Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 50, Spring 2015
September 15, 2015

Members Present:
Alex Metcalf (presiding), Suzanne Wen (clerk), Clark Zha, Destiney Randolph, Isabel Alison, Ismael Loerra, Mario Aragon, Yash Tarkunde, Emilia Duno

Ombuds: Sophie Schnietz

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A, B and C of cheating on 2 lab reports for a lower level CHEM 124 course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Student A, B and C’s written statement
- Student A’s Lab Report 1
- Student A’s Lab Report 2
- A comparison of Student A’s report and the key

Plea:
Student A pled “in violation.”
Student B pled “in violation.”
Student C pled “not in violation.”

Testimony:
Student A claimed that she originally intended to use the key just to check the answers that she did incorrectly. However, she ran out of time to finish the second lab report so she panicked and decided to copy the key. Student A stated that she did not copy the entirety of the report, but only the final portion. She reminded the council that the grade for CHEM 122 is also affected by CHEM 124. Student A clarified that she only copied on the final lab report which is a small fraction of the 40 points the entire report was worth. Student A explains that she did not ask Student C for the key, but instead Student C offered the key to her. Student A was aware the key was from a TA. Student A acknowledged that she was in violation and is regretful.

Student B admitted that she should not have sent the key to any of the students. Student B explained that the professor did not tell the TA’s they could not distribute the answer keys. Student B stated that she told Student C not to look at the key until after she finished the report; Student C had done very badly on Lab Report 1 – 4. Student B said that Student C did not ask for the report, but that key she had sent were old reports. Student B stated that she told Student C: 1) not to look at it before the lab report was due, and 2) not to share it. Student B admitted her mistake, but reminds the Council that she was just trying to be a helpful TA.
Student C stated that all the facts are true, but said that the purpose of having the key was not to copy. She said that there was nothing to actually copy on the lab reports since they are mainly based on one’s own data. Student C stated that she didn’t think it was cheating since the TA had given it to her. Student C said that she gave the key to Student A when she saw it on her laptop. Student C clarified that she looked at the lab keys but did not copy from it; she used it to see how it would be graded.

**Verdict Deliberations:**
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the testimonies made it clear.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?
   Yes: 9
   No: 0
   Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation.

The Council determined that Student A is in violation because she took the answer key, copied it, and did not report the violation to the professor.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”
   Yes: 9
   No: 0
   Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student B committed the violation.

Student C was a TA and passed out the answer key even if she didn’t know explicitly from the professor. However, on the syllabus, it states that answers are not to be shared.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is “In Violation?”
   Yes: 9
   No: 0
   Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student C committed the violation.

The council decided that Student C is was not given authority to look at the answer key until after she turned in her lab report, but instead she looked at it anyways, thus finding her in violation.

Vote: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student C is “In Violation?”
   Yes: 9
   No: 0
**Penalty Deliberations:**
Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Since the weight of the assignment was less than 5%, members of the council mitigated for this. The Council found no aggravating factors.

Student A deliberately looked at the answer key and copied it the Council determined a 2 letter grade reduction was appropriate.

Vote: 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: 9
- 1 letter grade reduction: 0
- 2/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- 1/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- Letter of Reprimand: 0
- Abstentions: 0

Student B does not have a letter grade for CHEM 124 since she is a graduate student TA.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?
- 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: 0
- 1 letter grade reduction: 0
- 2/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- 1/3 letter grade reduction: 0
- Letter of Reprimand: 9
- Abstentions: 0

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances for Student C. The Council mitigated for both weight of the assignment and cooperation shown through substantial disclosure. In addition to this, members of the Council felt there was unclear authorization because Student C was given the key by a TA. The Council found no factors to aggravate for. Thus a majority of Council members felt a 1 letter grade
reduction was appropriate because even though having the key was authorized by the TA, Student C still looked at it before turning in her lab report.

Vote: What is the appropriate penalty for Student C?
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: 0
1 letter grade reduction: 8
2/3 letter grade reduction: 0
1/3 letter grade reduction: 1
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 2 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

The Honor Council thus finds Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive Letter of Reprimand. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

The Honor Council thus finds Student C “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that she receive 1 letter grade reduction. A Prior Violation Flag is also attached to her record.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1.5 hours

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Wen
Clerk