

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 50-2, Summer 2023
August 21, 2023

Members Present:

Pedro Ribeiro (presiding), Rodolfo Gutierrez (clerk), Andrew Barber, Sriya Kakarla, Olivia Thom, Simon Yellen

Ombuds: Ammar Siddiqi

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration of a test for an upper-level STAT 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
- Course Exam and Syllabus
- Student A's Exam
- Student B's Exam
- Random student Exams
- Evidence from Student A
 - Audio and written communications logs between Student A and Student B
- Evidence from Student B
 - Lesson and exam files
 - Course files
 - Phone logs and a text message screenshot

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation."

Student B pled "In Violation."

Testimony:

Student A testified that they knew Student B prior to the course and were worried about the exam. The accused students communicated during the exam through Zoom and IM chats. Although some of the files were deleted, Student A was able to recover most of the files. Student A presented IM and audio communications with Student B, where Student B directed Student A to delete messages, call logs, and audio logs during and after the exam as well as fabricate evidence to present to the Council. Student B pressured Student A to not take the Alternative Resolution before the Investigatory Meeting and suggested that a lack of evidence will lead to a not guilty verdict.

Student B provided an updated statement to the council upon reviewing the evidence. Student B claimed that Student A initiated and instigated the collaboration, and that the

full conversation was not properly portrayed. Although Student B did not contest the evidence presented by Student A, they did not agree with the characterization of the collaboration.

Student A did not agree with Student B's accusation. That although both contributed at the start, Student A argued that Student B was the main initiator and instigator.

In response, the Council collected the complete existing WhatsApp chat log between Student A and Student B from Student A.

Student B, on reviewing the evidence, argues that Student A may have tampered with the evidence (i.e., deleting audio files from Student A) that may have implicated them.

Another student was also found to be in collaboration, but since they were not part of the accusation, their actions were not considered.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because of the evidence presented and student testimony is self-evident.

Poll #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 and or Student B committed the violation.

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

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

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

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

The Council opened penalty deliberations with Student B.

For Student B, it is believed that they committed a heinous violation by attempting a coverup of violation (i.e., deletion of evidence, attempted fabrication of evidence, attempted deceit of the council, and a general disregard of the spirit of the Rice Honor Code).

Poll #4: Did Student B commit a heinous violation?

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 3 letter grade reduction

Poll #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

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 CPS severity starts at a baseline of severity level 2.

There are clear aggravating factors in Student B's actions, including a clear attempted deceit of the Council. Although expulsion was discussed, it was decided that the distinction of heinous violation along with this being a first-time offense that expulsion was too harsh.

Poll #6: What is the appropriate severity level for Student B?

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

Poll #7: What is the appropriate length of suspension for Student B?

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

The Council then moved to discuss with Student A.

Student A provided substantial physical evidence surrounding the circumstances of the case. However, there are some concerns brought up. One – both student testimonies imply Student A's initial involvement, intent, and participation of the cover up. As a result, some of the evidence that may have been useful was lost. Two – does an initial

intent to deceive the Council count as aggravating even if not followed through? Three – could the council have comfortably made an ‘in violation’ decision without their disclosure? Finally, Student A was withheld from receiving an Alternative Resolution because of a possibility of aggravating factors.

The Council decided that Student A disclosed beyond what is expected and required from an accused student to the point of possible personal implication of heinous violation. Although the initial intent is sinister, they did not follow through. The student’s initial actions did harm the spirit of the Honor code. Nevertheless, a majority of the council believed that Student A went above and beyond to mitigate their actions to meet the criteria for Level 1. The Council also agreed the withholding the Alternative Resolution was unfair, and worth mitigating the penalty.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is a 3 letter grade reduction.

Poll #8: 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.

Poll #9: What is the appropriate severity level for Student A?

Expulsion:	0
Suspension:	0
Reprimand:	1
Warning:	4
Abstentions:	1

Decision:

The Honor Council finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive 2 letter grade reduction and Warning (Severity Level 1).

The Honor Council finds Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive 3 letter grade reduction and 2 semester suspension (Severity Level 3).

Time of testimony and deliberations: 3 hr 43 min

Respectfully submitted,

Rodolfo Gutierrez
Clerk