

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 42, Spring 2021**  
**May 21, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Matey Yanakiev (presiding), William Wang (clerk), Isabelle Reynolds, Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia, Kamal Tijan, Mei Leebron (observing), and Saswat Pati (observing)

**Ombuds:** Jack Fain

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using unauthorized Canvas resources while taking an exam for a lower-level ECON course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student's written statement
- Student's photo proof and testimony about her submission time
- Canvas logs (x3)
  - Selected excerpts from log, submitted by professor
  - Detailed course-related logs around exam period
  - Detailed Canvas logs around exam period, unfiltered
- Clarifications from OIT (x2)
- Canvas documentation
- Email from hacker (partial screenshot)
- Student testimony on hacker (x3)
- Two additional screenshots related to potential hack
- Professor's clarifications of the accusation (x2)
- Relevant Canvas files
  - Exam instructions (announcement)
  - Exam questions
  - Course syllabus
  - Exam quiz
  - Previous year's exam, with solutions
- Student's submission for the exam

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A explained she owns two laptops, Laptop A and Laptop B, and she let her roommate borrow Laptop B for the night. The next morning, Student A took the exam on Laptop A, and claimed she did not access any unauthorized materials during the exam period. She said she turned the Wi-Fi on the computer off for the duration of the exam, and she said she had no access to Laptop B during this time. Later, Student A said she

asked her roommate if they might have accessed any files on her Canvas account from Laptop B the morning of the exam. Student A reported her roommate said they could not recall since it had been a few weeks since the exam.

Student A said she had noticed some discrepancies between the OIT Canvas logs and her recollection of the exam timing. But due to professor clarification and OIT explanation, it was determined that this was a benign error, not a violation of the Honor Code.

Student A explained that she found a threatening email from a hacker in her junk mail. She explained she suspected the hacker, having access to at least one of her passwords, logged into her Canvas account. Furthermore, Student A theorized that the hacker impersonated her computer's USER\_AGENT\_ID and IP address, contributing to the log that showed her accessing unauthorized material during the exam. The student said she did not know the identity of the hacker.

Next the student addressed the Canvas logs on her account. She summarized them chronologically to be as follows:

1. Began quiz (Laptop A )
2. Downloaded exam PDF 25 minutes later (Laptop A)
3. Accessed generic Canvas pages (Laptop A)
4. Looked at ECON prohibited material from a *new device* (Laptop B)
5. Submitted the quiz from the original device (Laptop A).

Student A suggested that the hacker had begun to impersonate her at point #3 but made a mistake and revealed their true identity by displaying a new USER\_AGENT\_ID at point #4. She said this indicates that a different device was used to access the prohibited file on the student's laptop. Either way, Student A claimed that both points #3 and #4 were attributable to the hacker, not to the student. The student said she was not in the position to speak about the hacker's motivations.

### **Verdict Deliberations:**

After reviewing the evidence and considering Student A's testimony in full, Council members concluded it was unlikely that a hacker would have produced the Canvas logs under scrutiny.

That a hacker from a generic email scam (as identified by an article in the evidence file) would access the student's Canvas account, open materials relevant to the exam which the student was taking, impersonate the student's IP address, then close out the access session within a minute of the student submitting the exam seemed highly improbable.

Furthermore, there was no evidence to indicate that the accused's roommate may have accessed the files on her behalf. Ultimately, the Council felt that the preponderance of the evidence suggested that a violation had occurred.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 6  
 No: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

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 believed that the weight of the exam in the course merited the full CPS penalty of an F in the course plus 2 semesters of suspension.

Some members considered suspending for only one semester, but all voting members ultimately decided the higher penalty was appropriate. The Council found no mitigating factors and discussed whether the student’s evidence submissions constituted deceit of the Council. Ultimately, because the hacker’s email was confirmed to be a common Internet scam, the Council agreed the student had not fabricated the submitted evidence. Thus, the Council did not aggravate the penalty.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is an F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension.

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

F in the course and 3 semester of suspension: 0  
 F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 6  
 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

Next the Council was informed Student A had a previous violation on record. One Council member felt that it was appropriate to have some marginal aggravation because of the prior violation on record. Most Council members, however, felt that an additional semester of suspension would have little functional or instructive purpose. Thus, a supermajority of the Council upheld the original penalty of an F in the course plus 2 semesters of suspension.

Vote #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: 1  
 F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 5

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 an F in the course plus 2 semesters of suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours and 6 minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
William Wang  
Clerk