

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 47, Fall 2015
April 25, 2016

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Sara Meadow (clerk), Matt Roorda, Ike Arjmand, Ellen Diemert, Alex Metcalf

Ombuds: Aaron Shaw

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of submitting another student's assignment as their own in a lower level CAAM course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Grade Breakdown
- Homework assignment from the previous student
- Student A's homework assignment
- Syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "in violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that he had a concussion from a bike accident as well as the flu two weeks before the assignment was due, and he was unable to operate at full capacity to do the assignment. While working on the assignment in the commons, Student A saw his friend's laptop open; the other student was not around. The other student had taken the course a previous semester. Student A stated that emailed himself the friend's assignment without the other student's knowledge and then deleted the evidence of the email. Student A also pointed out that this assignment was worth about 4% of the course grade.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the assignment indicated a violation and the student testimony further explained the circumstances.

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 committed the violation.

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

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Students discussed taking the weight of the assignment into consideration and cooperation given that Student A described the directionality of the cheating.

The council also discussed aggravating factors. Many members felt that Student A’s actions were extremely damaging to the academic integrity of Rice University and the other student whose integrity was initially called into question as the result of this case. The council also discussed declaring this a heinous violation due to the theft of another student’s work.

When discussing the penalties, the council considered the heinous nature of this case and shifted the penalties appropriately. Students debated whether a heinous violation should warrant an extreme increase in penalty to suspension levels. Students also considered the fact that Student A gave substantial disclosure that helped the council come to its verdict by telling the truth about stealing from another student. The other student could have been brought into an honor council case if Student A had not told the truth. The council also considered that the assignment was worth 4%.

Vote #4: 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: 1
 F in the course: 0
 3 letter grade reduction: 5
 2 letter grade reduction: 0
 1 letter grade reduction: 0
 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 “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that he receive 3 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to his record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Meadow
Clerk