

Honor Summer Fellowship 2016

Education and Outreach Review

Zara Siddiqui

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I.

In the past and even now, there has been an undertone of exclusivity related to the institution of Honor at UVa. The culture of Honor being historically an “elite” organization is in my opinion, detrimental. It accepts only a few people to be its representatives and therefore there has been a disconnect between the opinions of the Committee and the opinions of the student body as a whole. Support Officers try to bridge this gap by pushing education efforts, but they usually focus more on case processing and the group is not very diverse. Many people who try to become support officers to participate in Honor are turned away because such a small number is selected. Also when people are turned away their first or second year of college they may feel it is too late to join later, and become distant from Honor. There is also obvious disengagement of the student population in the business of Honor, as too often it seems that there is not enough voter turnout, due to issues of disinterest or not enough knowledge on the subject, or even lack of awareness. (56% of students did not vote in the last election.) I therefore feel we need a plan to make Honor more approachable, transparent, and inclusive.

I think it would be in Honor’s best interests to work with a spectrum of students and faculty to implement a program that directly involves students with the Honor System in order to increase overall education and exposure to Honor, get more diverse voices involved in Honor, and foster a sense of inclusiveness to the community and Honor. This can be done by reaching out specifically to groups we want to hear more from, asking them personally how they want to be involved, and in what capacity they would be interested in participating. Also we should focus on integrating all the individual programs within Honor so that there is better communication and therefore more efficient spread of information and presence throughout the Community. Some

groups that are underrepresented are minority groups, athletes, international students, teaching assistants, residence life coordinators, graduate students, transfer students, and more. We should create a new outlet for these students to be involved without having to run for Committee or try out to be a support officer.

II. Expressed need (Using past Committee Meeting Minutes and feedback)

- 2012: Improve dorm representatives education, incorporate discussions at graduate school orientations
- 11/16/14: “Figuring out what to do with people that aren’t selected to be support officers
i. Interest in including them in a less formal way *ii.* Creating a group of “Honor Trustees”
iii. Could potentially include Student Ambassadors “
- 4/12/15: Emily (CLAS) added that we should consider exploring a non-application based support officer pool. We would need to further define these roles though. *i.* Martese (CLAS) adds that an outreach team or student ambassador group could be a mechanism for potentially expanding the pool. How a screening process or non-selection recruitment would be effective would need to be further explored/defined. Brynn (GSAS) would like to see more communication between Honor and grad student TAs; this is a great opportunity for support officers and committee to work together.
- 9/20/15: “Outreach to specific schools. Katherine Graham (ARCH) says they would like education to be more approachable whether through videos or other “fun” media.”
- 10/25/15: Monica Melmer (SMED) would like to see education pushes for graduate students at their “DOTL” type programs
- 2/2016: Adam Buckholz (Medicine) – “Need to focus on a way to get involved in Honor without just having Support Officers. There's not much that we can do by saying that everyone can run for it and opening to everyone.” (In talking about diversity of opinion on committee, after sanction vote)
- 2016: Need better flow between Committee and Support Officers

III. “Educator Pool” Proposal (Name TBD)

i. Purpose and Goals

- Lessens the idea that honor is an exclusive, elite organization, making more people open and accepting of Honor
- Gives Honor more human resources in education and outreach
- Provides an outlet for anyone to get involved in Honor that shows interest, without having the time commitment of being a support officer
- Promote transparency of Honor and give more people a voice in Honor by providing a middle ground between average students and support officers/ Honor Committee
- Respond to interest, ignite discussion, create a pathway for feedback, make conversation, act as a connection between support officers and the average student

ii. Function and Responsibilities

- Organize, plan, and staff engaging events, dialogues, discussions, and activities in their respective communities (with supervision of Support Officers and committee members) (students can work together in teams to put on events)
- Help staff other education events
- Act as a knowledgeable resource for their respective community about Honor, and are able to forward questions they don't know the answer to
- Suggest areas where we need to push outreach and have more presentations
- Get feedback from communities by acting as a productive outlet of discussion
- Attend monthly pool meetings to be aware of the happenings of Honor
- Hold interest days (ex. "Honor and Sexual Assault" or "Bystander Awareness" or "How to Properly Cite" or "TA Honor Training" or "How to be Empathetic")
- Create education materials (flyers, videos, ex: "How to File a CR")
- Hold Office Hours
- Socialize/bonding events within themselves and within Honor

iii. Selection

- Special invitations: Send an invitation to communities we want to hear more from, to act as an "Honor Ambassador" for their community and join the Educator Pool. Ask each community or organization to recruit one interested person to join the Pool, or invite a specific person we know is interested.

- General Application: Open an application for whoever wants to apply, and depending on initial interest, decide whether or not to have a quota. If interest is too large, set a manageable cap. Direct the people who didn't become support officers to join this group and keep the application open from August through the end of September (until after Support officer selection to allow those people to apply if they want to). (**Appendix A**)
- Recruitment: In order to make a program like this successful, it is important to actually go to the groups that we want to hear from directly, and ask them what they want. We should ask them how they want to be engaged and in what capacity, so that we are able to attract these audiences. Support officers can go to interest group meetings of individual communities, or go to libraries, to advertise the fact that anyone can try out to be a support officer and even join an educator pool. If we actively seek out these audiences, then we can hear more diverse voices and even increase voter turnout. For those that are disgruntled about the Honor system or don't like it in general, it is an opportunity for them to get involved in order to change it and get their opinion heard.

iv. Composition

- *Anyone* who wants to be involved in Honor
- People who do not fit in a certain categorical organization (SACH, CRDAC, etc.)
- Students who apply directly to join, and students who are invited to join. It should hopefully be a mix of organizations and groups around grounds including but not limited to: Dorm Representatives, organizations under MRC: (Asian Student Union (ASU), the Black Student Alliance (BSA), Feminism is for Everyone (FIFE), the Latino Student Alliance (LSA), the Middle Eastern Leadership Council (MELC), the Native American Student Union (NASU), the Queer Student Union (QSU), and United for Undergraduate Socioeconomic Diversity (UFUSED), members of the residential college senate, members of SACH, members from certain schools (Commerce, Darden, etc.), international students, transfer students, teaching assistants from each department, graduate students, fraternity and sorority council, and other interest groups. Students are invited from these groups to join.

v. Leaders

- The Educator Pool would be under the supervision of the Vice Chair for Education and Community Relations, as well as an Education Coordinator. A new Education

Coordinator position could be created that would be responsible for directing these students, recruiting, selection, organizing training, and helping them organize their respective events throughout the year. There may have to be more than one EC with this responsibility. Any support officer may also help the Education Coordinator in these efforts.

- Qualifications for EC Position: Must be creative and fun and outgoing, make sure every event is meaningful, have energy and drive, are able to be responsible for a large number of people, are good at teamwork and delegating
- Structure: All existing education teams could be under the umbrella of the Educator Pool, and support officer and General Education Pool members could work together to put on a variety of presentations, workshops, and events.

vi. Training

- Education Coordinators would hold Open Training (3-4 sessions) where each member would be required to attend one. The EC in charge and support officers would train them in basic Honor philosophy, basic case processing, terminology, resources, and any other relevant information (similar to Dorm Representative training). The leaders would also give them a list of contact information as well a packet of training materials that they could refer to throughout the year. They should be introduced to their responsibilities and be aware that they cannot hold an event without Support Officer assistance. They should also be aware of their ability to hold important discussions, conversations, and ability to voice their opinions. Students can also form groups to hold events together. They should also socialize and be integrated with support officers and executive committee so that they are not a separate entity, but rather feel a part of us on Honor.

vii. Commitment

- Staff two events and organize one event per semester of their own choosing
- Attend monthly Pool
- Potentially hold an Advising Office Hour

viii. Feedback

- Each semester we can take a survey of their experiences so far and get any feedback from their events and feedback from each respective community. We can discuss what sorts of questions are commonly asked, what people's attitudes are, what issues they brought up.

IV. Discussion

After considering this idea, there were some potential problems that could arise, but also foreseeable benefits:

Concern: The Educator Pool would make the current support officers less connected with their education duties, since that is one of their main functions.

Response: In my opinion, this would actually increase education and outreach opportunities by creating more specific outreach events. Also the members of the Educator Pool should always have a support officer to assist them in the event they plan. If the educator pool members were to present by themselves, unfortunately there would be no way to control the regularity of those presentations, and they are simply not experienced enough. However with a support officer partner, they could hold a great event together. When the Dorm Representative Program started last year, support officers still had plenty of education duties. Also, educator pool members can work on education efforts that support officers don't have time to do because of their case processing duties. They could work on projects like making flyers about the Conscientious Retraction, or making creative videos about Honor, or worksheets.

Concern: The students may feel that they have "lesser" duties than those of the support officers.

Response: From an evaluation of the Dorm Representatives program last year, which was its first year, these students were just as enthusiastic for being a representative to Honor because it is a unique position and they are filling a roll that is needed. They also will have a few requirements to fulfill which gives a sense of purpose. They will be actively planning events, meeting with support officers, coming to Pool (if possible) and taking their own initiative. Also there could be social events for these students to make them feel connected. By having a simple dinner for all the members or a social event they will be able to be part of a welcoming organization. If we advertise the program well, it will have the impression of getting to be a special part of Honor without having to do case processing or have a massive time commitment.

Concern: The Educator Pool will become a separate Pool and create division.

Response: If the Pool is conducted in a certain manner, this problem could be avoided. By integrating the Pool under an Education Coordinator and by having them work on projects alongside support officers and Committee, the new pool would not become a separate body, but will work together with members of Honor.

Concern: This goes against the “merge” after which everyone had to apply for the same support officer position without specializing in a role.

Response: Although this does act against the purpose of the “merge,” I believe it is important to weigh the benefits against the negatives in this situation. My stance is that it is much more important to have an inclusive and diverse body.

PRO: Outreach to Teaching Assistants: Often, teaching assistants do a lot of the work when it comes to teaching and helping students. They work with many students and faculty, grade papers, and help the professors. Sometimes TAs might not be clear about the Honor Policy or won't know what their professor's Honor Policy is. They even may not know how to handle an Honor offence. Since they're so likely to come across something related to Honor because of their exposure they should definitely have some additional Honor knowledge in order to help students know how to do the right thing, and how to be clear about citations, plagiarism, and other policies. TAs are right at the source, so they should be included in the educator pool.

PRO: Graduate students might be more likely to get involved in a program like this because it's a much lesser time commitment but they can still be involved and be a voice for their school. We can hold events at their respective schools and again this would be another pathway for feedback if we get them involved. They could have a greater presence, alongside support officers, at their respective orientation programs, for example. If a graduate student is involved in the process of planning this type of event, they will know better how to make it relatable and fit to their needs, whereas a regular support officer might not have that insight.

V. Dorm Representatives

Since the Educator Pool Proposal is a sort of expansion of the idea of the Dorm Representatives, (in that they are a smaller group representative of Honor but only are given a basic training but still are able to facilitate conversation and awareness) I thought it would be a good idea to poll the first year of Dorm Representatives to get their feedback. The questions asked were as follows:

- Overall, how was your experience being a dorm representative? (1-5)
- How was the training in October? Was it effective? How could it be improved?
- How did your events go? How many people came? What would you change? How could it be better supported?
- How often did you get asked about Honor by a resident in your dorm or by a friend?
- Did you refer a student to a member of the committee or a support officer?
- Do you think this is an effective program in spreading awareness and participation in Honor?
- Please provide any feedback you may have about the program -- including things you liked, disliked, suggestions for improvement, comments from your friends or anything else.

Based on the feedback from this poll, I was able to evaluate the success of the program as well as how it can be improved for the future. Overall, the representatives thought it was beneficial to have this program and that it was definitely effective, but needed some work (all rated their experience as 4 out of 5). One suggestion included having preparation materials to refer to so that they could better assist others because often they had to refer to other peers for the answer or direct the question to a Committee member. This problem could be solved by creating a packet of information (not too short and not too long) so that representatives have a source to go back to for common questions and basic answers. It would save time and prevent incorrect wording or misinformation during a presentation. (**Appendix B**)

The training itself was reported to be thorough and informative, although in the end there were some holes in their knowledge. One suggestion was to include a description of what support officers and other members of Honor do firsthand. To improve this we could include a

description of the duties and function of the support officers and executive members in the reference sheet.

In terms of the informational events that the representatives held, there were mixed reviews. Some people said they had a greater turnout than they had expected, and some people had very few people attend. Some had difficulty encouraging people to come and were only able to recruit their friends. Some experienced people only coming for the food and Honor paraphernalia. One representative said they put a lot of effort into the event but in hindsight it would have been more effective to have a simpler event. To combat the apathy of students it might be helpful to teach some presentation skills during their basic training, or even provide them a script to follow that is creative, fun, and engaging. Perhaps they could work together to create a video, make a game, or use the Honor spin wheel, or another fun idea to get people more engaged and excited. Also, the representatives should contact their RA to introduce themselves as the Honor Dorm Representative and ask him or her to assist in encouraging residents to attend the presentations. This way there will be a greater turnout and more advertising. One representative suggested that it would be helpful (depending on the event) if more support officers or committee members attended these presentations in order to make it more Honor-oriented (less focused on the food).

Most representatives responded that they were “occasionally” asked questions from peers or “rarely” asked questions from peers. Some responded that they sometimes referred others to a member of Honor committee, but most did not receive questions.

One representative suggested that perhaps the Dorm Representatives could work together in creating educational materials specific to their area, specifically for the audience of a first year or new student that is new to Honor. We could encourage dorm representatives in the future to work together in brainstorming the best way to educate their peers and ask for help in proofreading. There was also a suggestion that the reps should collaborate more often to increase motivation and spread ideas, communicate different lessons they learned, give each other advice on the kinds of things that work or don't work. Dorm reps could also team up to hold events so that they are more fully attended and so that there is more participation and excitement. This would take the pressure off of holding and planning an event singlehandedly. We could provide tips on how successful presentations have been in the past and how to engage an audience about Honor.

Another issue that has been repeatedly brought up is that new students' exposure to Honor for the first time can often be fast, scary, and a whirlwind of confusing information, which in turn makes students wary and scared of the Honor system. One representative commented that they found that people were scared of Honor until they explained the whole process to them and the different resources that existed. In order to work against this, I believe it is important to have structured presentations for the dorm representatives, or at least provide a basic outline of important items to cover with time for questions and clarifications at the end. They should also make a point to stress that Honor is not a punitive system, as well as outline the benefits of Honor and talk about its philosophy. Basically reinforcing that Honor is there to help you. These presentations should also be clear and concise and consistent across communities so that we don't perpetuate the problem of having confused fourth years that still don't understand the Honor system.

As a general suggestion, the Dorm Representatives program should be expanded to include the language houses, international residential college, and upper-class housing (Shea, French House, Spanish House, IRC, etc.)

VI. Work for the Future:

In evaluating Honor's outreach efforts, one area of improvement to work on is integration and communication between the existing initiatives. For example, the members of SACH don't know the members of CRDAC, who don't know the members of the Dorm Representatives, and so forth, when their mission is all the same: spreading awareness to all members of the Community. Perhaps these organizations should all be under one umbrella and be organized and coordinated from above, which could include having meetings between the groups and improving the internal structure of each of the groups. Maybe all the groups could convene together at pool in order to share their goals and work together in their efforts, which would create some more efficiency. The creation of a common listserv could help

At first it seemed to be a possibility to expand CRDAC to provide some of the functions that the Educator Pool would do. However this might not be as efficient since CRDAC members meet to make operation decisions about how to keep diversity in Honor and work on projects like

the Diversity Initiative Award and campaigning initiatives. They have a unique function and may work best as a smaller group of individuals.

VII. Conclusion

I've learned by hearing repeatedly now that many people (more people than I thought) are really scared of Honor and I've come across people that still don't know what exactly Honor is or does as a fourth year! Part of the problem I've found is that the first time they are exposed to it, it's a whirlwind of new information and facts when they've just been introduced to college life and have whole list of other things and names to remember. The presentations are fast and can be scary and intimidating after this first dose, so much so, that they will tend to shy away in their next few years.

On a final note and after hearing many opinions, I feel as though it is important to weigh the pros against the cons. The important thing to keep in mind is that there is a problem that needs to be fixed. Honor is seen as an exclusive and elite but popular group, often the concept of Honor is intimidating, and not all voices around Grounds are being represented! In my opinion these problems are huge because they go against the ideal Community of Trust, where everyone is welcome, safe, valued, and informed. I believe it would be in Honor's best interests to create a way for more students to get involved without having to go through the rigorous demands of being a support officer.

In my opinion it would be ideal if Honor could open up to accept more people to contribute and participate, so that we don't exclude any voices. We truly need more diversity in Honor in order to cater to the truly diverse community we live in. Making the support officer pool larger would create concerns in confidentiality and we simply don't have time and resources to train so many people, which is why I think we need a group like the Educator Pool that can contribute on a different level and provide access to participation and new perspectives so that we can have a truly *representative* Honor system, a system that reflects the ideals of the community, and better the Community of Trust.

Appendix A:

Honor Educator Pool Sample Application

Name: _____

Computing ID: _____

Year: _____

School: _____

Why are you interested in joining the Honor Educator Pool?

Describe an Honor event that you could realistically plan and hold. Be creative as well as informative!

What are your involvements like around Grounds or off-Grounds?

What does Honor mean to you?

Appendix B:

Hand-booklet/Reference for Dorm Representatives or any Honor Representative

A short document like this will help representatives have a go-to reference for common questions or clarifications with proper terminology, based off of the essentials from the support officer handbook.

Honor Committee: The Honor Committee is composed of 27 representatives, two representatives from each school, with five for the College of Arts and Sciences, due to its size. The executive committee is elected from this group. The elected officials are the Honor Chair, Vice Chair for Hearings, Vice Chair for Investigations, Vice Chair for Community Relations, and Vice Chair for Education. They handle the daily affairs of the Honor System.

Community of Trust: The Honor System exists to preserve and protect the Community of Trust. Students in the Community are held to high standards of integrity and responsibility. The goal of everything that Honor does is to preserve this trust between everyone in the Community, including students and faculty.

Single Sanction: the single consequence of being found guilty of committing an Honor Offense: expulsion.

Honor Pledge: On my honor, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment. (Sign)

Benefits of the System: assumptions of honesty, taking exams outside of class, Honor loans, and more.

Student Self-Governance: The Honor System is completely student run and self-elected. Hearing panels are made up of students, so everyone is judged by only their peers' standards. The Honor System is redefined each time a new student population enters to fit their individual needs and principles.

Criteria for an Honor Offense:

- Act: an act of lying, cheating, or stealing occurred
- Knowledge: the individual knew, or any reasonable University student would have known that the act would be considered an act of lying, cheating, or stealing

- Significance: The open toleration of this act would be inconsistent with the Community of Trust

Conscientious Retraction: An opportunity for someone to take responsibility of their actions (before they are suspected, or in “good faith”), admit to the act, and return to the Community of Trust. The student will write a description of the act they committed and have it signed by all affected parties to be turned in to the Honor Committee who will determine its validity. See an advisor for help.

Informed Retraction: An opportunity for someone to take responsibility for their actions after they have been reported to the Honor Committee. They must obtain signatures from affected parties and leave the University for two semesters before being reintegrated into the Community of Trust.

Case Processing:

- Report: report is made and the reporter is interviewed
- The student is notified and has seven days to decide whether or not to take the Informed Retraction. Both the student and reported are assigned trained advisors. Otherwise, they proceed to a full investigation.
- Investigation: remaining witnesses are interviewed and evidence collected
- Investigation Panel: (made of three Committee members) look at evidence and interviews and decide whether to formally accuse the student (under the standard of “more likely than not” that the act occurred) or to drop the case. If the student is accused, they can either proceed to hearing or LAG (leave admitting guilt)
- Hearing request: student chooses trained advocates and type of panel (all students, all Committee members, or a mix of both)
- Pre-Hearing Conference: evidence and scope of testimony is determined
- Hearing: guilty (4/5 of panel vote that the act was committed with knowledge beyond a reasonable doubt, and a simple majority vote on its significance) or not guilty (case is dropped).
- Post-Hearing: appeal options based on new evidence or good case

Academic Fraud: Plagiarism, Multiple submissions, False Citation, False Data (see the Honor website and the class syllabus or your professor for details if you are ever confused about an assignment).

Contact Information: Office Hours M-F, 9-5 Newcomb 4th Floor, call office, visit
Virginia.edu/honor

Honor Subgroups:

- CRDAC: Community Relations and Diversity Advisory Committee, outlet for diverse groups to express their views and interests, and to represent these views through action on the Honor Committee
- SACH: Student Athletes Committed to Honor
- FAC: Faculty Advisory Committee, increase faculty-Honor interaction
- P&P: Policies and Procedures Committee, analyze internal problems from By-Laws and operating procedures
- Standing Task Forces: include Libraries, CIOs, Fraternity/Sorority Councils

Honor Support Officer Applications: apply to be a support officer in the fall semester by attending an information session! Support officers work on advising, advocating, investigations, and education. The application process is a test and two rounds of interviews, and if selected, a training semester is required (2 hours per week).