

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 7, Fall 2014
November 24, 2014

Members Present:

Hurst Williamson (presiding), Destiney Randolph (clerk), Claire Bonnyman, Helen Sharpless, Isabel Alison, Jake Hassell, Julia Liu, Maria Montalvo, Mario Aragon

Ombuds: Carey Wang

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of attempting to gain an unfair advantage on an exam in an upper level Econ course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student A's Exam correspondence
- Student A's correspondence assignment

Plea:

Student A pled "In violation"

Testimony:

In his opening statement, StudentA offered his sincerest apologies for his conduct. He stated that he did not think that his actions would be considered in violation of the Honor Code. The student also pointed out that he did write a letter of self-accusation (after the professor had submitted a letter of accusation to the Honor Council) and claimed that the reason for his deceit was unstable state of mind due to intense fight with his mother on Nov. 1st and 2nd.

The student claimed that certain aspects in the letter of accusation are incorrect, including his lying about attending an Econ 343 class at 10 am. The accused says that he was late to the Econ 415 exam because he was taking the time to cram for the test. He also asserted that he originally scheduled a make-up exam for Econ 343 before scheduling the exam for Econ 415. However, when the student was asked why their Econ 343 professor claimed that this was not true, the student had no clear response.

In his closing statement, Student A reiterated their regret for committing the violation and said that this action was very out of character for him.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believe that a preponderance of the evidence supports that a violation occurred because the accused student clearly tried to gain an unfair advantage multiple times and was consistently untruthful to his professor.

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. It was very clear to all Council members that the accused student had in fact committed the violation of his own volition.

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. The thought of mitigating for cooperation was briefly discussed, but since Student A only submitted a letter of self-accusation after his professor originally accused him, the Council did not accept Student A’s attempts to self-accuse and determine that there are no mitigating factors in this case.

The Council then considered aggravating factors. The factors that were considered were multiple attempts to conceal the violation, deceit of the Council, and seeking outside advice from Council members.

Council members unanimously believed an F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension was the appropriate penalty due to a significant amount of deceit by Student A, including deceit of a professor in a different course. It is the belief of the Council members that after a rehabilitative period away from the university, the student will have a better understanding of the Honor Code and Rice’s academic expectations. An F and 3 semesters of suspension was also discussed, but it was noted that this punishment harm, by precedent, been used for multiple offenses and/or when a violation has harmed the academic integrity of another student.

Straw Poll #3: 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: 9

F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 0

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 2 semesters of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 45 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Destiney Randolph
Clerk