

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 9, Fall 2013
3/19/14

Members Present:

Adriana Bracho (presiding), John Cavallo (clerk), Seth Lauer, Isabelle Lelogeais, Clinton Wilbanks, Mario Aragon, Hurst Williamson, Erin Rieger, Michael Farner

Ombuds: Jayme Smith

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism on an essay for a lower level freshman writing course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Course Syllabus
- Student A Essay
- Wikipedia Article

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A began testimony by describing how the essay was supposed to be a completion grade and how he was struggling in the class. When given the assignment from the professor, he said he misunderstood the directions and wasn't aware at the time that it was a violation. Much of the essay was plagiarized from an online source and wasn't cited.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the word-for-word plagiarism that made up more than 90% of the student's paper.

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

Yes: 9
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

The Council found no reason why Student A would not be In Violation.

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. A few members said they could consider the weight of the assignment since it amounted to 9% of the total grade. However, all members agreed that it was a large enough portion of the final grade in the course to not warrant any mitigation.

Council members found no aggravating factors relevant to the case.

Council members all felt that suspension was warranted in the case due to the blatant nature of the violation and the extent to which the material was plagiarized. There was some discussion as to whether one or two semesters of suspension were appropriate. Most members felt that one semester of suspension was the appropriate penalty because it allowed the student to reflect on their actions and the Honor Code without being overly punitive. Council members felt that two semesters of suspension was excessively punitive.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

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:	9
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 an F in the course and one semester of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 19 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
John Cavallo
Clerk