

Abstract of the Honor Council

Case #6-3, Fall 2020

November 17, 2020

Members Present:

Sam Holloway (presiding), Caroline Brehm (clerk), Adam Zawierucha, William Wang, Sriya Kakarla, and Kamal Tijana

Ombuds: Andrew Graziano

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A and B of unauthorized collaboration on a project for a lower level CAAM course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's and B's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Project Description
- Copy of Student A's and B's project
- Random student sample
- Materials from lecture
- RLA testimony
- Email correspondence with an RLA
- Zoom recording of Student A and B collaborating
- Student A's and B's code from a separate project

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Student B pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A began her testimony by stating that all of the code she submitted was her own work and that she never copied code from Student B. She said she did collaborate with Student B on the project, but since this project was unpledged, this collaboration was allowed. Student A mentioned that both her and Student B attended the same RLA session and were in the same RLA group. While completing the project, Student A drew heavily from RLA sessions and lecture notes, which is why some areas of her code have the same variables and functions as Student B's code. Student A then directly compared class materials to the suspicious sections of

her code. Student A concluded by saying she did not copy code, and the collaboration between Student A and B was completely within the bounds of the course Honor Code.

Student B began by stating she did collaborate with Student A, but the collaboration did not rise to the level of plagiarism. Student B pointed out that the course syllabus stated that only copying was not permitted on unpledged projects, so she did not commit a violation. She then showed the Council screenshots of suspicious areas of code that were derived from pseudocode given in the project description. Student B also pointed out how other areas of codes were derived from information given on the professor's Zoom calls or given in the RLA session both students attended. Student B also showed the Council a video of her collaborating on the project with Student A, and she asserted that all of the collaboration done fell within the bounds of the Honor Code. Student B concluded by stating her code was her own work, and her collaboration with Student A did not constitute an Honor Code violation.

Students A and B called a witness, who was their RLA for the project. The RLA stated they thought the collaboration between Student A and B did not violate the Honor Code. The RLA said that Student A and B were very open with them and frequently asked questions over email and during office hours. The RLA said that even though their code has similar functionality, this does not mean unauthorized collaboration occurred. The RLA concluded by saying that they provided chunks of code to Students A and B, and this provided code could have led to the similarities in the students' code.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur. The Honor Council believes the collaboration between Student A and B fell within the bounds of the course honor code.

The Council determined that the similarities in Student A's and B's code most likely arose from authorized collaboration and help from their RLA and lecture materials. Additionally, the Council found the RLA's testimony compelling and concluded that the students likely did not copy code and did not violate the course honor code.

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: 1 hour and 21 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Brehm

Clerk