

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 17, Fall 2016
February 23, 2017

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Allen Hu (clerk), Ike Arjmand, Ryan Carlson, Joanne Kim, Peter Rizzi

Ombuds: Carey Wang

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of providing and/or receiving unauthorized aid on a final exam for a lower-level physics course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Addendum to Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Final Exam
- Exam Question of Accusation
- Solution to Question of Accusation
- Student A's Answer to Question of Accusation
- Student B's Answer to Question of Accusation
- Professor Clarification
- Course Syllabus
- Student A's course notes

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A reiterated from his written statement that he did not give nor receive unauthorized aid on the exam. He then responded to and clarified some of the accusations made by the professor. He brought forth additional evidence to back up his arguments.

He was accused of giving unauthorized aid on the exam. All of the answers on his exam had clear work to explain how he arrived at his answer. Student A described the exam room conditions, and how Student B was sitting to his right. He did not ever see Student B looking at his (Student A's) exam paper, but he could not definitively say that Student B never looked at his exam. He maintained that he never showed Student B his exam paper and that he did not commit an Honor Code violation on this exam.

Plea:

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student B opened by stating that he did not give nor receive any unauthorized aid on the final exam. He clarified the testing circumstances and situation for the Council. He sat to the right of Student A, with one desk between them. He stated that he never looked at Student A's exam and that he did not copy anything from Student A's exam.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the student testimonies insufficiently responded to the evidence provided to the Council. Student B completed several questions, arrived at the correct answers, scratched out his initial correct answers, and wrote down incorrect answers with no supporting work matching the answers of Student A. The Council recognized inconsistencies within the testimony of Student B regarding these workless incorrect answers, as well as inability to respond to specific accusations.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. The Council agreed that there was not enough evidence to support that Student A was in violation, due to the nature of the evidence. They could not conclude that it was more likely than not that Student A gave unauthorized aid to Student B with the testimony that both students provided.

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

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation. The Council agreed that there was a preponderance of the evidence to support that Student B was in violation, due to the nature of the evidence. Council members believed it was more likely than not that Student B copied the answers of Student A.

Vote 3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members chose to mitigate for the amount of the assignment found in violation. Council members determined that there was not enough evidence to aggravate for any circumstances.

Because Council members could not definitively say if Student A was a willing or unwitting donor based on student testimony, they chose not to aggravate (as they would have had then been substantial evidence indicating that Student A was an unwitting donor).

Council members discussed the appropriate penalty for Student B. The Council deliberated how to weigh the mitigating factor with respect to the weight of the assignment and the Consensus Penalty Structure. Ultimately, due to the weight of the assignment, the penalty was selected from the Consensus Penalty Structure and then mitigated down to an agreed outcome.

Vote 4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

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

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “Not in Violation” of the Honor Code.

The Honor Council thus finds Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive a 2 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour

Respectfully submitted,
Allen Hu
Clerk