

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

JUDICIAL PANEL
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OLIVER GRIFFITH

Plaintiff

v.

DAZHON COX

Defendant

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

As written by Justice Matthew Okocha

In the matter of *Griffith v. Cox*, the plaintiffs allege that the defendants violated Article II.A.a.vi, Article II.A.b.iv, Article II.C.a.i, and Article II.C.a.ii of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws.

Election Bylaws

Article II.A.a.vi

“All websites maintained by a candidate, candidate team, or slate are subject to review by the Judicial Panel and must adhere to the rules and regulations in these bylaws. Such websites must have a visible link to the Judicial Panels Elections webpage on each page of their website. This is a Type I bylaw.”

Article II.A.b.iv

“Candidates, teams and slates may not overtly act to gain votes, or solicit for votes before the approved campaigning season begins. This is a type III bylaw.

1. Candidates, candidate teams, and slates may produce campaign materials and create a website at any time but may not be visible at any time before campaigning begins.”

Article II.C.a.i

“All slates must maintain an online ledger. This is a type IV bylaw.”

Article II.C.a.ii

“All individual candidates must maintain a ledger of expenses.”

Held: The Judicial Panel finds that the Defendant is in violation of Article II.A.a.vi, Article II.A.b.iv, and Article II.C.a.i.

Opinion

In the matter of *Griffith v. Cox*, the plaintiff alleged that the defendants violated multiple sections of the Undergraduate Student Government Election Bylaws, including failure to include required links, early dissemination of campaign materials, and failure to maintain an online ledger. After reviewing the evidence presented, the Judicial Panel finds the defendants guilty of multiple bylaw violations and issues the following rulings.

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The plaintiff alleged a violation of Article II.A.a.vi, which requires campaign websites to include a visible link to the Judicial Panel Elections webpage. The Judicial Panel considered whether an Instagram account qualifies as a website under this bylaw. Given that Instagram pages are accessible through a web browser with a direct link, the Panel determines that Instagram accounts do qualify as websites under this bylaw. Since the defendant's Instagram page did not include the required link, the Panel imposes a \$10 fine for this Type I violation.

Regarding Article II.A.b.iv, the Judicial Panel reviewed multiple public Instagram posts from the personal page of Daizhon Cox. The plaintiff alleged that these posts were from a campaign-related photoshoot that took place before the official campaign period. While taking photos or videos outside the campaign period is not prohibited, the public dissemination of such material before the approved campaign period is. Upon review, the Judicial Panel found 12 separate instances in which campaign-related material was publicly posted. These posts included a video of people chanting “Daizhon for President!”, images of individuals holding signs referencing the Cox campaign, and a promotional video introducing his candidacy.

Additionally, the Judicial Panel found a 13th instance of early campaigning on the campaign Instagram account, "daizhonmike4usg", which was actively gaining followers and following other accounts back. This behavior constitutes an intentional attempt to promote the campaign before the approved start date, which the Judicial Panel recognizes as a clear Type III violation.

For these 12 instances of early dissemination of campaign materials, the Judicial Panel imposes a \$50 fine per instance, totaling \$600. For the campaign Instagram account’s violation, the Judicial Panel imposes a \$100 fine.

Regarding Article II.C.a.i, the Judicial Panel finds that if these photoshoot materials were used in the campaign, they should have been included in an online ledger. As of Tuesday, February 25, 2025, the Judicial Panel has no record of access to any such ledger from the Cox campaign. The failure to provide an accessible ledger constitutes a Type IV violation, for which the Panel imposes a \$150 fine.

Total fines:

- Failure to include Judicial Panel link on Instagram (Type I violation) – \$10
- Early dissemination of campaign materials (12 instances, Type III violation) – \$600
- Early campaigning via Instagram page (Type III violation) – \$100
- Failure to provide an online ledger (Type IV violation) – \$150

Final Total: \$860

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It is so ordered.

Signed: The Judicial Panel

Majority:

Chief Justice Matthew Okocha

Justice Ryan Buchko

Justice Sean O'Brien

Justice Abby Yallop

Justice Judith Vega