

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 1, Fall 2023
November 14, 2023

Members Present:

Kamal Tijani (presiding), McKenzie Jameson (clerk), Naidhruv Ananth Iyer (clerk observing), Rodolfo Gutierrez-Garcia, Kofo Thomas, Riya Yarlagadda, Rachel Kilgard (observing), and Gerald Lu (observing)

Ombuds: Nevaeh Hicks

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of unauthorized collaboration on an assignment for a lower-level COMP 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
- Class syllabus
- Assignment instructions and attachments
- Student A's assignment
- Student B's assignment
- Random samples
- Student-submitted videos of document revision history

Plea:

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

Testimony:

Student A began by stating that the course syllabus collaboration policy permitted discussion of assignment-specific concepts at a high level. They then discussed how they had worked on the assignment in the same room as Student B and used a whiteboard to brainstorm and diagram broad ideas about what elements they would need to include in their individual written strategies. Student A clarified that, after the concept discussion at the board, both they and Student B wrote each section of their assignments individually and in silence, citing the provided videos of revision history to show that no lines of text had been copied or pasted. Student A claimed that the similarity in syntax between their assignment and that of Student B should be attributed to the fact that they both used the professor's provided template as a guide, only filling in the blanks for the relevant objects.

Student B recounted the same high-level brainstorming discussion and reiterated that both students typed up their assignments individually without any further conversation during that time. They also emphasized the fact that the professor taught a specific syntax, and thus Student A and Student B agreed that it would be best to copy and paste the format from the professor's provided document and simply make the necessary changes relevant to the assignment. Student B concluded by stating that though they believed the course collaboration policy to be somewhat contradictory, they did not think that their high-level discussion constituted an Honor Code violation.

Witness Statement

Student C stated that they were in the same room as Student A and Student B working on an unrelated assignment. Student C attested to the fact that the other two students had a conceptual brainstorming discussion and drew diagrams on the whiteboard before returning to their computers to individually type up their assignments without communicating any further during that time. They reiterated that Student A and Student B discussed overarching ideas rather than specific details regarding how to complete the assignment.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur because the similarity between Student A's and Student B's assignments could be easily explained by their use of the professor's template. Further, Council members determined that the wording of the syllabus collaboration policy permitted the type of high-level, assignment-specific discussion that the students described. Council members also discussed that the differing lengths between the students' assignments showed that they did not write identical cases in their individual strategies.

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

Yes: 0
 No: 5+2
 Abstentions: 1

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 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
 McKenzie Jameson
 Clerk