

**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA HONOR COMMITTEE**  
**TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**  
**ON THE**  
**1993 HONOR SYSTEM T.A. SURVEY**

**March 6, 1994**

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## I: SUMMARY FINDINGS

- o Graduate TAs generally have distant and indirect relationships with the Honor System. Most have received basic materials that tell how the system is supposed to work; but, more must be done to publicize information on the Honor System, actually in operation, that would counterbalance the image of an ineffective system held by many and supported by negative comments circulating in second-hand stories. Supplying such information directly to Faculty Honor Advisors or faculty graduate advisors, for posting or distribution to graduate students, would help in this regard.
- o A better understanding by graduate TAs of the meaning and philosophy of the three criteria of an honor offense and the single sanction would help resolve TA dissatisfaction with the output of the Honor System.
- o Graduate TA knowledge of the Honor System is relatively static over time. However, evidence suggests that efforts to educate graduate TAs meet with some success. Unfortunately, most of this focuses on new students. Accordingly, more education directed at graduates after matriculation would likely improve the relationship between graduate TAs and the Honor System.
- o While the state of graduate TA knowledge of the Honor System is not critical, there is much room for improvement. Very few graduate TAs (7.8%) have little knowledge about the Honor System. However, less than 50% consider themselves knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about the Honor System.
- o Just over half of the respondents support the single sanction, with those who know more about the Honor System more likely to support the single sanction than those who know less about the Honor System. Respondent views of the single sanction split into three groups: single sanction supporters; those who considered the single sanction to be too harsh; and those concerned that the single sanction is not enforced by panels at trials. Those TAs who believe the single sanction is not enforced form a swing group in support for the single sanction. If more information and education, or minor procedural changes, would lead them toward stronger support for the single sanction, only a smaller minority would oppose the single sanction on philosophical grounds. However, if these students would hold fast to their doubts about enforcement, support for the single sanction among graduate TAs -- while still a majority -- would be much weaker.
- o The Honor Committee and Education Coordinator should repeat the effort to institute a department-based Graduate Honor Advisor pool. This new effort should enlist Faculty Honor Advisors and faculty graduate advisors to help fill this pool with interested graduate students that will provide procedural and substantive information to graduate students -- especially TAs -- in their departments.

## II: INTRODUCTION

Students at the University of Virginia -- whether undergraduate, graduate or professional -- have long benefited from the Honor System. For over 150 years it has enriched their experiences in ways both tangible and intangible. However, while the Honor System has traditionally garnered strong support from University students, it cannot avoid the difficulty faced when forcing an ideal code into the complexity of daily practice as a governing system. The comments of one teaching assistant reflect the practical tension this difficulty causes:

I feel that the honor system will always exist in spirit, but I find that various pressures students undergo can erode their sense of honesty and ethics in wake [*sic*] of a good grade, etc. I do not know how to correct this issue, other than for the instructors to be aware of these pressures and to stress the importance of one's dignity and respect, establishing the feeling that one's signature (following the PLEDGE) reflects one's character.

Both supporters and critics of the Honor System should agree that this difficulty requires the ongoing attention of the University community to address conflicts and possible problems -- whether procedural or philosophical -- within the system.

Members of the community may disagree on how best to operate and maintain the Honor System. Such differences of opinion, when framed in constructive dialogue, lead to improvements in the Honor System. Unless all sectors of the University community feel a part of the Honor System, though, it faces the danger of breaking down. Those members of the community who feel excluded, and those who exclude themselves, from the Honor System have little incentive to do the two things necessary for the Honor System to work: not lie, cheat, or steal; and, involve themselves in the Honor System (as initiators, witnesses, panelists, support officers, or Committee members) when others may have lied, cheated, or stolen.

This study grew out of concern -- stemming from a prevalence of negative comments, stories, and statements regarding the administration and maintenance of the Honor System -- that cynicism may be leading the graduate sector of the University community away from the Honor System. The study produced evidence of such cynicism, shown in responses that included doubts about students' abilities to adjudicate the futures of fellow students with fairness and impartiality and without bias; the frequent belief that students abuse the system; and the sense that students often fail to initiate cases after witnessing potential violations. Whether graduate students would feel excluded or exclude themselves from the University community, either result would drastically harm the Honor System. Graduate and professional students make up one-third of the University's student population, thus their numbers alone merit close attention to potential problems. However, the significant role in the Honor System many graduate students play through their positions as teaching assistants (TAs) made addressing the matter of crucial importance. Graduate TAs see the Honor System both as students and as faculty. This faculty role, in particular, affects the Honor System, for how a teacher treats students in a class with respect to the Honor System will affect the attitude of each student in the class. A positive relationship between faculty and the Honor System helps foster the community of trust; a negative faculty relationship can be the first crack in a line of disaffection that expands to destabilize the entire system.

The Honor Committee commissioned this study to address potential problems among graduate students, especially graduate TAs. The cover letter sent out to TAs with the survey stated the intent was "to gain a better sense of the general knowledge and opinion of UVa's Honor System among the University's graduate community," though the whole purpose is somewhat broader. The project was largely a widescale effort at education: To direct its efforts at educating graduate students better about how the Honor System works, the Honor Committee needed to learn what graduate students know and do not know about its procedures and philosophy. Furthermore, to represent graduate student opinion better and consider changes that might improve the Honor System, the Honor Committee needed to know what graduate students believed *did not* work.

It is important to point out at the outset several factors that qualify the results of the study. First, because the survey targeted a very specific population, i.e., graduate TAs, readers should not generalize results to the entire graduate community. Second, for financial and labor availability reasons, the Committee conducted the study as a mail survey, making it difficult to generalize the results to the entire TA population. Third, procedural changes in the Honor System implemented during and after the survey early last fall make characterizing these results as current sentiment more difficult, since these procedural changes may have led to changes in the knowledge and opinions of graduate TAs about the Honor System. The question naturally arises: Then why do it? In the first case, the special role of TAs in the University community, discussed above, gives great importance to their knowledge and opinions. Second, while the results pertain to only a limited group, they do provide some basic information to guide the understanding of graduate opinion, whereas before the survey not even basic empirical evidence existed. Finally, though changes to the Honor System may have brought changes to graduate opinion, the results of this study can still serve as benchmark information that directs potentially positive efforts not yet undertaken or adapts efforts already undertaken, as well as compares with information gathered in the future to measure the changes in opinion that have taken place.

The TA/Graduate and Professional Students Subcommittee of the Honor Committee wishes to thank those support officers whose production assistance in the early stages of the survey enabled it to go out on time. The Subcommittee also wishes to thank the Teaching Resource Center for including Honor Committee materials in its fall workshop packets, for its technical and substantive assistance in developing the survey, and for sharing in the survey project.

### III: SURVEY METHOD AND ANALYSIS

#### Survey Method

Because of restraints on the budget and available labor for the project, the Subcommittee drafted a survey to be sent by messenger mail to graduate TAs. The survey consisted of 27 questions, five of which required open-ended answers written in spaces provided on the question sheet, and the remaining giving multiple-choice options to be marked on the SCANTRON sheet provided. Because such surveys produce self-selected samples, the Subcommittee cannot generalize the results to the entire graduate TA population. However, the results do supply the Honor Committee with critical information regarding the opinions and experiences of an interesting mix of graduate TAs with regard to the Honor System. Given the exceedingly limited input the Honor Committee normally gets from the graduate

sector of the University community, any such added information improves the Honor Committee's understanding of graduate sentiment.

With the assistance of the Honor Advisor pool, the Subcommittee prepared survey packets, each with a cover letter, question sheet, SCANTRON sheet, and return envelope addressed to the Honor Committee. These packets were addressed from lists provided to the Teaching Resource Center from departments in the Graduate School for Arts and Sciences and other University programs with graduate TAs. After being addressed, envelopes were grouped by the department of destination and sent via messenger mail on September 15.

### Population and Sample

The survey sought the opinions and experiences of graduate TAs at the University. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences alone has approximately 800<sup>1</sup> TA positions each year, and some graduate TAs exist at the other schools as well. Rather than mail surveys to all graduate students with TA experience at some point in their time at the University, the Subcommittee sent surveys only to those listed with the Teaching Resource Center as TAs in the 1993-94 academic year, assuming this would offer a cross-section of TAs in terms of experience, background, and opinions. From the 750 surveys sent out, 222 responses came back to the Honor Committee, a response rate of 30 percent. Ten respondents seemed to miss the second page of questions, ending their SCANTRON answers after question #10; however, these were included in the overall sample results for demographic purposes, since they answered all the demographic questions.

The responses did provide a good demographic mix. Responses came from 32 graduate programs, in the following proportions: English 11%; Mathematics 9%; French 8%; Environmental Sciences 5%; Commerce 4%; Economics 4%; Government & Foreign Affairs 4%; History 4%; History 4%; Physics 4%; Biology 3%; Chemistry 3%; Electrical Engineering 3%; Religious Studies 3%; Slavic Languages 3%; Spanish 3%; Civil Engineering 2%; Education 2%; Material Science & Engineering 2%; Philosophy 2%; Psychology 2%; Architectural History 1%; Art 1%; Art History 1%; Astronomy 1%; Asian & Middle Eastern Languages 1%; Chemical Engineering 1%; Drama 1%; German 1%; Music 1%; RCS 1%; Sociology 1%; Systems Engineering 1%; and 9% with no department designation. Grouping these program responses by field, 32% came from TAs in the social sciences; 22% from arts and humanities; 17% from languages; 11% from natural sciences; and 8% from engineering.

Forty-eight percent of respondents had completed one year of graduate study or less at the University; 30 percent had completed two to three years; and 22 percent had completed four or more years of study. Responses had an almost even gender split, with 51 percent male respondents and 49 percent female respondents. As for the mix of experience, 43 percent of respondents were in their first semester as TAs; 25% in their fifth or higher semester as TAs; the remaining 32 percent were in their second through fourth semester as TAs. Sixty-six percent were PhD candidates, with the remaining 34 percent a mix of MA or other degree candidates. In addition, 43 percent of respondents had experience with honor systems at previous institutions. Of those, 36 percent rated their previous systems as excellent; 45 percent as good; and 19 percent as ineffective or worse.

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<sup>1</sup> Because varying workloads affects how TAs are counted, the number of positions is not necessarily the number of actual TAs.

## Anonymity

The Subcommittee made a special effort both to preserve the anonymity of respondents and avoid the perception of compromising anonymity. The existence of open-ended questions on the survey became a minor obstacle to this, given the desire to correlate open-ended responses with SCANTRON answers, since this required the ability to pair together the SCANTRON and question sheets of each respondent without making potential respondents think codes on envelopes tied their responses to their names. To get around this, SCANTRON and question sheets (instead of envelopes) received code numbers, survey packets received those sheets with the same numbers, and mailing envelopes were sealed without noting these numbers before they were addressed and sent. Respondents received instructions to list only their department on the SCANTRON sheet, to allow for departmental comparisons while ensuring individual anonymity. This system allowed for the correlation desired, and only a few respondents expressed concern for the anonymity of their responses. As a trade-off for this guarantee of anonymity, reminders and follow-up survey packets could not be sent to individuals failing to return materials after the initial mailing, since the code numbers did not show who had or had not responded. However, the added responses a follow-up mailing could have provided may have been offset by a decrease in overall responses due to concerns about anonymity. Nevertheless, some respondents did mistake the coding numbers for an effort to compromise anonymity. Several respondents ripped out the numbered corners of the SCANTRON and question sheets; others inked out the numbers so they could not be read. Future efforts at protecting anonymity could utilize the same coded system, but should state clearly, in the cover letter and survey instructions, the reason for the numbers and the guarantee of anonymity.

## Validity and Reliability

While no pretest measures were taken to check the validity and reliability of the survey, great care was taken to word questions specifically, in order to provide accurate and consistent responses. Several questions offer yes/no response options; but, where appropriate, more detailed response options exist. For example, to learn whether respondents believe the Honor System creates a community of trust and provides substantive community benefits questions had yes/no response options, while learning the respondents' levels of knowledge about, or evaluations of, the Honor System called for multiple response options of varying degrees (i.e., very knowledgeable-no knowledge and excellent-very poor). To avoid double barrel questions, the survey broke down questioning about details of the Honor System into separate questions about familiarity (an education matter) and opinion (a substantive matter). Specifically, the survey first asked if respondents were familiar with the three criteria of an honor offense and the single sanction, then asked if respondents supported these aspects of the Honor System. The survey provides a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions to break up the question format and offer respondents an opportunity to state their views in their own words. As a mail survey, there is no opportunity for respondents to clarify questions they do not understand; however, with this in mind questions were written as simply and straightforwardly as possible. Furthermore, the benefit of a mail survey, of course, is the lack of interviewer effects that arise from in-person and telephone survey interviews.

Issues of the external validity of the survey are not discussed here, as they have been discussed in previous sections of this report.

## Analysis

Responses arrived in the Honor Committee office between September 15 and October 15. As they arrived, the SCANTRON sheets were checked to make sure they had been filled out correctly. Between October 15 and November 12, Carruthers Hall fed the SCANTRON sheets into a data file, which was then delivered to ITC for statistical analysis. Specifically, after cleaning the data, ITC provided frequencies of all yes/no and multiple choice response options and various crosstabulation requested by the Honor Committee. These results were presented to the Subcommittee on November 12, 1993. After initial analysis, the Subcommittee released a preliminary report of general results at the December 5, 1993, Honor Committee meeting. During the winter break and through the early weeks of the spring semester, examining the results in closer detail led the Subcommittee to run further crosstabulations. After analyzing these results, the Subcommittee drafted its final report for presentation at the March 6, 1994 Honor Committee meeting.

## IV: GENERAL FINDINGS<sup>2</sup>

### Previous Honor System Experience

Before asking respondents what they know of the University's Honor System, the survey asked whether respondents had experience with honor systems before starting their graduate work in Charlottesville, and how they evaluated these other systems. Not only did 43 percent have previous honor system experience, but of these 80.5 percent said these systems were good or excellent. Sixteen percent thought their previous systems were ineffective, and only three percent said their previous systems were poor or very poor.

Whether respondents had previous honor system experience made a significant difference in some cases, no difference in others. Whereas 57.8 percent of respondents with previous honor system experience were either knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about the University's Honor System, only 40.9 of respondents with no previous experience had similar levels of knowledge\*. This may be due to those with previous honor system experience seeming to be more aware of information about the Honor System: whereas 95.6 percent of respondents with previous experience noticed and remembered receiving information about the Honor System at the Teaching Resource Center's fall semester Teaching Workshop (see Sources of Information, below), only 82.5 percent of those without previous experience noticed and remembered this material\*. However, those with previous experience were statistically neither more nor less likely than those without it to consider the TRC information helpful (88.1 percent/89.1 percent). Similarly, while respondents with previous experience were 15.6 percentage points more likely to believe the University's Honor System creates a community of trust (78.9 percent/63.3 percent)\*\*, previous honor system experience, in general, made no significant difference on respondents' overall impression of the University's Honor System.

How respondents with previous honor system experience viewed their previous systems also carried some influence. While the relationship only approaches significance, it seems

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<sup>2</sup> This section presents the results of univariate, bivariate, and occasionally trivariate analysis. Statistical descriptions are minimized in the main text, but levels of significance are noted with the following symbols: "\*"=(p≤.1), "\*\*"=(p≤.01), "\*\*\*"=(p≤.001).



that the worse the impression respondents had of their previous honor system, the more likely they were not to report to the University's Honor System those suspected honor violations they thought a student panel would find do not meet the three criteria of an honor offense. Whereas 100.0 percent of those rating their previous systems "poor" would not report such a suspected violation, only 50.0 percent of those rating their previous systems "excellent" would not report such a suspected violation. The influence of previous system impressions -- how good or bad the system was, as opposed to whether or not one had previous experience -- on how respondents evaluate the University's Honor System provides stronger evidence of the importance of previous systems. Respondents generally evaluated the University's Honor System as they evaluated their previous systems: 77.4 percent of those rating previous systems "excellent" and 90.0 percent of those rating previous systems "good" had positive evaluations of the University's Honor System, whereas only 40.0 of those rating previous systems "ineffective" and 50.0 percent of those rating previous systems "poor" gave the University's Honor System positive evaluations\*\*. This implies either that some people consistently maintain very high (and difficult to attain) standards of performance for honor systems, some people are more likely than others to support any honor system, or both. In any case, to some degree this may reflect respondents' general attitudes toward honor systems and not attitudes toward the University's Honor System in particular.

### Sources of Information

The survey asked several questions to help understand how graduate students learn about the Honor System. Each summer before matriculating, admitted students receive letters that briefly describe the philosophy and structure of the Honor System. Each August, before classes begin, the Graduate School conducts an orientation for new students that typically touches upon the Honor System. Finally, at the Teaching Workshop sponsored by the Teaching Resource Center last fall, Honor Committee Chair Roger Mason addressed TA and faculty attendees, and various materials giving background on the Honor System were included in the workshop packets supplied to attendees by the TRC.

The letter reached the highest number of respondents (n=178), followed by orientation (n=138), and the TRC information (n=90). However, information supplied through the TRC appears to have been the most effective. Receiving the TRC materials made a bigger difference (24.0 percentage points)\* than attending an orientation (17.4 percentage points)\* in whether TAs were either knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about the Honor System. TAs receiving the TRC materials were also 23.5 percentage points more likely than those not receiving them to believe the Honor System creates a community of trust\*, while TAs attending an orientation were only 13.9 percentage points more likely than those not attending\*. Receiving a pre-matriculation letter made no significant difference in either case. Furthermore, neither attending an orientation nor receiving a pre-matriculation letter made a difference in familiarity with the three criteria or the single sanction. However, whereas 69.0 percent of TAs receiving the TRC materials were familiar with the three criteria, only 20.0 percent of those not receiving this information were familiar with them\*\*. Similarly, whereas 85.1 percent of TAs receiving the TRC materials were familiar with the single sanction, only 60.0 percent of those not receiving the information were familiar with it\*. Finally, only 6.9 percent of TAs who received the TRC materials knew little about the Honor System, whereas 30.0 percent of TAs who did not receive the information knew little about it\*. Neither attending an orientation nor receiving a pre-matriculation letter made a difference in knowledge of the Honor System.

All three methods of communicating information about the Honor System to graduate TAs included in this study (a pre-matriculation letter, orientation, and inclusion in the fall TRC Teaching Workshop) have value. While the TRC material is the most effective, it also reaches the fewest people. On the other hand, while the letter is least effective, it reaches the most people. Future studies should also seek to learn how prominent and how effective a role Honor Educators (and others involved in the Honor System) play in graduate education in the Honor System, and whether individual departments make an effort to educate their TAs about the Honor System.

### Involvement in the Honor System

While the survey contained questions about the existence and form of involvement with the Honor System, only 10 respondents indicated any involvement: one as a panelist; five as witnesses; and four as initiators. The lack of data in this area prevents breaking down relationships accordingly. Nevertheless, this absence in itself leads to two related important considerations:

First, the Honor System has a distant relationship with graduate TAs. This is manifested in a sizable lack of information about the Honor System's procedures, actions, and education efforts. Many respondents noted in open-ended comments that students need to be taught more thoroughly about the Honor System, reminding them of its importance and emphasizing their role in supporting it. Less than five percent of the survey sample had been involved in the investigation and trial procedure, none as support officers or investigators. This may be read as evidence of strained relations between the Honor System and graduates. Graduate students, by the nature of their heavy workloads, are less likely to get involved in affairs that extend beyond their office walls. Conceivably, though, better relations with the graduate community would lead more graduates to get involved in the Honor System in an extracurricular sense, let alone as case initiators, witnesses, or panelists.

Second, because of this distance, the Honor System has an indirect relationship with graduate TAs. This means most graduates get very limited and select information about how and how well the Honor System works. Indeed, numerous respondents cited stories heard about cases of blatant violations resulting in no action to explain an unwillingness to pursue honor cases. Such stories have helped create a sense, pervading much of the graduate TA community, that reporting cases is not worth the trouble and red tape of initiating a case. As one TA wrote:

The process of reporting, investigating, and the trial are so long that it is less trouble to take action at your own level (i.e., a zero for the assignment or fail the course).

In the past, the Honor Committee has held tightly information related to cases in which students leave the University (voluntarily or on demand). As a result, most graduates have only second-hand knowledge of the Honor System in the form of dissatisfied colleagues' criticisms about cases initiated and dropped or ending in "not guilty" verdicts. Such an imbalance of information negatively affects the general opinion of graduates and pushes them farther away from the Honor System, only making the situation more tenuous. Many respondents asked for more publicity, particularly of cases with guilty verdicts. As one wrote:

The students do not respect the system! People do not understand the system and do

not want to be a part of it. Students need to be aware the sanction will be enforced.

The Committee's effort this year to make public more information about case resolutions should help to counter this imbalance of information. Because there is much ground to cover to bring graduates closer into the community of trust, the practice must continue and should be expanded however possible.

### Knowledge of the Honor System

The study puts to rest fears that graduate TAs are generally ignorant of the Honor System, with only 7.8 percent of respondents claiming little knowledge. On the other hand, only 7.3 percent claimed to be very knowledgeable, which combines with the 41.3 percent who considered themselves knowledgeable to represent less than 50 percent of the total sample. The plurality of graduate TAs, 43.7 percent, said they are only somewhat knowledgeable, leaving much room for improving the level of knowledge among graduate TAs. Looking to particular aspects of the Honor System, 83.2 percent of respondents were familiar with the single sanction, while only 62.4 percent were familiar with the three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness necessary for an honor conviction. Additionally, several prevalent misconceptions about the Honor System exist, such as the belief in the existence of a nontolerance clause, the belief that only students in a class (and *not* faculty or TAs) can initiate cases, and the belief that if you report a potential violation you must become known to the student in question and testify against him or her.

Contrary to expectations, more time spent at the University, different degree status, and more TA experience do not improve the level of overall knowledge about the Honor System. In addition, increased knowledge about the Honor System does not increase the likelihood of holding a positive impression of it. As for particular aspects of the Honor System, more time spent at the University, different degree status, and more TA experience also do not significantly alter the familiarity of respondents with the three criteria. Different degree status does not influence familiarity with the single sanction; however, breaking single sanction familiarity down by levels of TA experience does approach significance, and graduate TAs new to their programs are less familiar with the single sanction than those in the middle or late phases of their programs (80.8 percent/91.8 percent/91.1 percent)\*.

Levels of knowledge do, however, influence what respondents do under the Honor System. Whereas 46.6 percent of respondents not familiar with the three criteria would report a suspected honor offense even if they believed a panel would find that it did not meet all three criteria, only 31.7 percent of respondents familiar with the three criteria would report such a case\*. This comes as no surprise, since understanding the difficulty of finding all three criteria likely would discourage respondents from initiating an honor case.

### Support for the Honor System

While 62.4 percent of respondents were familiar with the three criteria of an honor offense, 83.2 percent said they supported employing these criteria. Still, some strong opposition did exist, such as:

The issue of seriousness of the offense is what allows students to freely cheat. I am aware of cases that were initiated where it was proven that the student cheated, but

since it "was only a quiz" the charges were dropped. When does it really become an offense? The intent is there, the act is there, then it is cheating and should be treated as such.

And:

The third criterion of seriousness could destroy the effectiveness of present and future panels. Thus the system would disintegrate. Cheating is cheating, no matter how serious.

These figures reversed for the single sanction, for while 86.3 percent of respondents were familiar with the single sanction, only 51.3 percent said they supported maintaining it. Open-ended comments hit both sides of the single sanction debate. In support were such comments as:

Thank goodness there is at least one institution of higher learning in the country which acknowledges and acts upon MORAL ABSOLUTES! I applaud the Honor System and wish more institutions would emulate it.

And:

Need to maintain single sanction [*sic*] -- it's been debated every year since '79 -- might as well recognize it as the only one that might impact students.

In opposition:

I think there should be counseling and educational service available to those found guilty. Simply dismissing students may not be in the best interest of the student. We are here to educate -- in and out of the classrooms.

And:

Get rid of the single sanction of permanent dismissal. No teacher wants to be responsible for throwing a student out of college, even if he/she did cheat. We are here to help students learn, not ruin their college years and possibly careers.

Overall, respondents comments on the single sanction split into three groups: single sanction supporters; those who considered the single sanction to be too harsh; and those concerned that the single sanction is not enforced by panels at trials.

Support for the three criteria seems to drop off somewhat for students late in their programs from higher levels for early- and mid-program respondents (86.7 percent/84.6 percent/73.8 percent), though this only approaches significance. More clearly, however, support for the single sanction drops considerably from 58.7 percent of early-program respondents to 38.6 percent of late-program respondents\*. Nevertheless, it is important to recall that knowledge of the Honor System does not seem to increase over time. With this in mind, a clear and sharp contrast exists between support for the single sanction among those more and less knowledgeable about the Honor System. Whereas 53.0 percent of those who know more about the Honor System support the single sanction, only 25.0 percent of those who know less about it support the single sanction\*.

One very interesting set of results pertains to the willingness of many graduate TAs to

report a potential honor violation even if they believed a student panel would find it did not meet the three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness. Surprisingly, 37.2 percent of respondents said they would still report the case. Some of the most significant relationships in the study pertained to this issue. More than twice as many respondents who support the single sanction as those who do not would report the case under such circumstances (50.0 percent/21.3 percent)\*\*\*. The same is true among respondents who believe the Honor System creates a community of trust (44.2 percent/17.9 percent)\*\*\*. These results make sense when considering that support for the single sanction, the belief in the community of trust, and the willingness to report a potential violation unlikely to meet the three criteria all require more faith in the Honor System. Not surprisingly, whereas 45.3 percent of respondents with positive evaluations of the Honor System would report such cases, only 17.9 percent of those calling the Honor System ineffective and 12.5 percent of those with negative evaluations would report such cases\*\*\*.

A strong majority of 80.0 percent of respondents believed the Honor System provided substantive community benefits, such as the ability to write checks with only a valid student i.d. This sentiment did not change much when broken down by other categories. However, the belief that the Honor System creates a community of trust varies greatly among different groups. While many respondents cited the size of the University as a factor responsible for a disintegration of the community of trust, overall, 70.0 percent of respondents believed in the community of trust. Looking at the effects of time and knowledge, respondents newer to their programs are more likely than respondents in their mid- or late-programs to believe in the community of trust (79.4 percent/61.7 percent/60.5 percent)\*, and a strong majority (72.0 percent) of respondents who know more about the Honor System believe in the community of trust while less than half (42.9 percent) of those with less knowledge have such a sense of a community of trust\*.

As for respondents' overall impressions of the Honor System, 10.0 percent rated it excellent, 60.5 percent rated it good, 21.0 percent rated it ineffective, 5.5 percent rated it poor, and 3.0 percent rated it very poor. Respondents provided a wide array of substantive comments regarding the procedures and practices of the Honor System:

- o Writing a "pledge" is just a token and an insult to a person who has "honor." If a person were to want to cheat, writing a sentence on a piece of paper will make no difference. And to the majority who would not lie, cheat, or steal, that offers no support. Luckily most people, including myself, will be "honorable" and do support the goals of the system.
- o It's stupid. I refuse to police these students beyond the obvious responsibility of teaching and grading them. I can't imagine why anyone would fetishize this kind of authoritarian, procedurist nonsense. In the humanities, there is no "teaching" as such, only plagiarism, which when detected results in ostracism, failure, etc. Honor proponents ought to grow up and put their energies into more substantial social reforms, not this kind of bureaucratic, pissant foolishness. We have enough lawyers and judges and criminal sanctions and political posturing without mimicking these social evils in our own backyard. This is just busywork for airheads.
- o I started at UVa undergrad in 1982. Got an MS, now working on a PhD. Creates a sense of honor within thyself.
- o A social code, in existence at many schools that have honor codes, helps bind the community together. As it stands, the UVa code seems to only be applied to "Don't

cheat.” Do we really need a code for that? Shouldn’t we expect that we will not cheat with or without a code? I think the UVa code is a joke considering the everyday occurrences of less than honorable behavior around the issue of gender and race relations. Why isn’t rape an honor code violation? I recommend the Honor Board [sic] examine some of the honor codes being used at the small, liberal arts colleges.

- o Make it more two-sided: i.e., use it to benefit students, empower them, in addition to merely punishing them.
- o [A problem facing the Honor System is] making the definition of the honor offenses too vague allowing for too many controversies.
- o I believe it’s really a societal problem -- not everyone is taught at home to not lie, steal or cheat. More and more people are willing to commit honor offenses knowing they won’t get caught due to the trust given to them by the honor system. It’s too bad for the honest people -- but isn’t that always the case -- everyone is punished for the acts of a few people. Faculty involvement in the Honor committee would place them under the Honor Code and greatly improve the quality of the Honor System. I know this doesn’t agree with your precious ideal of student self-governance, but students, as a whole, cannot be trusted with everything. That’s why there are now ID-checking machines at Scott Stadium.
- o Honor is not generally a possession of many young people today, unfortunately.
- o Attended UVa as undergrad 10 years ago. Had different view of the Honor System. Found it very beneficial. Felt as if there really was a community of trust . . . but feel conditions are worse now. People are more interested in a degree and less in education. General feeling among students is that a small amount of cheating is legal and many faculty end up encouraging this because penalty for cheating seems severe to them.

Interestingly, the longer respondents had been at the University, the less likely they were to have positive evaluations of the Honor System. Whereas 78.6 percent of newer graduate students had positive impressions, only 70.0 percent of mid-program respondents and 52.4 percent of late-program respondents had the same\*\*. Similarly, respondents with less TA experience were more likely to have positive impressions of the Honor System, ranging from 79.3 percent of respondents in their first semester TA experience to 55.3 percent of respondents with five or more semesters of TA experience having positive evaluations\*\*. One very curious result is that, despite the positive influence of increased knowledge of the Honor System on more philosophical particulars of the system (e.g., single sanction support, belief in the community of trust, and a willingness to report potential honor violations even if believing that a student panel would find it did not meet the three criteria of an honor offense), knowing more about the Honor System did not affect respondents’ impressions of it in any statistically significant way.

### Gender Differences

One interesting and unexpected result was the differences in responses supplied by male and female respondents. Female TAs tend to be more positive about the Honor System, more appreciative of the benefits it offers, and more likely to participate in its operation.

Men and women had roughly the same levels of knowledge about the Honor System. Less

than 10 percent of both men and women felt they had little knowledge of the Honor System. Using gender to break down respondent familiarity with the three criteria of an honor offense and the single sanction similarly yields little gender difference and does not test statistically significant. Men seem to have been slightly more familiar with the three criteria (65.0 percent) and the single sanction (89.3 percent) than were women (60.0 percent and 83.0 percent, respectively), but these results only approach statistical significance. In addition, women appear to have been more likely than men to find the material in the TRC packets helpful (93.0 percent/84.1 percent), though this too only approaches significance. However, statistically significant differences between men and women did appear in several cases. Women were more likely than men to believe that the Honor System creates a community of trust (75.5 percent/65.0 percent)\* and provides substantive community benefits (85.9 percent/74.0 percent)\*. Women said they would be more likely than men to report a suspected honor offense even if they believed a panel would find that it did not meet the three criteria (42.7 percent/31.3 percent)\*. More generally, female TAs were more likely than men to have a positive overall impression of the Honor System (76.5 percent/65.0 percent)\*\*.

This is a curious discovery. However, making causal assumptions about gender differences is premature. While responses differ between genders, so do the chosen fields of study. Among the most common fields (social science, arts and humanities), men and women had roughly the same proportions of respondents. Outside these, however, most women were in language programs while most men were in natural science and engineering programs.<sup>3</sup> The data were not analyzed to determine if the relationship between gender, department, and views about the Honor System is direct, intervening, spurious, conditional, or something else.

## V: DISCUSSION

### Suggested Action

The Subcommittee undertook this study with the intention of developing procedural and/or other reforms to suggest for adoption by the Honor Committee. However, as noted previously, between the survey dates and preparation of this report the Honor Committee implemented substantive changes in procedure and in the release of case information. Suggesting further procedural reforms without knowing the effect of these new policies on the graduate community could end up counterproductive. Furthermore, these changes seem in line with the direction of change the results of this study suggest are needed in the Honor System. Accordingly, the Subcommittee does not recommend further procedural reforms at this time. This, however, does not leave the study as a loud call for inaction.

Most graduate students, because they have chosen to spend their lives in academia, take for granted the need not to behave in ways prohibited under the Honor System as fundamental to academic life. Because they, unlike undergraduate first year students, are not steeped in the traditions of the Honor System from their first moments at the University, they have a less-developed habit to make the Honor System part of their daily or frequent

<sup>3</sup> Fields of male respondents: social sciences (30%), arts and humanities (22%), natural sciences (15%), engineering (15%), languages (7%), the rest had no program specification. Fields of female respondents: social sciences (34%), arts and humanities (26%), languages (25%), natural sciences (6%), engineering (2%), the rest had no program specification.

consideration. Indeed, many graduate TAs give the Honor System serious consideration only when brought face to face with potential violations by their students or when hearing stories of such situations. What graduate TAs most need is more information about the Honor System, letting them know how it works both procedurally and substantively. Redirecting graduate education efforts would be of great benefit both to the graduate community and the entire community of trust.

The pool of Honor Educators hears time and again about the need for more education. The Subcommittee recognizes the great contribution of time and effort made by educators, as well as the specific effort made to institute a graduate honor educator program in the fall of 1993. The idea of such a pool has merit and should be attempted again, perhaps with an approach more conducive to fostering graduate participation. Graduate students often take notice of, to say nothing of getting involved in, activities outside their departments only reluctantly. Because graduate students identify themselves more by field than by institution, they look more to their department for information and direction than to the University as a whole. The education of graduate students and the recruitment of graduate educators could yield better results if done through -- and with the assistance of -- departments administrations.

For example, having Honor System officers make presentations at fall semester department TA orientation meetings and orientations for new students would likely touch more students than broader institutional orientation presentations. Similarly, working through department Faculty Honor Advisors to identify and encourage the participation of potential graduate honor educators, demonstrating department support for the Honor System and approval of getting involved with it in a departmental capacity, would likely be more successful than putting up flyers in areas with high graduate student traffic. Spreading information about the Honor System to graduate students more efficiently and building up a core of graduate honor educators, both activities helping to counter misinformation about the Honor System circulating in the graduate community, would do much to improve the relationship between the Honor System and graduate students.

### Final Recommendation

This survey gives a benchmark view of graduate TAs' knowledge and opinion of the Honor System. While the information contained in this report offers valuable insight into the state of the relationship between the Honor System and graduate students, periodic (if not annual) updates are recommended in order to gauge how changes in the Honor System affect its relationship with its graduate members.

More questions about the likelihood of reporting potential violations, graduate opportunities for education about the Honor System, and knowledge about particulars of the Honor System would help direct and focus efforts by Honor Educators and others involved with informing the University community about the Honor System. Such future work should also look more closely into the opinions held of the single sanction, looking for the causes and implications of the three general attitudes discussed in this study. Those TAs who believe the single sanction is not enforced form a swing group in support for the single sanction. If more information and education, or minor procedural changes, would lead them toward stronger support for the single sanction, only a smaller minority would oppose the single sanction on philosophical grounds. However, if these students would hold fast to their doubts about enforcement, support for the single sanction among graduate TAs -- while still a majority -- would be much weaker.



# APPENDICES

# TA/GAPS Subcommittee Survey: General Results

December 5, 1993

## OVERALL RESPONSE

- o 750 surveys sent / 222 responses -- 30% response rate.
- o 64% open-ended and SCANTRON responses (n=144); 35% SCANTRON only (n=78).

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- o 48% completed one year of graduate study or less at UVa; 30% two to three years completed; 22% four or more years completed.
- o 51% male; 49% female.
- o 43% in first semester as TA; 25% in fifth or higher semester as TA.
- o 43% had honor systems at previous institutions. Of those: 36% rated their previous system as excellent; 45% as good; 19% as ineffective or worse.

## HONOR SYSTEM EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

- o 96% of those who remember say they received a letter about the Honor System prior to arriving at UVa.
- o 67% of respondents attended a graduate orientation program on the Honor System.
- o Of the 46% who attended the Teaching Resource Center's teaching workshop this fall, 88% remember getting information about the Honor System in their packets. Of these, 89% believed this information was helpful.
- o 48% are knowledgeable (41%) to very knowledgeable (7%) about UVa's Honor System, while 52% percent have only somewhat (44%) to little (8%) knowledge about the Honor System.
- o Only 5% of respondents have been involved with an honor case (50% as witnesses; 40% as initiators; 10% as panelists; no support officers or investigators). Of these, 60% had no change in their impression of the Honor System; 40% had their impression made worse.

## OPINIONS AND BELIEFS

- o Overall, 10% rate the Honor System as excellent; 61% as good; 29% as ineffective or worse.
- o 70% believe the Honor System creates a community of trust.
- o 80% believe the Honor System provides community benefits.
- o 62% of all respondents are familiar with the three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness. 83% of all respondents believe the three criteria are appropriate
- o 86% of all respondents are familiar with the single sanction. 51% of all respondents support the single sanction.
- o 37% would report a suspected honor offense even if they expected a student panel to find it did not meet the three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness.

Explanations for these responses will come from more detailed analysis over the winter break. For example, we hope to be able to say whether nearly one half of the respondents do not support the single sanction because they themselves think it is too harsh, because they think student panels are not willing to hand it down, or because of other reasons.

\* COMMENT  
THIS FILE RUNS FREQUENCIES ON ALL QUESTIONS  
FROM THE HONOR COMMITTEE SURVEY OF GRADUATE  
TEACHING ASSISTANTS AT UVA.

\* MISSING VALUES HAVE BEEN DECLARED FOR RESPONSES  
OF 'DONT REMEMBER' ON QUESTIONS 7 AND 8  
(LETTER AND ORIENT), AND FOR RESPONSES OF  
'DONT REMEMBER' AND 'DIDNT ATTEND' ON  
QUESTION 9 (TRCINFO).

\* ON QUESTION 1 (YRSTUDY), ALL BLANK RESPONSES  
HAVE BEEN RECODED TO A VALUE OF 0 -- 'LESS THAN  
ONE YEAR'. SEE PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION FOR MORE  
DETAILS.

\* See file called cleandat.inc for other changes to variables  
due to invalid responses (stray punches).

\* RELEVANT FILES:  
INPUT FILE=FREQHCOM.INC  
OUTPUT LIST FILE=FREQHCOM.LIS.

TITLE 'FREQUENCIES ON ALL VARIABLES'.  
SUBTITLE 'HONOR COMMITTEE SURVEY OF GRAD TAs'.  
GET FILE='HONOR2.SYS'.  
The SPSS/PC+ system file is read from  
file HONOR2.SYS\000  
The file was created on 11/12/93 at 11:14:02  
and is titled IDENTIFY SURVEYS WITH INVALID PUNCHES

The SPSS/PC+ system file contains  
222 cases, each consisting of  
31 variables (including system variables).  
31 variables will be used in this session.

Page 28 FREQUENCIES ON ALL VARIABLES

3

HONOR COMMITTEE SURVEY OF GRAD TAs

This procedure was completed at 11:23:24  
FREQ VAR=YRSTUDY TO REPORT.

\*\*\*\*\* Memory allows a total of 8712 Values, accumulated across all Variables  
There also may be up to 1089 Value Labels for each Variable.

-----

YRSTUDY YRS. OF GRADUATE STUDY COMPLETED

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
less than one year	0	16	7.2	7.2	7.2
one year	1	90	40.5	40.5	47.7
two years	2	34	15.3	15.3	63.1
three years	3	33	14.9	14.9	77.9
four years	4	29	13.1	13.1	91.0
fivet years	5	20	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 222 Missing cases 0

-----

SEX RESPONDENT SEX

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
male	1	111	50.0	50.7	50.7
female	2	108	48.6	49.3	100.0
.	.	3	1.4	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 219 Missing cases 3

-----

DEGRSTAT RESPONDENT DEGREE STATUS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent

MA/MS candidate	1	47	21.2	21.3	21.3	21.3
PhD candidate	2	146	65.8	66.1	87.3	87.3
Other	3	28	12.6	12.7	100.0	100.0
	.	1	.5	Missing		
Total	222	100.0	100.0			
Valid cases	221	Missing cases	1			

poor	4	2	.9	2.2	98.9
very poor	5	1	.5	1.1	100.0
	.	128	57.7	Missing	
not applicable	99	2	.9	Missing	
Total	222	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	92	Missing cases	130		

SEMSTTA NUMBER SEMESTERS RESP. BEEN A TA

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
one semester	1	95	42.8	43.4	43.4
two semesters	2	18	8.1	8.2	51.6
three semesters	3	41	18.5	18.7	70.3
four semesters	4	10	4.5	4.6	74.9
five+ semesters	5	55	24.8	25.1	100.0
	.	3	1.4	Missing	
Total	222	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	219	Missing cases	3		

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	178	80.2	96.2	96.2
no	2	7	3.2	3.8	100.0
	.	2	.9	Missing	
dont remember	3	35	15.8	Missing	
Total	222	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	185	Missing cases	37		

LETTER RECEIVE LETTER-UVA HSYS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

PREHONOR R PREVIOUS INST. HAD HONOR SYSTEM

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	94	42.3	42.7	42.7
no	2	126	56.8	57.3	100.0
	.	2	.9	Missing	
Total	222	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	220	Missing cases	2		

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	138	62.2	66.7	66.7
no	2	69	31.1	33.3	100.0
	.	2	.9	Missing	
dont remember	3	13	5.9	Missing	
Total	222	100.0	100.0		
Valid cases	207	Missing cases	15		

ORIENT ATTEND GRAD ORIENTATION PRGM ON HSYSTEM

IMPHONOR R IMPRESSION OF PREVIOUS HONOR SYSTEM

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
excellent	1	33	14.9	35.9	35.9
good	2	41	18.5	44.6	80.4
ineffective	3	15	6.8	16.3	96.7

TRCINFO RECEIVE HSYS. INFO SHEET AT TRC WORKSHOP

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	90	40.5	88.2	88.2
no	2	12	5.4	11.8	100.0
	.	3	1.4	Missing	
dontremem/didntattnd	3	117	52.7	Missing	

-----  
Total 222 100.0 100.0  
-----

Valid cases 102 Missing cases 120  
-----

TRCHELP TRC INFORMATION HELPFUL

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
yes	1	78	35.1	88.6	88.6
no	2	10	4.5	11.4	100.0
	.	134	60.4	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 88 Missing cases 134  
-----

KNOHONOR HOW KNOWLEDGEABLE IS R ABOUT HSYSTEM

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
very knowldgble	1	15	6.8	7.3	7.3
knowledgeable	2	85	38.3	41.3	48.5
somewhat knowldgble	3	90	40.5	43.7	92.2
little knowledge	4	16	7.2	7.8	100.0
	.	16	7.2	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 206 Missing cases 16  
-----

INVHONOR R EVER INVOLVED IN HONOR CASE

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
yes	1	10	4.5	4.9	4.9
no	2	195	87.8	95.1	100.0
	.	17	7.7	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 205 Missing cases 17  
-----

HOWHONOR HOW WAS R INVOLVED IN HONOR CASE

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
panelist	1	1	.5	10.0	10.0
witness	2	5	2.3	50.0	60.0
initiator	3	4	1.8	40.0	100.0
	.	211	95.0	Missing	
not applicable	99	1	.5	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 10 Missing cases 212  
-----

CHANGE CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE AFTER INVOLVEMENT

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
no change	2	6	2.7	60.0	60.0
made worse	3	4	1.8	40.0	100.0
	.	210	94.6	Missing	
not applicable	99	2	.9	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 10 Missing cases 212  
-----

FAMCRIT R FAMILIAR W/ 3 CRITERIA FOR CONVICTN

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
yes	1	128	57.7	62.4	62.4
no	2	77	34.7	37.6	100.0
	.	17	7.7	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 205 Missing cases 17  
-----

REQCRIT R BELIEVE 3 CRITERIA APPROPRIATE  
-----

22 9.9 Missing  
-----  
Total 222 100.0 100.0

Valid cases 200 Missing cases 22  
-----  
-----

BENEFITS DOES HSYSTEM PROVIDE COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	161	72.5	80.1	80.1
no	2	40	18.0	19.9	100.0
.	.	21	9.5	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 201 Missing cases 21  
-----  
-----

OVERALL RS OVERALL IMPRESSION OF HONOR SYSTEM

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
excellent	1	20	9.0	10.0	10.0
good	2	121	54.5	60.5	70.5
ineffective	3	42	18.9	21.0	91.5
poor	4	11	5.0	5.5	97.0
very poor	5	6	2.7	3.0	100.0
.	.	22	9.9	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 200 Missing cases 22  
-----  
-----

REPORT WOULD R REPORT SUSPECTED HONOR OFFENSE

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
report	1	73	32.9	37.2	37.2
not report	2	123	55.4	62.8	100.0
.	.	26	11.7	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	153	68.9	83.2	83.2
no	2	31	14.0	16.8	100.0
.	.	38	17.1	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 184 Missing cases 38  
-----  
-----

FAMSNGLE R FAMILIAR W/ SINGLE SANCTION

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	177	79.7	86.3	86.3
no	2	28	12.6	13.7	100.0
.	.	17	7.7	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 205 Missing cases 17  
-----  
-----

SUPSNGLE R SUPPORT SINGLE SANCTION

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	99	44.6	51.3	51.3
no	2	94	42.3	48.7	100.0
.	.	29	13.1	Missing	
Total		222	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 193 Missing cases 29  
-----  
-----

COMTRUST DOES HSYSTEM CREATE COMMUNITY OF TRUST

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	140	63.1	70.0	70.0
no	2	60	27.0	30.0	100.0

93/11/12  
11:53:44

Valid cases 196

Missing cases 26

freghcom.lis

Page 29 FREQUENCIES ON ALL VARIABLES  
3 HONOR COMMITTEE SURVEY OF GRAD TAS

This procedure was completed at 11:23:31  
set listing=off.

5

11/12/9

HONOR COMMITTEE SURVEY OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
©1993, University of Virginia Honor Committee

Recognizing the vital role TAs play in the honor system, the Honor Committee and the Teaching Resource Center seek to understand better your knowledge and opinions of the honor system, and what changes you would suggest for its improvement. Results will be published at the start of the second semester.

Instructions: Please be sure to use a #2 pencil, write your department name on the "Name" line, fill in the appropriate SCANTRON bubbles for each question, respond to open-ended questions in the space provided on this sheet, and return both the SCANTRON and question sheets in the enclosed response envelope to the Honor Committee through messenger mail by Friday, October 8. If you have any questions, please call the Honor Committee at 924-3452.

1. How many years of graduate study have you completed at the University of Virginia?  
a) one                      b) two                      c) three                      d) four                      e) five or more
2. What is your sex?  
a) male                      b) female
3. What is your current degree status?  
a) MA candidate      b) PhD candidate      c) Other
4. Including this semester, how many semesters have you been a TA?  
a) 1                      b) 2                      c) 3                      d) 4                      e) 5+
5. Did you have an honor system at your undergraduate or previous graduate institution?  
a) yes                      b) no

Please answer Question 6 only if you answered "yes" to the preceding question.

6. What was your overall impression of that honor system?  
a) excellent              b) good                      c) ineffective              d) poor                      e) very poor
7. Did you receive a letter explaining the honor system prior to your enrollment and arrival at the University of Virginia?  
a) yes                      b) no                      c) don't remember
8. As a new student, did you attend any graduate orientation programs that discussed the honor system?  
a) yes                      b) no                      c) don't remember
9. Did you receive an honor system information sheet at the Teaching Resource Center Teaching Workshop held on August 30?  
a) yes                      b) no                      c) don't remember              d) didn't attend

Please answer Question 10 only if you answered "yes" to the preceding question.

10. Did you consider its information helpful?  
a) yes                      b) no
11. Which Teaching Resource Center activities have you attended and how helpful were they?  
(Open ended.)
12. The University and your department seek to provide the information and help you need to teach and grade effectively. What additional assistance could they offer? (Open ended.)
13. How would you characterize your knowledge of how the honor system operates?  
a) very knowledgeable      b) knowledgeable              c) somewhat knowledgeable  
d) little knowledge              e) no knowledge
14. Have you ever been involved with an honor case?  
a) yes                      b) no

Please answer Questions 15-16 only if you answered "yes" to the preceding question.



15. In what capacity were you involved?  
a) panelist      b) witness      c) initiator      d) investigator      e) support officer
16. How did your participation change your perspective of the honor system?  
a) improved      b) no change      c) made worse
17. Are you familiar with the three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness required for an honor conviction?  
a) yes      b) no
18. Do you believe requiring all three criteria is appropriate for making a conviction?  
a) yes      b) no
19. Are you familiar with the single sanction of permanent dismissal from the University of Virginia for students found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of an honor offense?  
a) yes      b) no
20. Do you support the maintenance of the single sanction?  
a) yes      b) no
21. Do you believe the honor system helps to create a "community of trust" at the University of Virginia?  
a) yes      b) no
22. Do you believe the honor system provides substantive community benefits, such as the ability to cash checks with only a valid student i.d., to students at the University of Virginia?  
a) yes      b) no
23. What is your overall impression of the honor system at the University of Virginia?  
a) excellent      b) good      c) ineffective      d) poor      e) very poor
24. Would you report a suspected honor offense if you believed a student panel would find that it did not meet all three criteria of act, intent, and seriousness?  
a) report      b) not report
25. What problems -- short or long term -- do you believe face the honor system at the University of Virginia? (Open ended.)
26. How would you suggest improving the honor system at the University of Virginia? (Open ended.)
27. Please add any further comments you may have on these or other issues related to the Honor Committee.

September 16, 1993

Dear Graduate Teaching Assistant:

In order to gain a better sense of the general knowledge and opinion of UVa's Honor System among the University's graduate community, the Honor Committee's TA and Graduate-Professional Student task force has sent you the enclosed survey. Your spending five minutes to fill out and return the survey will enable the Honor Committee to gauge better how the system does and does not work. As a TA myself, I understand that there may be perceptions and concerns regarding the Honor System particular to the TA community. The Honor Committee recognizes this, and had made learning more about such perceptions and concerns a top priority for the 1993-94 academic year. Your participation in this project is fundamental to its success. Accordingly, please take five minutes to complete the survey and return it to the Honor Committee in the pre-addressed return envelope supplied in the packet.

If you have any questions or know of a current or former TA in need of a survey, please call the Honor Committee at 924-3452. Thank you for your generous participation.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Menard  
President, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
Chair, TA/Graduate and Professional Students Subcommittee