

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #15, Fall 2012
Tuesday, January 29th, 2012

Members Present:

Trey Burns (presiding), Abby Endler (clerk), Isabelle Lelogais, Sam Kwiatkowski, Mitchell Massey, John Cavallo, Edward Tsai, Hannah Bosley, Aaroh Parikh

Ombuds: Kristina Vu, Ira Shrivastava (Observing)

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on a take-home exam for a lower level Computer Science course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's Written statement
- Student B's Written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Exam Prompt
- Student A's Exam
- Student B's Exam
- Exam Template
- Sample Exams from Classmates

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Student B pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that this violation was a serious mistake, and that he made a poor decision in committing the violation. He wanted to help a friend, but he understands that in doing so he violated the University's Honor Code. At the time of the exam, Student B contacted Student A and asked if he would send him the exam. Because Student B was his friend, Student A decided to send it to him in order to help out. He was aware of the course Honor Code policy at the time that he sent the exam. Student A stated he did not believe that Student B would use the test in the way that he did.

Student B stated that he made a mistake, and understands that he now has to deal with the consequences of his actions. He emphasized that he respects the university and hopes to be able to return to the school next semester. Student B stated he asked Student A to send him the completed exam. Student A agreed to send him the exam, and Student B received it, and made very minor changes, and then submitted it. Student B confirmed that most of the work in the exam is from Student A; he only changed two or three cells in the entire exam - essentially he did not make any changes on the exam.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of both students' testimony, the letter of accusation, and the extensive similarities between the two exams.

Vote: 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. Council members saw no evidence to suggest that Student A had not committed the violation.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation. Council members saw no evidence to suggest that Student B had not committed the violation.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances for Student A. Council members discussed mitigation for cooperation, because Student A was forthcoming in his testimony. Some Council member discussed mitigation for the amount of the assignment, because this student did complete the exam on his own. However, many Council members disagreed with the mitigation for the amount of the assignment, because the Student A was not found in violation for cheating on his own exam. Rather, he was found in violation for sending his exam to another student. In this case, the amount of the assignment does not pertain to the violation. Several council members felt that there was no reason to mitigate in this case. These Council members did not mitigate for cooperation because although Student A did disclose his violation, his cooperation did not provide us with any information that we could not have discovered on our own.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate the penalty for Student A.

Council members then discussed what would serve as an appropriate penalty for Student A. Some Council members felt that suspension would be warranted in this case, arguing that sending your work to another student, and thereby making a violation possible, is a serious violation. Other council members felt that the fact that this exam was worth 15%

of the course grade made it more appropriate to consider a penalty other than suspension, and discussed the possible penalty of an F in the course.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	0
F in the course:	9
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

The Council then discussed mitigating factors for Student B. Council members felt that there were no mitigating factors for Student B. Some Council members felt that mitigating slightly for cooperation might be appropriate, as Student B explained very thoroughly the extent of the violation, and this disclosure warranted a slight amount of mitigation.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate the penalty for Student B.

The Council then discussed what would serve as an appropriate penalty for Student B. Council members felt that the fact that Student B requested the exam from Student A, and then also copied it completely and presented another student's work as his own, made this a more serious violation. The fact that Student B planned from the beginning to use someone else's work also contributes to the serious nature of this violation. Based on this, most Council members agreed that suspension was appropriate for Student B. One Council member felt that it was difficult to compare which violation was worse, and for this reason the appropriate thing would be to give both students the same penalty - for this reason this member felt that suspension may not be warranted.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	9
F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

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

The Honor Council thus finds Student B “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: 46 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Endler
Clerk