

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 45, Spring 2016
April 26, 2016

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Nicolas Conard (clerk), Dessy Akinfenwa, Ike Arjmand, Haihao Liu, Sofia Yi

Ombuds: Kenton Whitmire

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on a homework assignment for a lower level computer science course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Student A homework
- Student B homework
- Homework problem statement
- Homework assignment front page
- Professor clarification
- Course syllabus

Plea (Student A):

Student A pled "In Violation."

Testimony (Student A):

Student A stated that he was "In Violation" of the Honor Code because he did not specify that he collaborated with Student B on the homework assignment (an established course policy).

He stated that the portion of the assignment in question was only worth 27% of the overall assignment grade.

Student A stated that he and Student B worked on the assignment together. Student A clarified that he and Student B did not look at each other's code, but discussed general ideas and were in the same area as they were writing the code.

In his closing statement, Student A reiterated that he believed the violation occurred because he did not note that he collaborated with Student B on the homework assignment. He asked Council members to keep the percentage of the assignment in violation in mind during penalty deliberations.

Plea (Student B):

Student B pled “In Violation.”

Testimony (Student B):

Student B stated that he and Student A discussed how to address the various problems on the homework and how to approach the code. He pled ‘In Violation’ because he did not state that he collaborated with Student A on the homework, which was an established course policy. Student B stated that he and Student A did not copy each other’s code; they only collaborated on the assignment and helped each other with how to address each problem.

Student B stated that he takes responsibility for not citing Student A on his homework, and that he should have included Student A’s name when he turned in his homework. He reminded Council members of the portion of the assignment in question, and informed them of the overall weight in the course grade (1.8% per his calculations).

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the code submitted in their homework assignments was identical (with minimal changes of variable names), and the violation was corroborated by the narratives provided by Student A and Student B.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A and Student B committed the violation. The Council saw no reason to indicate otherwise.

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Most Council members stated that they would mitigate for the amount of the assignment in question.

However, other Council members did not think it would be appropriate to mitigate for amount of the assignment in question because almost a third of the assignment was ‘In Violation.’

No aggravating circumstances were considered.

In penalty deliberations, Council members briefly debated between a 2/3 and 1 letter grade reduction. They decided that a 1 letter grade reduction would be the most appropriate penalty if it were to include a punitive aspect because the homework was determined to be worth 6.15% of the total course grade.

Council members determined that both Student A and Student B should receive the same penalty.

Vote #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:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	6
2/3 letter grade reduction	0
1/3 letter grade reduction	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a 1 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to their record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Nicolas Conard
Clerk