Abstract of the Honor Council  
Case #56, Fall 2015  
September 10, 2015

Members Present:  
Alex Metcalf (presiding), [Bradley Hamilton] (clerk), Emilia Duno, Claire Bonnyman, Jake Hassel, Owais Syed, Isaac Batt, Nick Conard, Destinee Randolph.

Ombuds: [Katie Jensen]

Letter of Accusation:  
The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A, Student B, and Student C of collaborating on a take home exam on which collaboration was explicitly prohibited for an upper level PSYC course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:  
- Letter of Accusation  
- Student A written statement  
- Student B written statement  
- Student C written statement  
- Syllabus Spring 2015  
- Student A exam  
- Student B exam  
- Student C exam  
- Portion of instructions of exam 2  
- Professor’s Lecture notes  
- In class written notes  
- Homework keys  
- Explanation of evidence

Plea:  
Student A pled “Not in Violation.”  
Student B pled “Not in Violation.”  
Student C pled “Not in Violation.”

Testimony:  
Student A: Student A has taken many stat classes at Rice and has also served as a statistics intern in the past two years. Student A had an extension on the assignment due to being out of town. Student A has brought in her boarding ticket to verify she was not here. Student A has brought in evidence concerning the answers to her test. Student A has brought presentations of a previous class to describe her methods during the test. Student A believes the methods used are not uncommon throughout the class. Notes based on her method to solve problem number 3 can be found throughout homework assignments and lecture notes. There was only one student in the class with no similarities when finding the contrasts on the exam. She is more used to using the (*) symbol than the x due to use of coding languages during her internship. This is also the
reason why this symbol is so prevalent throughout her exam. She received the notes needed to answer question number five on the test by Student C. She received the correct source table despite having a wrong formula on number five due to the fact that the required interactions of the question had no effect on the total. After this, she states that she should have gone back and tried to find a correct formula, but due to the simplicity of the math, she decided to leave it as it was. She has brought in an email showing the professor presenting the expected format of the answer to question 6. Student C has brought in class notes showing her formatting for question 7 was based off a lecture given in class by the professor. On the second part of the exam, it was based off a homework problem and is a given function that is not personally modified. She took the test over one weekend, and she had the intention of finishing in time without the extension. The second part of the exam was taken in class, and the transition phrases used were similar to those used by the professor in class. The student knew the math behind a question, but she didn’t know the concept. Therefore, she knew what to expect, but was stuck when trying to fix what wasn’t expected. Student A states since there were four conditions she set this equal to four (-1)’s in order to make the end of the row equals zero. In question 10, she tried to be more specific and similar to what the professor had said beforehand. On the front of the exam, the professor lists what materials are allowed on the tests and the class notes were listed. In response to the use of her own notes, she stated she used her own notes but was very concerned about the language of her answers. In addition to this, she used the homework assignments as reference during the exams. In response to question 5, the corrected error could be found using the previous values of the table.

**Student B:** She has brought in her exam in addition to supporting documents used throughout the exam. She started by describing the analysis process she has used in this class in addition to a previous psychology statistics class. She stated there is a format that she used when wording her response to the questions. In addition to this, she stated a lot of the phrasing is phrasing that has been used in class. In comparison to the other two accused, the values used as her examples are not identical. Moving on to number 2, this was based off of a previous homework assignment. The student claims that numbers go from negative to positive within the table. She stated this is based off the lecture notes given during class. In addition to this she stated that in the traditional pattern, it should be whole numbers as they are easier to use than decimals. In concluding question 2, she points out that her table is the exact same as the professor’s key and another student in the class in addition to the accused. Moving on to question 3, she shows that her technique and wording is based off of lecture notes in which an example is given in a similar format to that of question 3 on the exam. In continuing in question 3, the student shows that she included her degrees of freedom in order to show her calculation process for the answer. She then goes on to show the professor included the degrees of freedom in his key despite the fact that the degrees of freedom are not required. She continued to show that for question 6 a large amount of her answer was based off paraphrasing language from both the exam question and the lecture notes of the professor. She showed that the word error variance is commonly used in this class and past statistics class. She claimed using the word in this type of problem is not very uncommon. She showed that her discussion on the exam concerning the power of a test in question 7 is based on
lecture notes given by the professor. Going to question 8, she showed that a large amount of the languages and phrasing used is based off of lecture notes and class by date notes of the professor. Similarly, in question 9 she stated her answer comes directly from the lecture notes. For the final question of the first part of the exam, she stated the answer can be found in the professor’s notes. She then continues to show what phrasing of her answer is based directly off of the phrasing of the question. In part 2 of the exam, the student presented a homework that reflects the language and process used to answer the question. In addition to this, the student shows a large amount of the phrasing is based off of the question. She then points out that she presents the p-stat while the other accused do not. In response to question 7, the phrasing was her own for this question.

Student C: Student C said that a lot of the language used in question 1 is based off the language used in the question. After this, she continues to speak on the language of the rest of the problem. This language was based off homework solutions and knowledge from a previous stat class. Continuing on to question 2, the student showed that a large amount of students received a lot of the same numbers. After this, the student continues to show that the professor’s key holds the exact same numbers as the accused. She used 4 (-1)’s in the table because there are four starting conditions and so these cancel out to zero. In question 3, the student shows that a large majority of the language that she chooses to use is based off the language used in the question. In response to the use of the asterisk, the student stated that she has been defaulting to the asterisk for a long time, and is therefore more comfortable using an asterisk as opposed to an x. During question 5, she noticed she was not getting the right numbers. After this, she began to work backwards to fill in the source table. The student was not able to find the notes on this subject, and this caused her to not know the equation for the problem. Given her knowledge of the concept, she was able to solve the correct answer despite having the incorrect equation. In response to the professor’s concern over the use of the word error variance, she shows lecture notes in which the professor refers to the same concept as the error variance. Question 7 uses language that was previously presented in a lecture. After this she continues on to question 8. The student claimed that a lot of question 8 was based off of the notes of the question and the rest of the language came from herself. In regards to question 9, a lot of the language was word for word to the professor’s notes. The sentence was not finished because she was cooking and was therefore unable to finish the sentence. After this, she forgot to go back to complete the sentence. The portion that is completed can be found word for word in the professor’s notes. In number 10, a large amount of the answer is word for word to the professor’s notes on the subject. She states she tried to use word for word when necessary because in past exams, she has been docked or has gotten comments from the professor due to a lack of specificity. She claims that she is not in violation because all she used were the homework assignments, lecture notes, and previous stat notes. She believes similarities came from restating the question and being word for word to the professor’s notes when possible.

Closing Statements:

Student A: She stated the materials used were materials that the professor explicitly stated were allowed to be used. After this, she maintains that she is not in violation.
**Student B:** She maintained that she is not in violation of the honor code due to the references that were provided.

**Student C:** She referred to the highlighted section and notes she provided during her opening statement. She continues on to say that the only resources used were her homework assignments and professor in class notes and lecture notes.

**Verdict Deliberations:**
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation has not occurred because the answers given are reflect

Straw Poll #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?
- Yes: 0
- No: 9
- Abstentions: 0

**Decision:**
The Honor Council thus finds Student A, Student B, and Student C “Not In Violation” of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours 30 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Bradley Hamilton
Clerk