

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #36-4, Spring 2020
May 29, 2020

Members Present:

Sam Holloway (presiding), Izzie Karohl (clerk), Sree Yeluri, Syed Shams, Rishab Ramapriyan, and William Wang

Ombuds: Eliot Behr

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of copying another student's code from a previous semester for a pledged project in a lower level Computational Applied Mathematics (CAAM) course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student A's code submission
- Other student's code submission
- Lecture slides and accompanying example code
- 10 randomly selected student sample submissions
- Course syllabus
- RLA testimony
- Assignment description

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

The student said she based her code off of the assignment description and explained how parts of the assignment description ordered her functions. She demonstrated which lines of code corresponded to particular instructions. The student explained her use of "for loop," which differed from other samples, as a stylistic practice she often used. She said she used the MATLAB function page to get certain functions needed for her code, whether the exact functions or adjacent functions that could be tweaked. The student also said that certain functions she used were based off of slides shown in class that week.

The student stated that she made her own comments, and that the comments from her code and the allegedly copied code differ substantially. She attributed similarities to the simplicity of the project and self-explanatory nature of the functions. She said that the comment placement is a common stylistic practice—most comments are above the function unless something in the middle of the function requires further explanation.

Lastly, she referenced multiple random samples which contained similarities in structure and chosen functions to demonstrate that her reasoning was similar to other students. The student explained that she was roommates with the person she is alleged to have copy from but that she did not discuss this project or previous projects with them.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred. Though the Council acknowledged the similarities between Student A's code and the random samples, the overwhelming amount of similarities in ordering, comment location, comment syntax, and structure between Student A's code and the previous students code suggest that some sort of collaboration occurred. Specifically, the comments she claimed to be at her discretion (ones not introducing a function) were at the same location as the other code.

The Council found that the project assignment description was not detailed enough to account for the highly similar formatting and stylistic similarities between codes, indicating that some exchange of information occurred. The Council also discussed how, because the project was pledged, similarities could have not arisen from using similar RLA pseudo code or RLA help.

Given that the project is pledged, the Council did not need to determine how the violation occurred because any help from an individual violates the Honor Code.

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. Because Student A submitted code which was created using unauthorized resources, Student A is "in violation."

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

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

The Council found no aggravating or mitigating factors in the case.

The CPS penalty for this case, based on the weight of the assignment, is either a three or two letter grade reduction given that the assignment weight is on the border. The Council defaulted to the lower of the two penalties, thus a two letter grade reduction.

Vote #3: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	0
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

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive a two letter grade reduction in the Course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hr. 20 min.

Respectfully submitted,
Izzie Karohl
Clerk