

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 45, Spring 2012
Saturday, April 21, 2012

Members Present:

Trey Burns(presiding), Clinton Willbanks (clerk), Andres Rodela, Isabella Lelogeais, John King, Mick Pryor, Johnny Lam, Andrew Austin, Ed Tsai, Nick Uhm (observing), Katie Stewart

Ombuds: Sarah Fraiser

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of using unauthorized aid on a homework assignment for an upper level Bioengineering course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Assignment prompt
- Student A's assignment
- Assignment solutions
- Sample homeworks from class
- Student A's other homeworks
- Student A's relevant notes

Plea:

Student A pled "not in violation"

Testimony:

In her opening statement, Student A asserted that the allegations were false because her methods and procedures could be found from class notes and the textbook. Her methods for completing her homework include using her textbook, including pictorial examples and step-by-step instructions for completing similar problems. Because the problems in the book mirror the homework assignment and answer key, her results will contain many striking similarities to the answer key. Her formatting was derived from the book and thus looked very similar to the answer key.

Council members was asked why the work of other students in the class involved more work than Student A used to reach her answers. Student A felt she used simpler methods found in the textbook to reach the same conclusion. She pointed several examples within the book that contain her methods for solving the problems. A council member asked why the diagrams were so similar. Student A responded pointed out similar diagrams within the book and walked the council through her procedure. Other students work also

contained similar diagrams, which could come from their academic backgrounds and previous classes. She walked the council through several problems from the homework to demonstrated with specific pages how, with the textbook and fundamental problems, her answers could be found without the use of unauthorized aid. Council members asked how she went about completing her homework. She worked alone usually, without the use of the answer key. Most of her time is spent researching in the book to find examples for the homework. She used examples within the book to demonstrate how so solve specific questions on the homework council members asked her to solve. Diagrams found in the textbook could also be found in professor's lecture notes in PowerPoint.

In her closing statement, she reminded the council that her answers were similar in format to the answer key because both sets were derived her format from the textbook. The problems in the homework were fundamental problems and therefore are likely to use similar formats across textbooks, answer keys, and homeworks. She discussed the irrationality of cheating on a small assignment rather than just get a wrong answer.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur because of her demonstration through testimony of her ability, with the textbook, to solve her homework problems.

Council members thought because of the scratch work brought in and the diagrams found in the book it is unlikely a violation occurred. Other students had similar diagrams that could be found in the textbook. Her explanations during testimony demonstrated her knowledge of the subject. She walked us through the problems with the textbook. Furthermore, she has studied in a similar fashion for previous assignments, using her textbooks and fundamental problems to reach her solution.

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

Yes: 0
 No: 9
 Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Student A committed the violation.

No further discussion.

Decision:

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 30 Minutes

Respectfully submitted,
 Clinton Willbanks
 Clerk