Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 37, Spring 2015
April 15, 2015

Members Present:
Alex Metcalf (presiding), Isabel Alison (clerk), Billy Rothwell, Maria Montalvo, Claire Bonnyman, Josiah Grace, Isaac Batt, Mario Aragon, Clark Zha, Cara Rogers (Observing), Matt Roorda (Observing)

Ombuds: Sophie Schmietz, Lawrence Cimino (Observing)

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and B of copying an assignment verbatim off of each other. The professor specified that discussion between students over the homework was allowed but students are required to write their assignments by themselves for a lower level COMP course.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Student A’s written statement
- Student B’s written statement
- Problem Statement for problems 2 and 3
- Policies
- Syllabus
- Code for student A
- Code for student B
- Clarification from professor
- Sample functions

Plea:
Student A pled “In Violation”.
Student B pled “In Violation”.

Testimony:
Student A said that he was already home for Spring Break and when Student B requested for his assistance and at this time he felt very tired and didn’t feel like explaining it to him at the time. So he sent Student B his code. He accepts that it is his fault and shouldn’t have done it. He didn’t know that Student B had copied off of his work. He assumed that Student B would know not to cheat off of him. He sent his code to Student B because he wasn’t at Rice or in close proximity to the campus. He said there was no collaboration on the quiz part of the assignment.
Student B said he used Student A’s assignment and in turn gave Student A answers to the quiz part of the assignment. He is unsure if they were allowed to collaborate on the quiz together, but would assume no. He accepts that he cheated on the assignment.

Student A said they cross-checked answers after both finishing the quiz. After asking Student B if he had finished the quiz, Student B sent student A his answers, at which point Student A checked his answers on his own quiz. He said that he did not change any of his own answers on the quiz.

**Verdict Deliberations:**
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the students’ testimonies and evidence presented.

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. The Council believed that Student A committed a violation based on the evidence provided and the testimonies of both Student A and B. The council believes that although Student A did not know that Student B would copy off of his code, the act of giving it to him when it was not permitted by the professor is a violation in itself.

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

The Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation. The Council believed that Student B committed a violation because of the evidence and testimonies presented in the hearing. The Council finds that by copying Student A’s code, Student B is committing equivalent to that of plagiarism.

Straw Poll #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is “In Violation?”
- Yes: 9
- No: 0
- Abstentions: 0

**Penalty Deliberations:**
Council members opened by discussing if Student A and Student B should receive the same penalty. The Council unanimously came to a consensus that both Student A and Student B should receive the same penalty as both giving and receiving unauthorized aid is equal under the Honor Code. In further discussion, the Council agreed that the students conducted the same penalty by providing equal amounts of collaboration on both the quiz and part 2 and 3 of the homework assignments.

The council then discussed if there were any mitigating or aggravating factors. The Council agreed that there was a clear honor code policy and that the weight of the homework assignment was substantial enough to where were not any mitigating or aggravating factors.

Straw Poll #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A and Student B?
- 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: 1
- 2 letter grade reduction: 8
- 1 letter grade reduction: 0
- 2/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- 1/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- Letter of Reprimand: 0
- Abstentions: 0

The Council believed that both Students A and B are to receive a 2 letter grade reduction. This was based on the fact that the violation was blatant and an equivalent of plagiarism. Based on the weight of the assignment being 7-10% of the course, the council believed that there needed to be a punitive aspect to the penalty, thus the Council decided on a two letter grade reduction for this violation.

Decision:
The Honor Council thus finds Student A and 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 record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 Hour

Respectfully submitted,
Isabel Alison
Clerk