

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 20, Spring 2021**  
**October 22, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Kaitlyn Crowley (presiding), William Wang (clerk), Mei Leebron, Leah Johnson, Andrew Barber, and Syed Shams

**Ombuds:** Grace Nichols

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using prohibited aid on an exam for a lower level MATH course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student Midterm
- Relevant course materials (including the blank midterm with instructions)
- Random samples
- Wolfram Alpha Screenshot
- Appendix of the textbook

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A expressed regret taking the class as she claims that the professor's teaching did not appeal to her. She said that the homework was completion based and no feedback was given. Thus, she resorted to teaching herself, and used the calculator (Wolfram Alpha) to learn concepts. Student A claims that she took extensive notes while studying on the exam, using a computer calculator to get the relevant answers to practice. Thus, she was able to reproduce these answers on the midterm.

Student A gave examples of practice problems that were similar to (and in one case identical) the ones on the exam. She explained that with her extensive notes fresh in her mind, she scanned the midterm for similar questions and worked on those first. She stated that even though the worksheet she used to study had solutions detailing the steps, she thought the output of the calculator was more correct and thus, memorized the "work" shown by the calculator instead. She said she knew that students were not supposed to use calculators on the examination.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the similarities between her practice problems and the exam only accounted for one part of a problem with several parts with the other parts being different. Thus, she would have no way of preparing these novel parts according to her study methods. Additionally, for an exam with no calculators allowed and simplifying long chains of fractions not even required, it is suspicious that the student gave her answers in decimals, something that might be the most common output of a calculator.

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. The student acted alone so they were found 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 and did not find any. Aggravating factors were also not found.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 3-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: 6

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 3 letter grade reduction.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour

Respectfully submitted,

William Wang  
Clerk