

## **Abstract of the Honor Council**

**Case #48-1, Spring 2020**

**September 26, 2020**

### **Members Present:**

Ricky Robinson (presiding), Joy Wang (clerk), Emily Wang, Zac Zalles, Rishab Ramapriyan, William Wang, Max Slotnik (observing), Andrew Barber (observing), and Sriya Kakarla (observing)

**Ombuds:** Eliot Behr

### **Letter of Accusation:**

The Honor Council received a letter accusing students A, B, and C of having codes that are very similar on a pledged project for a lower level CAAM course. The Chair read the Letter of Accusation aloud in full.

### **Evidence Submitted:**

- Letter of Accusation
- Student A's written statement
- Student B's written statement
- Student C's written statement
- Course Lecture materials
- Student sample submissions from other students in the class
- RLA testimony
- Comparison files for the project of each student
- Course syllabus
- Files of each student's project
- Pdf of Project instructions
- Student submitted evidence: Shape Driver (student C past project sample), Contact phone number, CAAM slides, Student C phone and text log, Basic Skills Practice Loops, Bridge driver (student C past project).

### **Plea:**

Student A pled "Not in Violation".

Student B pled "Not in Violation"

Student C pled "Not in Violation"

### **Testimony:**

**Student A:** Student A began by referencing RLA testimony. The RLA testimony highlights substantial difference between individual codes. They state that the students likely did not cheat and that the approach taken is direct, straightforward, and indicative of basic knowledge of MATLAB. The RLA also said the random samples of two other students are very alike to project code of the accused, and that five other random samples have similar aspects as well. Student A pointed out that there were very few ways to structure the ‘if’ statements which could lead to similarities between codes. Student A said that these similarities are exemplified in the similarities between sample codes and the accused students’ codes. She also emphasized that she did not know other students prior to the accusation.

**Student B:** Student B said that the similarities in the code are due to similar methods taken to solve the problem. She said that there are other ways to do the project, but that her method was most simple way she thought of, and in her opinion, the approach and method gave rise to similarities in the code. Student B supported this by referencing RLA testimony. She then pointed out differences in ways code is structured, the comments, and even length of code. Student B stated that she worked alone on the project, and that she met the other accused students for the first time at the investigative meeting. She concluded by saying that she used past RLA recordings and lecture recordings to complete the project.

**Student C:** Student C expressed that she did not collaborate with students and did not know the other students prior to the accusation. She said that the similarities in their code arose from same approach to the project, which in her opinion is intuitive and basic. Student C explained why she took the approach she did and supported this with evidence from past projects showing similar approach used. Student C then went through reasoning on why similarities might have occurred (basic knowledge of code means fewer options for approach problem, some variables similar due to what professor used and as instructed, exact code given by professor for some portions). She then pointed out differences in their codes (other variables, different order of lines, different comments explaining code). Student C elaborated to highlight random student samples that also had similarities in sections that were flagged for the accused students. She emphasized did not contact the other accused by referencing submitted call and text logs. Lastly, Student C used RLA testimony to affirm the argument that similar structure does not necessarily indicate collaboration.

### **Verdict Deliberations:**

Council members believed that a preponderance of the evidence supported that a violation did not occur because students’ commonalities can be reasonably ascribed to a similarity in their approach, which is an intuitive and basic method as supported by the RLA testimony, random student samples, and the accused students’ testimonies. Furthermore, enough variation exists between the structure, variables, and comments of the code to support the conclusion that a violation did not occur.

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

Yes: 0

No: 6+3 (observing)

Abstentions: 0

**Decision:**

The Honor Council thus finds Students A, B, and C “Not In Violation” of the Honor Code and recommends they receive no penalty.

Time of testimony and deliberations: 1 hour and 20 minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Wang

Clerk