

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 38, Spring 2016**  
**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Alex Metcalf (presiding), Claire Bonnyman (clerk), Dessy Akinfenwa, Sofia Yi, Joanne Kim, Hector Chaires

**Ombuds:** Kenton Whitmire

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration in a Graduate level MUSI course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Student A's exam
- Student B's exam
- Notes submitted by the students
- Exam Key
- Witness Statement
- Professor's study notes
- Course Syllabus

**Plea:**

Student A pled "not in violation."

Student B pled "not in violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A:

Student A opened by talking about how she studied with Student B on this particular exam. They received notes from another classmate and used those to study as well. They both took this course as undergraduates so they were already familiar with the material. The student also mentioned that she was not one of the students talking during the exam, which was mentioned in the accusation.

Student A then brought in a witness, who was sworn in. The witness was a classmate of the accused students and was sitting behind them during the exam. She said that Students A and B were sitting several seats apart from each other and never saw them speaking during the exam.

When asked about an answer that was extremely similar on the accused students' tests, Student A stated that the answer was factual information and there were no other ways to answer it.

Student A closed by reiterating that she was not in violation and that she values the Honor Code. She repeated that she studied with Student B and that can explain why the professor was suspicious of their tests.

**Student B:**

Student B began by talking about how she has taken this class twice before when she was an undergraduate and she's very passionate about the subject. She studied using her own study guide, the professor's study guide, and the witness' study guide. She stated that she studied with Student A the night before the exam. She explained some of her incorrect answers by saying that there was a 50/50 chance on some of them and she didn't have this information on the study guide. She also said that all of the material is factual, nothing is opinion based or subjective. She explained that she sat a few seats away from Student A but they were not right next to each other. She explained an answer on page 8 and why she answered it the way she did. She mentioned some interactions she had with her professor, who is also her colleague and conversations that were had with Student B, the professor, and other students about the potential Honor Code violation. She clarified the similar answer on page 8 by saying that she was not paying any attention to Student A during the test because she was so pressed for time.

Student B closed by saying that she had no reason to cheat on this exam. She studied a lot and has never cheated on an exam before.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation has not occurred because they studied together a lot and the exam is very factually based. Usually, this amount of similarity would raise suspicion but, based on the factual questions and the answer key, the answers were fairly formulaic.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 30 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Bonnyman  
Clerk