

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 24, Spring 2017
3/8/17

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Alex Metcalf (clerk), Jacob Kesten, Ike Arjmand, Grant Wilkinson, Ellen Diemert

Ombuds: Natalie Danckers

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of utilizing outside resources on a take-home exam for a lower level PHIL course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's Written Statement
- Student A's Exam
- Owlspace Announcement
- Resources Student A allegedly used on the exam
- Syllabus
- Student A's Written Statement
- Internet History of Student
- Study Room images
- Student submitted evidence (textbooks, notes, and previous writings)

Plea:

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:

The student began her statement by reviewing the exam questions. She pointed out that the plagiarism checker she used upon submitting her exam did not flag any of the sections in question, before transitioning to locating definitions for various exam topics in a textbook used in a previous class. She then reviewed the topics the class professor had highlighted as important to study for the exam. The student stated she studied by locating important information and repeatedly copying it down, as a form of memorization. She brought in numerous sets of notes and study materials from other classes to prove this as her standard study style. She stated that she completed her assignments at her apartment complex, and submitted the Internet history of the complex's computers as evidence.

During questioning, the student again referenced her notes and submitted textbooks. Council members asked her to clarify her Internet history, and she was unable to point out accessing a plagiarism checker. When the student looked at the sources submitted by the professor, she stated she did not believe that she used those websites when creating her notes, but rather that she accessed other websites for her definitions (which may have

had the same definitions). The student said that she read the sources she pulled definitions from before writing down the definitions for memorization.

In her closing statement, she stated that she had submitted all the evidence she could pull together, and reviewed where each definition came from.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because only a fraction of the sections accused of plagiarism were in the notes submitted by the student. The remaining sections were only available in the resources submitted by the professor, which the student stated she did not access.

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 saw no reason otherwise.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Some Council members saw potential mitigating factors in the weight of the assignment, though others decided against it, as in their opinion the violation was too intrusive and significant to warrant any mitigation.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is an F in the course. Some council members discussed mitigating down to a 3 letter grade reduction, but decided to stay at an F in the course.

However, the student had a previous violation, in which she received a penalty of an F in the course and 1 semester suspension. Council members discussed if a new penalty was warranted, and decided that an F in the course and a 2 semester suspension was appropriate given her repeated violation of the Honor Code.

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: 6

F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 0

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 “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive an F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 75 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Metcalf
Clerk