

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 2, Fall 2013
November 10th, 2013

Members Present:

Adriana Bracho (presiding), Seth Lauer (clerk), Michael Jin, Sarah Tooth, Michael Farner, Erin Rieger, Clinton Willbanks, Shantan Cheemerla, Mitch Massey, Tavni Nagpal (Observing)

Ombuds: Aubrey Siratautus

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and B of unauthorized collaboration for a Graduate level Business course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Student A assignment
- Student B assignment

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that discussing cases was permitted under the course's Honor Code policy. Through their discussion, they found that they had arrived at the answers to the questions, and they copied the answers from what they had written on the board. She believed that since they worked together to write up the answers during their discussion, they should keep their answers the same to be honest. She expected the professor to approach them about the similarities.

Student B reiterated that they arrived at the similarities through their brainstorming session by writing their thoughts on a board. She stated that they worked together to take the bullet point notes and form paragraph answers for the questions. She discussed that the first 4 questions of the case would not be similar since there would be no way that both her and Student A would arrive at the same answers, meanwhile the last two questions were asking for case information to be put in their own words, so they had very similar thought processes and decided to write them up together.

Student A stated that she believed that she was in accordance with the Honor Code.

Student B also stated that she believed if they had noted on their cases that they had written up together, there would be no Honor Council case.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the Student's testimony and the evidence shows that the students worked together on their write-ups.

Council members believed that the Student's ignorance of the course policy is not an excuse. The course's Honor Code policy states that "written submissions must be entirely your individual effort." Since the students stated that they wrote up their answers to each question together, there was a violation of the Honor Code.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9 + 1 observing

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A and Student B committed the violation.

Council members did not see any reason why either student would not be in violation.

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

Yes: 9 + 1 observing

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 9 + 1 observing

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances.

Some council members believed that the course policy may be unclear because the course allowed for discussion, which creates a gray area for when they can no longer collaborate. Other council members believed that the course policy was very clear on the fact that they could not write up their individual reports together.

Some council members believed that the amount of the assignment in violation was minimal and mitigated for this, while others believed that a significant portion of the assignment was written up together.

Due to the course's policy allowing one of the 6 case studies to be dropped, some council members mitigated for the weight of the assignment.

Many council members found no mitigating factors.

Council members did not find any aggravating factors.

Council members believed that both students should get the same penalty.

Vote #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	9 + 1 observing
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #6: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	9 + 1 observing
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Council members believe that a higher penalty would be too punitive for the violation committed.

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a 2 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to their records.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 49 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Seth Lauer
Clerk