

Posted by Joan Russow
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Social Sharing Chemi Lhamo, 22, got thousands of hateful comments after becoming U of T Scarborough student president CBC News ·
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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/china-tibet-student-election-1.5019648>

Chemi Lhamo, the president-elect of the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, believes she's being targeted because of her Tibetan identity. (Martin Trainor/CBC)

What might otherwise be the usual mudslinging around a student election has turned into a political firestorm on a Toronto university campus, where a newly-elected student president is raising questions about the source of pro-China attacks against her.

On Saturday morning, Chemi Lhamo, 22, learned she'd been elected student president at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus (UTSC).

By noon, her phone was buzzing incessantly with notifications. But instead of messages of congratulations, Lhamo — a Canadian citizen of Tibetan origin — realized a photo she'd posted on Instagram for the Lunar New Year was attracting thousands of hateful comments, most rife with anti-Tibet sentiment, some threatening.

"China is your daddy — you better know this," read one comment.

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"Ur not gonna be the president of UTSC," read another. "Even if you do, we will make sure things get done so u won't survive a day. Peace RIP."

China denies role in backlash against Tibetan student's election at U of T

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That wasn't all. A petition calling on Lhamo to step down had amassed nearly 10,000 signatures.

And there was a message on the Chinese mobile service We Chat making the rounds, calling on Chinese international students to stop Lhamo from becoming president.

The message, posted by the account Ladder Street, said: "The U of T student union is about to be controlled by Tibetan separatists." The message also says Lhamo shouldn't benefit from the millions of dollars brought in each year by Chinese students.