

April 4, 2023

Election Administrator's Decision

Decision #2023/12

The attached complaint was received as timely and met requirements for an official complaint under the CSU regulations. As the complainant expressed a wish to remain anonymous, information identifying them has been redacted.

The complainant, a CSU student and elector, alleges that the respondent, Parteek Singh, who is a candidate for CSU president in the 2023 elections, pressured him into changing his vote for president while he watched. The complainant was standing with a friend outside the birch cafeteria building when the respondent walked up to him and asked him for his vote. The complainant alleges that the respondent was insistent and did not leave until after the complainant took out his phone and changed his vote. The complainant felt pressured to change his vote.

The complainant's version of events was supported by a witness who was present and said that Mr. Singh asked the complainant to vote for him there and then and that he did not leave until the complainant did so. He also said that Mr. Singh's manner was pressing.

When informed of the complaint, the respondent admitted that he has approached the complainant and asked him to vote for him but denied pressuring or behaving in an intimidating way. He said that he stayed by the complainant only until the friend that he was waiting for arrived.

Following the receipt of this complaint, I received information from another witness, who asked to remain anonymous, that Mr. Singh had approached them in a separate incident and asked them in an aggressive and inappropriate manner to change their vote to him then and there. The complainant felt pressured to change their vote but managed to slip away from Mr. Singh before doing so.

Election procedure BD06.1: Elections includes the following provision:

1. The following forms of campaigning are prohibited:

....

d) Applying pressure, encouragement, or a requirement for a voter to cast an electronic vote in the presence of a candidate, or passing around devices upon which a voter is pressured, encouraged, or required to vote;

In this case, multiple witnesses have claimed that Mr. Singh applied pressure for them to vote in his presence. It is also relevant that in another complaint (See Decision #2023/9), the respondent submitted an audio recording of himself talking to an elector, in which he clearly asks the elector who she voted for and a number of other prying and inappropriate questions.

Taking into account all of the evidence, including Mr. Singh's response, I am satisfied that he has indeed violated the prohibition above. It is possible that Mr. Singh did not mean to

pressure or intimidate anyone to change their vote. Under the circumstances, however, it was reasonable for the complainant to feel pressured. The evidence also shows that Mr. Singh stood by and watched the complainant change his vote on his phone. It does not matter if his reason for staying, as he says, was that he was waiting for his friend. Mr. Singh knew the rules and should not have stayed to watch the complainant vote. Since the conduct in question was repeated, I regard this as a serious offence.

In consequence, Mr. Singh is disqualified as a candidate in the 2023 CSU Elections. This sanction is less forceful than I would like, given that the election is complete, and Mr. Singh was not elected. There is, however, no other sanction that can be applied under the rules. It is my hope that this action sends a message to Mr. Singh and other candidates that aggressive campaigning of this kind has no place in CSU elections.

The complainant has 48 hours from the time they receive this decision to submit an appeal in the manner set forth in CSU Regulation BD-06.1.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Ennis', written in a cursive style.

David Ennis
CSU Election Administrator

ANNEX 1 – Official complaint
CSU Election Complaint Template

Submitted:

March 16, 2023 · 17:36

Your full name:

[redacted]

Capilano University email address:

[redacted]

What is the nature of your complaint?

I have an official election complaint

Candidate Complaint

This area may be blank if not applicable.

When did you learn about the issue you are complaining about?

Mar 15, 2023

Are you a candidate, student, or other?

Student

Name of the person(s) you are complaining about.

Parteek singh

Names and contact details (email address and/or telephone number) of any witness who can verify your complaint:

Description of the issue in question:

Tried to make me and my friends vote for him, didn't leave till we all had open our voting links and changed our preferences. Stopped by us and told us to change our preferences for CSU president.

Upload any evidence you may have here:

How would you like the issue to be resolved?

Disqualification from elections.

Do you wish to remain anonymous?:

Yes, I wish to remain anonymous, even if it limits action on my complaint