

Miles Curiotto

In response to the accusation of giving or receiving aid during a chemistry exam, one must first consider the role of the calculator itself. According to Bylaw XVIII Section 18.01, the professor is responsible for defining acceptable use of electronic devices; in this case, terms of use would include sharing a calculator with a fellow student during an exam. If the professor had explicitly stated that electronic devices were not to be exchanged, both parties would be in violation of proper exam conduct. In accordance with the Honor Board penalty matrix, both students should receive zeros on their exams. If, however, the professor did not explicitly state restrictions on electronic device use and sharing, then the actual exchange of the calculator is not factor in the case.

Although Bylaw XVIII Section 18.01 also states that electronic devices cannot be programmed in any manner that would give a student an unfair advantage over his classmates, there is no evidence to convict the boyfriend of purposefully programming his exam answers into his calculator. To accuse the boyfriend of providing answers to the exam based on his failure to delete his answers from his calculator is completely circumstantial and unable to be substantiated without the confession of his intentions. Had the calculator been exchanged throughout the exam, there might be a stronger case for misconduct.

Although it cannot be held against the girlfriend for receiving a calculator with her boyfriend's chemistry answers, the case study description insinuates additional information: specifically that the girlfriend chose to copy the exact answers from the calculator and submit them as her own. The accuracy of this claim assumes that it was proven that there were indeed answers stored on the calculator being used and that they exactly matched the girlfriend's answers. Even so, this is a difficult situation due to the nature of the exam subject; unlike an essay in which plagiarism can be soundly proven, chemistry exams are given with the assumption that the majority of students will produce the same answers through scientific calculation and analysis. If it can be proven or if a confession is made, however, that the girlfriend knowingly copied answers because they were coincidentally provided on her boyfriend's calculator in the hopes that she would not be held responsible, the student is in violation of receiving aid and should be given a zero on the exam with the potential for a Dean's Star, pending the Honor Board's investigation.