

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 21-1, Spring 2018
4/12/18

Members Present:

Matt Nobles (chair), Haihao Liu (clerk), Grant Wilkinson, Virginia Xie, Mark Cantu, James Suffoletta

Ombuds: Pierson Lund

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarism on an 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
- Random sample of code from other students
- Student A's code
- Allegedly plagiarized online source code
- Clarification on semester of course
- Clarification on code submission process from student A
- Course syllabus
- Sample tests provided by professor
- Assignment description

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that his initial intent was to make a 0 on the assignment, since it only counted for 10% of the final grade. Only this project was to be done individually, the rest were group projects. However, he said he still needed to learn the material, which was why he found the solution online to study. He said he intended to submit an empty folder, and simply submitted the wrong folder. The small changes made in the comments and code are for readability, not intended for the grader.

He then showed us on his laptop that the folder he intended to submit was empty and created prior to the submitted folder. He stated that the reason he submitted something rather than nothing (despite intending to make a 0) was to avoid ambiguity and so they wouldn't think he'd submit something later. He stated that he made changes to the ReadMe only to make it easier to understand for himself. He gave some further clarification on the code submission process. He stated that he was disincentivized to cheat, as a senior with grad school offers who only needed to pass. He then reiterated his intent was never to submit the offending code.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the student's submitted code was identical to the code online, with only trivial changes. The student's intent, and whether this was an accident or not, is irrelevant to whether 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. No members saw any reason Student A was not 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. No council members saw either any mitigating nor aggravating factors.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 2 letter grade reduction.

Vote #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

3 letter grade reduction: 0
 2 letter grade reduction: 6
 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 a 2 letter grade reduction.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 35 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
 Haihao Liu
 Clerk