

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #21-2, Spring 2018
April 27, 2018

Members Present:

Matt Nobles (presiding), Peter Rizzi (clerk), Siddharth Gorantla, Stefano Romano, Henry Ulrich, James Suffoletta

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of copying code from the Internet for a lab assignment for an upper level COMP course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student Samples
- Student A's Code/Github
- Online Code/Github
- Registrar Clarification
- Witness Statement
- Semester Clarification
- Lab 1 Description
- Course Syllabus
- Test Samples
- Headers

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student distributed written versions of his opening statement. Student explained context of case – met with doctor to deal with mental health and personal issues over the course of a year or so. Student explained how lab 1 was to be done individually, but a fellow student told him that the professor would allow them to work together, so they split up the assignment. Before reviewing the fellow student's part of the code, Student A submitted their combined work to Github. Later, the fellow student, after Student A told her about the violation, explained that she had taken the code from Github. Student A has reflected on the process and is disappointed she did not ask the professor about working with the partner.

Council members asked about whether student had asked professor if she could submit same Lab from 2017 that she submitted for 2018, and the student stated that she had not

asked. Student explained that in a past course, the professor had allowed another student to join a working group so she was not surprised that it occurred again for this course.

Student A brought a witness who explained that she found the code online by google search.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the student didn't clarify if submitting again was okay, or if working with partner was okay. The code is very similar to the Github solution. The Honor Code states that without prior approval from the professor, students cannot submit the same assignment twice. Additionally, Student A had received unauthorized aid on this assignment, which was explicitly prohibited by the course Honor Code policy.

Vote: 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: 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. Council members saw none. Council members saw no aggravating factors. The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 2 letter grade reduction.

The Council determined that since there were two previous Honor Code violations, the student's behavior in the course was significantly damaging to the academic environment at Rice; therefore, the Council determined the violation "heinous" and recommended expulsion.

Vote #4: Does this Honor Code violation constitute a heinous violation?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #6: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

Expulsion: 5

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: 1

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:	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 expulsion.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 75 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Rizzi
Clerk