

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 25, Fall 2015**  
**May 3, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Alex Metcalf (presiding), Reece Rosenthal (clerk), Katie Jensen, Nicolas Conard, Nikki Thadani, Haihao Liu, Kirstin Sweeney, Bradley Hamilton, Mario Aragon

**Ombuds:** Natalie Danckers

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of copying a solutions manual for a homework assignment for an upper level psychology course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student A's additional homeworks
- Solutions Manual
- Student A's homework in question
- Sample homeworks
- Syllabus
- Professor Clarifications
- Grading Keys for homework

**Plea:**

Student A pled "not in violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A indicated that the resemblance between the assignment and answer key was purely coincidence. He explained that he never had access to answer keys, and only went over homework in TA sessions. He also pointed out that the past homeworks submitted used very similar formatting, showing that he consistently used similar formatting. The student stated that, since this was a course based in math and statistics, there would always be similarities among answers.

The student indicated that he attended TA sessions somewhat frequently, but did not recall if he went to the particular TA session for the homework in question.

The student explained the similarity between the answer key and his homework by stating that the structure is similar to both the problem solutions from odd-numbers in the workbook and the class notes. In addition, the student explained that many of the wording questions were vocabulary based and that definitional explanations were bound to be

similar. The student also indicated that he had taken other similar courses in the past, and some of the definitions may have been drawn from those classes.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the solutions manual and the student's homework were identical barring inconsequential editing. In addition, the council found that the answers in the homework could not be found in the textbook with the same wording, thus the significant syntactical similarities between the homework and the solutions manual indicated that a violation had occurred.

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. The council saw no reason otherwise.

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. Council members decided to mitigate by accounting for the weight of the assignment. The council saw no aggravating factors.

The penalty consideration took into account that the assignment was worth only a small amount.

Vote #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: 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: 0  
 1 letter grade reduction: 7  
 2/3 letter grade reduction: 1  
 1/3 letter grade reduction: 1  
 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 a one letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: one hour

Respectfully submitted,  
Reece Rosenthal  
Clerk