

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 51, Summer 2023**  
**September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Members Present:**

Kamal Tijani (presiding), Olivia Thom (clerk), Pedro Ribeiro, Naidhrav Ananth-Iyer, Dean Toujiman, Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia

**Ombuds:** Henry Cassidy

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized aid and misrepresentation of an extension on an exam for a lower-level Physics course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Parent Written Statement
- Email correspondence between Student A and professor about extension on exam
- Course syllabus
- Email correspondence between Student A and professor about final exam
- Graded Student A's alternate exam
- Exam questions document sent to external tutor by Student A
- Email correspondence between external tutor and professor
- Canvas access log
- First Midterm (original)
- Conversation between parent and external tutor
- Alternative Exam email sent by professor to Student A
- Student A's written open statement

**Plea:**

Student A pled "In violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A expressed deep regret for their decisions and held responsibility for the violation which occurred. Student A described personal setbacks experienced during the previous Spring semester and expressed concern with taking a condensed style of this lower-level Physics course over the summer. Student A was involved in an accident two days before the exam in question and even though on the day of the exam they were experiencing subsequent symptom, decided to try and take the exam, subsequently downloading the exam. Before the exam, Student A asked a parent to schedule a tutoring session with an online, external platform tutor. Student A then met with the tutor during the exam time and reviewed the problems of the exam with the tutor under the pretense that it was a practice exam. Feeling regretful of their actions, Student A did not turn in the exam and asked for an extension from the professor under the assumption that the makeup exam would be a different exam. Student A then took the make-up exam and received their grade on the new exam. Student A asserted that they are deeply regretful for breaking trust with the Honor Code and the professor during this violation. Student A now knows the correct path would have been one of honesty per Honor Council guidelines. Student A asserted that they did not work on the full exam with the tutor, just one or two free response questions, and of which the main question worked on was not on the makeup exam. Student A thanked the Council for their time and consideration.

#### **Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because Student A admitted to the violation and there is clear evidence that points to the use of the medical situation as a way to receive unauthorized aid and a deceitful extension.

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

#### **Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Student A claimed that they only worked on a few of the exam problems with the tutor, so the Council discussed mitigating factors. However, the Council found no mitigating factors present because there was no evidence to suggest that Student A only worked on a mitigable number of problems.

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	0
3 letter grade reduction:	6
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

The Council also discussed classifying the violation as heinous because of the use of the medical extension as a deceitful way to receive unauthorized aid on the original exam and a makeup exam. Ultimately, all members agreed that the direct admittance to misrepresenting medical status in order to get an unfair advantage by using the professor's trust as a means to violate the honor code, was damaging to the academic atmosphere of Rice University and, therefore, was classifiable as a heinous violation.

Vote #4: Is this violation heinous?

Yes:	6
No:	0
Abstentions:	0

The Council discussed aggravating factors due to Student A's admitted deception of the professor asking for an extension on the basis of a medical concern, as well as taking the makeup exam with similar questions to the original exam, which was downloaded and worked on prior, possibly constituting a concealment of a violation. The also Council discussed aggravating the violation based on the distinction of this violation as heinous, but most members ultimately agreed to mitigate to the baseline severity because the intent of the use of the medical situation as deceit was disclosed by the student in substantial disclosure.

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:	1
Reprimand:	4
Warning:	0
Abstentions:	1

**Decision:**

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours

Respectfully submitted,  
Olivia Thom  
Clerk