

Abstract of the Honor Council

Case 9, Fall 2020

December 10, 2020

Members Present:

Izzie Karohl (presiding), Caroline Brehm (clerk), Virginia Xie, William Wang, Syed Shams, and Adam Zawierucha

Ombuds: Oeishi Banerjee

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized collaboration on an exam for a lower level CHEM 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
- Course syllabus
- Instructions for exam
- Student A's full exam
- Student B's full exam
- Question with key and students answers
- Canvas Log
- 15 Random samples
- Student A's study guide

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation."

Testimony:

Student A began his testimony by stating that he did not violate the Honor Code and that the similarities between his exam and Student B's exam was due to them studying together. The student mentioned that he and Student B created a study guide together in preparation for the exam, but Student A maintained that they took their exams in separate rooms. Student A then referenced the study guide, saying the students worked on math problems similar to an accused question, which is why their answer was so similar. Student A pointed out how no other answers between his and Student B's exams are as similar and mentioned that he started his exam an hour after Student B, so it would not have been advantageous for them to cheat. Student A added that it would not make sense for them to cheat since they missed a lot of different multiple choice

questions and had very different free response questions. Student A concluded by reiterating that he did not cheat, which is evidenced by how different their overall exams were.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur because there was not enough evidence to suggest that it was more likely than not that exam answers arose unauthorized collaboration. The Council determined that the similarities on the question could have arisen from studying together. Some Council members noted that the fact that students attempted the question with a distinct answer at around the same time was suspicious, but did not find this evidence substantial enough to reach the preponderance standard. The Council also noted that several student samples contained similar errors and question structure to Student A's, which further suggests that Student A and Student B could have arrived at their answers independently.

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 "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour and 5 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Brehm
Clerk