

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 3, Fall 2013
November 7, 2013

Members Present:

Adriana Bracho (presiding), John Cavallo (clerk), Seth Lauer, Shantan Cheemerla, Shep Patterson, Isabelle Lelogeais, Mitch Massey, Erin Rieger, Julia Liu, Michael Farner (Observing), Josiah Grace (Observing)

Ombuds: Gabe Breternitz

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on an exam for a lower level Physics course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student A Exam
- Student B Exam

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Student B pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A began testimony by describing the nature of the accusation. Student A said that he was approached by Student B who asked for his test because he was distressed and unsure of how to complete the exam. He said Student B then took the exam and left Student A knowing that it was a violation of the course's Honor Code policy to share the test with another student.

Student B began testimony by describing how he was unable to complete the exam and saw Student A in a building on campus. Feeling stressed, he asked for the test and copied it in order to turn it in by the time class started. He admitted to copying the test and giving it back to Student A before class started. Student B mentioned how he would usually go to Student A with help for the class.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because both students' exams were very similar. Furthermore, given both of the accused students' testimony, it was very clear that a violation had occurred.

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. Student A admitted to giving unauthorized aid to Student B. Both of the exams were very similar and given the course's Honor Code policy, Student A was in violation by giving the exam and Student B was in violation of copying the exam.

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

Yes: 9
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

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. Most members felt that there were no mitigating factors that applied to the case. One member explained that he felt cooperation helped the council reach its decision. However, most members disagreed and felt that they were able to reach their decision regardless of the testimony given.

Members felt that Student B's false date and time of completion of the exam were an aggravating factor in that the accused tried to conceal the violation by deceit of the professor.

Most members felt that the penalty for both students should be the same. Giving unauthorized aid is critical to a violation, and they felt that giving and receiving an exam that was explicitly to be done individually was a clear an egregious violation. Given the nature of the violation which was a case of copying of one student's exams that was worth 15% of the total course grade, it was argued that the case was a particularly egregious breach of trust between faculty and students. Members felt that both students blatantly violated the Honor Code. Furthermore, the members argued that both students would benefit from some time away from the university given the lapse of judgment exhibited by both students and that they were considering suspension as a potential penalty.

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:	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

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 and Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to both their records.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 37 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
John Cavallo
Clerk