes and disciplines. The Honor Committee should make more known its successful efforts to ensure diverse appointments within the System. We have already discussed and recommended expanding the role of educators and organizational representatives for those activities.

One of the historic strengths of the Honor System is that it belongs to students and is administered by them. The students we met are simply awesome in their dedication to it and in their determination to make it work. And they work long and hard for their Honor System - a matter that is deservedly a point of pride to the University. Students are honored to be chosen or elected to help administer it. The posts associated with the administration of Honor are highly sought after; more want to serve than can. At that, the number of students who make working commitments to it is large - more than 200.

Unlike what may have been the case in earlier years, Black students are well represented among the many appointed positions. Perhaps disproportionately highly so. We believe that this is a result of the commitment of the Honor Committee and its leaders to ensure diversity in the many groups that are part of the administration of the Honor System. It also reflects a powerful commitment on the part of some students of color to serve, to invest themselves (and their community) in the ideals of the Honor System, and to try to improve things. We saw this on the Honor Committee itself, the Executive Committee, Honor Adviser, Honor Educators, and Honor Counsel. We saw that determination reflected in training and orientation programs, in discussion topics, in reaching out and recruiting to diverse communities on grounds. Those efforts are getting some of the very results encouraged by earlier reports (An Audacious Faith, and A First Step)

On the other hand, we did hear concerns about "in groups" and "out groups." The problem seemed to be that there were too many "Rugby Road types" involved in leadership positions. Certainly some Black students as well as non-Black students expressed disapproval of the life-styles (mainly the drinking and partying) of some of the fraternities and sororities. They wondered if that represented the mainline culture of UVa student life, and if so, were quick to disclaim any desire to be a part of that. It was not clear to us that this was a significant factor in either the image or realities of the Honor Committee and its organization. We did not study the social, year (class), residential, or organizational affiliations of those serving in Honor System positions.

It *was* clear to us, however, that the "Rugby Road" stereotype and reactions to it did not serve to strengthen the overall UVa student community. If anything, the separate and disparate lifestyles make the creation of community more, not less, difficult. That, of course, affects the working of the Honor System to some extent.

The selection of students to administer and serve the Honor System is continuous. There is a somewhat constant process of selecting and training investigators and panelists (jurors). The Honor Advisers are responsible for selecting investigators. On the whole, they use fair means to do so. But we believe they improved on the fairest means (randomly selecting students) by exercising judgment and using criteria that were educationally sound and equitably sensible. They

also tended to ensure that investigators were drawn from diverse groups.

Recommendation The Honor Committee and the Honor Advisers should make their selection criteria and processes for investigators more broadly known. To do so would increase confidence in the judicial process. Good judgment *is* being used and students should know that.

The selection of jury panelists has been fair, if for no other reason than that the student being tried has a choice about how the panel is to be constituted. During 1990-91 from 20 - 30% of the panelists for each jury have been students of color. That reflected a selection system that was working. And it reflected a willingness on the part of students of color to meet their community obligations to serve the Honor System when asked to do so.

We found no evidence that students of color were being excluded or were excluding themselves from serving in the administration of the Honor System. To the contrary, we found that the participation of students of color was actively sought and that they want to be full participants in the administration of the Honor System. But they want to participate as *full* members of the community.

Recommendation We recommend that the Honor Committee consider collecting and publishing statistics that indicate the participation of students of color in the administration of the Honor System.

There is one issue, however, that deserves some attention. Serving for the Honor System, as an elected or appointed official or being an investigator or even panelist, demands much time. Does this affect adversely students who need to maintain full job schedules to afford UVa? Does it deter them from participating?

The Single Sanction

It is probably impossible to study the UVa Honor System without considering the pros and cons of its single sanction. Although we did not study it thoroughly, clearly the single sanction has come to symbolize matters of great importance in the history of UVa. The single sanction is a key characteristic of the System - one that most clearly distinguishes it from almost all others. It is controversial and, as all know, is a regular subject of debate and vote by UVa students. Proposals to change it are frequently advanced and regularly defeated. Understanding *all* the intricacies and nuances would have taken more time than we had. We can, however, comment on some of the implications that we recognized.

College and university codes of conduct are primarily designed to help create and support a campus environment conducive to learning. Having a community marked by trust is a keystone of UVa. The Honor Spirit is the heart and soul of the Honor System; it is what the System seeks to create and perpetuate with each new generation of faculty and students. The single sanction is a part of the Honor System. While the single sanction is not intended to punish, it does

and should be analyzed as a collegiate judicial sanction. College and university judicial sanctions are usually designed to achieve three things: to deter, to penalize, and to rehabilitate. The simple fact that violating the Honor System will lead to one's separation from UVa (unless, of course, one conscientiously retracts their violation) is a powerful deterrent. It needs no further examination; it is quickly and definitely understood.

Penalties, on the other hand, serve both to deter and to place a value of seriousness on a violation. Because penalties can be variable, even within a single type of sanction, it is possible for the judicial process to respond to both mitigating and aggravating circumstances. One behavior can have multiple meanings, yet remain but one behavior. Assume, for example, that a person was arrested for speeding (going 80 mph) and going through several red lights. The violation occurred and the driver was guilty. Would the penalty be lessened if the guilty person told the judge that he was rushing to the hospital because his pregnant wife who was in the car was beginning labor? Or, in another instance, the arresting officer told the judge that the driver had a long record of arrests for speeding and running red lights? In neither case would the fact that a law was violated go away. Yet the wife in labor might be seen as a mitigating circumstance and the violator given a minimum fine - perhaps \$20. The history of multiple arrests for similar violations might be seen by the judge as an aggravation and the person may be given the maximum fine - maybe \$400. Examples abound in college judicial law of where it makes sense to find a person guilty and *then* decide

how serious the violation was *under the circumstances*. That is the point in the process where individual situations can be considered and where penalties can be tuned to reflect them. The UVa single sanction prevents that from happening: the sanction is The Sanction.

This creates problems for the Honor System. But first a non-problem: the caveat that binds an individual or a jury to decide that a certain conduct is either right or wrong. A student is either guilty or not guilty. All judicial functions must confront and answer that question within the usual constraints of evidence and fairness. The UVa Honor System does that well.

A usual problem, and one shared by UVa is clear advance knowledge about what is right or wrong; about what behaviors are expected and prohibited. We do not here join with those who seek specific rules of right and wrong or some type of collegiate Napoleonic Code. A good judicial code is more likely one that forces people to ask themselves, before they act, where an act would fall on the right-to-wrong scale? UVa's Honor System trumpets some absolutes: don't steal, don't cheat, don't lie. But it has subsequently been interpreted to imply that any of those acts might be okay if they are not regarded as "serious" by UVa students. The determination of "seriousness" is a problem in any system and the UVa Honor System is no exception. Seriousness isn't legislated. Rather it is usually reflected over time in case law that provides some guidance about the seriousness of a violation in the context of surrounding circumstances. That guidance usually is given by the sanction given; by where a penalty falls

within some range of penalties. This guidance cannot be a part of the Honor System because there is no variation of the single sanction, regardless of what circumstances surrounded a violation of the Honor Spirit.

There is no consistently good way for individual students (and faculty) to know when the behavior of another may cross the boundary from not serious to serious - or from serious to really serious. Students are encouraged to ask their professors what is allowed and many do. But many do not. Nor is there a consistently good way to calibrate one's own behavior - or even to risk making a mistake (such as pedagogically sound and possibly allowed collaboration on an academic project). Not when one's entire career might be jeopardized.

The single sanction, as it now exists, may hinder rather than help discussions about what is and is not serious. To some it breeds fear rather than the rational and ethical discussions and self-examined behavior that the Honor System most wants to facilitate.

There *are* degrees of culpability and they are encountered often within the Honor System. The problem is the occasional response to limited culpability by a finding of not guilty. When a student who has clearly cheated is declared not guilty because of extenuating circumstances, confidence in the system is bound to erode further. We observed this with some faculty who, knowing that a student plagiarized, could not understand a subsequent finding of not guilty.

There are at least two reasons why a case may not end up with a finding of guilt. The most common is probably the inability to prove guilt to a reasonable standard; there wasn't enough evidence. This causes misunderstanding but can be explained. It is something that the Honor Advisers already do in their dealings with faculty members.

The other reason is that there may have been a violation (say plagiarism) - but the severity of it coupled with mitigating circumstances (say personal troubles over which the person had no control) didn't seem to warrant imposing the only sanction available: leave UVa permanently. Under the present arrangement there is no way to take such mitigating circumstances into account other than to return a verdict of not guilty. It is difficult to maintain confidence in a system that periodically declares one "not guilty" in the face of compelling evidence to the contrary.

Wouldn't it be better to separate guilt from its consequences? To apply one set of tests to the evidence of guilt or innocence, and then separately consider whether there are mitigating or aggravating circumstances that should affect penalties? We believe that the Honor System would be strengthened if the Honor System could introduce some flexibility into the application of its single sanction. The single sanction (separation from the University) need not change. But perhaps the separation could be for variable lengths of time - the minimum being one semester.

Recommendation. We recommend that the single sanction of separation from the University for violating the Honor System be kept, but that it be made flexible as to the length of the separation. The sanction, therefore, could be separation from the University for a period ranging from a semester to permanently.

Finally, there is the matter of rehabilitation. A university, of all places, believes that people can learn, and in the case of mistakes, that students are corrigible. The single sanction makes no such assumption. Rather it preempts it. Or at least forbid someone from ever returning to UVa having fully come to terms with their behavior under the Honor Spirit.

Are there intergroup issues within the University that are not directly related to the Honor System, but that find expression through it? Is the Honor System a vehicle for such larger issues?

As was said earlier, there is a theme to this report and it is that the racial issues that find expression in the Honor System are *not* issues caused by it, or even primarily related to it. Rather, they are community-wide issues that find visible expression *through* the Honor System. Changing the Honor System will not make the issues go away; they would be there even if there were no Honor System.

These issues have been discussed throughout our report. UVa, like nearly all other universities and colleges, has committed itself to creating a pluralistic community where all of its members are

accepted as full members regardless of their race, religion, or other personal circumstances. It is a community organized around a daring and core principle of trust; a trust that is necessary for a healthy academic community that is civil and caring. If any at UVa enjoy less than full membership, and thus full benefits of trust, the entire community is lessened by that fact. If difference is not valued and accepted then those who are or are perceived to be different will be marginalized. As we noted earlier, we believe that the "spotlighting effect" is at the core of the disproportionate numbers of investigations and accusations of Blacks. That spotlighting phenomenon is a consequence of factors in the larger UVa community and not of the design and procedures of the Honor System. It is the larger issue of achieving an effective multi-cultural community that must be addressed and resolved if the Honor System is to continue its distinctive role in a University of Virginia education.

JWL
Final Report
August, 1991

 Appendix 1 Recommendations Summarized

Working towards a pluralistic community. The University of Virginia should regularly rededicate itself to creating and maintaining an open, just, caring, and celebrative community that is pluralistic, helps its members learn about human differences as well as commonalities, and embraces difference comfortably.

✓ Debunk the Admissions Myth! UVa should state clearly that everyone who is admitted has been judged able to become a successful student there. The Admissions Office and the Officers of UVa have made this point. It is a point, however, that must find its way more regularly and assertively into the language and publications of the University. The responsibility to do this rests squarely with the leadership of the University (at all levels) and with the Admissions Office. They should do more in this regard.

Accentuate the ideals of honor more than the mechanics We recommend that less attention be paid to the trial and strictly judicial aspects of the Honor System and that more attention be paid to what we have discussed as the Honor Spirit - the ideals that are its foundation. ✓

Experimental Honor Education We urge the Honor Educators to establish a subcommittee for Experimental Honor Education. That subcommittee should be charged to develop and experiment with more interactive and less passive educational techniques, to consider the use of various media, and to find effective ways to teach newly admitted students about their responsibilities under the Honor System.

Share educational tasks more broadly We recommend that the Honor Educators' leaders work with the leaders of selected student groups (we hope that Black student organizations will be included) to find ways to share responsibility for the orientation of new students to the Honor System. We also recommend that some groups, in

addition to individuals, be represented on the Honor Educator Committee.

More attention to the Honor System in Admissions The Honor Committee and the Admissions Office should establish a joint committee regularly to inform members of the admissions staff about the Honor System, to discuss how best to explain the significance to the Honor System, to orient new members of the Admissions staff who are not UVa graduates and hence may not appreciate the power and significance of the System, and to review how the Honor System is explained in promotional publications.

Faculty members need to help more The faculty should be encouraged and even asked to share considerable responsibility for keeping the ideals of the Honor System a reality at UVa. Students and faculty must work closely and regularly together to make it work. This should enhance, not diminish, the fact that students have the primary responsibility for administering the Honor System; it does not diminish their autonomy.

- The Honor Committee should make common cause with the appropriate faculty leadership to strengthen the role of the faculty departmental Honor Adviser (or other organizational entities) in exchanging information about current activities of the Honor Committee, about relevant faculty views and experiences, and orienting new faculty members and TAs.
- Different schools and departments have differing ways of organizing such matters. The Honor Committee, working with the faculty leadership, should experiment with new (or old) ways of involving faculty members in the above activities.
- The Honor Committee itself should meet with faculty leaders two or three times annually to discuss how the Honor System is working, and to share issues of common concern. Faculty members need to hear about some of the issues that students are confronting, and students need to hear about some of the issues that faculty members encounter.

Students need more and better information The Honor Committee should develop and use a *standard* format of appropriate categories to record activities and decisions related to the Honor System. There are many resources within UVa, such as the Office of Institutional Planning and Studies, to provide good advice and counsel about how such data can be collected and organized in ways that will be useful over time.

Ensure responsible complaining The threshold for allowing complainants to complain with the hope or promise of secrecy should be raised to the point where *all* complainants should assume that they will eventually have to confront the person they are complaining about.

Be open about selection processes - they are good The Honor Committee and the Honor Advisers should make their selection criteria and processes for investigators more broadly known. To do so would increase confidence in the judicial process. Good judgment *is* being used and students should know that.

Let UVa know that Black students are involved in the administration of the System We recommend that the Honor Committee consider collecting and publishing statistics that indicate the participation of students of color in the administration of the Honor System.

Keep but modify the single sanction. We recommend that the single sanction of separation from the University for violating the Honor System be kept, but that it be made flexible as to the length of the separation. The sanction, therefore, could be separation from the University for a period ranging from a semester to permanently.

Appendix 2 The Consultants

JAMES W. LYONS was the principal consultant and was responsible for organizing the visit, serving as liaison with the University, and preparing the report.

Lyons was, until last June (1990) Dean of Student Affairs at Stanford University, having served in that post for 18 years. For the ten years

before that he was Dean of Students at Haverford College, and before that, an Assistant Dean and graduate student at Indiana University. He is a graduate of Allegheny College (BA) and Indiana University (MS, EdD) where he studied higher education history and counseling psychology. He now serves as Senior Fellow in the Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research and is a Lecturer in the Graduate School of Education.

As a chief student affairs officer for 28 years, Lyons was responsible for the usual array of student educational services and concerns. Included among them was judicial affairs. Both Haverford and Stanford have long standing Honor Codes that are relevant to the academic and social cultures of the schools: trust is regarded as fundamental to the educational missions of Haverford and Stanford. Students in both institutions assume primary responsibility for making their Honor Systems work. Dean Lyons, in conjunction with the work of the Student Conduct Legislative Council, conducted studies of the Stanford Honor Code in 1975 and in 1985. Those studies provided additional longitudinal data from a national study, Student Dishonesty and Its Control in College (Bowers, Columbia University, 1964). Both Stanford and Haverford were a part of that study. Lyons has been a student of Honor Codes throughout his professional career.

Lyons has also had extensive experience as an accreditor, campus consultant and researcher. In recent years, Lyons has been either chair or a member of accrediting teams for the following schools: Oregon State University, Occidental College, Pitzer College, Pomona College, California State University Sacramento, Reed College, Lewis and Clark College, University of California at Los Angeles, Woodbury University, and the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

In recent years he has served as a consultant for Duke, Bucknell, Macalester College, Swarthmore, Harvey Mudd College, Eckerd College, the University of Puget Sound, and University of California campuses at Santa Cruz, Davis, Santa Barbara, and San Diego.

Lyons was also a member of a research team sponsored by the Lilly Endowment to study selected schools known for having a high quality of campus life that complimented their academic program. The study employed qualitative research methods that included campus visits, review of publications, and interviews of more than 1300 students, faculty, alumni, trustees, and staff of fourteen

colleges and universities. The study, Involving Colleges, was published by Jossey-Bass publishers in March 1991.

GREG RICKS is an assistant dean and multi-cultural educator at Stanford. His work includes developing and conducting programs throughout the University with faculty, students, and staff to increase understanding and sensitivity in cross cultural matters. These programs occur in residences, department, in campus organizations, and in campus-wide settings.

Dean Ricks also served as the Senior Class Dean at Dartmouth (1985-87) where he also worked closely with Dartmouth's Committee on Standards (Judicial Committee) where he counseled and advised students who were brought before their system and advised the Committee in instances where students of color were brought before it or otherwise involved.

He has served as a consultant in multi-cultural matters for more than 50 colleges and universities.

CHRISTINE BRADY received her AB in Political Science from Stanford where she is currently working towards an MA in Organizational Behavior (Sociology). Ms. Brady is an active member of the Stanford community where she was involved in several organizations including the Black Student Union, Alpha Phi Fraternity, the Stanford Equestrian Team, and Cap and Gown Honor Society. She worked as a Resident Assistant in a large undergraduate residence where, in addition to the usual counseling and educational program responsibilities, she developed special programs in multicultural and gender awareness. Ms. Brady also coordinated the Summer Fellowship Program for the HAAS Public Service Center, worked with African-American Youths in local communities as well as in Selma, Alabama.

