

WHAT ABOUT AN HONOR CODE AT OREGON?

(Ed. Note: The other night we brought together four persons to talk about the honor code—Jean Gould, senior in business, Frank Neuber, graduate in political science, and Henry Ambers and Merv Hampton, seniors in political science. We also asked Morton Kroll, instructor in political science, to moderate the discussion.

Miss Gould and Hampton represent the "pro" side; Neuber and Ambers, the "con." The "pro" representatives are both members of the code committee and Miss Gould studied for a year under the Stanford honor system. Neuber and Ambers take the "con" stand.

To Develop A Mature Attitude

KROLL: What we're going to do is present the basic arguments for and against and have rebuttals and general discussion.

GOULD: Our purpose in formulating this plan was to develop a more mature attitude toward the acquisition of knowledge and to foster a genuine pride in the academic excellence of the school.

By this we demonstrate our belief that the students of the University of Oregon do have a basically good character and that they can, when given opportunity, help themselves to stop the cheating.

Our ideal is not to stop it, but we hope to lessen it.

Wouldn't Be Fair

We have reasons for wanting it to be instituted all over the university at one time. It wouldn't be fair to think that a person could go into an 8 o'clock class and have the honor system in operation there and have the tradition instilled in him to the point that he would believe in the code well enough to practice it properly, and then go into a 9 o'clock and take a test where the honor code wasn't being used and where there was cheating.

A person either has a feeling of a spirit and a tradition of honor and it's either fostered in him or isn't. We don't feel that it can be cut off at 8:50 a.m. and started at any time again later.

People who have gone to a school and had that spirit instilled in them are much less apt to cheat. I honestly believe that they probably don't if brought up that way, more than those who have been under a system where cheating is the thing to do.

It's basically a belief that the students when given a chance can develop this attitude and use the code wisely.

KROLL: In other words, you feel that the honor code should be adopted as a whole rather than piece meal.

Change Proposers Must Give Proof

NEUBER: I'm quite pleased to see Miss Gould assume the necessity for defense of the plan because it has always been my feeling that the proponents of change have the burden upon their side. That they are the ones who have to justify what they propose doing.

I start from the supposition that we have a system which is working fairly well and before a change is to come we must have a rather concrete demonstration that the change will be better.

Haven't Proved Case

It's impossible to accept the thesis that tomorrow must be better because it could not be worse. Therefore I feel that it is the responsibility of the honor

Both Sides Agree 'Honor' Is Good, But Differ on Method and Degree

code people to prove their case. And I feel that they have not done so in the past, at least not to my satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of many others.

The opponents of the honor code system are not against honor. They are not against this ideal dream of a situation in which men will police themselves and there will be no need for men in blue suits to run around and knock them over the head.

It is a beautiful dream that some day men can watch out for themselves, that some day they can be trusted in all situations.

Not all men can be trusted, and not all men, even the best, can be trusted in any situation.

Man Good or Evil?

It comes down to the theory of human nature that says that man is not good or evil. Man is good or evil according to circumstances under which he is operating. It is necessary not only to give chances for people to manifest the better side of their character, but also to put limits upon manifestations of the worst in human nature?

The honor code proponents have shown some unwillingness or inability to see the point of their opponents. The characteristic argument is to say if this is so then this is so and this follows, and then to forget about the first ifs entirely.

If the honor code will eliminate cheating and raise academic standards, would you be for it?

There has been no demonstration that it will do either. I am still waiting for that demonstration.

There has been a tendency to confuse propaganda, or the presentation of one side in order to get definite judgment, with education.

The honor code committee has a responsibility to point out not only the possibilities for success but also the danger spots and the possibilities of failure.

Avoid Vexing Questions

The group has shown a great willingness to avoid vexing questions. They have been tempted to go ahead on faith and say the system must work so it will work, without meeting some awfully troublesome problems.

There has been a tendency to set up sample arguments, which in many cases have been easy to refute and which have been refuted or passed over. I don't think that the arguments attributed to the opposition have done the opposition entire justice.

There is a tendency toward legalism, toward the theory that a system is what is needed. All we need to do is set up a law and set up some legal framework and the thing will work.

You have to pay some attention to the concrete facts of existence. You can't establish a panacea by legislating a utopia that has also a tendency to say that if anyone does not go along, that doesn't really matter. He can be bypassed. I read here from possible argument number six of the code:

"If the students really want and ask for an honor code it is believed that the large majority of the professors will cooperate in supporting the experiment. Actually, it really doesn't matter. The students can bypass the instructor."

I don't like the sound of bypassing the instructor. I still think that is a matter of individual decision on the part of the in-

structor as to how he will run his class.

I do not think that extra legal enforcement measures or duplication of enforcement measures in a class is desirable.

The argument for totality says that it is unfair. I'm unable to understand why it is unfair to have the honor system in certain circumstances and not in others.

If the honor code is so good why not let the people become convinced instead of passing a

What They Say...

PRO: "An Honor code will decrease cheating, raise the academic level of the University, give the students a great amount of pride in their university and make them better citizens."

CON: "If the honor code is so good why not let the people become convinced instead of passing a law to coerce the minority? Why not let instructors adopt the honor code system on their own conviction that it is good when they will?"

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Taking Positive, Not Negative

HAMPTON: Mr. Neuber's attitude is a very conservative one, and one we've never been able to fit into our minds.

We're looking at the code from a very positive standpoint and a progressive viewpoint. We believe it a very important step in the right direction and that its benefits will be very measurable if given the proper time and if the proper attitude is allowed to build itself up in the minds of the students and the faculty.

We've proposed a positive rather than a negative program; one which we believe is preventive rather than punitive. We're not interested in bringing students up to the honor court and seeing that they're expelled or seeing that they're given some sort of a punishment. What we're mainly interested in is installing an honor code and decreasing, in large measure, the amount of cheating.

Mr. Neuber spoke of the existing situation, the status quo, which he's in favor of as being all right. I believe that the survey taken by the discipline committee would refute that statement. Forty-seven per cent of the students polled have cheated at one time or another. That's a very sizeable figure and to us it's important. It demonstrated very definitely the need for some correction.

Will Decrease Cheating

We believe an honor code will decrease cheating, raise the academic level of the University, give students a great amount of pride in their school and make them better citizens when they have to face the life of a graduate.

Cheating's Matter Of Motivation

AMBERS: A couple of basic fallacies exist. One of them is that of argument number eight: "Natural or habitual cheaters

would tend to make efforts to beat the system."

That would naturally assume that there are some that can be classified as natural or habitual cheaters and I wouldn't know how anyone would go about classifying them as such.

It is largely a matter of motivation, this business of cheating. It all depends on what the student has to win or lose.

Good Students Cheat

Cheating will be done by both borderline cases and by people who have a large motivation for honor societies and so forth. Somebody who really wants Phi Beta Kappa would, if necessary, cheat to get it.

Another assumption that I would like to re-emphasize is the idea of the instructor.

I do not think that an honor system will work in a university where the objective testing method is used as largely as here. It does work at Stanford but it has worked there under a different type of program. I don't mean because it's a private type of institution and the students have to pay large sums of money to go there, but because the whole university is oriented differently.

The idea there is almost like that of professors here who use the open book examination—the idea that the test is built around is to keep the students so busy they will not have time to cheat.

Can't Observe

Going along with that, it does not give them a chance to observe anyone else's cheating. Out of all the cases last year at Stanford only nine of them were reported. Because the faculty have absented themselves from the classroom during the examination in all departments except language (where they figure an essay type test will not work) there were only seven cases of cheating in the whole school reported by the faculty and only two by students. Where the honor system is used the faculty are not normally present in the classroom and the two that were sent up to the student court by the faculty were later suspended. The two reported by the student body were exonerated.

Another criticism is the idea that the student will automatically stop cheating when he hears a pencil tapping.

That's fine, but when does the pencil start tapping when the whole exam is designed to keep the student so busy he does not have time to cheat and naturally the other students will not have time to stop him?

When will the pencil start tapping, before the cheating is accomplished or after it?

Two football players were suspended from the University of Florida where an honor code is practiced and also OSC used it for a period of time and the student body, not the faculty, voted it out because it didn't work. The OSC system is pretty much like the system here only the exams are probably tougher.

KROLL: We now have the basic arguments and rebuttals presented. A good deal of the discussion has centered about the element of cheating in the honor system and I wonder whether all of you consider cheating the most important reason for the adoption of an honor code and whether there are some other elements which don't enter in which upon further analysis might not be as

important in a pro or con argument?

HAMPTON: Very definitely.

We believe this is one of the biggest steps we could take in the advancement of student government. We would be giving academic achievement to the students. It would be theirs to watch and theirs to safeguard.

By an increase in their responsibility it would tend to increase the maturity and intelligence of the average student.

I'd like to point out a mistake in Mr. Neuber's argument. He seems to be a bit bitter about the statement in the report that the instructor can be bypassed anyway. That was unfortunate. It was not in the report that was accepted by the senate.

Faculty Important

We strongly take into consideration the part that the faculty must play. This honor system cannot go into effect without the cooperation of the faculty.

NEUBER: I'm pleased to find the committee admitting that they can make mistakes. However, why is student government itself good? Is student government necessarily always good or is good government good, not necessarily student government?

HAMPTON: Government is a necessity. I don't see how we're going to get along without it unless we're advocating anarchy.

NEUBER: I don't think anyone is saying we're going to get along without it. I'm asking why the students exercising governmental power is set up as a good. Have you any proof that student government is the best government?

HAMPTON: What government would you advocate over student government? Isn't it proper that the students run their own government?

NEUBER: I'm not advocating. I am questioning.

I am wondering if perhaps in some situations it may be better for the faculty to have the final say. I think discipline is one of those areas.

To Become Adults

GOULD: One thing we come to the University for is to become adults. Nine-tenths of the people here come basically as children and become adults while they're here. One phase of college that helps them to mature is in working with student government and in learning leadership and also in learning how to follow along with their fellow students if they happen to be followers.

The faculty does have the final say in this. Any action taken by the student court can be criticized and taken back for review by the court and in the long run it can be completely superceded by whatever the faculty says through its discipline committee.

The students are just asking for a chance to prove that they can run their own affairs in this line as well as the lines that we previously have.

AMBERS: Miss Gould says that faculty have the last say anyway and that after the student court passes on the matter then it goes to the faculty for review?

GOULD: No, not necessarily. It can, though, if the faculty is critical of the action they still have the ultimate power.

Same Treatment For Campus Stars

AMBERS: One fact that we, as students, all realize is the necessity at time for various "stars" on the campus and it would bring up a very interesting point that if one of these "stars" were brought up for cheating and suspended by the honor court,

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