

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 20-2, Spring 2019
4/18/19

Members Present:

Virginia Xie (presiding), Caroline Brehm (clerk), Angela Liu, Sam Holloway, Sanat Mehta, Grant Wilkinson, Hugh O'Reilly (observing), Kyler Foutch (observing)

Ombuds: Jean Choi

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized collaboration on a project 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
- Class syllabus
- Project description
- Student A's code
- Previous student's code
- Code provided on Canvas
- Class lecture slides
- Project sample submissions

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

The student opened her testimony by saying that she has never met the person she is accused of collaborating with. She then referenced a portion of her code that had been marked as suspicious, explaining that the naming conventions are very similar between because the professor had discussed these variable names in class. She moved on to point out that in MATLAB, the program will override incorrectly entered functions to a default set up, so that is why the set up of the functions is nearly identical. Moreover, the project was pretty straightforward, so that's why the code was similar. Since the TAs for the course grade on how many comments are present, she wrote down descriptor comments based on what the function did. Student A also pointed out that a lot of the code had been provided by the professor in class, and that the TA had also provided her code during the TA session. While she did collaborate with other students in the course, it was within the Honor Code policy of the class. She concluded by stating that she never copied code, and she did not know the previous student.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the unusually high level of similarity between Student A's codes and the previous student's code. There were multiple typos in the same place, and the comments were identical.

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. Council members saw no reason to not find her 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. The council found no mitigating or 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?

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

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A "In Violation" of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive a two letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 45 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
 Caroline Brehm
 Clerk