

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 28, Spring 2018
April 25, 2018

Members Present:

Matt Nobles (presiding), Stefano Romano (clerk), Ricky Robinson, Sean Olsen, Siddharth Gorantla, Riya Mehta

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A and B of unauthorized collaboration for a lower level CAAM course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Random code samples
- Student-submitted screenshots
- Course slides
- Project description
- Student A's project
- Student B's project
- Course syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "Not In Violation." Student B pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A started by stating that she had never met the other accused student before the Investigative Meeting. She then went on to explain her thinking for various functions in her project. Student A then stated that she did not collaborate with any other student on this assignment, and did not go to TA hours for this assignment. She then stated that she used her class notes and the professor's slides as references for this assignment.

Student B started by stating that she had never met the other student before the Investigative Meeting. She then stated that she did not collaborate or discuss this assignment with any other students in the class. Student B then stated that her similarities to Student A's code are due to Student B's logic, and she does not know how Student A's code has the same patterns. She then went on to explain her thinking and how she coded certain functions.

Student A closed by reiterating that she had never met Student B before the Investigative Meeting. She then stated that she only used allowed resources for this assignment.

Student B closed by reiterating that she followed the Honor Code policy for this course for all assignments in the class.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the similarities between the two students' assignments showed that it was more likely than not that some form of unauthorized collaboration took place, which constitutes a violation of the course Honor Code policy.

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 Students A and B committed the violation. The Council found no reason why either student did not commit the violation.

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

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing whether or not the same penalty would be appropriate for Students A and B. Council members then discussed mitigating and aggravating circumstances. Council members found no mitigating or aggravating factors. Following the Consensus Penalty Structure, Council members found a 2 letter grade reduction in the course to be the most appropriate penalty.

Vote #4: Should Students A and B receive the same penalty?

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Vote #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Students A and 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: 0

3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	6
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Council members then found out that Student A had committed two prior Honor Code violations. Council members considered the fact that Student A had committed a third Honor Code violation to be considerably damaging to the academic atmosphere of Rice University, and therefore considered Student A's most recent violation of the Honor Code to be a heinous violation.

Vote #7: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A has committed a heinous Honor Code violation?

Yes:	6
No:	0
Abstentions:	0

Council members then discussed what the most appropriate aggravated penalty for Student A would be, in light of the fact that she had two prior Honor Code violations. While the Consensus Penalty Structure provides minimal guidance on the amount of aggravation for prior violations, all Council members found it appropriate for Student A to be required to take some time away from the University. Many Council members disagreed on the length of this suspension, but eventually decided that the most appropriate penalty for Student A would be an F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension.

Vote #10: What is the appropriate aggravated penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	4
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	2
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 an F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension.

The Honor Council thus finds Student B "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive a 2 letter grade reduction in the course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours, 10 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Stefano Romano
Clerk