

**Date Filed:** March 7, 2019 (received by Electoral Office March 8)

**Nature of Complaint:** Prohibited campaigning, financial non-compliance

On March 7, 2019, the Elections Office received a complaint alleging that:

1. Video production company Riptide Studios, an off-campus group, had endorsed a slate;
2. That slate must have campaigned off-campus to get that endorsement, a violation of 5.9.5b;
3. Riptide Studios at the very least provided footage for that slate, and possibly produced the whole video
4. Given the high cost of video production, the slate likely did not report the fair market of this donation in their financial statements

On March 11, 2019, the slate responded. They provided evidence that Riptide's donation consisted of four seconds of stock footage of the UVic campus. The video itself was produced by an unaffiliated UVic student with no professional video editing experience. Riptide Studios also suggested that they would provide the footage for free to anyone who requested it.

**Discussion:** This section will reference the four points above in turn.

1. Riptide Studio's small donation falls far short of constituting an 'endorsement.'
2. I draw a distinction between *networking* off campus and *campaigning* off-campus. It is true that the slate in question reached out to an off-campus group. However, they were not campaigning in the usual sense of the word. It would be different if the slate reached out to convince the studio that they are the only candidates to whom footage should be donated. Nothing in policy prohibits reaching out to off-campus groups.
3. As Riptide did not produce the video, this assertion is dismissed.
4. The value of four seconds of stock footage is likely negligible and is certainly not enough to invalidate the financial statement of the slate even if 'fair market value' was considered. However, given the studio's clear statement that they would donate that footage for free to anyone who asks, the value of the footage is zero, and the financial statements of the slate need not take it into account.

Speaking to the Election Office's broader purpose, nothing in the actions of the accused slate caused any kind of inequity or unfairness in the elections process. Anything that either slate can access for free, albeit with a bit of active community outreach, is permissible, be it donated stock footage or the free software trial used to put the video together.

Complaint dismissed.