Graduate Students Association of McMaster University

Referendum re: Mental Health Services April 1-3, 2017

Final Decision of the Chief Returning Officer (CRO) dated April 3, 2017

The CRO received a complaint regarding the conduct of the “Question 1 Yes Campaign” in relation to the GSA referendum on Mental Health Services. Pursuant to the GSA bylaws, the CRO has reviewed the complaint and determined that there has been campaign impropriety. Pursuant to the GSA bylaw the CRO is imposing the sanction set out below:

SANCTION 1:

Misconduct: an official from the “Question 1 Yes Campaign Committee” has made false statements of fact in its campaign materials in violation of the GSA bylaw (Art. XXII, s. 16a)

Sanction: The “Question 1 Yes Campaign Committee” shall:

a. pay a fine of $5.00

False Statement Example A:

The “Question 1 Yes Campaign Committee” circulated a video (dated March 28, 2017) stating “they have had a full year to change the so called “undemocratic fees,” but have made zero improvements all while depriving graduate students from mental health counselling.” The preceding statements in the video were: “We do not believe in suspending services indefinitely until fee changes are installed as the No campaign is suggesting to do. The No campaign won last year and consequently terminated access to counselling.”

The statement is false because it is unclear who “they” are. The use of “they” in the first sentence refers to the 2017 “Question 1 No Campaign Committee” and the use of “they” in the second sentence refers to the “No Campaign Committee” from 2016. However, as GSA members who voted in the 2016 Referendum determined that access to counselling would no longer be provided via the Student Wellness Centre, it appears the statement is false (since the video is directed to GSA members, “they” cannot logically refer to GSA members).