

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 29, Spring 2017
May 2, 2017

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Reece Rosenthal (clerk), Alex Metcalf, Jake Reinhart, Kevin Zhang, Ellen Diemert

Ombuds: Natalie Danckers

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of receiving unauthorized aid and copying the work of another student on a midterm for a lower level economics course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Email Exchanges between student and professor
- Scratch Work of both students
- Copy of Examinations (annotated and unannotated)
- Answer Comparisons
- 5 Sample Tests and Scratch Work
- Score Comparison
- Answer Key
- Test Instructions

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation"

Testimony:

Student A stated that, due to the nature of the case, special consideration is warranted. Specifically, the student pointed out the fact that the answers were given to her by mistake – and that it would've been very difficult for any student at Rice University to resist the temptation to look at those answers.

Student A stated that she looked at the test answers on her way back from the library, where she had been planning to take her test. The student clarified that she did not take any pictures of the completed exam she was mistakenly given. The student stated that most of her test was completely her own work. She stated that she drew inspiration from the completed exam and remembered several images and computations, but that she was unable to remember the exact solutions as she completed her own exam.

Student A stated that she only flipped through the completed exam she was mistakenly given. She reiterated that she took no pictures of the completed exam nor did she intensely study the completed exam.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the similarities between Student A's exam and the completed exam she was mistakenly given, as well as the testimony provided by Student A admitting to looking at another student's exam and drawing inspiration from those answers to complete her own exam.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The council saw no reason why Student A would be found 'Not In Violation' given the student's testimony and the nature of 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 factors. Council members saw no mitigating factors. Student A admitted to looking through the entire completed exam, thus no portion of her own exam was demonstrably not in violation.

Council members next discussed aggravating factors. Some Council members aggravated for the involvement of another student in an Honor Code violation (by copying and thus stealing the work of another student). Some Council members also aggravated for attempting to conceal the violation after the initial violation had occurred, due to the student's repeated denial of looking at the completed exam even when directly asked by the professor if she had looked at the completed exam.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is an F in the course. The council aggravated, to varying degrees, up to an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension.

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: 2

F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 4

F in the course: 0

3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 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 she receive an F in the course and 1 semester of suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1hr 15min

Respectfully submitted,
Reece Rosenthal
Clerk