Abstract of the Honor Council  
Case 14, Fall 2014  
February 2, 2015

Members Present:  
Hurst Williamson (presiding), Shayak Sengupta (clerk), Helen Sharpless, Billy Rothwell, Destiney Randolph, Isaac Batt, Julia Liu, Emilia Duno, Michael Jin

Ombuds: Natalie Danckers

Letter of Accusation:  
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarizing one an essay for an upper level PSYC course.

Evidence Submitted:  
- Letter of Accusation  
- Student A’s written statement  
- Course Syllabus  
- Originally submitted essay  
- Originally submitted essay with investigator comments  
- Internet Source 1  
- Internet Source 2  
- Student A’s outline of the submitted essay

Plea:  
Student A pled “in violation”

Testimony:  
The student explained how she wrote an outline before beginning to write the assignment in question. She made sure she noted sources next to any information she borrowed to complete this outline. Any missing information or any misrepresentation of her work was not intentional, and likely due to time constraints she had when completing the assignment. The student submitted the assignment late to the instructor. The instructor did not enforce a specific citation style for the paper, and that the student tried to adhere to MLA style as much as possible throughout the paper.

The sources in question were on the student’s outline for the paper, but were missing from the originally submitted paper. The student usually transfers material and sources from the outline when writing papers for classes, and in this case forgot to transfer the sources in question appropriately. The outline by the student included direct quotes and paraphrasing.

The paper was submitted due to technical difficulties and time concerns.
The student explained that when writing page three of the submitted essay, she did not properly paraphrase the source, which was open on her desktop. When copying from her outline, she mistakenly did not set the copied text apart from the rest of her essay. The verbatim text from Source 1 was on her outline.

In closing, the student did not want to intentionally misrepresent her work. The copied sections of text came from a messy outline (which consisted of both paraphrased and quoted sections of text from outside sources) and a time crunch she faced when completing the assignment. She is aware of the Honor Code and how to properly cite in papers.

**Verdict Deliberations:**
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because there was clear evidence on multiple pages of copied text from outside sources.

Vote #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. Given the evidence, the Council felt Student A committed the violation.

Vote #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 Council found no mitigating factors given the physical evidence.

The Council also found no aggravating factors.

Penalties discussed ranged from an F in the course to an F in the course and one semester of suspension. Members repeatedly referenced the sections of text that were copied verbatim from outside sources. In addition to the blatant plagiarism, some members cited many instances of false citation in the submitted paper.

When discussing the possibility of suspension, council members argued that the evidence presented showed that suspension is warranted given that Student A’s actions
demonstrated a lack of understanding of the Honor Code. Regardless of whether the student acted with gross negligence or purposefully, the Council believed that the use of false citations and the plagiarism of most of her work on a major essay warranted suspension.

Vote #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Penalty Description</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F in the course and 1 semester of suspension</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F in the course</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 letter grade reduction</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 letter grade reduction</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 letter grade reduction</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Reprimand</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstentions</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Decision:**
The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive an F in the course and one semester of suspension. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 55 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Shayak Sengupta
Clerk