

Abstract of the Honor Council
Case 47-3, Spring 2020
June 13, 2020

Members Present:

Sam Holloway (presiding), Matey Yanakiev (clerk), Hannah Dryer, Diego Casanova, Emily Wang, and William Wang

Ombuds: Laura Li

Letter of Accusation:

The Honor Council received a letter accusing Student A of accessing course materials on Canvas during two closed-note exams for a lower-level ECON course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

Evidence Submitted:

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Course syllabus
- Course materials (20 PDF files)
- Professor and OIT clarifications (6 PDF files)
- Student exam responses, as submitted on Canvas (2 files, 1 for each exam)
- Student-submitted images of notes, allegedly taken by students' father (4 files)
- Student-submitted screenshots (2 files)
- Class final exam PDF
- Class midterm #2 exam PDF
- Final exam logistics PDF
- List of Inappropriate URLs Visited During Exam (key to match file IDs to file names)
- Midterm #2 logistics PDF
- Full student Canvas access record in the hours surrounding each exam
- Written testimony from the student's father (PDF)
- Student's filtered Canvas activity during each exam

Plea:

Student A pled "Not In Violation."

Testimony:

The student testified that while completing these two exams, he removed all electronic devices from his room, except his laptop—which automatically shuts down after left unused 15 minutes. Since the student printed off the exams to work, the laptop shut down, leaving the student with no active device from which to access Canvas.

Both times, however, while the student was completing the exams, the student's father was simultaneously accessing the Canvas course materials for the class out of personal curiosity for the subject matter on his child's iPad. The student confirmed his father knew

the iPad's passcode and provided pictures of his father's notes on the course materials, both digital and handwritten. (The digital notes were timestamped with a time during the exam.)

The student's father was then called in to testify.

The father testified he had used his child's iPad during both exams, which explained both the Canvas timestamps of file access and the student having no access to the device. Even before the exams, the father and the student had had discussions about the class materials with his child since the course subject intersected with the father's professional interests. These conversations continued even after the exams but never took place during the exams. The father confirmed that as he read, he would take notes on the iPad and on paper in his personal notebooks—of which the Council had screenshots for both exams.

These two instances were not the only times in which the father had accessed the class materials, but because his child's iPad was generally not free, the student said it made sense that the father took advantage of the opportunity while his child was taking his exams.

Verdict Deliberations:

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur for the following reasons:

1. The timestamp(s) of the digital notes the father had taken coincided with the timestamps of files being accessed.
2. The content of the father's notes was consistent with the file he was allegedly looking at that time, as determined by timestamp comparison.
3. The unfiltered log of Canvas activity on the student's account confirmed the access was from an iOS device, consistent with the father's and the student's testimony that the files were accessed from an iPad.
4. Lastly, the Council considered it valuable that the student had initially had his father testify at the investigative meeting, before there could have been any opportunity for the student to explain the contents and the nature of the accusation to his father. (Unfortunately, the video of the original testimony at the IM was lost, but the Chair who was present on both occasions confirmed the father's testimony at the hearing was entirely consistent with what he had said at the IM.)

Ultimately, the Council decided that the evidence more strongly suggested the student's father—as opposed to the student himself—had accessed the course materials on Canvas under the student's account during both exams. Therefore, the Council concluded no violation had occurred.

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

Yes: 0

No: 6

Abstentions: 0

Decision:

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

Time of testimony and deliberations: 40 minutes

Respectfully submitted,
Matey Yanakiev
Clerk