

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 41, Spring 2011
5/9/2011

Members Present:

Kaleb Underwood (presiding), Sean Sessel (clerk), Trey Burns, Hilary Baker-Jennings, Brett Johnson, Iara Palacios, Gabriela Lopez, Creston Herron, John Cavallo

Ombuds: Daniel Stark

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarizing a paper for a lower level humanities course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Paper by Student A with professor's comments
- Sources of alleged plagiarism submitted and highlighted by professor
- Course Syllabus
- Assignment Prompt
- Four additional sources submitted by Student A
- Student A Deposition

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that he had created a notes page with copied portions, and then used that as a basis for the paper without remembering that some of the notes had been copied.

Student A admitted to not using a works cited page and stated that he had not originally intended to use outside sources.

Student A admitted to the first body paragraph being heavily plagiarized but noted that the introduction and conclusion were original.

Student A noted that he normally does not write his papers by assembling a notes sheet with copied material and then building on it.

Student A stated that he created the notes sheet a week before the due date but that he didn't start the paper until 11:00 PM the night before the paper was due.

In his closing statement, Student A emphasized that he had not meant to violate the Honor Code.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that there was clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred because there are clear correlations between the sources and Student A’s paper. Additionally, Student A’s testimony confirms that a violation occurred.

Straw Poll #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. Testimony and material evidence supported this.

Straw Poll #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”

Yes: 9
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Straw Polls #1 and #2 made binding.

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members discussed whether to mitigate based upon the bringing in of relevant information before the hearing. Many Council members felt it appropriate to do so.

Council members discussed whether to mitigate based upon the student’s statements that his plagiarism was accidental. It was noted that the paper was not intended to be a research paper but rather the student’s own words and thoughts. It was also noted that there was no works cited. Many Council members felt it inappropriate to mitigate on the difference between intentionality and gross negligence.

Council members resumed discussion of mitigation based on cooperation and noted that he had gone to the effort of collecting other sources.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate.

Straw Poll #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 2
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 6
F in the course: 0
Abstentions: 1

Council members continued to discuss the significance of the sources brought in before the hearing.

Council members also discussed whether two semesters of suspension was an appropriate penalty overall as compared to one semester of suspension.

Straw Poll #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	2
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	7
F in the course:	0
Abstentions:	0

Straw Poll #4 made binding.

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 45 minutes and 40 seconds

Respectfully submitted,
Sean Sessel
Clerk