

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 24, Spring 2010**  
**15<sup>th</sup> April, 2010**

**Members Present:**

Hillary Baker-Jennings (presiding), Adnan Poonawala (clerk), Travis Smith, Trey Burns, Andrew Briggs, James Hannah, Kern Vijayvargiya, Jeff Worne, Kelsey Zotnick

**Ombuds:** Vivian Ban

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing two students of collaborating on an exam in an Upper level science course.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's Written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Second Midterm Exam
- Student A's Second Midterm Exam
- Student B's Second Midterm Exam
- Solutions to Second Midterm Exam
- Preparatory Notes for Second Exam
- Document submitted by Student A
- Deposition from Student A's father
- Deposition from BIOC chair
- Second Exam from 2009
- Study questions and notes
- Student A's study notes
- Student B's study notes
- Deposition from classmate
- Sample Exams

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in violation"

**Testimony:**

The testimony phase began with Student A reading a document submitted by her to the council. The document highlighted the details of the alleged violation. The student explained that she was stunned by the violation and walked the council through the reasoning and logic behind each question as answered by Student A. The Student explained that she concluded after the investigative meeting that Student B may have taken and copied her exam. She explained that she had submitted her exam in the submission box which was not being monitored. She especially pointed to the fact that

both her and Student B's exam were found together in the submission box. Student B said that her exam had been turned in early to the professor's mailbox, which was supported by a witness deposition. A witness brought in by the student testified to the oddity in one question where numbers that were copied, and were a result of some calculation on Student A's part but the same numbers in Student B's assignment did not match the calculations done in Student B's exam. Also student B had a spelling error in her exam which the witness claimed could only be copied over through plagiarism and was not at all common. Student A said that the same misspelling appeared in her notes, so it was a common mistake for her. The witness also pointed out that the class was large and the probability of two particular exams together in the submission box is small. The student explained that she knows student B from several semesters and had worked with him in several classes in previous semesters. Student A said that she had worked on the exam alone at her house, and a deposition from Student A's roommate confirmed that the exam stayed at the house until Monday.

### **Verdict Deliberations:**

During verdict deliberations the council felt unanimously that the problems highlighted by the professors were too similar to ignore. Similarity in spelling errors and the incredibly similar wording proved that a violation had occurred.

Straw Poll #1: Is there clear and convincing evidence that a violation occurred?

Yes: 9  
No: 0  
Abstentions: 0

The council then discussed whether or not Student A was in violation. Most members felt that there was not clear and convincing evidence to find Student A in violation, as she provided a good explanation as to how and why she reached the answers in her exam. It was also pointed out that given the submission timeline it would not be possible for Student A to have copied from Student B or for them to have collaborated. Student A also used terms that were not discussed in class proving that she could not have copied from another student in the class. Also, on one problem Student B provided an answer that was not consistent with her earlier work, but was the same as Student A's exam. One council member did raise the suggestion that Student A may have given her exam to be copied by Student B, but there was no clear and convincing evidence on the matter.

Straw Poll #2: Is there clear and convincing evidence that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 0  
No: 9  
Abstentions: 0

Straw Polls #1 and #2 made binding.

The Honor Council thus finds Student A “Not In Violation” of the Honor Code

Time of testimony and deliberations:

1:26:25

Respectfully submitted,

Adnan Poonawala

Clerk