

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 13, Fall 2022**  
**May 24th, 2023**

**Members Present:**

James Cheng (presiding), Olivia Thom (clerk), Pedro Ribeiro, Jay Messina, Kamal Tijani, Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia

**Ombuds:** Ammar Siddiqi

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized aid and preparation for an essay exam for a Lower-level Philosophy course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Possible exam questions given beforehand
- Professor correspondence with Student A
- Class syllabus
- Student A's exam
- Academic Advisor Written Statement

**Plea:**

Student A pled "not in violation."

**Student A Testimony:**

Student A began by explaining that they were under the impression that students were able to use prepared essay answers on the timed exam. Student A received an email from the professor asking about short Canvas timestamps to which Student A responded by saying they did not copy and paste but did use notes for reference, which were not allowed. However, Student A revealed to the Council that they did copy and paste previously written essay responses (also shown by extremely short time stamps) but sent this response under the guidance of an advisor. Student A felt that the advance preparation was an honest mistake, and that the professor may have not reported the case to the Honor Council if Student A did not try to conceal the copying and pasting in their email response. And furthermore, because this email response was sent under the guidance of an advisor, Student A felt they did not commit a violation on their own accord.

**Witness Testimony:**

The Witness explained that Student A stated on a phone call that they had received an email from their professor asking for an explanation for unusually fast Canvas timestamps on the exam. The Witness explained that Student A was overwhelmed with their situation and therefore held a meeting with an advisor. The Witness stated that the advisor told Student A to tell the professor they did not copy and paste pre-written responses but rather mostly wrote the responses during the exam and only referenced notes (which was also prohibited on the exam). The Witness felt wary about the recommended response to the professor's email, because it was not accurate. The Witness believes that the accuser would have decided to not report Student A's possible violation to the Council if the email response conveyed the truth. After the investigative meeting, the Witness and Student A prompted the advisor to write a statement explaining their guidance in the crafting of the email response. The Witness expressed to the Council that they felt that the advisor's written statement was a little vague and didn't exactly reflect the whole situation, but the Witness believed it did show that the advisor accepted responsibility for the email response. The Witness also wanted to clarify that Student A wrote all prepared responses in his own work. The Council asked for and received clarification of the dates of the correspondences. The Council then asked for clarification if the advisor knew of Student A's action of copying and pasting before giving the email response advice. The Witness stated that they were under the impression that the advisor knew of the nature of the possible violation before giving the advice.

#### **Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because Student A copied and pasted pre-written essay responses into the timed exam, even though the instructions for the exam were explicit that it was closed book, notes, and pre-written responses were prohibited. The Council decided that the email correspondence before the formal accusation was sent to the Council cannot be considered because even though the advisor wrote the response, the email itself was not the violation. Furthermore, The Council wanted to emphasize that in all cases, professors should be reporting possible violations to the Council without corresponding with the suspected student(s) to begin with.

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 Council discussed that a plea of ignorance cannot be taken into consideration, so Student A did commit the violation. The Council again found that the response to the professor, which was guided by the advisor, was not the violation itself, but rather Student A's act of using unauthorized, prewritten responses on the exam.

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. The Council discussed possibly mitigating based on professor communication with Student A before the accusation was submitted to the Council, but ultimately decided against mitigating for this reason because it is not an explicit reason for mitigation.

The Council then discussed aggravating circumstances. Student A had two prior violations. The Council discussed the possibility of expulsion but deemed only suspension necessary because Student A did not have previous suspensions. Next, the Council discussed the length of the suspension. Historically, two priors would result in a four semester suspension. The majority of the Council agreed to mitigate the aggravation because Student A was cooperative with the Council and provided substantial disclosure during the hearing. Ultimately, the majority of the Council decided to aggravate to a two semester suspension because it adequately constitutes for the violation which Student A committed and gives Student A sufficient time for reflection. The Council also discussed aggravating due to Student A concealing information to the professor in the email response but decided against this because the email response was under the guidance of the advisor.

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

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

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| Expulsion:                                     | 0 |
| F in the course and 4 semester of suspension:  | 1 |
| F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: | 0 |
| 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 they receive F in the course and a 2 Semester Suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 Hour and 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
Olivia Thom  
Clerk