



CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL INTERNET DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTRE

DOMAIN NAME DISPUTE

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL

DECISION

CIIDRC case number:	26881-CDRP	Decision date: 21 May 2026
Domain Name:	<innovationhubslc.ca>	
Panel:	Robert A. Fashler	
Complainant:	St. Lawrence College of Applied Arts and Technology	
Registrant:	Mateusz Gwarda	

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 This proceeding concerns the domain name <innovationhubslc.ca> (“**Disputed Domain Name**”), which is registered with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (“**CIRA**”). The proceeding is governed by:

a. the Canadian Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (version 1.3) (“**Policy**”); and

a. the Canadian Dispute Resolution Rules (version 1.6) (“**Rules**”).

1.2 The Canadian International Internet Dispute Resolution Centre (“**CIIDRC**”) is administering this proceeding. CIIDRC is a recognized domain name dispute resolution service provider under the Policy.

2. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

2.1 The procedural history of this case was set out in a letter from CIIDRC to the Panel dated May 12, 2026, as follows:

a. On March 26, 2026, the Complainant paid the required commencement fee.



- b. On March 31, 2026:
 - i. Laure Bonnavé of Clyde & Co. Canada, LLP, external legal counsel to the Complainant, filed the Complaint with CIIDRC pursuant to the Policy and the Rules;
 - ii. CIIDRC determined that the Complaint was in administrative compliance with CIRA's requirements under paragraph 3.2 of the Rules;
 - iii. CIIDRC notified CIRA of this proceeding;
 - iv. CIRA emailed a verification response to CIIDRC confirming that the Disputed Domain Name is registered in the name of Mateusz Gwarda ("**Registrant**"), whose registered address is in Krakow, Poland; and
 - v. CIRA confirmed to CIIDRC that the Disputed Domain Name was placed on a Registrar LOCK and that the Disputed Domain Name was registered September 4, 2025 ("**Registration Date**").
- b. On April 2, 2026, pursuant to Paragraph 4.4 of the Rules, CIIDRC forwarded to both disputants a Notice of Complaint together with a copy of the Complaint.
- c. The deadline for the Registrant to submit a Response was set for April 23, 2026.
- d. The Registrant has not filed a Response.
- e. The Complainant has elected to proceed with a Panel consisting of a single-member.
- f. The Complainant deposited the required Panel fee on May 7, 2026.
- g. On May 12, 2026, CIIDRC appointed Robert A. Fashler to serve as a single-member Panel in this proceeding.

3. FACTS

Complainant's Allegations

The Complaint alleges the following facts:

- 3.1 The Complainant satisfies CIRA's Canadian Presence Requirements because:
 - a. it is an Ontario college created pursuant to the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002, S.O. 2002, c.8, and operates as a Canadian public institution (as contemplated in section 2.10 of CIRA's Canadian Presence Requirements); and
 - b. It owns the following Canadian rights in the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (as contemplated in sections 2.17 and 2.18 of CIRA's Canadian Presence Requirements):

Mark	CIPO No.	Goods/Services	Status
Official Mark: 	0913428	Goods and services (unrestricted)	Public notice under s. 9(1)(n)(iii) given November 14, 2001
Reg'd Trademark: 	TMA307501	Educational services at the post-secondary level. Mirrors; stationery and school supplies namely notepaper, letterhead paper, brochures, folders, flyers, envelopes, pens, notebooks, calendars, handbooks, instructional manuals, binders, desk sets and pencils; men's, women's and children's clothing namely ski jackets, vests, parkas, woven headwear namely toques and hats, caps, coats, jackets, sweatpants, robes, scarves, hosiery, tank tops, T-shirts, sweatshirts, pants and shirts; display materials namely posters, pennants, bumper stickers, badges, uniform insignia, buttons, keychains, shakers and souvenir items namely team hats and lapel pins, team rings, key chains, stick pins, plaques, beer mugs and enameled jewellery.	Registered October 18, 1985

("Complainant's Registered Marks").

- 3.2 The Complainant is an Ontario college established in 1967. Since 1967, the Complainant has built extensive goodwill, institutional recognition, and a well-established identity across Ontario and Canada. The Complainant has become widely known to students, alumni, employers, and the public, resulting in significant reputation and brand equity tied to its name, logos, and associated visual identity elements.
- 3.3 The Complainant's registered trademark comprising ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE & design is the primary identifier of the Complainant in all its official documents, digital assets, and marketing materials. The Complainant's official mark that consists of a wave design is a distinctive and recognizable component of the Complainant's visual identity.
- 3.4 The Complainant's Registered Marks are distinctive, recognizable, and have been used extensively by the Complainant over many years. The Complainant's Registered Marks are recognized as indicating the Complainant as the source of educational services in Canada. Under Canadian law, the Complainant's Registered Marks confer on the Complainant the exclusive right to use them throughout Canada in association with educational services and related institutional branding.
- 3.5 The Registrant actively operates a website that is accessed via a URL that comprises the entire Disputed Domain Name ("Registrant's Website"). Both of Complainant's Registered Marks are displayed "verbatim or in substance" prominently on Registrant's Website, without authorization, in a manner that creates a false impression of affiliation with the Complainant, or of sponsorship or endorsement by the Complainant.
- 3.6 In addition to the Complainant's rights in the Complainant's Registered Marks, the Complainant has acquired substantial common law trademark rights through long-term, continuous, and public use of its name, logos, and branding elements since 1967, which arise from:
 - a. *"Decades of uninterrupted use of its institutional name ('St. Lawrence College'), acronyms (including 'SLC'), and associated branding on campus signage, academic materials, digital platforms, social media, and student-facing publications";*

- b. *“Consistent and widespread public exposure, including to students, alumni, staff, stakeholders, and the broader community across Ontario and Canada”;* and
 - c. *Use of the Complainant’s “branding across official websites and online communications well before the Registrant acquired the Disputed Domain Name.”*
- 3.7 *“The unauthorized use of these marks” on the Registrant’s Website, “particularly in the exact form registered and historically used by” the Complainant, “demonstrates clear misrepresentation and creates a likelihood of confusion among members of the public who reasonably expect that the website is operated by, affiliated with, or endorsed by” the Complainant.*
- 3.8 *“These trademark rights therefore form a foundational element of the Complainant’s case, demonstrating that the Registrant has no legitimate entitlement to the marks and is improperly exploiting” the Complainant’s “goodwill for deceptive purposes.”* That statement denotes both the Complainant’s Registered Marks and its unregistered marks.

Registrant’s Allegations

- 3.9 The Registrant has not filed any response.

4. CONTENTIONS OF THE PARTIES

Complainant

- 4.1 The Complainant *“has delivered post-secondary education for nearly six decades. Over this period, SLC has educated more than 136,000 graduates and currently serves approximately 5,500 students in more than 55 academic programs offered in person and online.”*
- 4.2 Throughout its history, the Complainant *“has used its institutional name, official logo containing the ‘St. Lawrence College’ name, and its distinctive Wave Design on websites, recruitment materials, campus signage, promotional materials, and other official communications. This longstanding use has created significant reputation, goodwill, and public recognition throughout Canada and internationally.”*
- 4.3 The Complainant owns and uses the Complainant’s Registered Marks, which are protected under the *Trademarks Act*, which grants the Complainant *“exclusive rights to use them in Canada in connection with its educational services and related institutional branding.* Both of the Complainant’s Registered Marks *“appear in identical or substantially identical form on the website associated with the disputed domain name.”*
- 4.4 *“In addition to its registered marks, the Complainant enjoys extensive common law trademark rights arising from continuous and public use of its institutional name, acronym (SLC), logo, Wave Design, and related branding elements since 1967. These identifiers have been used consistently on” the Complainant’s “official website, digital platforms, publications, and communications long before the Registrant acquired the disputed domain name.”*

4.5 *“Collectively, these rights demonstrate” the Complainant’s “longstanding goodwill and distinctiveness in its institutional identity and branding.”*

4.6 The Disputed Domain Name *“was registered by the Registrant on September 4, 2025, after the prior SLC-related domain registration expired and was not renewed. Following registration, the Registrant launched a website designed to impersonate SLC.”*

(The Panel is puzzled by the Complainant’s allusion to a “prior SLC-related domain name registration”. Throughout the Complaint, the Complainant employed “SLC” as a definition denoting itself, St. Lawrence College. That was just a drafting choice. The Complainant could just as easily have selected another definition, such as “the Complainant” or “the College”. Hence, the Complainant’s reference to a “SLC-related domain registration” is inherently ambiguous – is the Complainant merely referring to its own website or is it referring to a URL that featured the acronym “SRL”. In either case, the Complainant provided no supporting evidence, explanation, or context. Accordingly, the Panel cannot take that statement into account.)

4.7 The Registrant’s Website:

- a. *“reproduces SLC’s official registered trademarks and Wave Design without authorization”;*
- b. *“copies substantial portions of” the Complainant’s “prior website content word-for-word”;*
- c. *“imitates” the Complainant’s “formatting, branding, and institutional presentation”;* and
- d. *“includes a link at the bottom of the page redirecting users to a sports gambling website.”*

(The Panel is puzzled by the Complainant’s assertion, in item b., that the Registrant’s Website copies substantial portions of the Complainant’s “prior website content word-for-word”. Again, the Complainant provides no supporting evidence, explanation, or context. The Panel cannot take that allegation into account.)

4.8 *“The redirection raises serious concerns about DNS abuse, including phishing and misdirection aimed at extracting personal information from unsuspecting users.”* The Complainant *“has not authorized any use of its intellectual property on the disputed website and has no affiliation with the gambling site.”*

4.9 The Disputed Domain Name *“is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s Marks in which”* the Complainant *“held rights long before September 4, 2025, and continues to hold such rights today. The domain name contains the acronym “slc”, an identifier strongly and uniquely associated with the Complainant. The website displays exact imitations of “the Complainant’s “registered trademarks and institutional branding, reinforcing the likelihood of confusion.”*

(The Panel notes that the Complainant depicts the “Complainant’s Marks” as if that was a defined term. However, that term is not, in fact, defined in the Complaint, hence its meaning is uncertain and ambiguous.)

4.10 *“Under the first-impression test applied in CDRP jurisprudence, an average user encountering innovationhubslc.ca alongside”* the Complainant’s *“distinctive branding would reasonably assume it is officially affiliated with the Complainant.”*

4.11 The Registrant has no legitimate interest in the Disputed Domain Name within the meaning of paragraph 3.4 of the Policy, for the following reasons:

- a. *“There is no evidence that the Registrant has ever used, been identified by, or conducted any activity under the names ‘Innovation Hub SLC,’ ‘SLC,’ or ‘St. Lawrence College’.”*
- b. *“The Registrant has never been licensed, authorized, or otherwise permitted by the Complainant to use its registered trademarks, unregistered marks, institutional name, or any related branding elements. SLC has not granted the Registrant permission to reproduce its logo, Wave Design, content, or visual identity, nor has it entered into any agreement that would justify or legitimize the Registrant’s use of these protected identifiers.”*
- c. *“The disputed domain name is not being used in a descriptive, generic, or non-commercial manner that could fall under the legitimate-interest criteria set out in paragraph 3.4 of the Policy. The term ‘SLC’ is not being used in a dictionary sense, nor is the domain name used to describe goods or services offered by the Registrant. It is instead being used to impersonate the Complainant and to exploit the goodwill associated with the Complainant’s institutional identity.”*
- d. The Registrant is actively impersonating the Complainant. The website at the Disputed Domain Name copies the Complainant’s *“official trademarks, its copyrighted website content, and the overall look and feel of SLC’s authentic web presence. This type of reproduction goes beyond mere resemblance; the Registrant has recreated”* the Complainant’s *“branding in a manner that would lead a reasonable user to believe that the site is officially affiliated with or operated by”* the Complainant .
- e. *“The presence of a link redirecting users to a sports gambling website further demonstrates that the Registrant’s use of the domain name is deceptive, harmful, and commercially exploitative.”*
- f. *“The evidence supports a finding that the Registrant is using the domain name in a misleading, fraudulent, and harmful manner that serves no bona fide purpose. The Registrant’s activities are entirely parasitic on the Complainant’s reputation, and the domain name is being used solely to exploit and deceive, not to advance any legitimate interest.”*

4.12 *“The Registrant’s conduct satisfies several grounds of bad faith under paragraph 3.5 of the Policy. The totality of the evidence demonstrates that the domain name was registered and is being used with the intention of misleading the public, disrupting the Complainant’s activities, and exploiting the Complainant’s longstanding goodwill and trademark rights.”*

4.13 *“The Registrant has replicated the Complainant’s official branding, including exact copies of its registered trademarks and prior website content. This imitation is deliberate and calculated. The overall appearance of the disputed website is designed to make visitors believe they are accessing an official”* web page of the Complainant.

4.14 *“By directing visitors to a gambling website and misusing” the Complainant’s “academic branding to lend credibility to this redirect, the Registrant is interfering with” the Complainant’s “online presence, damaging its reputation, and undermining the trust that students, families, staff, and the broader community place in the institution. This type of misuse risks diverting users away from” the Complainant’s “legitimate digital platforms and tarnishing its reputation as a responsible educational institution.”*

4.15 *“After the domain name expired, the Registrant acquired it opportunistically and immediately put it to use in a manner that takes advantage of” the Complainant’s “reputation and brand recognition. The registration was not done in good faith, but rather with the intent to occupy a domain name incorporating” the Complainant’s “identifiers and to exploit the lapse for the Registrant’s own purposes. The Registrant’s misuse of the Complainant’s trademarks demonstrates that the goal was not passive registration but intentional exploitation of” the Complainant’s identity.*

(The Panel notes that, once again, the Complainant makes a cryptic allusion to “an expired domain name” but provides no evidence, explanation, or context. The Panel cannot take that allusion into account.)

4.16 *“... the Registrant’s actions constitute trademark infringement, passing off, and misappropriation of goodwill under Canadian law, and support the relief sought under the CDRP.”*

4.17 *“The term ‘SLC’ is well known as an identifier of St. Lawrence College, and the Registrant reinforces confusion by copying SLC’s official branding.”*

Registrant

4.18 The Registrant has not filed a Response.

Remedy Sought

4.19 The Complainant requests that the Domain Name be transferred to it.

5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

5.1 Eligibility

The Complainant is an eligible complainant under paragraph 1.4 of the CDRP because it is an Ontario college created pursuant to the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002, S.O. 2002, c.8, which operates in Canada (as contemplated in section 2 (j) of CIRA’s Canadian Presence Requirements).

5.2 Policy Requirements

In accordance with Paragraph 4.1 of the Policy, the onus is on the Complainant to prove, on a balance of probabilities, that:

- a. the Domain Name is Confusingly Similar to a Mark in which the Complainant had rights prior to the date of registration of the Disputed Domain Name and continues to have such rights; and
- b. the Registrant registered the Domain Name in bad faith as described in paragraph 3.5 of the

Policy.

and the Complainant must provide some evidence that:

- c. the Registrant has no legitimate interest in the Domain Name.

5.3 Analysis

Preliminary Observation

The CDRP process is narrow and specific. It is a form of summary adjudication established by contract, not legislation or common law.

The CDRP is not intended to serve as a substitute for, or an adjunct to, a civil action for infringement, passing off, misleading advertising, etc. Panelists must “stay in their lane” - focussing only on the narrow task established for them by the Policy.

This case presented in the Complaint appears to exceed the proper scope of a CDRP proceeding.

First Element – Confusing Similarity

Paragraph 4.1 (a) of the Policy requires the Complainant to prove on a balance of probabilities that the Disputed Domain Name is “Confusingly Similar” to a “Mark” in which the Complainant had rights prior to the date of registration.

The terms “Mark” and “Confusingly Similar” are defined precisely in the Policy. Those definitions are crucial to the following analysis. The definitions are:

3.2 A “Mark” is:

- (a) *a trade-mark, including the word elements of a design mark, or a trade name that has been used in Canada by a person, or the person’s predecessor in title, for the purpose of distinguishing the wares, services or business of that person or predecessor or a licensor of that person or predecessor from the wares, services or business of another person;*
- (b) *a certification mark, including the word elements of a design mark, that has been used in Canada by a person or the person’s predecessor in title, for the purpose of distinguishing wares or services that are of a defined standard;*
- (c) *a trade-mark, including the word elements of a design mark, that is registered in CIPO;*
or

- (d) *the alphanumeric and punctuation elements of any badge, crest, emblem or mark in respect of which the Registrar of Trade-marks has given public notice of adoption and use pursuant to paragraph 9(1)(n) of the Trade-marks Act (Canada).*

3.1 *“Confusingly Similar”. In determining whether a domain name is “Confusingly Similar” to a Mark, the Panel shall only consider whether the domain name so nearly resembles the Mark in appearance, sound or the ideas suggested by the Mark as to be likely to be mistaken for the Mark.*

The Disputed Domain Name is <innovationhubslc.ca>.

The Complainant does not restrict its allegations to any specific Marks. Rather, it refers to a collectivity of registered and unregistered marks, names, acronyms, and branding elements, some of which are specifically identified and some of which are only alluded to by category. The Complaint generally conflates all such items in an uncertain manner which it characterizes, *inter alia*, as “institutional identity”, for example:

“ In addition to its registered marks, the Complainant enjoys extensive common law trademark rights arising from continuous and public use of its institutional name, acronym (SLC), logo, Wave Design, and related branding elements since 1967. These identifiers have been used consistently on SLC’s official website, digital platforms, publications, and communications long before the Registrant acquired the disputed domain name.

Collectively, these rights demonstrate SLC’s longstanding goodwill and distinctiveness in its institutional identity and branding.”

The Complainant does not provide any evidence, or assert any details, of such activities.

The Complaint gives significant attention to the Complainant’s Registered Marks. However, it is self-evident that the Disputed Domain Name does not resemble either of the Complainant’s Registered Marks, whether they are assessed by careful comparison or as a matter of first impression and imperfect recollection. To illustrate, here is a side-by-side comparison:

Official Mark	Registered Mark	Disputed Domain Name
		<p>innovationhubslc.ca</p>

The Panel notes that the Complainant’s Registered Marks do not include any of the principle elements of the Disputed Domain Name - namely, “innovation”, “hub”, and “slc” - or any words or characters that include or resemble those elements.

In any event, the Complainant provides no evidence and makes no argument supporting an inference that the Disputed Domain Name so nearly resembles either of the Complainant’s Registered Marks in appearance, sound, or ideas suggested, as to be likely to be mistaken for those Marks. The Panel finds that

the Disputed Domain Name is not Confusingly Similar to either of the Complainant's Registered Marks as contemplated in paragraph 3.3 of the Policy.

Although the Complainant does not unambiguously assert that the Disputed Domain Name is Confusingly Similar to "SLC", the Panel infers that the Complainant intended to do so. For the sake of completeness, the Panel will now proceed on the assumption that the Complainant had unambiguously asserted that the Disputed Domain Name is Confusingly Similar to "SLC".

The first step in that process is to consider whether there is sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that "SLC" is a trademark or trade name within the meaning of paragraph 3.2 of the Policy. The Complainant has not asserted or adduced evidence that "SLC" is a registered trademark, a certification mark, or an official mark. Hence, subparagraphs (b), (c), and (d) of paragraph 3.2 cannot apply. The only subparagraph of paragraph 3.2 that could apply is (a).

Clearly, acronyms can be trademarks and trade names, but that is not automatic for the purposes of paragraph 3.2 (a). Unlike the common law action of passing off, subparagraph 3.2 (a) is narrow in scope. Subparagraph 3.2 (a) applies exclusively to unregistered trademarks and trade names that *"are used in Canada by a person... for the purpose of distinguishing the wares, services or business of that person ... from the wares, services or business of another person."*

The Complainant has not provided evidence proving that it has been actively using "SLC" for the purpose of distinguishing its wares, services, or business from the wares, services, or business of others.

However, the Complainant does make the following assertions:

"the Complainant enjoys extensive common law trademark rights arising from continuous and public use of its institutional name, acronym (SLC), logo, Wave Design, and related branding elements since 1967."

and

"SLC, an identifier strongly and uniquely associated with the Complainant."

Regrettably, assertions of fact do not qualify as evidence, and the Complainant has not provided any actual evidence to support those assertions.

Even if the Complainant had provided some evidence that the acronym "SLC" qualifies as a Mark, it would still have to prove that the Disputed Domain Name is "Confusingly Similar" to the acronym. That would require the Complainant to prove, on a balance of probabilities, that the Disputed Domain Name <innovationhubslc.ca> so nearly resembles "SLC" in appearance, sound, or the idea suggested by the acronym that it is likely to be mistaken for it. The Complainant has not provided any evidence in support of that proposition and has not presented any legal arguments as to why the Panel should find that <innovationhubslc> is likely to be mistaken for "SLC".

At the very least, the Complainant should have provided some evidence establishing:

- a. That the Complainant's use of the acronym "SLC" as a trademark or trade name, within the applicable time frame, that demonstrates use for the purpose of distinguishing the Complainant's

goods, services, or business from those of others; and

- b. Some factual basis from which the Panel could conclude that the Complainant's use of the acronym has increased the likelihood that the Disputed Domain Name would be mistaken for the acronym.

The Complainant has not asserted that it has been using the words "innovation hub" or "innovation hub slc" as a Mark, and it has not provided any evidence to that effect. If the Complainant was using those words as a Mark before the Registration Date, then the Complainant's case would be stronger.

The Complainant does provide evidence and argument addressing what might qualify as bad faith activity exhibited on the Registrant's Website, which might extend into claims of trademark infringement, passing off, copyright infringement, misrepresentation, etc.. That evidence and argument would be relevant in relation to a consideration of bad faith and legitimate interests under subparagraphs 4.1 (b) and (c) of the Policy, but they are of no assistance in relation to subparagraph 4.1 (a).

Given the lack of evidence and relevant legal argument on the narrow issue of Confusing Similarity, the Panel can only make a simple comparison of the Disputed Domain Name and the acronym "SLC". The Panel cannot infer the likelihood of Confusing Similarity because the Registrant appears to have acted in bad faith in the operation of the Registrant's Website.

Looking only at the Disputed Domain Name and the acronym "SLC", the Panel finds that the Complainant has not proven, on a balance of probabilities, that the Disputed Domain Name so nearly resembles the acronym "SLC" in appearance, sound, or the ideas suggested by the acronym as to be likely to be mistaken for it.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that The Complainant has failed to satisfy its burden under paragraph 4.1 (a) of the Policy in that it has not proven, on a balance of probabilities, that the Disputed Domain Name is Confusingly Similar to a Mark in which the Complainant had rights prior to the date of registration of the Disputed Domain Name.

Second and Third Elements

As the Complainant has failed to satisfy its burden on the first element stipulated in paragraph 4.1 (a) of the Policy, there is no need for the Panel to consider the second and third elements stipulated in paragraphs 4.1 (b) and (c) of the Policy.

6. DECISION AND ORDER

For the above reasons, the Panel finds that Complainant has failed to satisfy its burden under paragraph 4.1 of the Policy and, pursuant to paragraph 4 of the Policy and paragraph 12 of the Rule, the Panel orders that the Complaint be Denied.

Made as of 21 May 2026

