Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 9, Fall 2017
March 1, 2018

Members Present:
Reece Rosenthal (chair), James Suffoletta (clerk), Virginia Xie, Joanne Kim, Sean Olsen, Amy Lin

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism for an essay for an upper level RELI course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student Essay
- Referenced Paper
- First Paper Topics

Plea:
Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that he did properly cite his sources in his paper and never tried to use someone's source as his own. He stated that he never cheated on anything and worked hard to get where he is now. Student A then gave a definition of plagiarism. He said that the word "dominical" is something he has heard throughout his life due to his background, and that means it is reasonable for him to have used it in his paper. Student A also pointed out that this was the first paper written for this class, so there was little precedent for what his writing was like for the professor. Student A stated the timing of the accusation was unusual and he felt like discrimination could have been a factor in the accusation. He said that he was generally quiet during class and did not ask many questions.

Student A said that the source in the Referenced Essay was his main source for the essay. He said that he took notes on it, and took points from what he thought was important from the text and put it into his paper. He stated that he used his notes and his own argumentation to formulate his paper, and that he did not write the entire paper in one sitting. Student A said that he wrote the paper and later added the ideas from the Referenced Essay. He said that he did not want to use direct quotes in the essay and tried to paraphrase what the Referenced Essay said. Student A also stated that he did read all the sources that were cited in the text of the essay. Finally, Student A reiterated that the

timing of the accusation was strange and that the professor's assertion regarding the student's sophisticated writing was not something to hold against him.

Verdict Deliberations:
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred. Members pointed out that there were a significant number of sentences and phrases that were directly taken from the Referenced Essay. No quotations were used for these, and these were not paraphrased. In addition, council members noted that the logic and structure used throughout the essay was similar to the Referenced Essay. The Council believed that regardless of any citations, direct copying from another essay constituted a violation.

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. The Council saw no reason Student A would not be in 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. The Council did not believe there were any mitigating or aggravating factors. Council members believed that the CPS penalty was appropriate in this case.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is an F in the course.

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: 6
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 he receive an F in the course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 30 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
James Suffoletta
Clerk