

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 47-7, Spring 2020**  
**June 15, 2020**

**Members Present:**

Sam Holloway (presiding), Matey Yanakiev (clerk), Adam Zawierucha, Emily Wang, Hannah Dryer, Ricky Robinson

**Ombuds:** Jean Choi

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of accessing course materials on Canvas during a midterm and the final exam for a lower-level ECON course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Professor and OIT clarifications (6 PDF files)
- Student final exam submission (PDF)
- Selected study materials (2 PDFs)
- Class final exam PDF
- Class midterm #2 exam PDF
- Final exam logistics PDF
- List of Inappropriate URLs Visited During Exam (key to match file IDs to file names)
- Midterm #2 logistics PDF
- Full student Canvas access record in the hours surrounding each exam
- Written testimony from the student's mother (PDF)
- Student's filtered Canvas activity during each exam

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

**Testimony:**

The student began by admitting he used disallowed materials on midterm #2, as accused. On the final, however, he had not accessed any of the class materials on Canvas. The student had told his parents about his access of unauthorized materials during midterm 2, and after a discussion, the student and his parents decided it was best he not have his laptop in the room during the final exam so that this access would not happen again. The only electronic device in the room with the student during the final exam was his phone, switched to airplane mode, on which the student had taken pictures of the final exam questions. The student, therefore, could have had no access to the Internet during the exam.

During the exam, the student's laptop was with his mother. Canvas had been left opened so the quiz timer could continue running, but the password was saved on Safari either

way, so the mother could access the course files regardless. The mother then alternated between looking through the course files (to better understand what material her child had been struggling with) and doing other activities around the house. The student did not know the exact details of his mother's behavior, but he referred the Council to his mother's written statement for the relevant information.

After completing the final exam, the student took pictures of his responses on his phone, converted them to PDF format, and intended to submit the exam on Canvas but ran out of time, and the quiz locked. He then contacted the professor and emailed the exam to him directly.

### **Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred.

Considering the extensive logs of Canvas activity during midterm #2 and the student's testimony that he agreed with the accusation of an Honor Code violation on midterm #2, the Council unanimously agreed a violation had occurred on the first assignment.

On the final exam, the Council's opinion was split, with most members believing no violation had occurred. The majority of Council members found the mother's testimony a sufficient explanation for the Canvas activity during the final exam and felt that witness testimony should be taken at face value in the absence of controverting material evidence. Additionally, because the Canvas logs between midterm #2 and the final exam showed sharp distinctions in pattern of access—in number of files browsed, time spent on each file, etc.—some Council members believed this further corroborated the student's testimony that he was responsible for the access on midterm #2 but not on the final exam. Other Council members, however, were unconvinced on the grounds that a myriad of factors could have caused such a disparity.

A minority of Council members found the mother's written statement insufficient to convince them, citing the several separate instances of file access over the exam period as less likely to have been caused by a curious parent. Additionally, these Council members discussed whether the student had a general responsibility for activity on his account—meaning there would be presumption that the student had committed all activity on his account unless material evidence demonstrated otherwise—and also considered the weight of the mother's written statement, which had been sent typed to the Honor Council through the student's email.

With all considerations in mind, the majority of the Council still concluded that the available evidence did not prove the student had more likely committed an Honor Code violation than not.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred (midterm #2)?

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred (final exam)?

Yes: 2  
No: 4  
Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. Based on the material evidence and student's own admission in the testimony, the Council concluded the student was responsible for the violation on midterm #2.

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation" (midterm #2)?

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

### **Penalty Deliberations:**

The Council found neither mitigating nor aggravating factors.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment (midterm #2), was an F in the course.

Vote #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A (midterm #2) ?

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
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

The Council then considered that student A had a prior violation of the Honor Code. Importantly, the Council analyzed the timeline of the previous violation and the violation on midterm #2:

1. The student was informed he had been accused of a violation in another course.
2. Afterward, the student took midterm #2 in ECON and still committed a violation.

3. Then, the student had his investigative meeting (IM) for the violation in the first course. The student took full responsibility for the violation in his written statement and signed the Alternative Resolution (AR).
4. The student was later accused in ECON for midterm #2 (and the final exam).

Because when the student committed the midterm #2 violation in ECON the IM for the first accusation had not yet taken place, the Council distinguished this case from a usual aggravation for a prior violation, in which the student has gone through the Honor Council process before and still commits another violation.

Nevertheless, upon closely reviewing the student's previous violation—in which the student admitted to knowingly collaborating on a pledged assignment—the Council decided it was appropriate to aggravate somewhat, given that the student had sought out impermissible aide in full knowledge of the Honor Code on two separate occasions, and that the second occasion in ECON had taken place after the student had already been alerted of an Honor Code accusation against him in a class where he fully knew he had indeed committed a violation (and with knowledge of what that violation was).

In weighing both factors, the Council ultimately decided to increase the penalty by a single level, to an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension.

Vote #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A (midterm #2)?

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:	6
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 he receive of an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour 40 mins

Respectfully submitted,  
Matey Yanakiev  
Clerk