

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 15, Fall 2017
March 22, 2018

Members Present:

Reece Rosenthal (presiding), Virginia Xie (clerk), Sam Holloway, Talia Kramer, Maheen Khizar, Bella Buntin

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A, B, C, D, E, F, and G of giving or receiving unauthorized aid on the final examination in a lower level LING course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- TA Letter
- Instructor Letter
- IT Logs
- Professor Clarification
- Response Spreadsheet
- Answer Rubric
- Students' Exams
- Course Syllabus
- Student Submitted Screenshots

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Student C pled "Not in Violation."

Student D pled "Not in Violation."

Student E pled "Not in Violation."

Student F pled "Not in Violation."

Student G pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A said that although he did not perform as well as he could on the exam, he did not receive any unauthorized aid. He said that he only studied the modules and textbook and completed the exam alone. Student A took the exam in one sitting in his room in his apartment. While solving the question 40, he knew it had something to do with Grimm's Law and tried his best to work out a response. The student emphasized that he did not have any class resources in sight or have any other Internet tabs open on his computer when he was taking the exam. Student A emphasized in his closing statement that he

would not throw away everything he had worked for in his four years at Rice for two questions.

Student B asked the council members to consider that he was only being accused of 2 questions in the test. He took the exam in Tutor Fieldhouse on his own without any unauthorized aid.

Student C said he took the exam in his father's house without any of the other accused students present. During the exam, Student C did not have any contact with the other students. He took the entire test in one sitting without any class material present.

Student D said that he had surgery performed a few days before the exam and was on bed rest at home. He took the exam in his house and had no contact with any students during the time of the exam. Student D said that he studied information on Canvas and did not use any materials related to the class during the exam. Student D said that he would never risk his reputation and work over cheating on two questions.

Student E said that on the first page of his list, his name was not included. Student E took the exam at his house. He studied the coursework and used knowledge from previous linguistics classes. Student E said he took the entire exam in one sitting and did not use any class material during the exam. He did not have any contact with any other students during the exam. Student E emphasized that he did not have any unauthorized aid on the exam and that he would never risk everything for just two questions.

Student F said that he tried to cooperate with the Honor Council as much as possible. He said that the instructor and TA only saw similarities in two questions. Student F took the exam by himself in his house in Houston. His score was also different compared to all the other students. The student also disagrees with the professor that his answers were "extremely wrong" since he got partial credit for the questions. Student F emphasized that he did not have any contact with other students during the exam. The tabs he had open were Canvas and a Canvas notification tab to receive messages from the professor. Student F showed that his phone records and Canvas records verified that he had not texted or called other students and had not received unauthorized aid from other websites. Student F reiterated that the two questions he was being accused of were only worth a total of 10 points.

Student G said that he did not understand why the three other students who had similar answers were not accused as well. He said that he would not have passed the class even if he had gotten a perfect score, so he had no reason to cheat. He had just had hip surgery before the exam, so he took the test by himself at his apartment in Houston all in one sitting. He studied for the test by looking over the Canvas modules. Student G emphasized that he would never risk everything he risked for over two questions on a test.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because all students had extraordinarily similar and wrong answers to the two questions in issue when compared to the other students in the class.

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

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether each student committed an Honor Code violation. The Council determined that Students A, B, C, D, E, F, and G all committed an Honor Code violation, as a preponderance of the evidence showed that the students collaborated on the exam in question in a method inconsistent with the course Honor Code policy.

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

Vote #4: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student C is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Vote #5: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student D is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Vote #6: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student E is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Vote #7: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student F is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Vote #8: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student G is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Some council members did not find any mitigating circumstances, but other members wanted to mitigate for the percentage of the examination demonstrably not in violation to account for only the two questions submitted by the professor.

Because the examination was worth 25% of the total course grade, the Consensus Penalty Structure recommends an unmitigated penalty of an F in the course. Because a majority of the Council decided for the amount of the examination demonstrably not in violation, the Council decided that a 3 letter grade reduction was the most appropriate penalty for Students A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

Vote #16: 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: 1

3 letter grade reduction: 4

2 letter grade reduction: 0

1 letter grade reduction: 1

Letter of Reprimand 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #17: What is the appropriate penalty for 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: 1

3 letter grade reduction: 4

2 letter grade reduction: 0

1 letter grade reduction: 1

Letter of Reprimand 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #18: What is the appropriate penalty for Student C?

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: 1

3 letter grade reduction: 4

2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #19: What is the appropriate penalty for Student D?

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:	1
3 letter grade reduction:	4
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #20: What is the appropriate penalty for Student E?

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:	1
3 letter grade reduction:	4
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #21: What is the appropriate penalty for Student F?

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:	1
3 letter grade reduction:	4
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #22: What is the appropriate penalty for Student G?

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:	1
3 letter grade reduction:	4
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	1

Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

At this point in the deliberation, the council was informed that Student F had a previous Honor Code violation. Because of this, the Council decided to aggravate Student F's penalty to an F in the course.

Vote #24: What is the new appropriate penalty for Student F?

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:	4
3 letter grade reduction:	1
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Students A, B, C, D, E, F, and G "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that Students A, B, C, D, E, and G receive a 3 letter grade reduction in the course and Student F receive an F in the course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour, 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Xie
Clerk