Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 3, Fall 2014
11/2/14

Members Present:
Hurst Williamson (presiding), Shantan Cheemerla (clerk), Michael Jin, Josiah Grace, Julia Liu, Helen Sharpless, Mitch Massey, Owais Syed, Tanvi Nagpal, Maria Montalvo (observing), Billy Rothwell (observing), Clark Zha (observing)

Ombuds: Jayme Smith, Carey Wang (observing)

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using unauthorized resources on a homework assignment for a LOWER level Music course.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Student A’s written statement
- Student A’s Homework
- Homework prompts
- Homework Copies with Professor’s Notes
- Mozart Score
- Beethoven Score
- Professor Term Definitions
- Course Syllabus

Plea:
Student A pled “NOT IN VIOLATION.”

Testimony:
The student noted that he had previously seen, heard, and played the two scores discussed in the accusation. The student noted that since he misses lectures for various reasons, the professor may not think that he is capable of doing the assignment to the level indicated in the letter of accusation.

The student noted that he can identify grace notes – identified by the professor as a flag – because he had previously played this piece in high school. The student stated that while the letter of accusation had specified certain measures to be used, the written instructions for the assignment had no such instruction. Thus, the student’s use of different measures to answer the assignment was in line with the assignment as he understood it. The student had not looked at this assignment because he was in a rush, and so he assumed that the assignment involved the first part of the piece. Because the student played this music in high school, he was able to complete the assignment from memory. The student said that he only roughly listened to the music sample provided by the professor.
Verdict Deliberations:
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence did not support that a violation occurred.

Some members noted that the two parts of the Beethoven piece were very different, suggesting that a violation had occurred. Furthermore, the rhythm is so different in the submitted work as opposed to the music that was provided by the professor that it is suspicious that a student could have done the assignment from memory. Members noted that the student claimed to have the talent to hear grace notes in the Mozart piece, but said that he was unable to ascertain notes in the Beethoven piece. Council members noted that there were a number of red flags surrounding the submitted work for the Beethoven piece. The evidence gives reasonable doubt to the student’s claim that he worked using his memory to complete the assignment. Council members questioned that if the student was talented enough to pick out grace notes, would he not be able to recognize that the rhythm in the Beethoven piece that he submitted was drastically different from the rhythm in the Beethoven piece that the professor supplied.

Other council members noted that musicians may be able to play the baselines from memory from his high school years. This may have caused him to use the wrong section for part of the assignment. Furthermore, the council members noted that the student claimed not to have read the assignment. Council members noted that the council may not speculate, and that it does not need to determine how a violation occurred.

Council members agreed that the student could have recognized grace notes in the Mozart piece from his prior experience with the piece.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?
Yes: 7
No: 2
Abstentions: 0

Decision:
The Honor Council thus finds Student A “NOT In Violation” of the Honor Code.
Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Shantan Cheemerla
Clerk