

## Student Testimonials

from Georgetown Honor Council: <http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/main.html>

Paper 1      <http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/student%201.htm>

I have learned a lot during my four years here at Georgetown, but perhaps the most valuable lesson came from my experience with the honor council. When my professor asked me about the situation I was not sure what to do. I could have lied further and perhaps gotten away with it, but I decided not to. I immediately confessed to looking at a classmate's exam and was offered the option of settling the case without involving the Honor Council. The professor gave me some time to think it over and for the next few days that was all I did.

As I reflected on my actions I realized that I could not accept his offer. While that would have been the easy way out, that was not what I wanted. I spoke with some students and professors involved with the honor council and decided to do what I thought was the right thing. My classmate and I were given a hearing and I received a letter of censure. After the hearing I met with the dean of the Business School and spoke with him at length. This conversation had a great impact on me and it was then that I decided that I wanted to do something to make this a positive experience. I feel that I have now accomplished that.

For the past year and a half I have been involved with the Honor Council. During my junior year I met several times with the student chair and faculty chair of the Honor Council to discuss my ideas regarding the Council and the sanction reduction proposal. As an MSB student advisor I tried to make my three freshman international student advisees aware of the Honor Code at Georgetown. In my senior year I became a member of the Honor Council and have since been involved with various committees, including the Student Advocacy Committee and the Sanction Reduction Committee. As a member of the latter, I was involved in the preparation and presentation of the Sanction Reduction Seminar, offered for the first time this semester.

Participating in the Sanction Reduction Seminar was an excellent experience. I led the discussion in which the students shared their experiences with the Honor Council and it was beneficial to hear what others had learned from their similar experiences and a comfort to be able to discuss my own situation.

I believe that this experience has prepared me for the business world as no class could have. As the hugely publicized Enron case illustrates, success without ethics is not true success. While I was not an inherently dishonest or conniving person even before this occurred, my stress got the better of me during that exam. I did not think before I acted. There was no reason for me to act as I did, if I had thought about it rationally I would have realized that my actions would hurt me more than help. I now realize that it is important to carefully evaluate situations, and avoid rash decisions. Stress is a part of life and will continue to occur both in my career and personal life. Being a person with strong values and a high level of integrity is essential to me. This experience - my violation, and more importantly being part of the Honor Council - will ensure that I am more careful in the future to adhere to my values.

In addition, being on the Honor Council has allowed me to help other people who have been in the same situation. Often students cheat or plagiarize under stress and due to poor time management, although there are some that use these method to take them through college. I hope that I have been able to help some of these individuals to realize that there is a better way to do things and help them as I was helped.

3 A.M., I was still at the library struggling to write a paper for my “X” course. The deadline had already passed by one day, and ten pages seemed unconquerable. In the back of my mind, I was also worried about two exams which were scheduled in the same week. I felt close to a nervous breakdown. I just wanted to get the “X” paper finished, so I started to copy down parts of chapters from books without using quotation marks. This action has changed my summer and my post-graduation plan, and became a defining experience of my years at Georgetown.

I wasn’t a fast writer. I started to write academic papers in English only after coming to Georgetown. Being English is my second language, I had to spend more time preparing, writing and correcting papers. But for this “X” paper, I left myself with little time. Although the topic was given out in the beginning of the course, I only started to do research a few days before the deadline. In my third year at Georgetown, I developed a bad habit, which was to leave things until the last minute. I had a “Y” final paper due a few days prior to the “X” paper, and I spent most of time writing it, because I considered it the more important task. With little time left, I submitted to the temptation of plagiarism.

At that time, I wasn’t aware of the honor code and the consequences of its violation, which I regret the most. I read the honor code only after I was charged with the violation. Yet, I now know that such ignorance does not ease my wrongdoing because I knew clearly that I was doing something wrong at that time through my prior teachings in writing classes. Writing difficulties, and the bad habit of putting off my writing assignments, had existed before, but this time I made a different choice, a bad one, which involved a more fundamental problem of my values and my ethics.

I was a consequentialist. In the beginning of the semester, I set a challenging goal for myself of getting an A in the “Y” class, since I wanted to continue my study in “Y” at the graduate level. This goal was very important to me personally. I also knew that I needed strong grades for my application to graduate school to be successful. I have never received an A in classes which required heavy writing. In fact, during the final period, my desire to do well intensified because I was at the borderline between a B+ and an A- grade. This “obsession”, however, resulted in a disaster because I was now faced with the time constraint for the “X” paper and still had to study for other exams. To solve this problem, I took a consequentialist approach. I allocated my time according to its importance. That meant finishing the “X” paper as soon as possible and spending more time on the two exams. After finishing the “X” paper in such a wrongful way, I started to worry about it a little bit, but all I expected was an automatic lower grade from the professor. The violation of the honor code was not in my consciousness. I sought an easy way out by compromising my morals to consequentialist calculation.

I’m truly thankful to the honor council and the Georgetown Community for giving me a chance to redeem my dignity. To improve my writing skills, I have taken a writing course and have done grammar exercises on my own. I frequently asked my friends to proofread my papers and visited the Writing Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library. To effectively deal with time and stress management, I researched helpful websites for my benefit and for others.

The violation caused a great shame and disgrace to me, to my family, and to the Georgetown community. Yet, I now fully understand and share Georgetown’s commitment to academic integrity in which moral truth cannot be separated from the pursuit of intellectual truth. I learned that honesty, sincerity, and responsibility are the values required to keep this academic integrity alive

Through this painful but valuable lesson, I now fully understand what it takes to be a responsible citizen and a moral being. There are moral boundaries that should not be crossed at any price, despite how big the temptation is. This hard lesson has strengthened my morals and ethics in a fundamental way and I believe it will guide me to a right path in times of greater difficulties in the future. For this, I give thanks to the Georgetown community and especially to the honor council.