

March 16th, 2022

On behalf of the student groups:

The University of Winnipeg Neuroscience Student Association (UWNNSA),

The University of Winnipeg Physics Student Association (UWPSA),

The University of Winnipeg Mathematics and Statistics Student Association (UWMSSA),

The University of Winnipeg Queer Student Association (UWQSA),

The University of Winnipeg Applied Computer Science Student Association (UWACSSA),

The Chemistry Student Association (ChemSA),

Unitea,

The Geography and Environmental Studies Sciences Association (GESA),

The Students of Science Association (SOSA),

The University of Winnipeg Social Dynamics(UWSD),

The Canadian Indigenous science and engineering society (caiSES),

The University of Winnipeg Psychology Student Association (UWPSA),

The University of Winnipeg's Pre-Veterinary Club (UWPVC),

alongside the STEM Peer Mentorship Program (SPMP),

are writing this open letter as we are deeply emotionally exhausted and disheartened to hear about the recent complaints against Hayer, as well as individuals' experiences with him. It is deeply disturbing to discover that the person who is running to represent you and your peers is actively making statements and choices that cause serious harm to the larger student body, and that the UWSA has swept these claims aside and done little to hold the individual accountable for his actions.

Based on Section D, "Election Violations, Complaints, and Accountability" of the UWSA General By-laws, page 33 <https://theuwsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/By-laws-Feb-2021-1.pdf>, we believe for the following reasons that Kiratveer Singh Hayer should be removed from this election and any further elections or positions in the UWSA.

5.46 Election Violations and Complaints point i. states "Election campaign participants are required to act reasonably, respectfully, and in good faith." Point d. states that election campaign participants must "Comply with University of Winnipeg Policies" one of which is the Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy as stated in Regulations & Policies section 11. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/regulationsandpolicies.pdf>.

Furthermore, the University of Winnipeg Human Rights and Diversity office states that students have the right to "learn and work in an inclusive and respectful work and learning environment

that promotes equal opportunities and is free from discrimination and harassment.”
<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/index.html>

The complaints made in the EAB reports on March 5th, <https://theuwsa.ca/2022/03/election-accountability-board-march-5th-2022-report/>, <https://theuwsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EAB-Report-March-5th-2022.pdf>, <https://theuwsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EAB-Report-02-March-5th-2022.pdf>, and March 7th, <https://theuwsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EAB-Report-March-7th-2022.pdf> and from individual accounts, Hayer has been proven to violate these sections of the UWSA By-Laws.

In 2020 there was a formal complaint put against Hayer that led to the CEC ruling which determined Hayer should be restrained from approaching members of the Devote slate as they did not feel safe around him <https://theuwsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Complaint-Ruling-Feb-27.pdf>.

The names of the persons reporting these sentiments will remain anonymous to protect their identities, however it may be possible to share our records privately with the appropriate figures within the UWSA if required. Hayer has engaged in public discourse on numerous occasions to make statements such as “because BIPOC have to toughen up” then continuing “the world is not a safe space”. In response to the statement “institutions of higher education should be safe spaces” he said that “it is from my perspective because I’m not so sensitive”. This further supports his own words that he believes that “...racism is seated at the level of the individual instead of the group” and that “...systematic racism must be stopped but things like intersectionality and the BIPOC lounge are making it worse”.

He has implied on several occasions that individuals brought racism upon themselves to further their own agendas by continuously criticizing BIPOC safe spaces on campus by saying “What I believe in is that we should be stressing responsibility over rights as there are ways that people can change their circumstances despite marginalization based on race”.

Additionally, we would like to express our disappointment in the lack of transparency and accountability that the UWSA has displayed this past election. The UWSA failed to make students adequately aware of the serious allegations brought forth against Hayer before the elections had concluded; the only indications of the accusations were brief mentions on social media of “One formal complaint was brought up to the Election Accountability Board.” The posts included the date the EAB met, but do not mention the complaint, the accused, nor the result of the board meeting. Further, it required students to click a link to first navigate to the UWSA website, and then download the formal report if they wanted access to the information mentioned.

This stands stark against the content found on the UWSA Instagram, which includes comprehensive information about candidates and how to vote. Such important information about a candidate should be stated plainly, instead of only being mentioned in a cryptic Instagram story that disappears within 24 hours.

There was also a delay between the submission of these reports and when the board met; the report from March 7th was only posted on March 9th, which was the last day of the election period, at which point a significant portion of the votes had been cast, all of these voters had no knowledge of the second formal accusation against Hayer, which could have greatly impacted the results of the election.

Complaints as serious as those brought against Hayer are key in an election for a position of power that represents the students of University of Winnipeg. The lack of appropriate action from the UWSA is a disappointment and a slap in the face to a population of which they have committed to being transparent.

We hope that the UWSA will take the appropriate steps to rectify this mistake by making future complaints, and the results of said complaints more accessible by detailing the report in an accessible manner in plain text in addition to making statements and posts for students to learn of the nature of the complaints, accessible and permanent.

By allowing Hayer to have run in this election, the UWSA implies that the University of Winnipeg endorses him as a representative of their institution and student body. You imply, moreover, that you're perfectly happy to provide this individual with a large platform to continue to cause harm to the larger student body, most of which, disproportionately affects already marginalized student groups.

There has been no adequate representation of the University of Winnipeg's values, policies, and morals in his public image and statements.

We do not stand for Hayer to be considered a representative of us, the aforementioned groups, or the values of the University which we chose and pay to attend. We are calling for his removal from this election, any future elections, and his current elected position. We are sharing with the UWSA exactly what we believe is the only right action under the current circumstances, and that is Hayer's removal from this election and any future elections for any elected positions. We, the aforementioned student groups, will continue to advocate for our campus to be a safe and welcoming place for all persons, and we do not believe that Kirt Hayer embodies or promotes values that align with a safe, inclusive, diverse, and welcoming student environment.

We hope you listen to our concerns; take them with the utmost seriousness, and take appropriate action.

Thank you for your time.

Please contact:

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