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Northeastern University

Student Government Association Elections Committee Grievance Filings

Student Government Association

March 13, 2012

Grievance #1: 2012

Student Government Association, Northeastern University

Recommended Citation

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SGA
Giving You a Voice

Student Government Association of Northeastern University
332 Curry Student Center • 360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Grievance #1

File Date: 2012-03-13
File Time: 2:02 p.m.
Elections Committee Chair: Taylor Cotter
Merit Status: Approved at 12:47 p.m., 2012-03-14

Complainant: Adrian Van, Senator
Slate: Unleash Northeastern

Claim 1: The Unleash Northeastern slate released parts of their website containing campaign-related material before the campaign began at 12 a.m. on March 14th, 2012.

Violation in Question:

Section 4.1
Section 4.1.2
Section 4.1.2.1
Section 4.1.2.2

Verdict: *Unleash Northeastern was found responsible for the violations in question.*

Sanctions: *Candidate Petrin – 1 demerit, Candidate Naraghi – 1 demerit*

Notes: *The committee determined that releasing a website containing campaign-related information, even in part, constitutes campaign-related material. The committee also determined that this was also released early, and remained online for a significant amount of time. The committee also determined that any material on the Internet, regardless of whether it is advertised, is considered publicly accessible.*

Student Government Association
of Northeastern University

Student Government Association
332 Curry Student Center
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360 Huntington Avenue

t: 617.373.2651
e: sga@neu.edu
w: www.sga.neu.edu

GRIEVANCE REPORT FORM

This form is to be used to file a grievance against a candidate for office based on violation(s) you have personally witnessed during the course of the campaign period. The Direct Elections Policies Manual defines a grievance as an "allegation that a candidate and/or his or her campaign workers have knowingly violated the Association's governing documents (including this manual)."

For any grievance report to be found with merit and/or considered, it must be submitted prior to the certification of election results.

Submitter's Information

Name(s): Adrian Van

Email(s): van.ad@husky.neu.edu

Phone Number(s): 415 756 3337

Do you wish to file this grievance anonymously? Circle: Yes or (No)

Please Note: The Association aims to protect the identity of anyone submitting a grievance for any reason. If in the case that **insufficient** evidence exists, we may request that you provide any additional evidence, witnesses, or personal testimony, through which your identity may be revealed.

Violation Information

Name of Candidate/Slate: PETE PETRIN - President NICK NARAHGI - EVP

Date of Violation: March 13, 2012

Time of Violation: 12:34PM

Location of Violation: unleashnortheastern.com

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of Northeastern University

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332 Curry Student Center
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Please provide a full description of the violation(s) you witnessed, including any and all relevant evidence. You may attach additional sheets of paper, documents, photographs, etc. if needed:

Attached

By signing and dating below, I confirm that all information written on this form and/or attached to this form is accurate and truthful.

Signature

3-13-12
Date

Please return (in a sealed envelope) to the SGA office, addressed:
GRIEVANCE CLAIM
ATTN: Elections Committee, Chair

--- or ---

Email a scanned copy to:
Cotter.t@husky.neu.edu

Van, Adrian

From: Taylor Cotter [taylorcotter@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 12:36 PM
To: Van, Adrian
Subject: Re: Is this a grievance?

Campaigning will start at 12 tonight. The template is just here: http://www.sga.neu.edu/committees/elections/elections-documents. Obviously you will just have to recluse your voting rights from EC during the hearing and voting procedure.

On Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 12:32 PM, Van, Adrian <AVan@cetcap.com> wrote:

Okay thanks just to make sure campaigning should not start 12 tonight, right? Or is it after the briefing? I probably won't call you up as a witness regarding the information that they addressed the problem with another candidate. They have broken the rules it's plain and simple. I will fill out the form now when I get the opportunity to when I can actually log into orgsync (the computers at my work doesn't allow us to go on myneu or basically anything you can log into)

From: Taylor Cotter [mailto:taylorcotter@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 12:25 PM

To: Van, Adrian
Subject: Re: Is this a grievance?

Grievance report form template is on the website. Let me know if you need any other information from me. We may have to work something out if you want to call me as a witness.

On Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 12:15 PM, Van, Adrian <AVan@cetcap.com> wrote:

The fact that they asked you to address this with another candidate and they themselves are doing it is ridiculous. I would like to file a grievance.

From: Taylor Cotter [mailto:taylorcotter@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2012 12:07 PM
To: Van, Adrian
Subject: Re: Is this a grievance?

They can have their website up but the "For President" is considered early campaigning. In fact, they asked me to address this with another candidate a few days ago. Do you want to file a grievance or would you like me to just ask them to take it down?

On Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 12:04 PM, Van, Adrian <AVan@cetcap.com> wrote:

Nick and Peter have their website up and have their logo up in the corner:
http://unleashnortheastern.com/home.htm

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Section 4.1 of the Direct Elections Manual states "The Campaign Period will commence at midnight or four hours following the Candidates' Briefing, whichever occurs first."
Section 4.1.2 states " No campaign-related activities are permitted before this date."
Section 4.1.2.1 states "Campaign related activities include, but are not limited to any activity directly relating to obtaining votes in the election. Disseminating biographical information, qualifications and goals, upon request, or procurement of campaign-related materials does not constitute a campaign related activity." Though "goals" could be interpreted as the "desire" to run for President and EVP, I do not feel as this was the true intent of said rule.
Additionally, the Glossary states "Campaign-Related Material" is defined as "Websites, chalking, posters, club cards or anything that promotes one campaign over another, including digital media."

Therefore, I would like to bring a grievance up against the slate of Pete Petrin for President and Nick Narahgi as EVP. Their website www.unleashnortheastern.com at 12:34 PM on Tuesday, March 13, 2012, in my opinion displays campaign-related material, before the start of the campaign period. Their campaign-related activity using their campaign-related material (website) to promote their slate in my opinion is in violation of the manual.

Being able to "campaign" before their opponents is unfair and more importantly in violation of the manual. What makes their violation even more egregious is that fact that they have addressed the issue of "early campaigning" with another group while doing it themselves.

Attached is a screenshot of the website with date stated, along with an email between Elections Chair Cotter and I regarding the slate addressing the early campaigning of another candidate.

Unleash Your Husky Potential - Pete & Nick For Northeastern - Windows Internet Explorer

http://unleashnortheastern.com/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Favorites | Unleash Your Husky Potential - Pete & Nick For Northe...

PETEPETRIN FOR STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT
FOR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT NICKNARAGHI
UNLEASHNORTHEASTERN.COM

Unleash Your Husky Potential

Home | Meet Pete | Meet Nick | Unleash | Platform | Referenda | Calendar | Contact | Campaign Blog

This page is password protected

Enter Password:

Login

Home | Meet Pete | Meet Nick | Unleash | Platform | Referenda | Calendar | Contact | Campaign Blog

Contact us at ideas@unleashnortheastern.com

Done | Internet | 100%

start | Sent Items - Microsof... | Open Duplicates foun... | Duplicates.xls [Comp... | Control Panel | Unleash Your Husky P... | Tuesday, March 13, 2012 12:34 PM

Van, Adrian

Subject: RE: Early Campaigning

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Nicholas R Beek** <beek.n@husky.neu.edu>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 10:09 PM
Subject: Early Campaigning
To: Taylor Cotter <cotter.t@husky.neu.edu>
Cc: Peter Petrin <petrin.pete@gmail.com>, Nicholas S Naraghi <nicholas.naraghi@gmail.com>

Taylor,

I appreciate you taking action on this issue already. I am emailing you on behalf of the Pete Petrin and Nick Naraghi who are currently exploring a potential candidacy for student body president and executive vice president.

I wanted to lodge a formal report with you about what we spoke on the phone about for your records.

At approximately 9:30pm on Sunday March 11, 2012 a friend brought to my attention a Facebook group advertising Mr. Chris LaColla's run for Student Body President. You can see the image attached. The group is titled "LOL WTF SGA / Chris For President" and encourages people to sign his intent to run form if "you think SGA needs a serious reality check." Mr. LaColla has posted from his personal Facebook on the group --and from your own interactions you know this group is legitimate even with, in my opinion, an absurd title.

This Facebook group is an example of early campaigning. It is a person who is running for student body president soliciting people to join in order to get signatures. Unlike the referendums, the petition process for student body president and executive vice president is not digital thereby forcing potential candidates or their surrogates to get signatures in person. I believe that any attempt to organize signature drives through social media is early campaigning as these groups could immediately be turned into a full throttle campaign simply by changing the title of the group.

In addition, I believe, the comment from Mr. LaColla asking people to sign his form if "you think SGA needs a serious reality check" may well represent part of his platform obviously arguing that SGA is out of touch with students.

Had the group not already been taken down as per your request as Elections Chair --I would have asked your permission to create our own "Intent to Run" Twitter account, Facebook account, YouTube account, Flickr account and website. Obviously these types of groups set a dangerous precedent.

I strongly approve of your request for Mr. LaColla to remove the Facebook group, and from what I can tell, it has been taken down. This email is meant to serve as part of your records.

Thank you,

Nicholas R. Beek

beek.n@husky.neu.edu
(516) 998-6579

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