

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 34, Spring 2023**  
**4/23/23**

**Members Present:**

Pedro Ribeiro (presiding), Simon Yellen (clerk), Andrew Barber, Kamal Tijani, Neha Kohli, [Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia](#)

**Ombuds:** Leah Nutkis

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration during 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
- Blank Exam
- Exam Key
- Student A's grade exam
- Student B's graded exam
- Student A's ungraded exam
- Student B's ungraded exam
- Random samples
- Student A's scratch paper
- Student B's scratch paper
- Student A's submitted evidence
- Student B's submitted evidence
- Picture of exam room
- Video testimony explaining exam by a CHEM professor(not accuser)
- Testimony from two TAs

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

**Testimony:**

The TAs witnessed Student A and Student B passing papers and looking at each other's areas during an exam. The accused students explained that these actions could be easily explained by the fact that they used the desk between them to store scratch paper that they consulted. They emphasized that they only consulted their own scratch paper. The TAs were not near enough to the accused students to discern exactly what occurred.

**Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that there wasn't preponderance of the evidence supporting that a violation occurred because of the differences in Student A's and Student B's exams. While their correct answers were similar, there were only so many ways to answer any given question. None of the similarities in their wrong answers stood out as unusual and every given mistake was made by at least one of the students whose exams were submitted as random samples. While Student A and Student B put himself in a situation where a risk of cheating was higher due to the proximity of their scratch paper, there is not a preponderance of evidence to suggest that anything improper occurred between the two.

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

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

Council members also discussed whether or not a case like this should have been dropped before a hearing due to the importance of eyewitness testimony in this instance. While the council members appreciate the stress that follows an Honor Code accusation and the anxiety the process creates, situations of ambiguity like this one highlight the importance and benefit of a student-composed, fact-finding group in adjudicating issues of academic integrity.

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Student A and Student B "Not In Violation" of the Honor Code.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 2 hours.

Respectfully submitted,  
Simon Yellen  
Clerk