

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 40, Spring 2023
3 July 2023

Members Present:

Kamal Tijani (presiding), Olivia Thom (clerk), Simon Yellen, Naidhruv Ananth Iyer, Pedro Ribeiro, Neha Kohli

Ombuds: Thelo Lewis

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on an exam for an upper level SOSC course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Student A exam
- Student B exam
- Student A submitted evidence consisting of class notes, photo of classroom where exam was held, and past exam submissions.
- Student B submitted evidence consisting of exam submission, past homework submissions.
- PowerPoints consisting of materials covered on exam
- 5 random exam samples
- Key to exam practice problems

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A claimed that the APA citation format given by the professor accounted for the similarities across the students' answers. Student A also stated that they did not know or study with Student B, furthermore, that they sat on opposite sides of the room during the exam. They acknowledged that while the wording was similar for many questions, some calculations and numbers were different from Student B's exam.

Student B also felt that the similar answers stemmed from the APA citation format. They stated that they also followed a format similar to their past homework assignments in class and materials given by the professor. Student B also explained that while the wording appeared similar on some questions, different calculations and numbers were

also present. Student B highlighted that the exam was in person so collaboration would be extraordinary. Student B also stated that they did not know or study with Student A.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of a great number of inexplicably similar and verbatim answers on the two exams, especially compared to the varying responses seen on random samples of the exam. The Council discussed that the APA formatting explanation did not apply to all questions and therefore could not explain all the similarities found. There was discussion about the possibility and method of cheating because of the supposed distance between the two students in the exam room, but it is not the role of the Council to figure out the exact method of collaboration; just whether a preponderance of evidence supports that a violation occurred.

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.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. The council found no mitigating factors.

The Council members then discussed aggravating penalties. Both students had prior violations and the Council deemed a one semester suspension for both students was sufficient time to reflect.

The CPS penalty for this case for both students, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 2 letter grade reduction

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

F in the course	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	6
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

The CPS severity starts at a baseline of severity level 2.

Vote #5: What is the appropriate severity level for Student A?

Expulsion:	0
Suspension:	6
Reprimand:	0
Warning:	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #6: What is the appropriate severity level for Student A?

2 Semester suspension	0
1 Semester suspension:	6
Abstentions:	0

Vote #7: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	6
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

The CPS severity starts at a baseline of severity level 2.

Vote #8: What is the appropriate severity level for Student B?

Expulsion:	0
Suspension:	6
Reprimand:	0
Warning:	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #9: What is the appropriate severity level for Student B?

2 Semester suspension	0
1 Semester suspension:	6
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “in violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a 2 letter grade reduction and a 1 semester suspension.

The Honor Council thus finds Student B “in violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a 2 letter grade reduction and a 1 semester suspension.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours and 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Olivia Thom
Clerk