

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 35, Spring 2021
May 27, 2021

Members Present:

Matey Yanakiev (presiding), Isabelle Reynolds (clerk), Mei Leebron, Kamal Tijani, Andrew Barber, Spencer Darwall (observing), and Leah Johnson (observing)

Ombuds: Samantha Cheng

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of plagiarizing an assignment for an upper level SOCI course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Assignment description
- Student A's project proposal
- Student A's presentation
- Student A's planning documents
- Course syllabus
- Alleged source materials
- Professor clarification

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A stated that he forgot to complete citations for the essay portion of the assignment when he submitted it for a second time (revision). Thus, the student did not cite a number of sources he used for the paper.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred based on the evidence and the students testimony. It was clear that the student plagiarized sources (ie. used direct quotations) without citing the material.

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. Because the student admitted to plagiarizing, the Council determined 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 and aggravating circumstances.

The accused assignment involved both a paragraph submission and a powerpoint presentation. Based on the Council’s deliberation, it was determined that the paragraph submission was “in violation” because it did not cite referenced materials. Some members believed the powerpoint presentation portion, however, was demonstrably not “in violation,” which they viewed as a mitigating factor. Other members believed that because the powerpoint was based on the paper, the ideas used in powerpoint can also be considered as “in violation” which would raise the penalty.

The Council found no aggravating factors for this particular assignment.

The CPS penalty for the paper, based on its weight in the course, was a 1 letter grade reduction. The CPS penalty for the entirety of the assignment, paper and presentation, based on its weight was a 2 letter grade reduction.

Vote #3: 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: 2
 1 letter grade reduction: 4
 Letter of Reprimand 0
 Abstentions: 0

The Council then learned that the student had previously committed an Honor Code violation. Council member considered this a significant aggravating factor.

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: 1
 3 letter grade reduction: 5
 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 he receive a 3 letter grade reduction.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 55 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Isabelle Reynolds
Clerk