

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 44, Spring 2013
September 27, 2013

Members Present:

Adriana Bracho (presiding), Hurst Williamson (clerk), Seth Lauer, Likeleli Seitlheko, Ed Tsai, Michael Williams-Hart, Mitch Massey, Cesar Udave, Ibrahim Akbar

Ombuds: Jayme Smith

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized aid on an exam for a lower level Philosophy course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Exam Prompt
- Student A's Exam
- Unauthorized Notes
- Exam Instructions
- LSE Investigator Comments

Plea:

Student A pled in violation.

Testimony:

Student A began by stating that she felt that she was responsible for the actions of the violation and she expressed in regret in committing them. Student A then explained the timeline for the how she came to take her exams for the London School of Economics (LSE) at Rice University. She went on to explain that the night before the exam she "freaked out" and created a series of notes which she brought into the exam. Student A repeated that the exam proctor realized that Student A was using unauthorized notes and that she was allowed to complete her exam. Student A stated that she was explaining these events, not to exonerate herself, but to provide the context of the events for the Council. Student A continued by saying that the LSE Council decided to reduce all of her exam grades to an F, again to provide context to the Rice Council.

Student A then proceeded to explain that she believed that while she was at the LSE the Rice Honor Code did not apply to her. Student A then said that she was now aware of the Rice University Study Abroad Office's policy that stated that she was still bound to the Rice Honor Code while abroad.

Councilmembers then proceeded to ask Student A to what extent she utilized the unauthorized notes during the exam. Student A responded that she was unable to see the notes clearly while she was using them, so she did not think that they helped her very

much. Upon further question, Student A stated that she did not know the exam questions ahead of time, but knew the topics.

In her closing statement Student A restated that she did violate the Honor Code. She restated that her summer internship had begun the week before, and while that did not excuse her actions, she wanted to re-summarize the events for the Council.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members began by observing the Study Abroad Office's policy that every student who goes abroad is still bound by the Rice Honor Code.

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred due to the evidence presented during the case as well as Student A's own confession.

Straw Poll #1: 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. No Councilmembers saw anything to the contrary.

Straw Poll #2: 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. There was an initial discussion of Student A's cooperation throughout the hearing. Some Councilmembers believed that Student A's cooperation warranted some mitigation, but the majority of the Councilmembers did not see any mitigating factors. The Council did not see any aggravating factors for this case.

The Councilmembers then began discussing the appropriate penalty for Student A. The majority of the Councilmembers believed that suspension was warranted. Some of the Councilmembers asked for a discussion on whether or not suspension was warranted. There was discussion on whether or not the weight of the exam should change whether or not Student A was suspended or not. The majority of the Councilmembers believed that, regardless of the weight of the exam, the blatant nature of Student A's violation and the attempt to gain an unfair advantage of her fellow students warranted suspension.

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

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

The Council then continued with a discussion about why the majority believed that suspension was warranted.

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 one semester of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 00:46:00

Respectfully submitted,
Hurst Williamson
Clerk