

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 39, Spring 2016
April 5, 2016

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Claire Bonnyman (clerk), Haihao Liu, Ellen Diemert, Joanne Kim, Sofia Yi, Ike Arjmand (observing), Angel Garcias (observing)

Ombuds: Kenton Whitmire

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of copying homework solutions in a lower level COMP course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Homework instructions
- Homework problem statement
- Homework weight clarification
- Student A's homework
- Teacher solution
- Course syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "in violation."

Testimony:

Student A started his statement by emphasizing that he was in the wrong and knows that his actions were wrong. He also stated that this is an isolated violation and that solutions had not been leaked to the rest of the class. He stated that he used to live with a TA for the course. He later moved to a different room but still had access to his former roommate's computer, which he would sometimes use to play video games. On the instance of the supposed violation, his former roommate was not there. He logged into the former roommate's computer and saw that the solutions to Homework 3 were pulled up. He spent about 30 minutes to an hour studying the code, but he did not take any notes or photos and did not share with any other students. He stated that he feels badly for doing this. He further emphasized that his friend, the former roommate and TA involved in the case, was unaware that he looked at the solutions and was not trying to harm another student. The student closed by saying that he did not try to exploit his friend or explicitly try to get the solutions from him.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the evidence submitted by the professor and the student's testimony.

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

Yes: 6 (2 observing)

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. The Council saw no other reason as to why Student A would not be in violation.

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

Yes: 6 (2 observing)

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Some Council members discussed mitigating for the weight of the assignment but others found that the weight of the assignment was substantial enough not to mitigate for this reason.

The Council members continued to discuss aggravating factors. Some Council members aggravated for involving another student in the case.

The Council members entered into a discussion of whether or not the violation could be considered heinous. According to the Census Penalty Structure, “a violation may be considered heinous whenever it is considerably damaging to the academic atmosphere of Rice University”. Because Student A broke the trust that he had with his former roommate and course TA, this was considered detrimental to the trust that many Rice students have with their colleagues.

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A’s violation is considered heinous?

Yes: 6 (2 observing)

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Council members entered into a discussion about what the penalty for Student A would be. Some Council members supported an F in the course. Given the nature of the violation, the Council felt that the student did not deserve credit in the course. A couple Council members mentioned suspension and felt that it could be appropriate in this situation but other members disagreed.

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: 6 (2 observing)

3 letter grade reduction:	0
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

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.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Bonnyman
Clerk