

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 63, Spring 2016
October 20, 2016

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Haihao Liu (clerk), Peter Rizzi, Dessy Akinfenwa, Sofia Yi, Joanne Kim

Ombuds: Carey Wang

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A, Student B, and Student C of going beyond the allowed level of collaboration on a final exam for a graduate level mechanical engineering 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 C's written statement
- Student A's Exam 2
- Student B's Exam 2
- Student C's Exam 2
- Exam 2 Questions
- Lecture Schedule
- OwlSpace Screenshot
- Professor Clarification
- Exam 2 Question 15 Comparison Test Answers
- Witness Statement
- Course Powerpoint Slides

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in violation."

Student B pled "Not in violation."

Student C pled "Not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A opened by reading the professor clarification on the course Honor Code policy and the Honor Code presented on the front of the exam. He mentioned that students were allowed to openly discuss general approaches to exam questions. Student A referred to the PowerPoint slides he used to answer questions 11 and 12. He stated that he and Student B and Student C all used the same PowerPoint slides to answer the questions, causing their answers to be similar. For question 15, Student A stated that he and the

other accused students discussed the general methodology to approach the question, but never shared answers. They all defined the possible terms together, but answered the questions separately. Their similar definitions led to their similar answers for question 15.

Student A then referenced an Owlspace screenshot that stated that all students in the course missed question 12 because they used the wrong equation from the course PowerPoint slides. He also directed Council members to read the witness statement that confirmed that the accused students did not discuss their answers when working together on the exam.

Student B stated that the answers to questions 11 and 12 came from the course PowerPoint slides. He then stated that he and Student A and Student C discussed the approach to question 15 and defined the terms together, but did not share answers at any time.

Student C told Council members that he had pass-failed the course, and had no reason to cheat on this exam. He then stated that the answers to questions 11 and 12 came from the course PowerPoint slides. He also mentioned that he and Student A and Student B defined the terms for question 15 together, but answered all the questions separately.

Student A closed by saying he referenced the course PowerPoints when answering the questions and that he and Student B and Student C used the same general approach to answer question 15, leading them to have similar answers.

Student B closed by saying that they shared resources but never shared answers. Questions 11 and 12 came from the course PowerPoints and question 15 was just a matter of defining terms.

Student C closed by saying he had no motivation to cheat as he had pass-failed the class. He directed Council members to look at the evidence to see how they all answered questions 11, 12, and 15 so similarly.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members did not believe that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because the similar answers of the accused students were thoroughly explained by the course PowerPoint slides and the general way in which they approached question 15.

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, Student B, and Student C “Not In Violation” of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour

Respectfully submitted,
Haihao Liu
Clerk