

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 30, Spring 2023
4/10/23

Members Present:

Pedro Ribiero (presiding), Simon Yellen (clerk), Kaylah Patel (clerk observing), Olivia Thom, Naidhrav Ananth Iyer, William Wang.

Ombuds: Nevaeh Hicks

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration and plagiarism on a writing assignment for a lower-level MUSI course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Professor clarification
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Essay Guidelines
- Student A's submission
- Student B's submission
- Student A's resubmission
- Screenshots provided by Student A regarding communication with the professor and submission timings
- Witness testimony by Student C

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A and Student B were accused of submitting identical annotated bibliographies. Student B's computer ran out of battery and they used Student A's to complete the submission. When Student A went to submit their assignment they accidentally submitted Student B's. Two days later they realized their mistake and messaged the professor on Canvas in addition to attaching their own (markedly different) assignment. Student A approached the professor the following class period and claimed the professor said they would take a look at the assignment before deciding how to proceed, but would give Students A and B the benefit of the doubt. Student C was, by coincidence, in the same place as Students A and B were when they were working on the assignment and testified that they witnessed no collaboration.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because identical assignments were submitted by both students.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether Student A committed the violation. Council members were conflicted about whether Student A committed a violation. It was clear that the same assignment was submitted by both students, but council members felt that this was not intentional. While Student A did submit their own assignment after the deadline, they provided evidence to show no changes had been made after the original due date. Additionally, Student A's communication to the professor was before any work had been graded or letter of accusation submitted to the council. Several council members felt that the referral of this matter to the Honor Council was an attempt to make a scholastic issue (submitting an assignment late) an issue of academic integrity. While council members did believe that a violation occurred, they were split on whether there was a preponderance of evidence to suggest that Student A's actions constituted a violation of the Honor Code.

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 2

No: 3

Abstentions: 1

The Council then discussed whether Student B committed the violation. Council members saw no reason to believe Student B provided Student A with their work as some form of aid. Regardless of the status of Student A, council members unanimously agreed that there was no evidence to suggest student B committed a violation.

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B "Not in Violation" of the Honor Code

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour, 50 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Simon Yellen
Clerk