

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 8, Fall 2017
April 21, 2018

Members Present:

Reece Rosenthal (presiding), Maheen Khizar (clerk), Virginia Xie, Sam Holloway, Amy Lin, Peter Rizzi

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of violating exam instructions related to the use of outside devices during exams for a lower level MATH course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A confirmed the contents of the letter of accusation to be an apt and accurate reflection of the events that occurred during the exam. Student A stated that her phone remained on during the exam because she arrived late to the exam. Student A stated that she left to use the restroom to take a break and check a call that had come in earlier in the evening. Student A stated that the documented phone call referenced in the letter of accusation was a missed call from her mother. Student A stated that she went to the restroom without explicit intent to use her phone. Student A stated she had her phone out in the restroom to communicate to friends how she poorly she was doing on the exam. Student A stated she did not end up communicating to her friends because the course instructor walked into the restroom.

Student A concluded by re-iterating that she had no intention of cheating on the exam, and only used her phone for communication unrelated to the exam. Student A stated she did not look up exam materials on her phone while in the restroom, nor did she communicate with others about the contents of the exam.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because evidence and testimony confirm that the student engaged in unauthorized use of a device during an exam.

Numerous council members stated that usage of phone during exam time was a violation of the exam policy regarding unauthorized use of devices as a violation of the Honor Code. Thus, a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred.

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 agreed that student's disclosure and the letter of accusation's contents corroborated one another. Thus, a preponderance of the evidence supported that 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. Several council members stated that as this was a largely testimony-based case, the student's confirmation of their usage of their phone during the exam warranted mitigation, as this disclosure helped the Council reach its decision.

A council member stated that mitigation is warranted as without student's confirmation of their usage of their phone, the Council may have reached a different conclusion in this Hearing.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 3 letter grade reduction.

Council members discussed whether mitigation for "amount of the assignment that is demonstrably not in violation" was appropriate (Honor Council Consensus Penalty Structure). A council member stated that the letter of accusation's scope was a violation of exam policy, corresponding to the entirety of the exam to be in violation.

Council members found no aggravating circumstances.

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: 0

F in the course: 0

3 letter grade reduction: 0

2 letter grade reduction: 0

1 letter grade reduction:	6
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 a 1 letter grade reduction.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Maheen Khizar
Clerk