

2025 ASI ELECTION COMPLAINT COMMITTEE DECISION

By SAMUEL N. JONES, chair

Members Present:

SAMUEL N. JONES, Vice President for Student Affairs designee (chair)
NITIN ROY, Faculty Senate designee
DREW HARRIS, student representative
LEILA BERANIA, student representative
DHRUV SINGH, student representative

Members Absent:

NONE

MAY 14, 2025

Collin Haskin vs Jonathan Poston

I. Statement of the complaint

Haskin brought charges against Poston stating that he ran in a slate (collective of candidates) under the Coalition for Progress, specifically Project Sunrise. Specifically, the following policy:

Article V: Fair Campaigning and Publicity

B. Collectives of Candidates

1. Collectives of Candidates (e.g. slates) are prohibited in the conduct of all ASI elections and campaigning. No independent candidate shall individually endorse another candidate, campaign in their stead, nor run under a collective platform, name, logo or slogan with the exception of eligible candidates who have filed for candidacy as a Presidential Ticket. Any violation of this section may result in **disqualification**, unless it can be shown that the candidate was not aware of the violation and did not condone the violation, in which case the Elections Complaint Committee or Appellate Council will fashion an adequate remedy.
2. Independent candidates are prohibited from the pooling of resources and/or funds in the conduct of all ASI elections. Any independent candidates acting as a collective by pooling resources associated with the ASI elections may be **disqualified**.
3. Only one independent candidate name per physical promotional item or candidate website will be allowed. Multiple candidate names and/or slates are not allowed for web-based and/or social media (e.g. Facebook) promotional items (does not include websites) with the exception of candidates who have filed for candidacy as a Presidential Tickets. Independent candidates will be held responsible for social media accounts, posts, and/or ads that may be considered a collective of candidates. Any violations may be eligible for review by the Election Complaint Committee.

II. Summary of the testimonial and documentary evidence received at hearing in support of the complaint

Haskin provided testimony and documentation alleging that Poston participated in a slate with several other candidates during the election. Haskin presented social media posts indicating that the following candidates appeared to be running as a coordinated group: Director of Business, President and Vice President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Director of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Director of Graduate Studies. Evidence cited included shared campaign themes, similar agendas and goals, consistent graphic backgrounds, and common endorsement logos across multiple candidate posts.

Haskin also noted that chips were provided to two different candidates and reported on their respective expenditure reports at varying prices, raising concerns of coordinated resource sharing. Additionally, Haskin presented a social media post from the account csus_accountability, which featured a message targeting candidate Perez that read, “Vote the liar out! Tell Armando No!”!

III. Summary of the testimonial and documentary evidence received at the hearing in opposition or rebuttal to complaint

Poston testified and provided documentation to support that he had no involvement in the social media posts made by his endorsers. He stated that he did not form or participate in a slate with the individuals referenced in Section II, Page 1. Poston emphasized that endorsements are permitted under the ASI Election Code and that he neither approved nor coordinated with the endorser responsible for the social media posts.

Regarding campaign materials, Poston explained that the chips he received were donated by an endorser and that he was not collaborating with other candidates to share or pool resources. Additionally, he stated that he did not repost or share any social media content containing slander against candidate Perez.

IV. Summary of witness testimony

- a. Haskin provided a witness, Daniel Smith. Smith verified the social media post were from Project Sunrise.
- b. Poston provided the Committee with three witnesses. The witnesses were Fnu Namrata, Josiah Ben-Oni, and Nikita Akhumov. The witnesses stated there was not a slate formed and that endorsements are allowed based on election code. Ben-Oni stated he did donate chips to two different candidates and paid for them with his money.

In closing statements and rebuttal, Haskin reiterated the post made by Project Sunrise was representing a slate and Poston should be aware of their actions. Poston reiterated he did not have a slate nor participated or approved of the social media post made by Project Sunrise. Poston also stated he did not repost any media post by Project Sunrise.

V. Statement of the remedy requested

Disqualification under Article X. Remedies for Complaints, Section D

VI. Statement of the burden of proof the complaining party or parties was required to meet

Clear and convincing proof is required for the Committee to award the remedy of disqualifying a candidate. Clear and convincing evidence is defined as that which “leaves no substantial doubt as to the veracity of the claim.”

VII. Conclusion as to whether the complaining party met the applicable burden of proof

The Committee did not find the evidence presented by Haskin to meet the burden of clear and convincing by testimony or documentation.

VIII. Summary and reasoning supporting the Committee's conclusion

The Committee unanimously found that the burden of proof was not met by the complainant.

IX. Statement of the relief

The Committee denies the requested relief. However, the Committee finds that the ASI Election Code lacks clarity regarding the definition of "slates" and whether candidates can be held accountable for social media posts made by third parties referencing their candidacy. The Committee recommends that these areas be reviewed and clarified for future elections.