

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 32, Spring 2014
2/27/14

Members Present:

Isabela Lelogeais (presiding), Hurst Williamson (clerk), Josiah Grace, Parker Dalton, Likeleli Seithleko, Allen Hu, Mitch Massey, Katherine Stewart, Seth Lauer, Michael Zeringue (observing),

Ombuds: Gabe Breternitz

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of unauthorized collaboration for a lower level chemistry course.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Course Syllabus
- Lab Assignment
- Student A's Lab Report
- Student B's Lab Report
- Sample Lab Partner Reports
- Email Correspondence
- Email Sent from Student A to Student B
- Text Message Correspondence

Plea:

Student A pled "Not In Violation."
Student B pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:

In her opening statement Student A said that she and Student B worked separately on the assignment in question, but did communicate when both students ran into difficulty. Student A said that she came up with all of her answers for the assignment on her own and that she submitted her own work. Student A said that she and Student B met one final time to go over the assignment one last time before submitting it, but worked on separate computers. Student A said that she asked Student B to send Student A her report for formatting, immediately after which Student A deleted Student B's answers so that Student A could do the assignment on her own. Student A said that she and Student B probably had similar answers for the assignment because they had studied and collaborated together within the constraints of the course.

In her opening statement Student B said that she turned in her own work. Student B said that Student A did ask for Student B's assignment in order to type up her

assignment because Student A thought her own work was too messy to turn in. Student B said that she barely changed her answers during her last meeting with Student A. Student B said that she did remember Student A having her hand-written lab report with her during their last meeting and believed that Student A referenced her own work during their meeting. Student B said that she and Student A know each other well, stating that they were in the same O-Week group.

In her closing statement Student A said that she and Student B's answers were similar because they studied together before submitting their own work for the final copy of the assignment.

In her closing statement Student B said that she submitted her own report and that she only sent her report to Student A so that she could access the format for the assignment.

Verdict Deliberations:

Some Council members did not believe that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation occurred because Student A and Student B clearly came to their meetings with their own work, and those Council members believed that Student A and Student B completed their final submission on their own. Some Council members however, believed that the two assignments were too similar and were thus, plagiarized off of one another. There was a discussion as to whether the violation in question was plagiarism, a one-sided violation that is covered in all courses by the Rice Honor Code, or unauthorized collaboration, a two-sided violation that is specifically under the jurisdiction of the course. All Council members believed that the course Honor Code policy was poorly constructed and that there was a vague description of what amount of collaboration was allowed for the course.

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

Yes: 4

No: 5

Abstentions: 0

Decision:

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

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 02:13:00

Respectfully submitted,
Hurst Williamson
Clerk