

CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER RULING

Carleton University Students' Association General Elections 2026

Date of Ruling: February 7th, 2026

Ruling Code: 2026GE-ND-003

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. Summary of Review

This matter arose from a formal Notice of Complaint issued by the Office of the CRO concerning alleged conduct related to campaign coordination, inducement, campaign team conduct, and potential undermining of the electoral process.

The CRO reviewed the Notice of Complaint, the candidate's written submissions, evidence provided by electors, interview admissions and explanations from a registered campaign team member, and the applicable provisions of the Electoral Code.

This ruling is confined exclusively to the allegations and materials arising under 2026GE-NC-003.

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III. Candidate

Maxwell Heroux

Presidential Candidate, 2026 CUSA General Election

IV. Standard of Proof

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

No finding of violation is made unless the CRO is satisfied that each essential element of the alleged offence has been established to that standard.

V. Findings

After reviewing the observed conduct, supporting materials, and written submissions provided by the candidate, the CRO determined beyond a reasonable doubt that:

A. Alleged Slate-Forming and Coordinated Campaign Planning

Finding: Not substantiated

The CRO determined that the evidence did not establish slate formation or coordinated campaign planning within the meaning of the Electoral Code. No violation was found under this heading.

B. Alleged Coercion, Bribery, or Conditional Offers

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Finding: Substantiated

The CRO found that communications referencing future executive participation were framed in a manner that constituted conditional inducement tied to alignment or tolerance. This conduct was inconsistent with the principles of free participation and independent candidacy under the Electoral Code.

C. Conduct of Campaign Team Members and Affiliates

Finding: Substantiated in part

The CRO found that a registered campaign team member engaged in election-related discussions with an elector, questioned voting intentions regarding a competing candidate, commented on the feasibility of that candidate's platform, and failed to clearly disclose campaign affiliation when asked. Responsibility for this conduct attaches to the candidate under the Electoral Code.

D. Alleged Undermining of the Electoral Process

Finding: Substantiated

The CRO determined that the substantiated conduct under Sections B and C constituted undermining of the electoral process. This finding represents a distinct legal characterization of the conduct and does not constitute double jeopardy under Section 59 of the Electoral Code.

VI. Electoral Code Violations

The following violations were established under Schedule IV of the Electoral Code:

- Conditional inducement / coercion relating to executive participation
- Improper voter influence by a campaign team member and failure to disclose campaign affiliation
- Conduct undermining the integrity of the electoral process

VII. Penalties Issued

In accordance with Schedule IV of the Electoral Code, the following penalties were imposed:

- 2 demerit points - Improper voter influence and failure to disclose campaign affiliation
- 5 demerit points - Conditional inducement / coercion
- 5 demerit points - Undermining the electoral process

Total Demerit Points Issued: 12

No additional sanctions were imposed.

VIII. Appeal Information

In accordance with the Electoral Code, this decision will automatically be referred to the Appeals Committee for review.

IX. Additional Information

A full Notice of Decision, containing the complete findings of fact, analysis, evidence considered, and rationale, has been provided directly to the candidate in accordance with Section 67(b) of the Electoral Code.

This public report is provided for transparency and does not include confidential or identifying information.