

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 8, Fall 2016
January 22, 2017

Members Present:

Katie Jensen (presiding), Alex Metcalf (clerk), Ryan Carlson, Ellen Diemert, Sofia Yi, Ike Arjmand

Ombuds: Sam Morimoto

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of collaborating on an exam for a lower level biochemistry course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Written statements
- Exam keys
- Email chains
- Exam topics
- Study guides
- Sample tests
- Syllabus
- Student tests
- Grade clarification

Plea:

Student A pled “Not In Violation”

Student B pled “Not In Violation”

Testimony:

Student A stated that she did not take the exam with Student B, and that she and Student B spent approximately 10 hours a week studying for the exams and building a study guide. According to Student A, there was no substantial contact between Student A and Student B concerning the exam. Student A stated that she did not exceed the time allotted on the exam. 90% of Student A’s exam was based on the study guides, based on her testimony. Student A stated that she did not refer to the study guides she had created while taking the exam.

Student A then called in a witness. This witness is a friend of Student A, who stated that she watched a movie in another room with Student A’s phone while Student A took the exam alone and without notes.

Student B stated she and Student A had studied together in a group for this class. According to Student B, the group met most days to compile notes, watch online

tutorials, and study information. In response to questions, Student B stated that she took an appropriate amount of time for the exam, took it in her room, and had no contact with other students. She said she did not have access to the study guide while taking the exam. Student B stated she was sick the day after completing the exam, and therefore waited to submit until a day later. Student B said she did not study extensively with the other student for this exam, due the travel commitment of Student A, but both students used the study guide. The student stated that this accusation was likely the result of the same TA grading both exams. Student B stated that she studied the exam less with Student A for the second exam in the class, as opposed to the first.

Student B then called in a witness. This witness was the roommate of Student B, and stated Student B took the exam alone. According to the witness, Student B had no contact with anyone, used no materials, and took the exam within the allotted time. The witness discussed the study groups that the students took part in. The groups were useful for memorization and studying.

Upon further questioning, Student A then stated that she memorized material in the following way: the students in the study group would review material for each topic question on the exam, with a rotation of students serving as teachers. Leading up to the exam in question, Student A stated that she had to study on her own, due to travel commitments, but referred to the google doc built by the student study group. This was contrasted to the first exam, where the student said the group studied together. However, there are much stronger similarities between the second exams, as opposed to the first. When asked about this, Student A stated the group studied much more intently for the second exam.

In her closing statement, Student A stated she provided as much information as possible for the Council's use.

Student B stated that while Student A was not physically present for the study groups, the study guides were the same, and there were still opportunities for the students to test each other on their knowledge.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members discussed the likelihood of collaboration. While both answers had very similar components, these components came from the study guide submitted by the students. However, the similarities were extensive, and use of the study guide was not allowed on the exam itself. Council discussion focused on the similarities in both the multiple choice answers and the written responses.

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

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A and Student B committed the violation. Given the nature of the violation, the Council saw no reason to find either student “Not In Violation”.

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is “In Violation?”

Yes: 6
 No: 0
 Abstentions: 0

Penalty Deliberations:

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members chose to not aggravate or mitigate, based on the evidence presented.

Council members agreed that both students should receive the same penalty, and assigned a penalty based on the CPS.

Vote #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: 0
 F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 0
 F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 0
 F in the course: 6
 3 letter grade reduction: 0
 2 letter grade reduction: 0
 1 letter grade reduction: 0
 Letter of Reprimand 0
 Abstentions: 0

Vote #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension: 0
 F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension: 0
 F in the course and 1 semester of suspension: 0
 F in the course: 6
 3 letter grade reduction: 0
 2 letter grade reduction: 0
 1 letter grade reduction: 0
 Letter of Reprimand 0
 Abstentions: 0

Decision:

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that they receive an F in the course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 75 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Metcalf
Clerk