

CHIEF RETURNING OFFICER RULING

Carleton University Students' Association General Elections 2026

Date of Ruling: February 6th, 2026

Ruling Code: 2026GE-ND-008

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

Maxwell Heroux

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.

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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.

IV. Summary of Review

This matter arose from a formal complaint received on February 4, 2026, alleging prohibited campaigning activity inside the MacOdrum Library during the voting period.

The complaint included video evidence showing an individual:

- Soliciting votes in favour of the candidate;
- Approaching electors in a designated quiet study space;
- Observing elector screens while ballots were being cast; and
- Engaging in conduct reasonably perceived as intimidating.

The MacOdrum Library is a strictly prohibited campaigning location under the Electoral Code and CRO-issued guidelines.

The candidate was issued a Notice of Complaint and provided a written response, which was fully considered.

V. Findings

The CRO determined beyond a reasonable doubt that:

- Campaigning occurred in a university library space;
- Elector independence and ballot secrecy were compromised;
- The conduct interfered with the free and fair exercise of voting;
- The conduct materially benefited the candidate;

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- Responsibility attaches to the candidate under the Electoral Code for third-party campaigning that is reasonably foreseeable and preventable.

The CRO made no finding that the candidate personally directed the individual. Such direction is not required for responsibility to attach under the 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, the following demerit points were assessed:

- 5 demerit points - Campaigning in a university library (major violation)
- 5 demerit points - Interference with free and fair elections (major violation)
- 5 demerit points - Undermining the electoral process (major violation)
- 2 demerit points - Failure to control or disclose campaign actors (minor violation)

Total: 17 demerit points

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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.