

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 16, Fall 2012**  
**January 26, 2013**

**Members Present:**

Trey Burns (presiding), David French (clerk), Adriana Bracho, Shayak Sengupta, Hurst Williamson, Aaroh Parikh, Izzy Lelogeais, Nick George-Jones, Shep Patterson,  
Observing: Abhinav Tiwari, Scott Gilley

**Ombuds:** Aubrey Sirtautas

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism on a graduate level Social Science course.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's Written Statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student A's Paper with Professor and Investigator Notes
- Correspondence Between Student A and Professor
- Professor deposition
- Earlier Work on Paper
  - Early Topic Work
  - Previous Drafts
- Source Documents (when available)

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A stated that the professor discussed plagiarism in detail during class. She said that she failed to use quotation marks on direct quotes because she thought the ideas in some of those quotes were common knowledge, or that the quotes were insignificant enough in length to not need quotation marks. In other situations, she forgot to use quotation marks because she believed that a source citation at the end of the quote would be sufficient. She thought that a direct quote from Wikipedia didn't need to be cited because it contained common knowledge. The professor did not point out the uncited quotes in earlier draft reviews or discourage the use of Wikipedia as a source.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of various portions of the paper were either plagiarized without any citation, or contained direct quotes without quotation marks.

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

Yes: 9  
 No: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation. Council members saw no evidence to suggest that Student A had not committed the violation in question.

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

Yes: 9  
 No: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

### **Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members mitigated for the amount of the assignment in violation and the student’s attempts to provide some sort of citation in most instances where quotation marks were not used for direct quotes.

Council members saw no reason to aggravate the penalty in this case.

In discussing an appropriate penalty for Student A, Council members agreed that suspension was not warranted given the mitigation in this case. Members still agreed that, despite this, a high level of grade reduction was appropriate given that Student A plagiarized several times on a final paper worth 25% of the course grade.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course: 8  
 3 letter grade reduction: 1  
 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 a penalty of F in the course. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 38 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

David French  
Clerk