

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #32, Spring 2023
May 30, 2023

Members Present:

James Cheng (presiding), Simon Yellen (clerk), Naidhrav Ananth Iyer, Dean Toumajian, Kamal Tijani, Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia.

Ombuds: Thelo Lewis

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using unauthorized aid for an UPPER level PSYC course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Professor's email correspondence with Honor Council investigator
- Student A's exam answers
- Exam answer key
- Random student answer samples for exam
- Course syllabus

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A was accused of obtaining and using an exam answer key on an open note exam. Student A denied these allegations stating that the similarities in their answers must have been due to them coming across similar wording during their studying. They claimed that it was possible the professor did not write the exam questions themselves and so the answers could have been available online. However, Student A did not provide their class notes or search history corroborating those claims. Student A closed by restating that they did not do anything wrong.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the near identical wording between Student A's answers and those provided in the key. Student A was unable to produce any evidence explaining how this similarity could have originated other than consulting these answers during the exam.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

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 found no mitigating circumstances present and determined that the entire assignment was “In Violation” and there was no need to disagree with the CPS penalty.

Council members then discussed the severity level of the violation. At this time, members were informed that Student A has had three prior violations and has received, but not yet served, a suspension. Given their history with the Honor System, many council members felt that Student A should be expelled from Rice University. Others felt that Student A should only receive a suspension because they had yet to serve one. Ultimately $\frac{2}{3}$ of council members felt that Student A’s repeated violations of the Rice University Honor Code over several semesters reflected a complete disregard for the academic environment at Rice. Council members believed that Student A has been made aware of the consequences of their actions time and time again and that it was very unlikely that behavior would change should they be allowed to return to Rice University.

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 6

3 letter grade reduction: 0

2 letter grade reduction: 0

1 letter grade reduction: 0

Letter of Reprimand 0

Abstentions: 0

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

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

Expulsion:	4
Suspension:	0
Reprimand:	0
Warning:	0
Abstentions:	2

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a 3 letter grade reduction and expulsion from Rice University.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Simon Yellen
Clerk