Abstract of the Honor Council
Case #55, Fall 2015
September 24, 2015

Members Present:
Alex Metcalf (presiding), Isaac Schultz (clerk), Clark Zha, Lanie Tubbs, Sara Meadow, Nick Conrad, Kristin Sweeney, Isaac Batt

Ombuds: Katie Jensen

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of collaborating on an exam for a Graduate level Managerial Studies course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Course syllabus
- Student A’s written statement
- Student B’s written statement
- Student A’s final exam
- Student B’s final exam

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

Testimony:
Student A explained the use of a Surface Pro 3 to do his notes, and that he does not print. He used Google drive for all class files. He henceforth presented his Google Drive folder of the managerial studies course. He discussed that at one point during last spring Student B was travelling, and missed classes. Student A explained that he shared the managerial accounting directory with Student B sometime around April 10th so that he could see the notes in his absence. The directory was shared with another student (not accused). The student declared he did not print on the exam at all, and saved it to the Google Drive class folder. He explained that he used the full extent of the test’s time, in the executive wing of the MBA building (very quiet). He said he started the test sometime around 10 or 11 on a Sunday. Student A reinforced the point that he is a slow test taker. Because Student B had access to the folder, the finished file would have been available for viewing if he searched for it. Student A finished his test the day before Student B submitted his.

Student A declared that there are 4 potential scenarios: first, that A&B worked together that morning, and submitted at different times. The 3rd scenario according to Student A was that the tests are similar, and the two students didn’t copy. Student A said the 4th scenario was that he took the test and forgot that the test could be viewed in the folder. Based on the evidence, Student A declared that he did not collaborate with Student B, and did not intentionally leave the folder with the exam open. He henceforth noted that on page 6/13 of the exams, in the bottom right of the pages there are completely different
answers. On the next page, he went on, question 4 has different responses. Student A followed up with differences in results, with the same number of points being lost on pages 9. Student A henceforth presented his grades in past classes, showing that he need not cheat because he can survive academically on his own. He furthered this point by explaining his relationship with Student B; aside from in the course, they do not interact. Student A then explained that it is not that preposterous that two exams would look similar. Student A declared in the case of scenario 4 that while it was a mistake to leave the file in the folder, it is not a violation. He conclusively noted that he had no recollection of the professor stating that their notes could not be shared.

Student A discussed the automatic synchronization techniques of Google Drive, so when the exam was completed in his document, it automatically was saved to the drive. While Student A stated he doesn’t share all his folders, the MGMT502 folder was shared with two students for notes. Rather than specific files (i.e. lecture 2), all files pertaining to the class were stored in this folder.

Student A explained that he did not share through an email, rather, he shared it directly through drive. However, the recipient will get an email from Google notifying them of the share, and providing them with a link through which they could access the document. Student A shared the document with Student B’s Gmail account. Student A clarified that after the primary sharing of the folder, he never un-shared or re-shared the folder/file.

Student A made his closing statement and declared that he did not intentionally leave his finished final in the shared folder, and does not feel it is an Honor Code violation.

**Student B**

Student B explained that he did not return to his work until Sunday night. His boss granted him permission to take the exam at work, as he was needed at work. Student B claimed that not only did he not utilize help, but he did not use a computer during the exam. He noted multiple witnesses who observed him taking the exam unassisted. Student B presented his binder from all classes from Spring 2015. Addressing the Google Drive folder, Student B declared that he has never used the shared folder. Student B also provided screenshots of his email and Google drive (exhibits 1-7) around the time that Student A’s folder was shared. A witness for Student B was brought in (his employer), and is a Rice graduate (Jones School class of ’11). The witness was present for the taking of Student B’s exam. Student B placed his homework and computer with the witness, and asked her to ensure no one would disturb him. Student B had a student in his office during the entirety of the exam. The witness walked in to Student B’s office twice, and both times the student was taking the test. Student B scanned his work thereafter, and recycled it. The witness declared that as a Rice graduate, she would not have permitted any abuse or violations of the Honor Code. For the weeks that Student B missed, he did not have access to the notes. Student B stated that this was exemplified in the last question on the exam, on which he improvised. Student B noted that he could answer parts of questions that utilized information from earlier weeks of class, but not questions pertaining to weeks that he had missed (i.e. week 6). Student B claimed he never received an email from Student A pertaining to the shared folder. Student B went on to remind that
the screenshots in the Google Drive show his inability to find the folders sent by Student A, although he was able to access the final on the drive earlier in September. Student A explained that the dates displayed on the Google Drive are dates shared with other users, rather than dates/times accessed, unless under “recent” (see Exhibit 8). Student B went on to explain that the files in Exhibit 3, while possibly accessible, were never opened by him. Student B explained that he never used his Rice email, and he did not/can not link his work email account to the Rice email account. He continued to add that he utilized his Gmail account for Rice classes, hence under “Last modified” both his name and “me” appearing—he had two separate email accounts on file, his work and Gmail accounts.

Student A informed Student B that the notes would be shared. The team had a shared folder, and corresponded by email and text. The exam was not accessed by student B September 17th, he first opened the file the night of September 23rd.

Student B stated that despite travelling, he did have access to the team notes. Student B noted that, according to her conversation with Google IT help the night of September 23rd, after a folder has been shared individual files can be unshared and subsequently re-shared.

Prior to the closing statement, Student B insisted that he’d be happy to share further documents and files in order to prove his innocence. Student B concluded by declaring his innocence.

**Verdict Deliberations:**
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation has not occurred because there is not enough evidence to support one.

A preponderance of the evidence did not support that a violation has occurred, because there is not enough information in the Google files. While the test itself had a ton of information that can be argued (as the accused got the same problems wrong), they got questions wrong for different reasons. The accused parties are innocent until proven guilty, and there is not enough information to fully prove guilt. There were many curious and noteworthy pieces of evidence (and lack thereof), but it is this very lack of evidence that stipulates the impossibility of declaring the accused in violation.

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2hrs 20minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Isaac Schultz
Clerk