

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 27, Spring 2021
April 20, 2021

Members Present:

Izzie Karohl (presiding), Hannah Dryer (clerk), Andrew Barber, Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia, Rohit Chouhan, Emily Wang, and Matey Yanakiev (observing)

Ombuds: Dylan Glenn

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Students A, B, C, and D of collaborating on an open note/open book exam for an upper level MECH course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A, B, C, and D's written statements
- Course syllabus
- Accused student exams
- Exam instructions
- Exam answer keys
- Relevant lecture materials
- Random student samples (x10)
- Witness statements (x2)
- Student A, B, C, and D's notes used on exam
- Student A, B, C, and D's schedules
- Course homework solutions
- Professor clarification

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Student C pled "Not in Violation."

Student D pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A:

Student A explained that he, along with the other accused students, often studied together and received tutoring together from athletic department for the majority of their courses. He also stated that the group met often to work on homework in their shared classes. Student A said that throughout the semester, the students studied together for the course and before the exam, created a study sheet together. He claimed the similar material written on their exams was attributable to studying the same material together at the same times.

Student A said he used his study guide on the exam as it was open book and open note. He showed the Council his schedule and explained that he was given extra time on the exam. However, even with this extra time, he was unable to find any three hour slot to complete the exam besides the one ending near the deadline, so he did not have time to send information about the exam to the other accused students. His roommates provided witness testimony stating that he was not in contact with anyone during the exam and did not have an electronic device on his person.

Student A then went through each answer on the exam. He showed the Council which notes he used for each question and explained his thought process throughout the exam. He also showed where the sample submissions had similar errors on the test.

Student B:

Student B explained that each accused student often worked together in this class by doing homework, creating study guides, and preparing for exams together. Prior to taking the exam, Student B said the group went over each homework assignment and listed the concepts covered by each question in the homework so that they would know which homework problems to look at during the open-note exam. Student B said that this study sheet is what he used when taking the exam.

Student B then showed the Council which resources he used to get to his solutions on his exam. He mentioned where there were similar mistakes in sample exams. Additionally, he showed the Council part of a lecture in which the professor went over common mistakes from the exam, and some of his mistakes were mentioned as common in this lecture. Finally, Student B said that he and the other accused students all had very similar schedules due to shared athletic practices and classes, which is why they all took the exam during the same time frame.

Student C:

Student C first explained that he took the exam on his own, without his phone, and did not have contact with any other students. He showed the Council his schedule and explained that he took the exam at the time he did because he had athletic practices and classes during the rest of his day.

Student C showed the Council which resources he used during the exam on each question and explained his rationale. He also showed the aforementioned clip from lecture in which the professor said that a mistake he had made was a common issue. He explained that one of the mistakes he made was due to a lack of time and a desire to get partial credit on the question, knowing that it wasn't completely right. Finally, he showed a few differences in the mistakes that he and the other accused students made on the exam.

Student D:

Student D first explained that he had a very busy schedule over the 48 hours that the exam was open. He said that he had a lot of work, classes, and practices, so he took the exam towards the end of the 48 hours. He did most of his studying the day before the

exam, knowing that it was an open-note test. Student D said he did some of the review and homework problems, as well as made a study sheet. On the day of the exam, he stated that he did as much studying as he could and began the test at the last possible moment to optimize his study time.

Student D showed the Council all of the resources he used during the exam and for which questions. He explained where he got his variable names from previous assignments. He detailed that many of the errors he made were also made by other students in the class, shown in the sample submissions collected.

Verdict Deliberations:

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

Each student gave a detailed testimony explaining where they got their answers from during the exam. Some of the students used different resources for the same questions. Considering the exam was open-note and the students made a study guide together, showing them what problems to look at for particular concepts, it made sense that they would have used nearly the same sources for the questions, consequently having similar responses. The students also had different answers for some of the questions on the exam.

Furthermore, Council members agreed that taking an exam in the final hours before it was due is not suspicious as it is a common practice. Council members also believed that the similar time slot was a plausible result of similar athletic and class schedules.

Thus, the Council ultimately concluded that a preponderance of the evidence did not support that a violation had occurred.

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, C, and D “Not In Violation” of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours and 45 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
 Hannah Dryer
 Clerk