

**Abstract of the Honor Council Case
56-7, Spring 2021
March 2, 2022**

Members Present:

Matey Yanakiev (presiding), Bora Göbekli (clerk), Jae Kim, Simon Yellen, Pedro Ribeiro, and William Wang

Ombuds: Grace Nichols

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of accessing prohibited material on Canvas during exams for a lower-level ECON course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Announcements made on Canvas prior to the assignment
- Student's answers to the assignment
- Canvas log records
- List of specific logs that were considered problematic by the accuser
- Course Syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

On the final exam:

Student A referred to a video recording that included the timestamps of the documents that she submitted. She said that she did not access any Canvas documents while working on the final—only after she had finished her answers, photographed and converted them to PDF, and was uploading them to Canvas. While the answers were submitting, the student accessed some Canvas materials to review whether her finished answers had been correct.

On both midterm #2 and the final exam:

When asked about other Canvas logs, which showed her accessing prohibited materials in the middle of the exam periods, the student explained these were the result of refreshing the quiz page by going "Back" and "Forward" using keyboard shortcuts, which accidentally took her to the prohibited material pages, though she never used these.

Verdict Deliberations:

Some Council members argued that it was explicitly against the exam guidelines to have any access to Canvas materials during the exam time regardless of whether the student made use of these pages.

Moreover, the Council found the student's explanation to account for Canvas access in the middle of midterm #2 and the final exam implausible. The reasons were as follows: 1) the Canvas quiz page included only a link to the PDF document with exam instructions, so there was no conceivable need for the student to continually refresh the Quiz page during the exam; and 2) the detailed Canvas logs did not show a parallel pattern of going from Quiz to prohibited material pages back to Quiz. In fact, the student often did not return to the Quiz page after opening the prohibited materials.

Ultimately, the Council felt the preponderance of the evidence suggested the student had accessed prohibited materials during midterm #2 and the final exam, and thus in violation of both exams' explicit instructions.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred on exam 2?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstention: 0

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred on exam 3?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstention: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that the student committed the violations that occurred for exams 2 and 3?

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstention: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

The Council saw no mitigating circumstances.

The Council considered aggravating the student's penalty because of a prior violation. Ultimately, however, the Council decided that 2 semesters of suspension were a sufficiently steep penalty, which would already give the student enough time away from Rice to reflect on the severity of violating the Honor Code.

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 #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: 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

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.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour and 55 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Bora Göbekli
Clerk