

**\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: \*\*\*\***

**-HE/HIS FOR ODD NUMBERED CASES**

**-SHE/HER FOR EVEN NUMBERED CASES**

**Abstract of the Honor Council**

**Case 48, Spring 2010**

**9/12/2010**

**Members Present:**

Hilary Baker-Jennings (presiding), Trey Burns (clerk), David French, Adam Hartman, Andrew Patterson, Keenan May, Jessi Litman, Lemuel Soh, Andrew Briggs

**Ombuds:** Vivian Ban

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A and B of unauthorized collaboration on homework for a lower level science course.

Prior to the hearing, Student B withdrew under Article XII of the Honor Council Constitution.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Student A and B's HW #3
- Student A and B's HW #4
- Student A and B's HW #5
- Student A and B's HW #6
- Student A and B's HW #7
- Student A and B's HW #8
- Student A and B's HW #9
- Student A and B's HW #10
- Originals of Student A and B's HW #3-10
- HW #3-10 problems and solutions
- Expert Deposition

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A acknowledged that her homework assignments and Student B's homework assignments were similar, but stated that she never knowingly gave unauthorized aid to Student B. She stated that they would go over assignments together, but never copied answers from one another. Student A said that she and Student B spent a lot of time

together, and that Student B would have had opportunities to see her completed pledged problems. She stated that she and Student B would ask each other if there was a concept that was unclear to either of them, but only after the homework was submitted.

Student A said that she never gave Student B her assignments at any point in time. She said that they would discuss general concepts after they had turned in their assignments so that they could better understand the course material.

While working on non-pledged problems, Student A said that she would let Student B look at her paper, and acknowledges that Student B could have looked at her solutions to the pledged problems since they were on the same page.

Upon examination of some of the solutions given as evidence, Student A acknowledged that the solutions that she and Student B gave were almost identical. She then walked the Council through some of the problems.

Student A testified that Student B would have had opportunities to look at and copy her assignments, given that the two spent so much time together over the course of the year. However, Student A said that it was also possible that Student B simply could have arrived at the same solutions (both correct and erroneous) given that they studied together and discussed topics and ideas.

Student A said that she would generally do the assignments for this class all in one sitting the day before it was due. She testified that Student B would also wait to do the non-pledged problems until the night before as well. However, she testified that she did not know when Student B would work on the pledged problems; in a few instances she said that she saw that Student B had already completed the pledged problems, but she did not know if that was true for each and every assignment.

In regards to the non-pledged problems, Student A said that she and Student B would work side by side so that they could help each other out. She believes this would explain why there are instances in their assignments where they both skipped or did not answer fully a given problem. She stated that they would look at each other's papers during this time, but stated that no word-for-word copying took place to her knowledge. She again testified that there was no collaboration between her and Student B on any of the pledged problem sets for this class.

Student A would characterize their collaboration on the non-pledged assignments as relatively heavy. She stated that they would go over and review almost every problem on a given assignment.

After closely going over a particular solution, Student A said that their answers were suspiciously similar, but again felt that this could be explained by the fact that they worked together and discussed concepts.

In closing, Student A says that she did the work on her own, and whether or not Student B copied off of her should not be the issue at hand.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that there was clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred because there were many clear similarities across the pledged problems given as evidence. Members also cited the expert deposition which states that the similarities between the two students' solutions are highly suspect.

Straw Poll #1: Is there clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not there was clear and convincing evidence that Student A committed the violation. Some members believe that there is evidence that Student A was in violation. Some members stated that Student A was negligent in the amount of access that she provided Student B with for copying her assignments, if she did not outright allow Student B to copy her solutions. Members cited the fact that Student A would show Student B her non-pledged problems (even in some cases giving Student B the paper) and that her solutions to the pledged problems were on this same piece of paper. They also noted that Student B was often in Student A's room even when she wasn't around, and could have copied her solutions without her knowledge.

Other members said that they were reluctant to say that Student A was in violation. They did not believe that the level of negligence constituted a violation, and that students don't expect to need to be overly suspicious of other students.

Members stated that they were undecided as to whether or not Student A was in violation. They discussed the fact that Student A never gave Student B her solutions if Student A was not in the room. Other members said that even though there was no copying at times when Student A gave Student B her assignments while they were discussing them, that still gave Student B opportunity to cheat and thus constitutes giving unauthorized aid, even if she did not do so knowingly.

Some members said that even if Student A may not have intentionally given Student B an opportunity to cheat, she still created an opportunity for Student B to cheat. In some of the instances where Student A gave her paper to Student B, the answers to the pledged problems were on the same page. In opposition to this, members said that the Council did not know which specific assignments Student A allowed Student B to look at, and even if the Council did have that information, it would not be known what order the problems had been done and what Student B would have had access to.

Straw Poll #2: Is there clear and convincing evidence that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 1

No: 6

Abstentions: 2

The abstaining members stated that they voted in this way because they were still unclear how to process the idea that providing Student B an opportunity to cheat should constitute a violation.

The member who voted “in violation” said that they made their decision by calling to mind the wording of the Honor Pledge. They believe that even unintentionally providing another student with the opportunity to cheat should be taken as a violation.

The members who did not think that Student A was in violation said they did so because even given that Student A may have provided Student B with the opportunity to cheat, the Council does not know exactly how this happened and what Student B would have had access to. Given this uncertainty, they did not believe this should constitute a violation.

Straw Poll #3: Is there clear and convincing evidence that Student A is “In Violation?”

Yes: 0

No: 9

Abstentions: 0

Straw Polls #1 and #3 made binding.

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “Not in Violation” of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour 20 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Trey Burns

Clerk