

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 12-5, Fall 2020**  
**March 3, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Sam Holloway (presiding), Matey Yanakiev (clerk), Emily Wang, Hannah Dryer, Caroline Brehm, and Sriya Kakarla

**Ombuds:** Oeishi Banerjee

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A, B, and C of impermissible collaboration on an unpledged assignment in a lower level CAAM course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A, B, and C's written statements
- Course syllabus
- Students' accused codes
- Project instructions (2x pdf)
- RLA notes (2x jpg)
- 10 random code samples
- RLA and professor statements (x3)
- Additional RLA materials (x6)
- Student A's conversation with RLA (x32 screenshots total)
- Student A's RLA notes
- Student A's code in progress (x3 files + x3 additional files)
- Relevant lecture materials (x4)

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

Student B pled "Not In Violation."

Student C pled "Not In Violation."

**Testimony:**

*Student A:*

Student A explained that her code was an expansion upon a previous project completed in the class. For the accused submission, she had collaborated with Student B extensively but always as permissible according to the class's Honor Code guidelines. Students A and B had the same RLA, hereafter "RLA A."

RLA A would provide very detailed, sometimes line-by-line feedback to Student A on her code. Likewise, Student B would often request that Student A ask RLA A about specific

errors in her (Student B's) code. Therefore, Student A served as an intermediary between RLA A and Student B. Student A also shared RLA A's slides with Student B.

Student A explained that the large amount of legitimately shared information between her and Student B—RLA notes and specific corrections; code and pseudocode drawn from the project instructions—meant that the two students essentially began with much of the code given and primarily had to hardcode specific numerical values into the functions to produce the right output. RLA A had offered especially detailed help on the driver function, further justifying the similarities between the two students' submissions.

Student A stated that she had had only had minimal interaction with Student C, answering her questions in a large course group chat and attending Zoom group work sessions with her. Student A did not believe she screenshared her code at these sessions.

*Student B:*

Student B had had no prior contact with Student C before the accusation.

Student B said that she had collaborated with Student A, and, with substantial help from RLA A, the two students' codes were similar. Nevertheless, Student B never saw Student A's code. The two worked over the phone and on Zoom but without ever sharing their screens. Students A and B began with the sample code given in the project PDF and received extensive advice from RLA A how to structure the driver function.

Student B said she was unable to attend any of the larger group work session and therefore collaborated exclusively with Student A. Whenever Student B hit an error in her code, she would read out both the error message and its corresponding line of code to Student A, who would then contact RLA A for help.

*Student C:*

Student C said she did not know Student B prior to the accusation. She said she did know Student A because she had worked with her during the group work sessions, including collaborating on the accused project, as permissible under the class Honor Code. Student A and Student C had worked over Zoom; Student C does not remember whether they shared screens. Student C also received help from her RLA, hereafter "RLA B."

In a written statement submitted to the Council, RLA B indicated Student C should not be considered in violation since the accused version of the code was a late submission, which the student had personally requested to be left ungraded in favor of an earlier version.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation had not occurred.

Despite substantial similarities between the three students' codes, the Council deferred to the written expert testimony of the two RLAs:

- 1) Student C's accused code was a later, ungraded submission and therefore not subject to an Honor Council accusation in the course.
- 2) Student A and B's codes, while very similar, were within an acceptable margin for the project in question, especially since, on unpledged assignments, the course is "very collaborative."

Consequently, no Honor Code violation could be established.

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 Students A, B, and C "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Matey Yanakiev

Clerk