

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #36, Spring 2016
April 6

Members Present:

Alex Metcalf (presiding), Matt Roorda (clerk), Natalie Swanson, Ismael Loera, Nikki Thadani, Ike Arjman, Katie Jensen, Joanne Kim, Haihao Liu

Ombuds: Aaron Shaw

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of copying code from a solutions manual that had been released for previous semesters for a lower level COMP course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Professor's Response
- Submitted Homework Assignment
- Homework solutions
- Course syllabus
- Homework Description
- Homework Description Front Page
- Code of other students in the class

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that parts of her assignment had odd function names because she wrote it over a large period of time. She also claimed not to have had access to teacher's solutions or to have used them.

The witness, the professor of the class, was sworn in and stated that a TA emailed her and said that the student's solutions looked identical to theirs. The witness agreed with the TA, especially in the case of two functions that look identical. In the case of certain numbers that are identical that appear to be for testing, the witness claims that they did not provide these numbers for the class to use. The witness also gave no guidelines for naming various functions and variables, though there are some names that are identical.

The student says that she referenced the textbook in working on her solution and that she worked with other students, mainly by discussing. She worked on problem 5 and 4a separately. The student submitted two versions of the same function because she forgot that she could use the same function.

In her closing statement, the accused student stated that her function for problem 5 could be wrong completely, so she was not trying to get credit for someone else's work.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the code is extremely similar. The syntax of this function, especially when compared with the other students' solutions was too similar to the solution to overlook. Everything but the comments and names were identical.

Vote #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.

We see no reason why this would be otherwise.

Vote #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 Council did not mitigate.

Then the Council discussed aggravating factors. The Council mostly did not aggravate, but one member aggravated for deceit of the council.

Lastly, the Council discussed an appropriate penalty. Due to the weight of the assignment (6%), the Council mostly is at either a 1 or 2 letter grade reduction.

Vote #4: 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: 0
3 letter grade reduction: 0
2 letter grade reduction: 8
1 letter grade reduction: 1
2/3 letter grade reduction: 0
1/3 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 she receive a 2 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Roorda

Clerk