Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 13-6, Fall 2016
February 2, 2017

Members Present:
Katie Jensen (presiding), Alex Metcalf (clerk), Natalie Swanson, Allie Salter, Adesola Akinfenwa, Reece Rosenthal

Ombuds: Natalie Danckers

Letter of Accusation:
The Honor Council received a letter accusing the students of collaborating for a lower level computer science course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:
- Letter of Accusation
- Witness Statements
- Articles
- Lab Instructions
- Piazza Resources
- Student Code

Plea:
Student A pled "Not In Violation."
Student B pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:
Student A stated that she was wrongfully accused, and said that she and Student B did not work together on this assignment. Student A referenced the letter of accusation, and refuted claims the professor made concerning both the likelihood of plagiarism and the design space available to students. Additionally, the student stated that she had additional evidence that would counter claims made in the letter of accusation. Student A referred to a witness statement submitted by a class TA, which indicated that the TA believed the amount of similarity found was too low to indicate that plagiarism occurred. The student referenced the Honor Council's procedures, as well as websites from other universities, to set a higher bar for code overlap. In the student's view, the code overlap between the assignments submitted by Student A and Student B was too low to cause plagiarism accusations.

Student A presented her test cases, and referenced statements. Additionally, she mentioned that she would bring up evidence to refute the code submission times. Student A then explained how the assignment worked, and walked the Honor Council through her code, in exhaustive detail.

In response to questioning, Student A stated that she and Student B attended TA sessions once or twice a week, and sat at the same table. However, Student A stated that she did not work with Student B outside of the TA sessions.

Student B began her opening statement by walking the Council through her code and responding to the claims made in the letter of accusation. Student B said that the letter of accusation used forceful language to present the cases, which "unjustly pins the students accused in a guilty state", and claimed that the accusation was unjust and unfair. After discussing the letter of accusation, Student B referenced various statements submitted. These statements support Student B's claim that she did not collaborate with Student A. Continuing her opening statement, Student B walked the Council through the assignment specifications, as documented in the evidence already submitted.

After explaining the assignment, Student B ran the program to demonstrate the functionality of it. She then shifted to a refutation of the program used by the professor to detect similar pieces of code. During the course of this statement, Student B read aloud from a statement submitted by a class TA. This statement was submitted in the evidence before the hearing began, and supported the student's point of view.

Student B proceeded to walk the Council through her code, explaining each function in depth, frequently reading aloud from the statement submitted by the TA, posts on the class website, or the assignment itself. This explanation was in exhaustive detail, covering functions not mentioned in the letter of accusation, as well as functions that the professor specifically identified as suspicious.

Finally, Student B brought up the commit history of her code. She stated that students often made repeated commits shortly before the assignment deadline, and her commit behavior was not unusual. She referenced, and read aloud, testimony. This testimony indicated that Student A and Student B were not working together shortly before the assignment was due, and had been submitted by the student before thearing. Student B again refuted the accusations made by the professor.

Before making her closing statement, Student A clarified an earlier question, and acknowledged a possibility that local commits may not be reflected in the sever commits. In her closing statement, Student A reiterated that the case presented by the students was convincing. She stated that the similarities were produced through methods entirely within the class Honor Code, and closed by running each student's code side by side to demonstrate the differences between them.

Student B's closing statement consisted of a restatement of her earlier points. In specific, she disagreed with the professor's accusation, and remarked that the letter of accusation submitted by the professor is unjust and unfair.

Verdict Deliberations:
Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence did not support that a violation occurred because the students provided explanations for each similarity.

Vote #1: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that a violation occurred?
Yes: 0
No: 6
Abstentions: 0

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"
Yes: 0
No: 6
Abstentions: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"
Yes: 0
No: 6
Abstentions: 0

Decision:
The Honor Council thus finds both students "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Metcalf
Clerk