

**Abstract of the Honor Council**  
**Case 20, Fall 2016**  
**3/5/17**

**Members Present:**

Katie Jensen (presiding), Alex Metcalf (clerk), Joanne Kim, Ike Arjmand, Sofia Yi, Peter Rizzi

**Ombuds:** Sam Morimoto

**Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A and Student B of collaborating on an exam for an upper level PSYC course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

**Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student A's Canvas activity logs
- Student B's Canvas activity logs
- Student A's Exam
- Student B's Exam
- Exam answer key
- Relevant book pages to exam questions
- Relevant course slides to exam questions
- Witness statement for Student A
- Witness statement for Student B
- Email between professor and Student B
- Syllabus
- Images of Student B's home
- Student study guide
- Document comparing the exams of Student A and Student B
- Exam Instructions

**Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation."

Student B pled "Not in Violation."

**Testimony:**

Student A stated that she did not use any unauthorized aid on the exam, nor did she work with Student B (who was home at the time). Student A stated that she remembered content from the textbook and her class notes verbatim, and did not reference the notes or the book while taking the exam. Student A stated that she and Student B studied together and made a review sheet together. She stated that they both studied this review sheet in preparation for the exam.

Additionally, Student A called in two witnesses. These witnesses stated that Student A took the exam alone, without a phone, resources, or notes in her room at home. Both witnesses recalled checking in on Student A as she was taking the exam as they waited for her to complete her work before going out for dinner. Neither witness saw any evidence of Student A studying for this exam.

Student B stated that she did not commit a violation, as she took the exam back home, and Student A was still at Rice. According to Student B, the professor for the class had lectures based on the book, which explained the similarity between the answers of Student B and the textbook. The student stated that she copied information directly from the slides into her notes, before memorizing the information in her notes. The student's log of the exam contained frequent logging on and off, which the student explained by noting the poor quality of the internet at her house.

In Student A's closing statement, she summarized the evidence, before closing by stating that she did not commit a violation of the Honor Code. Student B closed by stating that she did not commit a violation of the Honor Code.

### **Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members started discussion by noting that nearly all of the short answer exam questions had significant similarities, but not all of these answers were in the study guide or notes or course textbook or class slides verbatim. On the whole, Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did occur due to the similarities between the exams that could not be explained by the students' course notes or shared study guide.

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

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

The Council then discussed whether or not Students A and B committed the violation. Council members saw no reason to decide otherwise.

Vote #2: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student A is "In Violation?"

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

Vote #3: Does a preponderance of the evidence support that Student B is "In Violation?"

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstentions: 0

### **Penalty Deliberations:**

Council members opened by discussing mitigating circumstances. Council members saw no reason to mitigate or aggravate.

The CPS penalty, based on the weight of the exam, calls for an F in the course. Had no prior violations occurred, all council members believed that both students deserved the same penalty of an F in the course. However, Student A had a previous violation, and had received an F in the course for that violation. Council members believed that the previous violation indicated Student A should receive an increased penalty due to their repeated violation of the Rice Honor Code.

Vote #4: What is the appropriate penalty for Student B?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	0
F in the course:	6
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

Vote #5: What is the appropriate penalty for Student A?

F in the course and 3 semesters of suspension:	0
F in the course and 2 semesters of suspension:	4
F in the course and 1 semester of suspension:	2
F in the course:	0
3 letter grade reduction:	0
2 letter grade reduction:	0
1 letter grade reduction:	0
Letter of Reprimand	0
Abstentions:	0

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Students A and B “In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends that Student A receive an F in the course and two semesters of suspension, and Student B receive an F in the course.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 55 minutes

Respectfully submitted,  
Alex Metcalf  
Clerk