

**\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE:\*\*\*\***

**-HE/HIS FOR ODD NUMBERED CASES**

**-SHE/HER FOR EVEN NUMBERED CASES**

**Abstract of the Honor Council**

**Case 43C, Spring 2010**

**September 11, 2010**

**Members Present:**

Hilary Baker-Jennings (presiding), Kate Snyder (clerk), Trey Burns, Kaleb Underwood, Gabriela Lopez, Kelsey Zottnick, Jessi Litman, Andrew Briggs, Erin O'Brien

**Ombuds:** Daniel Stark

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using an internet homework help site on a pledged problem set for a lower level natural sciences course.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Pledge Problem #10 and official solution
- Solution posted to Cramster by Professor
- Student A's Pledge Problem #10
- Alternate website with problem

**Plea:**

Student A pled "In Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A knows that using online resources was against the Honor Code, though he did not consult Cramster specifically. He used online search engines while working on the problems and used the answers he found to see the step-by-step approach taken in the problems, though he tried to not copy directly. He used internet searches on about two other problem sets in this course. He only used internet sources on the first problem of this set. When his answer did not match the online source, he changed his answer to follow the source.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that there was clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred because the student's testimony indicates that he used unauthorized online resources while working on the problems, as well as the material evidence submitted by the professor.

Straw Poll #1: Is there clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. Based on the student's testimony, the Council determined that Student A had committed the violation.

Straw Poll #2: Is there clear and convincing evidence that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

Straw Polls #1 and #2 made binding.

**Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Most council members mitigated based on cooperation because Student A answered all questions thoroughly and provided testimony that he had used online resources on other problem sets despite the Council having no evidence to suspect such. Members also mitigated based on the nature of the violation because of the small weight of the assignment.

Some members considered aggravating based on the testimony that he had used outside sources on multiple problem sets.

Straw Poll #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course: 3  
3 letter grade reduction: 4  
2 letter grade reduction: 0  
1 letter grade reduction: 0  
Letter of reprimand: 0  
Abstentions: 2

Abstentions needed to hear more discussion from other members. Those who voted for an F in the course believed that because there was blatant intent and knowledge of the violation and that that warrants aggravation. Some council members rethought the amount of cooperation because of the expectation that students tell the truth to the council. The fact that there were other problem sets caused some council members to mitigate less on nature of the violation.

Straw Poll #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course: 2  
3 letter grade reduction: 6  
2 letter grade reduction: 1  
1 letter grade reduction: 0

Letter of reprimand 0  
Abstentions: 0

Some members are uncomfortable putting too much weight in the testimony of other problem sets because there is no material evidence outside of the one question. Also, based on the precedent of other cases similar to this one, council members believed this case warranted a higher penalty because the student acknowledged using unauthorized sources on multiple problem sets.

Straw Poll #4 made binding.

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 47 minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Snyder  
Clerk