

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 6, Fall 2025
11/10/2025

Members Present:

Caroline Snider (presiding), Jack Bartlett (clerk), Sashi Kulatilaka, Aisha Khemani, Olivia Thom, Elias Sikavitsas, Ayden Molina (observing), Nidhi Rao (observing)

Ombuds: Tori Cole

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter from Student A accusing themselves of using an unauthorized command on a project for an upper level COMP course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student emails with professor
- Account of restorations to assignment
- Assignment instructions
- Professor confirmation of assignment restoration
- Account of events involving the alleged violation
- Student explanation of disallowed command
- Screenshots of assignment activity

Plea:

Student A pled "In Violation"

Testimony:

Student A began by stating that they had violated the honor code by making use of two commands prohibited by the syllabus for a group project. The student stated that they agree with the professor's account of the violation. They then made the claim however, that they do not believe that this particular situation breaks the spirit of the honor code and, therefore, should not be treated as other violations. They stated that the violation they had committed was unintentional and, they believe, technical in nature.

The student elaborated by stating that in response to an error they received while working the project, they initiated the first unauthorized command, potentially jeopardizing the work done by the group. The student stated they then realized their mistake and, in an attempt to fix their previous error, made use of the second unauthorized command. They claimed that they did not know this second command was disallowed. By this point, the student had already contacted their professor who, as the student stated, noted that both of their actions had violated the honor code. The student then claimed that after this, using methods allowed by the course syllabus, they restored the assignment to its original state. They made use of evidence they submitted (which was validated by the professor) to confirm that this restoration was successful.

The student then claimed that the original error was itself unintentional. They stated that due to the way the menu of suggested commands is ordered, the prohibited command they used was right next to one that is allowed, and in fact necessary, in completing their project. They claimed that this led to them making the oversight of using the unauthorized command.

Finally, the student claimed that due to the immediate reporting of the error to the professor, the quickness of their own self reporting to the Honor Council, their restoration of the assignment to its original state (thus preserving the integrity of their group's work), and the unintentionality of the violation constitute a technical violation. They believed this due to the fact that, in their estimation, no permanent damage had been done to the assignment and that they had no intention of breaking the honor code.

The student then brought in a witness, who is a TA in the course, to confirm their account of events related to this case. This witness stated that the way in which the project is graded requires that the original prohibited command employed by Student A not be used. The reason for this is that the accused assignment is a group project and in initiating this command, the history of what work was contributed by which student can be deleted or altered, thus making grading of the project for individual group members impossible. The witness then added that the history which was restored by the student was identical to the one from before the violation was committed. They also added the command used by the student is very common, especially in projects where only one person is involved.

The student closed by stating that because no change was ultimately made to the assignment history after restoration, this violation was truly an accident and technical in nature.

Verdict Deliberations:

The council began by considering that the student pled in violation and self-reported themselves. In light of these things, the Council believed that the student was in violation.

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

Yes: 6+2

No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

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

Yes: 6+2
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

The council found no aggravating factors in the case.

Council members then discussed mitigating circumstances. The Council began by considering how to assess the fact that the student had successfully restored the original assignment history, that the violation was accidental in nature, and that, as it turned out, only a very small portion of the total assignment had been affected by the use of the unauthorized command. In light of these factors, the Council all agreed that the student should be given a severity penalty of a warning as all damage to the assignment history had been corrected and the Council believed that the violation did not break the spirit of the honor code. Additionally, the Council believed that no more than a one letter grade reduction should be given as only a very small portion of the assignment had been affected by the prohibited command.

The Council was not in agreement however, about whether to further mitigate to a letter of reprimand as opposed to a one letter grade reduction. Some Council members felt that the above factors warranted this further reduction. Ultimately, however, 4 Council members agreed that there were not grounds to go further down than a 1 letter grade reduction.

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?

F in the course 0
 3 letter grade reduction: 0
 2 letter grade reduction: 0
 1 letter grade reduction: 4
 Letter of Reprimand 2+2
 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: 0
 Suspension: 0
 Reprimand: 0

Warning:	6+2
Abstentions:	0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive a warning and a 1 letter grade reduction.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours and 54 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Bartlett
Clerk