

CUSA X elections

CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER RULING

Carleton University Students' Association General Elections 2026

Date of Ruling: February 17th, 2026

Ruling Code: 2026GE-ND-010

This public report is issued pursuant to Section 67(a) of the CUSA Electoral Code. It summarizes the outcome of a ruling made by the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) in relation to a review conducted during the Campaign Period of the 2026 CUSA General Election.

I. Authority

This Notice of Decision is issued pursuant to the authority of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) under the CUSA Electoral Code, including but not limited to Sections 59, 63, 66, and Schedule IV.

II. Candidate

Aryan Singh

Presidential Candidate, 2026 CUSA General Election

III. Standard of Proof

Pursuant to Section 58 of the Electoral Code, the burden of proof for electoral offences is beyond a reasonable doubt.

CUSA^X elections

Major offences require proof of both actus reus (the prohibited act) and mens rea (the requisite intent or knowledge) beyond a reasonable doubt.

IV. Summary of Review

Overview

The Office of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) received a complaint alleging prohibited campaigning and interference with the voting process occurring during the 2026 CUSA General Election voting period within the MacOdrum Library.

The complaint alleged that an individual campaigning in support of the candidate:

- Approached electors studying in the library;
- Promoted the candidate's campaign;
- Offered assistance while ballots were open;
- Requested proof of voting;
- Engaged in conduct interfering with ballot secrecy and independence.

The identity of the complainant remains confidential pursuant to Section 63 of the Electoral Code.

The candidate was provided full procedural fairness, including an opportunity to respond in writing. A response was received and considered in full.

V. Findings

After reviewing the complaint, clarifications, written submissions, and relevant provisions of the Electoral Code, the CRO determined the following:

1. Campaigning in a Prohibited Area



CUSA X elections

University libraries are explicitly designated as prohibited campaigning spaces under the Electoral Code.

The CRO found beyond a reasonable doubt that campaigning occurred within the library during the voting period.

The individual identified themselves as campaigning in support of the candidate, and the conduct described constituted an attempt to motivate electors to support an electoral outcome.

Under Section 1 of the Electoral Code and clarifications issued at the All-Candidates Meeting:

Anyone campaigning for you = your responsibility.

The Code extends responsibility beyond formally registered campaign team members to those acting in furtherance of a campaign under reasonable foreseeability.

Responsibility therefore attached to the candidate.

Finding: Breach established.

Penalty: 5 Demerit Points

2. Interference with Free and Fair Elections

The complaint described conduct including:

- Offering to assist electors while ballots were open;
- Standing over electors during voting;
- Requesting proof of voting;
- Conduct interfering with ballot independence.

The Electoral Code protects ballot secrecy and elector autonomy.

The CRO determined beyond a reasonable doubt that the conduct described constitutes interference with the conduct of free and fair elections.



CUSA X elections

The candidate's denial of knowledge does not negate responsibility where conduct is undertaken in furtherance of the campaign and materially benefits the candidacy.

Finding: Breach established.

Penalty: 5 Demerit Points

VI. Double Jeopardy

Campaigning in a prohibited area and interference with free and fair elections are distinct offences:

- One addresses prohibited location;
- The other addresses ballot integrity.

Both may be established from the same factual matrix without constituting double jeopardy.

VII. Total Penalty

- Campaigning in a prohibited area → 5 Demerit Points
- Interference with free and fair elections → 5 Demerit Points

Total: 10 Demerit Points

Pursuant to Section 71 of the Electoral Code:

Ten demerit points shall be the threshold for disqualification of a candidate.

As a result, the candidate has reached the disqualification threshold, subject to appeal.





VIII. Appeal

In accordance with Schedule IV of the Electoral Code, this decision is automatically referred to the Appeals Committee for review.

