

Case: Connor Strobel vs. Shane K.M. Wood

- (1) Connor Strobel alleges that Shane K.M. Wood impugned his integrity during the Presidents' Forum and in a Facebook post. Strobel alleges that this is a violation of Elections Code Section XV-C-2: "2. Failure to comply with university policy, which includes Housing Complex Rules, State and Federal Law." Strobel elaborates that the specific policy he is referencing is AGS Bylaws Section V-G: "An AGS representative and executive board member shall not impugn the integrity of another representative or executive board member in AGS business."
- a. **Ruling:** Elections Code section XV-C-2 does not include the AGS Bylaws. Any student, including those not previously AGS officers, may run in AGS elections; therefore, those students are not subject to AGS Bylaws prior to being elected, so the Elections Code does not mandate that AGS Bylaws must be followed. Additionally, the elections for AGS seats are not classified as AGS business. Candidates for office running in elections for AGS seats are running as students, not as current AGS officers. As such, elections proceedings are not subject to following the AGS Bylaws. Based on these clarifications of the Elections Code, (1) is not a valid elections complaint and no action is suggested on behalf of this complaint.
- (2) Connor Strobel alleges that Shane K.M. Wood violated Elections Code Section XV-C-7: "Failure to comply with the UCI Principles of Community." The UCI Principles of Community state: "Our legacy for an increasingly multicultural academic community and for a learning climate free from expressions of bigotry is drawn from the United States and California Constitutions and from the charter of the University of California, which protects diversity and reaffirms our commitment to the protection of lawful free speech. Affirmation of that freedom is an effective way of ensuring that acts of bigotry and abusive behavior will not go unchallenged within the University. Tolerance, civility and mutual respect for diversity of background, gender, ethnicity, race, and religion is as crucial within our campus community as is tolerance, civility and mutual respect for diversity of political beliefs, sexual orientation, and physical abilities. Education, and a clear, rational, and vigorous challenge are positive responses to prejudice and acts of bigotry" and "UCI expects all those affiliated with it to adhere to the letter and the spirit of University nondiscrimination policies." Strobel alleges that during the Presidents' Forum, Wood intentionally invoked a consequence of Strobel's disability status to paint Strobel in a negative light, in relation to social programs run by AGS. Strobel alleges that Wood knew about Strobel's disability status and its impact on Strobel's ability to attend social events, and Wood purposefully used that information to suggest that Strobel did not care about building community.
- a. **Ruling:** In the Presidents' Forum, Wood states that Strobel doesn't come to social events. Strobel then brings up Strobel's disability status and states that Wood was aware of that status and the impact it has on Strobel's ability to attend social events. Considering that commenting or questioning the social

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attendance of a presidential candidate is something any person may have reasonably asked regardless of the history between the two people in question, and because Strobel is the first to actually mention disability during the debate, this complaint becomes a question of intent. Strobel effectively alleges that Wood intentionally invoked Strobel's disability status to use it against Strobel. In Wood's response to this complaint, Wood states that while Wood was aware of Strobel's disability status and some of its consequences, Wood understood the implications of that status to apply to larger events only. Wood further explains that Wood has participated in other trips, meetings, and gatherings with Strobel where Wood has perceived that Strobel was comfortable. Wood states that Wood was surprised when Strobel stated during the elections forum that smaller events were also difficult for Strobel due to disability. During the President's Forum, Strobel states in response to Wood that Wood shows a "misunderstanding of how disability works." Misunderstanding the consequences of a disability is not inherently malicious. Based on Wood's response, it is reasonable to believe that Wood did not understand the full extent of the consequences of Strobel's disability, and therefore did not purposefully intend to implicate a consequence of a disability status against Strobel. Because this is a case of proving intent, it is the opinion of the Elections Commissioner that there is not enough evidence to prove that Wood intended to use Strobel's disability against Strobel in the debate, given the Forum discussion and Wood's response. No action is suggested on behalf of this complaint.