

2017

University of Southern California

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

RACHEL REBECCA v. AUSTIN MORGAN

Transcription

BASED ON THE FORMAL COMPLAINT SUBMITTED ON JANUARY 27, 2017

Hearing Held January 29, 2017 Decision Decided January 29, 2017

Deciding Commissioners:
Nillani, Christian, Kara, Kyle

Chairs of the Commission:
Katherine (Kat) Lee, *Associate Director of Elections*
Donielle Bunyard, *Assistant Director of Elections*

Representatives of Rachel Rebecca:
Rachel Udabe, *Presidential Candidate*
Rebecca Harbeck, *Vice Presidential Candidate*
Rachel Krusenoski, *Campaign Manger*

Representatives of Austin Morgan:
Austin Dunn, *Presidential Candidate*
Morgan Monahan, *Vice Presidential Candidate*
Paul Breslin, *Campaign Manager*

Observing:
Luis Canton, Program Coordinator, Campus Activities

Luis: Hello everyone again, so my name is Luis Canton, program coordinator for Campus Activities, so I advise USG and GSG.

Commissioner: Hi my name is Nillani. I'm a freshman studying global health and I'm part of the elections commission.

Commissioner: Hey I'm Christian, I'm a sophomore, and I'm also part of the elections commission.

Commissioner: Hello. I'm Kara, I'm a senior, part of the Elections Commission.

Commissioner: I'm Kyle, I'm a freshman, and also a part of the Elections Commission.

Morgan: I'm Morgan, I'm running for VP.

Paul: I'm Paul, I'm a junior, and I'm their [Austin Morgan's] campaign manager.

Rebecca: I'm Rebecca, and I'm a sophomore running for VP.

Rachel: Hi I'm Rachel. I'm a junior running for President.

Rachel-2: I'm Rachel, I'm a sophomore, and I'm their [Rachel Rebecca's] campaign manager.

Austin: I'm Austin Dunn, I'm a junior running for President.

Kat: Hi everyone, I'm Kat, Associate Director of Elections.

Donielle: I'm Donielle. I'm the Assistant Director of Elections. I'm chairing the Commission today.

The Elections Commission is assembled here today, Sunday January 29, 2017 to hear the case of Austin Morgan, who is charged with 2.A.IV.1, 2.A.5, 2.A.6, and 2.A.7. When directed by the chair of Commission, myself, all witnesses, and others without responsibilities for this hearing will be requested to leave the room.

A student called before the Elections Commission as a respondent has the following rights: the right to review the statements of the petition, the right to present

information supporting his/her version of the alleged complaint, a right to a hearing, the right to present up to three witnesses who have information relevant to the case at hand, the right to be present throughout the hearing, and to consult with his/her advisor during the testimony, the right to appeal the final decision of the Elections Commission in accordance with the appeal procedure outlined in the USG Elections Code.

The petitioner filing a complaint before the Elections Commission has the following rights: the rights to review the statements of the respondent, the student who is the alleged infraction, the right to present information supporting his/her version of the alleged complaint.

The hearing will be guided by the following procedure: the petitioner will have up to one hour to present his/her case including witnesses. The respondent may question the petitioner's witnesses through the Elections Commission. The Elections Commission may question the petitioner's witnesses. When the petitioner has finished, the respondent will have up to one hour to present his/her case including witnesses. The petitioner may question the respondent's witnesses through the Elections Commission. The Elections Commission may question the respondent's witnesses.

When the student who is the respondent has finished, both the petitioner and the respondent will have five minutes to summarize which each believes has been shown to be true. The Commission retains the right to ask questions at any time. The Commission may call any witnesses whose testimony bears on the case. The Commission insist on honesty and forth-right responses to its questions and may recommend penalties, including suspension or dismissal, for any witness who is found responsible for not being truthful or intentionally misleading the Commission.

Advisors are reminded that they do not poses the right to address the Commission, the witnesses, or the opposing person. Advisors are present solely for the purpose of advising the student. As stipulated in the Undergraduate Student Government Constitution, the Elections Commission Advisor may participate in the hearing if he/she deems that the Elections Commission is not following its own guidelines.

By participate they mean vote. Luis is sitting in.

Kat: So the three of us [Kat, Donielle, and Luis] will not vote.

Donielle: In this case, the Elections Commission Advisor can halt the proceedings.

All parties are reminded that they cannot speak unless they have been recognized from the chair of the Commission, again myself, and can also remove a party from the proceedings who refuse to adhere to set guidelines.

A record of this hearing will be made by the Elections Commission by tape recording, aka my phone.

Is all of this understood?

[ALL AGREE]

Donielle: Phenomenal.

Will petitioner present any and all information relevant to the allegations.

Rachel: So, Austin Dunn and Morgan Monahan utilized a Facebook group starting on Wednesday, January 25, 2017 at 11:03AM to disseminate information regarding their candidacy and campaign. As of 10:17PM on January 26, 2017 the group had 364 members, included are several members according to the USG Elections Code who are prohibited in actively taking part in USG elections campaign due to their current USG affiliation. Due to severity of the violations Austin Morgan has conducted their campaign, we demand that the Elections Commission immediately disqualify Austin Morgan from the election.

Rebecca: Before delving into specifics, we would like to note that each communication during the silent period is an individual violation. Piece of point is Austin Morgan created a private Facebook group the Austin Morgan 2017 Campaign Team on or before Wednesday, January 25, 2017 and by which January 26, 2017 they had 364 members. This is a clear violation of the preparation period and silent period rules prohibiting communication.

Rachel: Silent Period violations. 2.A.5 preparation period rules and 2.A.4.i silent period limits the communication to the five people of group and submitted to the USG Elections Commission on December 9, 2016. Any communications beyond that constitute a violation. Because this was done during the preparation period, all individuals in the group are unauthorized members of the campaign team. Also, there were known violations of the rules since there were several messages and instances where the messages ask people to keep the group a “secret.”

Rachel-2: Piece of point, USG’s involvement with the Facebook group and Austin Morgan. 9.C forbids any USG members to be a part of a campaign team or a

campaign. As previously established, all members of the Facebook group constitute the campaign team. Of their 23 violations, 17 were listed on the original complaint.

Rachel: So point C, Austin Morgan failure to report violations. Rule 7.C creates two affirmative duties which are extremely important. The duty is on them to follow through with this. Once they have been accepted as a candidate, this duty is binding, which is to immediately do that which is in his/her power to end the actions which is potentially in violation. They could have left the group, and they did not. They also continued to post in the group, and they also made requests to keep the group a secret – knowingly violating the rules. They also could have documented his/her efforts to end the violation if possible and sent to the elections team, also something we know they did not do. Also, each violation should have gone through when they failed to do so, creating a new individual violation for each instance. That is, previously up to this point there are approximately 350 violations of breaking the original silent period rules, but because of the rule that they did not notify the Elections Commission, it is technically closer to 700 violations.

Rebecca: Piece of point, violations committed by four other candidates, and by which we are referring four other candidates currently running for position in Undergraduate Student Government, whether it be a different ticket or Senators. All these are bound by the USG Elections Code and are in violation of 12.C – failure to report the activities of the Facebook group.

Rachel: Also, the Elections Commission power to disqualify based on severity and effect on the election. The definition of cheating is to act dishonestly or unfairly to gain an advantage, Austin Morgan knew they were violating the rules in order to gain an unfair advantage, and in an academic environment, for example, they would be sent to student judicial affairs and would receive not credit on the assignment.

Rebecca: Their use of the Facebook group gave them an unfair advantage, and gave them additional time to campaign and get out their message. We cannot ascertain how much the additional time helped, but we know that both candidates who abided by the rules have 400-500 likes and they're nearly double that – were referring to Facebook. It can be assumed that the cheating and dishonesty played a significant role in the head start of the campaign.

If they are not disqualified, there is no reason for candidates in the future to not engage in this type of problematic behavior. If you can gain a clear advantage in the beginning without fear of actual punishment to advance your ends, why would other people not do this as well.

Their actions aimed to undermine the elections process and the USG Elections Commission per all the violations we have stated above. There is no reason to hold an election if they are allowed to stay in the race.

Rachel: Power to disqualify. 11.M.vii the Elections Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate. In this instance, the Elections Commission must take this action in order to preserve an semblance of integrity.

And our evidence, as you have in front of you, are the various screenshots, which are posts on the Facebook group written by Austin Dunn, Morgan Monahan, and Paul Breslin. And we will read some of them to you.

Austin Dunn posted on 11:15AM on January 25, 2017 “This page is for active members of the Austin Morgan campaign. We will post strategy for the elections season including media updates, profile pictures, cover photos, etc. as well as other tasks or information regarding volunteering. Campaign launch will be tomorrow night at 7PM. Location will be posted ASAP. Would love for you all to join us but please keep in mind that the campaign is a secret until then. Thanks.”

Morgan Monahan, 11:26AM, January 25, 2017 “Please do not mention anything about our campaign until 7PM tomorrow.” Which was commented on Austin Dunn’s aforementioned post.

Also at 1:45PM January 25, 2017 she stated, “Please do not mention anything about our campaign until 7PM tomorrow.”

Paul Breslin posted at 1:30PM January 26, 2017 “Just a reminder, the campaign is a secret until tonight, 7PM.” Which followed a lengthy post inviting all members to help launch the campaign at 7PM, January 26, encouraging all supporters to bring electronics to help out.

We also have no witnesses.

Donielle. Great. Does the respondent have any questions for the petitioner?

Austin: Can I just get clarification on the numbers situation regarding 700? I don’t know if I could hear you correctly. It was previously mentioned.

Rachel: So.

Austin: Oh, 700 violations I believe.

Rachel: Yes, so you have about roughly 350 people in the group by the time that we have the screenshots of the group at around 10PM on the 26th. And having them in the group was one violation, and then not reporting each individual violation of disseminating information would constitute another violation, which is why we roughly doubled the original number.

Austin: Got you. Thank you.

Donielle: Great. Does the Commission have any questions for the petitioner?

Commissioner: So just to further clarify that point. So are you defining every communication as just someone who joins the group?

Rachel: Every communication with someone who had join the group, and therefore saw what was posted.

Commissioner: Ok. And you're just essentially doubling that for lack of telling us [the Elections Commission] about those violations.

Rachel: As per the duty of being a candidate.

Commissioner: Why do you guys believe disqualification is an appropriate punishment for a social media violation?

Rachel: We determined that because in the Elections Code that there was no explicitly stated due process for disqualification, we just determined that the quantity, scale, and severity of the violations would constitute a disqualification. Of course that's up to the determination of the council, but that was our recommendation.

Commissioner: Ok.

Donielle: Ok, great. Will the respondent present any and all information relevant to the allegations.

Morgan: Hello. Thanks for coming here on a Sunday, I know everyone is super busy getting their stuff together. Just to start out, Austin and I made it our goal for the origins of beginning to run that we really wanted to run a clean campaign. They've been pretty malicious in the past, and we've been in USG and seen the effects of those throughout the organization and it's been really hard. That was our intent going into this.

That being said, we do take full responsibility for this. What had happened was we created a group and we made our admins of our core five, including Austin and I, making seven people total. The group's intent was each person add 20 people. Like we said, were taking full responsibility for this. To kind of promote ourselves, like I said, full responsibility we did that. But it kind of spiraled out of control because people got excited. We've been planning this since October. We were just really excited, and I assume you guys were, to tell people and Austin and I you go ahead.

Paul: Ok. I just want to make sure all infractions are taken care of fairly. As far as the points that you made as a team, you mentioned how USG officers were not allowed to be in a group and that's actually not true according to the Bylaws. Any person that is considered a currently seated member of the Undergraduate Student Government and/or Program Board is prohibited from working on a campaign for any candidate throughout the entire elections process. Currently seated members may publicly support campaigns, which is what this group was. But the Undergraduate Student Government office shall maintain a nonpartisan space.

Morgan: This was in no way a malicious act toward you guys or the other ticket. We were just kind of excited as I'm sure you might have told one of your friends, I'm not sure. That being said, we want to take responsibility for our mistake and move forward without any infractions going forward. We want to run a clean campaign, and we know how hard everyone's worked going into this.

Paul: And just in terms of the over 700 violations that you are according to. The most amount of likes that a post ever got was 60, so that I will take full responsibility for. That was the one that was posted before the group. The 364 members could easily have been added after, at seven, because you actually gave a timestamp of 10:17PM, so your 700 is actually incorrect. 60 members at most, so if we were going to double it, as I do see the validity in us not reporting it is our fault, 120 is the total number, rather than 700 which you previously stated. And that's all I have.

Austin: To add something, I guess I don't have to phrase this as a question per se, but in regards to that, hypothetically speaking, I guess I would say, if there was a student who had accidentally told a teacher they were running for office, and then that teacher then went on to recite to the class that this person was running, I would consider that personally to be one infraction as opposed to an individual infraction for every student that heard the teacher make that mistake. That's just kind of the basis of what we've been understanding, because we do understand the magnitude of this mistake, but also consider it to be one error rather than something that is treated as 700 infractions, and thereby invalidating the success that we had on our Austin Morgan 2017 page, which has obviously been apparent. It's kind of just what I wanted to add.

Morgan: Just going off of that, we completely take responsibility like I was saying. We do apologize for it. It kind of spiraled out of control. It was not the intent for it to happen and we just hope we can run a really run a sportsman-like campaign from here on out because we've all worked really hard.

Paul: I think I have something to add. You also mentioned how, both tickets who had not previously mentioned their campaigns had around the same number of likes, but it's not really possible because our group alone has almost the same amount of likes as yours, and just because that group, which you said at 10:17PM had the 364 members, that easily could have had all of them add a member after 7PM. So, the fact that you're saying that we have more likes is only due to that is quite unfair, and the fact that you're not validating the fact that we could have very strong social networks in that is not fair because you are assuming that all of the work was done prior to 7PM, which it was actually not.

Morgan: We were up till like 4AM that night.

Austin: To conclude, I think, I really just can't reiterate this enough, I failed to mention this previously, but it is in every single one of our desires, foremost as head of the ticket, and every member of our teams to not have to spend another minute in an election hearing because we 100% feel that all of our time should be devoted into hearing the needs of student body and spreading the message that were all running on, and I think I'd really appreciate it if there was recognition of no ticket being perfect in that regard, and keeping that in mind moving forward.

Donielle: Great. Any further statements?

Does the petitioner have any questions for the respondent?

Rachel: So our first question is, probably the most wild part of this is that Luke Southwell-Chan, who is the Senior Director of Communications and is also overseeing elections is in your group, which seems to be a conflict of interest for all of us, so I was just wondering what your comment was?

Paul: He was actually added by another member of the team, and we didn't see it until later in the process, which we clearly see is not ok, which is why he in the group, but it is also not against the Bylaws to support someone, it's just they just can't physically campaign or wear any gear or anything into the USG Office.

Donielle: So we're going to add onto that.

Kat: Just to clarify, it's really up to you as a Commission later to determine what working on the campaign team means. In the Bylaws, it specifically says that Exec members Luke is an Executive member of the team cannot work on the campaign.

Donielle: Must remain nonpartisan.

Kat: From the start of the campaign moving forward. From that point on, all members of USG can publically show their support. They cannot be a part of the core five. That's in the Bylaws.

Donielle: We can only act upon what's said in the Elections Code. The Commission does not have the authority to raise claims or give sanctions based on violation of the Bylaws, so that's a different procedure that we can talk about after. But just so were all aware, the Elections Code does state that.

Kat: But that being said, 9.C says that any person that is a currently seated member of Undergraduate Student Government and/or Program Board is prohibited from working on the campaign team or for any candidate throughout the entire elections process. Currently seated members can publicly support campaigns but the Undergraduate Student Government office shall remain a nonpartisan space. So, it's just a clarification.

Morgan: And can I say something with that.

Kat: Yes.

Morgan: Obviously we have all worked closely in USG, and we completely understand that. We really want to run a fair campaign, and we see how that's a thing, but we specifically Austin, Paul, and I were not adding people in USG, or the Exec members to be specific. It wasn't one of us that added them, and we completely, completely agree that, that is a conflict of interest. But that being said, Luke is one of our good friends and we just want to keep that separate in this election because we want it to be fair.

Kat: We just wanted to highlight the stuff in the Bylaws.

Austin: Just to be 100% clear, that's all active members of the Exec team cannot publicly? I guess I just want to make sure, because obviously I feel like this does affect me as the only sitting member of Execs running in this election. I just want to be clear on what is allowed and what is not.

Kat: The specific rules about Execs are in the Bylaws, so we don't have jurisdiction over it. What the code says about currently seated members is that they're prohibited from working on the campaign, so technically, just given the code, Exec is allowed to change their profile picture, do things like that. They're not allowed to be on your core five, be on your campaign team.

Morgan: Which Luke isn't.

Kat: That's all up for you to decide. I can't give my personal opinion. Yes, according to this, all members can change profile picture, post on Facebook, do whatever. The office is a neutral space. The Bylaws might have specific stances on that. Like they might get more into detail on exec. We can't talk about that here.

Morgan: Can I do a point of clarification on that?

Kat: Yes.

Morgan: I know David Moreno was the head of elections a few years ago and he was able to work on the campaign team he supported and he was public about it, so.

Donielle: Great. This is a different year.

Morgan: Ok, I was just making sure.

Donielle: Yep.

So just as a clarification for everyone.

Kat: Wait are you saying as the Assistant Director of Elections David Moreno worked on the Rini Jordan campaign?

Morgan: Umm, Austin can you clarify?

Austin: I can't remember.

Kat: I don't think that's allowed.

Donielle: I don't think that's valid in this situation.

Morgan: Ya. Sorry, sorry.

Rachel: Is it possible to offer new evidence?

Donielle: It appears not according to this.

Kat: But you do have five minutes to give a closing statement.

Rachel: Great.

Donielle: Any other questions for the respondent?

Rachel: We would like to point out that we have time stamps of the comments that were given on these posts so we know that they were commented yesterday, so with that we can infer that these people were already in the group at the time that they commented.

Paul: We admitted that. We were just saying that it was not the total 364 members that are now in the group that were previously in the group before 7PM on January 26.

Rachel: We also have the screenshots of everybody who is added in the group, and we have a lot that say joined yesterday, and they were taken at approximately the same time as that, so we could individually count.

Donielle: Was that submitted as evidence?

Rachel: It was not.

Donielle: Ok.

Kat: I think they can bring it up as evidence?

Morgan: No, we completely admit to that. That's part of it, ya.

Rachel: We would also like to ask you all to describe what your definition of a team is and then we'll describe our definition of what a team constitutes.

Morgan: Can you repeat the question?

Rachel: Ya. Please describe what you consider to be a campaign team.

Austin: Ya, so to clarify, at least the way in my experience in elections and how I've been involved in the beginning is I don't actually use the word team very much. So you obviously have your core, which is not my turn, that's the code's. Then I kind of use something called the periphery, which is people that you try to get involved in the

campaign through a group like what we made to kind of spread involvement and not only bring diversity of thought but different groups on campus and representing different students in our student body together to kind of formulate a team of support. That was kind of the goal there, but obviously the error occurred with losing control of the time in which that began.

Does that help?

Rachel: Yes.

Austin: I guess the only reason I use team is because people understand that better than if I would have put Austin Morgan 2017 Periphery.

Paul: Could we hear your definition of a team?

Rachel: Yes. So we define.

Austin: Wait, isn't this your time to ask questions?

Donielle: Yes, so you can ask a question.

Austin: I don't know if that's a question actually.

Donielle: The Commission can come to their own vision of what a team is. If you want to include that in your final statement, that's an option.

Any additional questions? No. Good. Do you have any witnesses?

Morgan: No.

Donielle: Ok.

So before we take a break to allow the Commission to prepare.

Commissioner: We need to ask questions to the respondents.

Donielle: Oh, yes. Sorry. I think I'm going to interject something first.

So we just want to be transparent with everyone that we had a slight issue in regards to the complaint being raised due to 11.H.1 of the Elections Code hearings shall not be open to the general public, including but not limited to members of the press and general student body. Hearings are only open to the accused members of the

opposing ticket, the complainant, the witnesses, a USC faculty member, and/or staff as mentioned in the members of the Commission, the Associate Director of Elections, the Assistant Director of Elections, and USG Advisors. However, on emails regarding the complaint, there was, from the Rachel Rebecca ticket, there was cc'd a law student here at USC who they mentioned in an email who was helping them that does violate the code. The Commission and ourselves will look further into what that means and if you look at 11.H.2 it does say any comment to the press by any participant in a hearing will lead to a sanction. It doesn't specify what the result of a non-press individual is. But we just want to be clear that was a violation of the code, and in further hearings that's really inappropriate. We wanted everyone to be aware of that and to have it on official record.

Kat: Ya, we're going to sort this out. We're planning to talk to you guys after the hearing, before they deliberate. If you're willing you guys can stick around and not be a part of this conversation obviously but if you want to.

Donielle: Ok. Great. Now moving forward.

The Commission now has the opportunity to ask any final questions.

Commissioner: Ok, so my biggest question is, I really appreciate you guys saying your entire intention is to run a clean campaign and I also understand that you were trying to work with your core team and it may have gotten out of control. So I have a question for Austin because it looks to me like on 1/26 at 11:20AM about, you commented "this is a secret group, it cannot be searched or found, and only added members can see who is in the group. Please feel free to add anyone you can think of." So to me that does not sound like other people began to add people without the core campaign team's permission, that seems like the core campaign team was encouraging active campaigning before the campaign period had begun. So can you please clarify what your intention was in making that comment, and whether you would do it again after going through this process?

Austin: Totally. So actually, from a personal stand point, I copied and pasted that exact verbiage and wording from the team Edwin and I created last year. And my intention was to set it up the same way I set up my Vote page, right. So know how we previously mentioned how I created that page but didn't publish it. So the intention with using those words and that framework essentially was to have that page ready to be added at the correct period of time, right, and that was my absolute intention. We did want people to be added and we did want all of that to happen, just for that to be launched after and, as we previously mentioned, the problem was more and more people got invited and it got out of control, which is why we are discussing it.

Does that help?

Commissioner: Sure.

I think that clarifies it pretty well. It's just the group was made and then about 20 minutes later you posted for more members to be added. So that seems pretty clear to me that you weren't expecting people to wait until 7PM the next day to start adding members. Then again, it could be a simple mix up, but you've mentioned many times that you're currently Vice President, so if anyone should know the code. But that's not a question. I don't want to digress.

Morgan: No, absolutely.

Can I add to that?

Commissioner: Ya, go ahead.

Morgan: I think our intent behind it was like people we trust, and just like we were saying we didn't want it to get out of control and it was a page for people we trust and I think we made that pretty clear. Fully taking responsibility for it, like we shouldn't have done it. We know that now and are running a clean campaign. No more infractions going from here.

Commissioner: Very good, ok.

The other question I guess I would have is, were you guys aware of section 7.C in the Code, that says that if you are aware of any campaign indiscretions being committed by parties on your behalf, you should self-report it, and if you were aware, why did you not self-report it?

Morgan: I didn't know. Austin, did you?

Austin: That was totally news to me, which is why I ask the clarifying question to Rachel earlier about the 700, because I was unaware of that, but it does make perfect sense. It's clearly stated there now. I understand why she said that.

Commissioner: Sure, thank you for that response. I just thought it was a very fair point. As you guys are trying to run a clean campaign in the future, that would be a great way to demonstrate that.

That's it from me.

Donielle: Are there any further questions from the Commission?

Nope, alright. We will now take a five-minute break to allow parties to prepare summary statements.

[5 MINUTE BREAK]

Donielle: Will the petitioner summarize what he/she believes has been shown to be true. He/she may include any general comments or address the impact of the incident, and may include a sanction recommendation.

Begin.

Rachel: Austin said he and the team encouraged other people to add including Luke Southwell-Chan. We would like to point out that we have a screenshot that points out that Luke Southwell-Chan was added to the group by Austin Dunn.

Now we would like to address the intent. So they said that they wanted to run a clean campaign, but obviously starting this group contradicted what we hoped to be the ideal. They did not act as it was a clean campaign.

I would also like to mention the allegation of the teacher saying it this out loud in class. I used him as my own personal mentor, and he mentioned this in class. So obviously I take responsibility for confiding in him, but in class, when this happened, I denied it. I refused to talk about it because I'm not allowed to, because he did not know that it was not supposed to be talked about. So I just wanted to point that out.

Rebecca: Also, we will take full responsibility for the law student cc'd on the email. We honestly didn't know who to go with, and given his knowledge, we just wanted to have a person to talk to. Given how many people in USG were involved in this Facebook group, we were not sure how far the reach was, so we do take responsibility.

Rachel: Also, in terms of the severity, you just can't make up a 100 meter dash if you're already 100 meters behind. Having that extra day on a 14-day campaign really matters a lot. So that's the severity, and the scale of the approximately 300 members. We also have screenshots of when they were added that say yesterday on them.

Now we would also like to point out that fact that Austin said he didn't know about the fact that you should let the Elections Commission know if any rules are violated. You can't claim ignorance on that. We were all told to read Code, everybody was reading the Code.

We also want to reinforce what a team is. There were specific rules in the Facebook messages saying what they should do, how they should outreach to people, what the Facebook posts should look like, so we constitute that as working on a campaign team.

We also just really want to reinforce that we didn't want to bring this up. If we could have had a campaign where we all dealt with all our own problems and issues. We had our own plans to do, a lot of things to do, and I'm sure Austin Morgan knows there's a lot of stuff that goes into running a campaign. We didn't want to spend the extra time on doing it, but we are running the campaign with the mentality that the students deserve to know what the student leaders are doing. We don't think that just because having USG connections means they can be above the rules, so why we're running this as outsiders is just to reinforce the fact that anybody can be a student leader and we need to hold all our student leaders accountable and to be responsible. So obviously we need take responsibility for the claims against us even though this wasn't our hearing. But we would like to just reinforce that our recommendation is that, due to the severity of the violation Austin Morgan has conducted in their campaign, we demand that Elections Commission immediately disqualify Austin Morgan from the election.

We would also like to just reaffirm that we would love to have a campaign where we all just dealt with ourselves, and serve the students the best we can but we've had to bring this up because it's something to this nature cannot be disregarded.

Kat: Can we also request to see the evidence that Luke committed?

Rahcel-2: Yes.

Donielle: Alright. Will the respondent summarize what he/she believes has been shown to be true and this may include a sanction recommendation. You may begin.

[TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY]

Austin: As to what I previously mentioned, we've said this over and over again, I don't think we've broken any rule particularly. I know Luke is the Senior Director of Communications and oversees the Election so I would have never had the intention to put him in a position where he would be in a conflict of interest. I do have a memory of adding people who were suggested to me, and maybe in the heat of the moment I could have accidentally added him. I do remember however the moment that the group was actively active, I immediately people were liking I did make sure he wasn't in the group and I believe he had already removed himself. It was actually news to me a while ago that he was in the group at all it doesn't really add up due to the evidence that was presented, but that was the honest truth again.

As we've reiterated repeatedly, we do hope to have no more of these issues something we didn't want at the beginning of our campaign. It is very sad to have it be effecting the rest of our campaign thus far.

That's probably where I'd leave it. Morgan?

Morgan: Ya, adding to that, we did own up to this mistake. In no way do we think were above the rules. Obviously we made a huge mistake. Going forward, like we said, we do want to run a great campaign.

Paul: We are obviously accepting that we take responsibility for this action, however as the petitioner actually stated, it was basically just a day advantage, so we feel as though a social media infraction that would amount to the same amount of time would be a fair infraction, rather than complete and utter disqualification, which, as they said, would be very disheartening since we have worked so hard on this. Especially because Austin and Morgan have been think of running since October, to have one mistake that we all very might regret, completely disqualify us would show how our work would completely be just taken away from us and I don't think that's truly fair. I do truly see an infraction being quite fair, because we made a mistake, but I don't think that mistake is as sizable as the other team is trying to amount it as.

Austin: Ya, I think just to add up finally, I know I did read the Elections Code, focusing on the guidelines to determining pertinent and for determining validity, and that's obviously not in question because validated this mistake, and the severity of the events of the elections are muted, which would be the second point.

In regards to the intent of offense, I can really not reiterate enough the fact that we had no intentions of making this error or of conducting our campaign unfairly. And the other thing mentioned in the Code is the number of violations and the campaigns that have been sanctioned against previously. Obviously this is first one, and our intent is for it to be the last one as well. And in regards to cooperativeness, we are literally 100% trying to cooperate, by all means. Thank you for your time tonight.

Donielle: Great. After the Commissions' decision and deliberating, all verdicts and sanctions will be emailed to the involved parties, and posted on the USG Elections website within 24 hours of the deliberation.

Are there any questions? No questions? Great.

This hearing is concluded. Participants are reminded about the confidentiality of this hearing. Thank you.