

Boston University | Student Elections Commission Official Statement



April 7, 2014

Question at hand

On April 6, 2014 at 11:44 PM, the Student Elections Commission (SEC) received the following complaint:

To Whom It May Concern:

Today a member of Push To Start sent the SEC photos of TrueBU using a computer at Marsh Plaza to prove that TrueBU was creating illegitimate voting booths or coercing people to vote. We were well aware of the photos being taken of us because the person doing so had a Push To Start sticker on his phone. He was there for at least 30 minutes and was there long enough to be well aware we were using the computer for the sole purpose of playing music and dancing to said music.

Even though they knew this information, Push To Start sent you a complaint saying:

"Members of the True BU campaign team were set up at Marsh Plaza with a laptop, offering it to passerby to vote on. All candidates were told at the mandatory Candidate Information Sessions that this is not allowed. We have video evidence of them with a computer and we have more than one witness who was offered the computer to vote."

Every single one of these statements are untrue, and any passerby who says to the contrary is lying. We can give dozens of people as alibis to our innocuous use of the computer.

Thus, the sending of these photos with the following false statements made to the SEC as to the use of the computer were all fallacies and, more importantly, defamatory.

Section 3.4.03 explicitly says:

"Defamatory statements made by candidates or campaigns with regard to any individual in the following list are expressly prohibited: other candidates and/or campaigns; faculty, staff, trustees, employees and/or students of Boston University; members of the Student Government and/or members of college governments; members of the SEC."

Defamatory/libelous statements are defined as "a false statement of fact that exposes a person to hatred, ridicule, or contempt, causes him to be shunned, or injures him in his business or trade." (Digital Media Law Project)

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These complaints posted to a reputable site like the SEC webpage "injures" the reputation of TrueBU and our "trade." It will make people voting believe that we are manipulative, dirty, and in your words "coercive."

This will limit our votes and defame us by definition.

We will gladly offer up search histories, alibis, text messages and any other information you'd like to back up our assertion that we were using the laptop in non-malicious ways.

Best,
TrueBU

Findings

The SEC met in person to consider this complaint. In a 9-0 ruling, the SEC voted to dismiss this complaint on grounds that the complaint referred to in this complaint had multiple sources that the plaintiff could not have known were or were not connected to BU's Push to Start (including a member of the SEC itself). Additionally, there is nothing defamatory either in the complaint referenced or in the Cease and Desist Order the SEC issued. Likewise, the SEC never ruled that TrueBU was partaking in such an activity; only that TrueBU and all other slates must refrain from doing so. All members of the SEC were present for this vote.