

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 12, Fall 2014**  
**December 11, 2014**

**Members Present:**

Hurst Williamson (presiding), Sam Kwiatkowski (clerk), Isaac Batt, Clark Zha, Emilia Duno, Jake Hassell, Josiah Grace, Lynn Fahey, Michael Jin

**Ombuds:** Natalie Danckers

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of a violation on an exam for a lower level CHEM course.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Copy student A's exam
- Copy of accusing student's exam

**Plea:**

Student A pled "in violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A testified during the opening statement that multi-step chemical reactions were difficult for her and she couldn't remember how to answer an exam question. She looked on her neighbor's test to find the answer to questions on question #3 on the second page of the exam. Student A's homework was entered as evidence that she did not cheat on other specific portions of the exam.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of Student A's admission to the violation.

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

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

No further discussion was necessary before the next vote.

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

Yes: 9  
 No: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

**Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances.

The amount of the assignment which is in violation was discussed as a possible mitigating factor since the issue involved only 1 question. No other mitigating factors were thought to be necessary. Student’s cooperation was considered but thought to be not necessary since the council could have reached the decision without the student’s cooperation.

Council members thought aggravating factors did not apply in this case.

Various penalties were considered, including 1/3 letter grade reduction, or 3 letter grade reduction. “F in the course” was discussed as well since the violation happened during an exam. All penalties in between were also included to try to match the weight of the assignment.

The 1 letter grade reduction was thought necessary because the council member believed it best fit the weight of the assignment and is necessarily punitive. Members who called for a “3 letter grade reduction” felt it was necessary because of the effect of the violation on the accusing student, who was distracted while taking the exam, and that an “F” may not be the most appropriate penalty. Council members who proposed “F in the course” felt the penalty was appropriate because of the nature of the violation having happened on an exam.

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

F in the course: 6  
 3 letter grade reduction: 3  
 2 letter grade reduction: 0  
 1 letter grade reduction: 0  
 2/3 letter grade reduction: 0  
 1/3 letter grade reduction: 0  
 Letter of Reprimand: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

None of the students voting for “3 letter grade reduction” decided to move to “F in the course” for unanimity. They felt the penalty was still too harsh. Students who moved up to the penalty felt the act of trying to obtain an unfair advantage on the exam warranted the penalty.

**Decision:**

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 54 minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
Sam Kwiatkowski  
Clerk