April 3, 2016

Question at hand:

On April 1, 2016 at 4:18 PM, the Student Elections Commission (SEC) received the following complaint:

Pursuant to section 3.4.3 in the SEC Elections Code, "Defamatory statements made by candidates or campaigns with regard to any... other candidates and/or campaigns,... employees and/or students of Boston University;... members of Student Government [are expressly prohibited]."

On 3/22/2016, Jacob Brewer made a Facebook post (see attachment IMG_001.PNG) that essentially demonized Hillel, Hillel students, Hillel senators (specifically Senator Hochberg), Hillel administration staff, and BUPD officers. The post was meant to further criticize Hillel for the actions taken by the private event hosts for the situation that a rose on January 28th, 2016. This statement directly targets those mentioned before, in a method that is not justified. A defamatory statement is defined as a statement that "damages the good reputation of someone," and it is no coincidence that these statements were made months after the incident, at the same time that Atid Malka, a Hillel senator, is running as the Vice President of Finance on a competing slate.

Additionally, on 3/28/2016, an Op-Ed written by Marlene Kalb, one of the campaign staffers listed on the Clean Slate campaign (http://www.bu.edu/election/campaign-staff/), was also used to further target Hillel and its constituents. To further the situation, Ms. Kalb also posted a link to the Hillel at Boston University Facebook group (see attachment IMG_002.PNG); this was something that she had also done in the past to promote a Students for Justice in Palestine event - something that was clearly not taken with great reception in the group and I consider to be a form of harassment (see attachments IMG_003.PNG and IMG_004.PNG).

The previously mentioned Op-Ed (which can be found at http://dailyfreepress.com/2016/03/28/discrimination-bu-hillel/) continues to misrepresent facts, tell lies, and further damage the reputation of Hillel, its students, staff and senators. In the Op-Ed, Ms. Kalb states that "Hillel is not welcome to all students," a clear example of a statement used to damage the honorable and good reputation of Hillel that is not supported by hard fact. She also stated that "BU Hillel is a BU owned building," another lie, as BU Hillel is owned by the separate entity that is Hillel and merely is associated with the university.

In short, the comments made by Mr. Brewer and Ms. Kalb, both campaign staffers or candidates for Clean Slate, are two separate instances where defamatory statements were made about Hillel, its staff, students, senators and other constituents. There is no coincidence that these two people are rehashing irrelevant stories of 2 months during the elections for Executive Board of Student Government, while a Hillel senator on another slate is competing with them.

Findings:

4/3/16
In a vote of 8-0 the SEC decided to award no violation points on the grounds that these statements are not seen to be defamatory. Marlene’s actions, are not defamatory but her expressing an opinion about an event that directly affected her. Additionally she does not link her opinion is to Clean Slate and it is therefore not relevant to this election cycle.

Jake statements are not see as demonizing Hillel but calling for dialogue which is not defamatory.