

Complaint (Ajibola Adigun (Jibs))

Introduction:

I am Ajibola Adigun, a PhD student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta and a candidate for the Vice-President (Student Life) Position at the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) elections.

I am filing a complaint about officials of the GSA in their vague and inconsistent application of the Bye-Laws of the GSA which went contrary to the expectations of the operations of the GSA and her officials as contained in POL.6.1 "The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA" (GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section I.BYL.1.1).

Complaint against Speaker of Council, Farhan Khalid

On February 27, 2024 the International Students' Association hosted a free breakfast at the Triffo Hall, the offices of the Graduate Students' Association between the hours of 10am to 1pm during the voting for the GSA elections. While other officials of the ISA who are also running for offices in the GSA may be excused for a lack of awareness of the conflict of interest inherent the potential of using GSA offices for campaigns which is contrary to POL.10.5. which says The GSA office and any associated resources (eg, email accounts, staff) will not be used for campaign purposes, notwithstanding that all candidates will be given the opportunity to submit information about themselves for inclusion on the GSA website. It is my contention that the hosting of a breakfast by the International Students Association (ISA) at the GSA office by officials of the ISA who are running for office is a fundamental breach of the policies as it unduly advantages other candidates. If some of them were not aware of this apparent conflict of interest, the Speaker of the Council as a custodian of the GSA Bye-Laws should have been aware and pointed them to the potential for the use of GSA offices for campaigns due to the hosting of an ISA event at GSA offices during campaigns and voting period. Please see attachments four and five. The Speaker in fact was aware of the potential for this conflict of interest and did try to stop me from campaigning. But was unable to stop other candidates from distributing flyers urging people to vote for them.

The Bye-law says that Elected Officers and candidates for elected office will self-disclose any conflict of commitment or conflict of interest, real or perceived, to the President and/or Executive Director (or delegate) as soon as it arises. (D.POL.4.4). This

conflict of interest led to the use of GSA offices from campaigns and voting which is a violation of the Bye-laws thus. POL.10.5. says The GSA office and any associated resources (eg, email accounts, staff) will not be used for campaign purposes, notwithstanding that all candidates will be given the opportunity to submit information about themselves for inclusion on the GSA website.

Regards,
Ajibola

Response (Farhan Khalid)

Response to Jibs Complaint Against Farhan Khalid

Introduction

I am Farhan Khalid, MSc student in Materials Engineering at University of Alberta and currently serving as Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Speaker and Co-VP Academic Affairs of the International Students' Association (ISA).

Response

ISA did hold a breakfast at Triffo Hall on 27th February between 10 am – 1 pm, this event was widely marketed and was open to anyone. ISA took permission from GSA staff to hold such event and it was held in the Triffo Hall lounge space right across from the main Triffo Hall entrance, this space does not constitute as GSA office space. I being the Speaker and the Co-VP Academic Affairs was aware of my conflict of interest and to mitigate this I was only present to represent ISA and was wearing an ISA name tag showing my position within ISA.

I would like to add Jibs came up to me to ask for vote while I was busy managing the event, to which I told him do not ask directly for a vote. But I further clarified this thing with the CRO and within a few minutes I told Jibs that CRO has confirmed that you can directly ask for votes. Jibs like other candidates present at the ISA breakfast event more than campaigned and after the CRO's clarification around asking for votes I did not stop any one from campaigning. Not only this Jibs was constantly harassing me as I was busy managing the ISA event, to complain that his name is incorrect in the GSA Ballot. I told him again and again that as GSA Speaker I am not responsible and he should take it up with CRO's office or the GSA management team. Jibs had completely lost his composure and further harassed the event participants showing them his phone/taking their phone as soon as they entered Triffo Hall, he did not even allow them to get the breakfast first for which they came for. This whole ordeal was also witnessed by Saad Iqbal (Candidate VP Student Services) and Benjamin Kutcher (Candidate VP Student Life). Jibs behavior that day is in violation of I.BYL.1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.

It should be further be noted that this event happened on **27th February 10 am – 1 pm**, the provisional election results were announced on **29th February 10:34 am** and Jibs had filed the complaint against me and his name on ballot not being correct on **29th**

February 10:47 am. Any rational candidate with a true complaint against a GSA officer should have filed the complaint right there at the spot, however Jibs chose to wait for the election results to be announced (he had lost the election) and then he chose to weaponize his false allegations.

Decision (ACB)

Parties:

- Complainant - Ajibola Adigun (Jibs) - A candidate for the position of VP Student Life in the GSA General Election 2024
- Respondent - Farhan Khalid - Speaker
- ISA - international Student's Association (an undergraduate association)

Complaint:

The complainant maintains that the use of the gsa offices for an ISA breakfast is a conflict of interest as candidates running for various GSA positions were in attendance and the event occurred during the voting period. The complainant states that *"the Speaker in fact was aware of the potential for this conflict of interest and did try to stop me from campaigning. But was unable to stop other candidates from distributing flyers urging people to vote for them"*.

Relevant Bylaw and Policy:

I.POL.10.5 - The GSA office and any associated resources (eg, email accounts, staff) will not be used for campaign purposes, notwithstanding that all candidates will be given the opportunity to submit information about themselves for inclusion on the GSA website.

I.POL.10.9 - The Chief Returning Officer (CRO), Deputy Returning Officer, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, members of the GSA Nominating Committee, members of the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, and members of the GSA Elections and Referenda Committee will remain neutral and not serve as a Campaign Volunteer for any candidate whatsoever.

H.POL.15.7.b - GSA ACB Hearing Committee decisions are final and binding.

Decision:

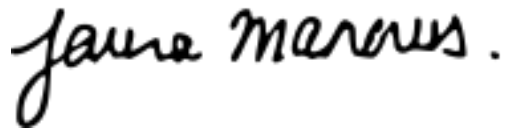
The ACB would like to clarify that the ISA breakfast event occurred in the GSA lounge of Triffo Hall and not in the GSA offices. Additionally, it would like to clarify that this ISA event was run independently and GSA candidates that attended were attending in their capacity as international graduate students and not representing the GSA.

However, taking into consideration that the speaker was at this event attempting to stop some campaigning, the fact that this took place during the voting period, and the fact that an international student referendum was included during this election the ACB concludes that this is a concerning conflict of interest and advises that the election for

VP Student Life be rerun in order to maintain confidence in the integrity and fairness of the election results.

Finally, the ACB understands that this is a gray area and both the speaker and the ISA will be informed of this complaint. Furthermore, the ACB will look into creating policy surrounding events that occur during the voting period.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Manerus." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Manerus
GSA ACB Hearing Committee Chair