Abstract of the Honor Council  
Case 10, Fall 2014  
12/12/2014  

Members Present:  
Hurst Williamsom (presiding), Destiney Randolph (clerk), Shayak Sengupta, Claire Bonnyman, Shantan Cheemerla, Katie Jensen, Luke Van Der Spoel, Maria Montalvo, and Michael Jin  

Ombuds: Carey Wang  

Letter of Accusation:  
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism by failure to assign proper sources for two graduate level sociology courses  

Evidence Submitted:  
• Letter of Accusation  
• Student A’s written statement  
• Module of code of ethics from course 1  
• Student A’s rough draft of the final paper for course 1  
• Student A’s final paper for course 1  
• Sources from which student’s work was plagiarized in course 1  
• Course 2 syllabus  
• Student A’s paper proposal in course 2  
• Sources from which student’s work was plagiarized in course 2  

Plea:  
Student A pled in violation  

Testimony:  
In her opening statement, the student claims that she did not intentionally break the Honor Code. She said that the ethics training module at the beginning of the semester did not provide sufficient information to let her know how to properly cite a source. Also, the professors did not inform the students that the honor code policy was at the end of the syllabus. The student was unsure on how to rephrase information and maintain clarify without directly quoting the text. When asked if she had ever written a paper before that required citation, the student replied that she had not, which caused her to repeatedly make the same mistake. In closing, the student apologized for unknowingly breaking the Honor Code.  

Verdict Deliberations:  
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the student herself admitted that she had broken the Honor
Code and all evidence supports this finding. The sources from which the student got her information were provided, and it was clear that in many places, direct quotes were used without proper or any citation.

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. All Council members agreed that Student A did indeed commit the violation due to her testimony and the evidence.

Straw Poll #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”
Yes: 9  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

Straw poll # 3: Should the Council consider these Cases separately?
Yes: 9  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

**Penalty Deliberations**
Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Some members mitigated for cooperation because the student brought in the ethics training module to show that the section on plagiarism was fairly limited. In the first case, there were arguments made for between a 2 letter grade reduction and an F in the course. Those in favor of a 2-3 letter grade reduction note that she did attempt to cite some sources, though they were done incorrectly. The fact that these two assignments counted for a total of 30% of the class grade, and that incorrect citation was present throughout the entire paper made Council members believe that student A should forfeit credit for course 1. In the case of course 2, Council members took into account the fact that plagiarized paper was not actually a graded assignment, but rather a proposal for a future paper. Considering that the student had not yet plagiarized on the final graded product, a 2 letter grade reduction was deemed appropriate. No aggravating factors were discussed for either case.
Straw Poll #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A? (Course 1)
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: 0
F in the course: 8
3 letter grade reduction: 1
2 letter grade reduction: 0
1 letter grade reduction: 0
Letter of Reprimand 0
Abstentions: 0

Straw Poll #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A? (Course 2)
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: 0
F in the course: 0
3 letter grade reduction: 0
2 letter grade reduction: 9
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 she receive an F in course 1 and a 2 letter grade reduction in course 2. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 50 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Destiney Randolph
Clerk