

# THE VARSITY

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## Impeached SCSU prez threatens lawsuit

By **Yeamrot Taddese**

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**Z**uhair Syed remains president of the Scarborough Campus Students' Union after the board did not ratify his removal at a meeting on Friday, Feb. 12. Syed said the referendum procedures leading to his impeachment vote from Feb. 3 to Feb. 5 were "illegal and unconstitutional," and threatened to sue SCSU if it ratifies his removal before the end of his term in May 2010.

The ramifications of Syed's challenge are unclear. Acting president Amir Bashir told The Underground, "If Zuhair doesn't get removed, then he goes back to being president and I return all his duties." An inside source contradicted Bashir and said that not ratifying the referendum does not mean giving Syed back his duties. The question on the referendum asked students if they wanted to remove Syed from his presidency and not whether or not he should get his duties back, said the source.

According to Syed, bylaws in the SCSU policy on referendum procedures have been violated on two counts.

First, Syed said the policy required a two-week period between the day the referendum was called and voting days. He said the referendum was called on Jan. 28 and voting began on Feb. 4, leaving only six days of notice. Voting in fact began on Feb. 3.

Second, Syed said the board should have formally provided information about the referendum through publication at least once a week for two consecutive weeks before the vote.

The SCSU policy on referendum says that notice of a referendum should be given in the same manner as notice of SCSU board meetings. Board meetings are announced through the Intranet and meeting schedules are available on the SCSU website.

"If the board decides to neglect the constitution of the SCSU, I'll be forced to [...] protect my rights and I have already consulted my legal counsel," Syed said. "I will file a lawsuit against the SCSU [for] removing me from office unlawfully and taking away my salary and position."

He added that he will also press defamation and reputational charges for the Tier 3 censure the board gave him in December citing neglect of duties and unprofessional behaviour.

"I'd never want to put [the board] or myself in this position but this is my last resort," Syed said. Psychology director Sarah Bushara posed a question at the meeting for the board to consider. "Why did

Contributor

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[Syed] campaign in the referendum if he knew it was not going to count anyways?”

The board passed interim president Amir Bashir’s motion to end the meeting and investigate the bylaw violations Syed alleges. The policies said to have been defied are article 13:04 of bylaw 1, article 6:00 of bylaw 2 and article 4:04 of bylaw 1.

The board is currently consulting a lawyer to see if it can ratify the referendum. It will likely not hold another meeting until March 5.

“[Syed] has been a president for two years. By now he should know the policies,” said humanities director Maryann Raby who expressed disappointment at Syed’s actions. “I hope he remembers that this is student money [at stake].”

About five minutes into Friday’s meeting, students and reporters were escorted out of the boardroom for almost an hour of in-camera meeting. Syed made his statements once the meeting reopened for audience.

Syed’s bylaw violation claims came on the last day of voting and campaigning for 2010-2011 executive positions.

*Note: this article originally appeared online, and has been updated to reflect the slightly expanded version that ran in the Feb. 22 print edition.*

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