

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 28, Spring 2013
April 16, 2013

Members Present:

Trey Burns (presiding), Isabelle Lelogeais (clerk), Seth Lauer, Adriana Bracho, David French, Abby Endler, Sam Kwiatkowski, John Cavallo, Jen Shafer, Erin Rieger (Observing), Shantan Cheemerla (Observing)

Ombuds: Aubrey Sirtautas

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of cheating on a departmental exam for a graduate level Social Science program.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Follow-up to the Letter of Accusation
- Student A's Written Statement
- Exam Prompt
- Student A's Exam
- Sources of Alleged Plagiarism
- Required Article for Part 1 of the Exam
- Accuser Deposition
- Advisor Deposition

Plea:

Student A responded that he was "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A began by saying that this is his first course of study in the United States, and he has only just recently learned English. In addition, she was sick and just returning from a school related trip to Istanbul when the exam in question was supposed to be turned in. Due to these circumstances, she was pressed to complete the exam. She continued to state that she did not understand the magnitude of this exam, and that it had only been stated verbally in class. She did not understand that she needed to pass this exam to stay in her program. She said that the department did not supply her with sufficient information or communication to complete her course of study well.

She continued to state that she did not read the instructions of the exam due to time constraints. As a result, she was not aware that internet sources were prohibited, and used them to complete her test. She said that she was aware of the rules of citation and had adhered to them on previous assignments, but she was not aware that these rules applied to this specific assignment. She continued to say that she thought she was supposed to locate the portions of the article that corresponded to the question on the exam and supply them.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the student admitted to using prohibited resources and copying them directly and because of the verbatim similarities between his exam and the plagiarized material.

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. Because Student A was the only student involved in the case, the council believed that Student A was in violation.

Straw Poll #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that the violation of plagiarism occurred in part I of the exam?

Yes: 9
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Straw Poll #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that the violation of use unauthorized resources occurred on part II of the exam?

Yes: 9
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Straw Poll #4: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that the violation of plagiarism occurred in part II of the exam?

Yes: 9
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members first discussed whether the Honor Council would be able to accurately assign a penalty in this case due to the fact that the violation occurred in a graduate department, rather than in a particular course. Most council members thought that a strongly worded letter of reprimand, an F on the exam, and some quantity of suspension would be the appropriate recommendation for the graduate committee.

Straw Poll #5: Should the Council make a penalty recommendation for Student A?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Straw Poll #6: Should the Council recommend that Student A fail the exam in question?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Straw Poll #7: Should the Council recommend that Student A be suspended?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus issues the opinion that Student A violated the Honor Code and recommends that she fail the exam in question and be suspended for some amount of time from the department as the committee sees fit.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour and 20 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Isabelle Lelogeais

Clerk