1987 HONOR COUNCIL ABSTRACT: GREG AND MARGARITA

Summary: Greg suspected Margarita of looking at other people's papers during an in-class exam. The jury could not determine that there was an academic violation because of inconclusive evidence.

An inquiry was convened to address the incident described by Greg in his French class. He was taking a two-part exam. The first part was an oral portion in which Professor Daley-Jacobs read phrases out loud. As he was taking the exam, he noticed Margarita, who was seated on his left, glancing at his exam. He moved to cover his paper with his arm, and Margarita did not look at his exam again. Subsequently, out of his peripheral vision, he noticed Margarita looking at the exam of another person. She seemed to follow a pattern of looking at another paper and then writing the answer. At the time, Greg said there was "no doubt in my mind" that she was cheating.

The second part of the exam was an essay question. Margarita finished before Greg and left the classroom. Greg later confronted Margarita for a possible violation of the Honor Code. After the confrontation, Greg was uncertain that Margarita had been cheating. At the inquiry, Margarita said she had no idea that she was looking at anything in particular, or that her actions might have constituted a violation. She said she was concentrating on listening to the words, and had a tendency to be "flighty" under test conditions. She said she felt confident going into the exam and was surprised by Greg's accusation.

Greg and Margarita left the room and the jury discussed whether there was a violation of the Honor Code. It was agreed that procuring the tests and comparing them would be inconclusive evidence because of the nature of the exam. Although he had been present, Professor Daley-Jacobs had not been proctoring the exam. It came to a question of weighing Greg's word against Margarita's, and the jury came to consensus that although this could have been an Honor Code violation, all evidence was circumstantial. Therefore it was impossible to positively determine any wrongdoing on Margarita's account.

Margarita and Greg returned and were informed of the decision. The final statement of the jury was that they could not determine whether or not there was a violation of the Honor Code, but that Margarita should be more considerate of her behavior during exams, since her looking around the room may cause suspicion.