

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #57, Spring 2012
September 15, 2012

Members Present:

Trey Burns (presiding), Isabelle Lelogeais (clerk), Adriana Bracho, Andres Rodela, John King, Ana Watson, Hannah Bosley, Andrew Austin, Shep Patterson, Nick George-Jones (Observing)

Ombuds: Divya Bhat

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of plagiarism in a lower level Computer Science course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's Written Statement
- Course Syllabus
- Course Assignments Page
- Assignment Prompt
- Incomplete Code Given for Assignment
- Students' Joint Submission
- Alleged Source Code
- Excerpt from Students' Submission (highlighted by accuser)
- Email Conversation between Student A and Professor
- Sample Submissions from Class

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation." Student B withdrew under Article XII of the Honor System Constitution.

Testimony:

In his opening statement, Student A said that he and Student B were partners on this assignment, and divided the work so that Student B completed the majority of the computer code. When asked about his individual contribution to the code, Student A relayed that he only reviewed syntax and checked for errors, but had no part in generating the code. Furthermore, he emphasized that Student B never discussed the methodology behind the code with him, and that he did not question the logic. Student A maintained that due to this lack of knowledge, he did not suspect any violation of the Honor Code regarding this assignment.

In closing, Student A re-stated his position that he and Student B were partners, but that Student B completed all the work for this assignment, so he had no knowledge of and did not participate in a violation of the Honor Code.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the clearly copied code, backed up by a very insistent expert deposition, violated the Honor Code of the course in question.

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

Yes: 9+1 Observing
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. Council members debated over whether or not Student A was not in violation considering the fact that all he did was review the code for syntax errors. Most members of the Council thought that even in light of the fact that Student A did not actively participate in committing the violation, he still committed a violation by putting his name on and assuming responsibility for an assignment that was in violation.

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

Yes: 6+1 Observing
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 3

The three members who abstained emphasized that they were not sure about finding someone “in violation,” when they did not meaningfully contribute to the assignment, and had no knowledge of a potential violation. The majority of the council responded by saying that it was Student A’s responsibility to make sure that the work he was submitting was appropriate.

Straw Poll #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”

Yes: 9 + 1 Observing
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Most members decided that they would mitigate heavily for the fact that Student A did not actively participate in the plagiarism.

Council members did not see or discuss any aggravating factors.

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

F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	1
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1
Letter of Reprimand:	7
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive Letter of Reprimand. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 54 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Isabelle Lelogeais
Clerk