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JOINT STATEMENT REGARDING THE DECISION TO DISQUALIFY VISION SLATE:

March 2nd, 2021

To the Pitt community:

On Sunday, February 28th, the Elections Committee received an allegation of an infraction regarding the distribution of shot glasses by the Vision Slate in a predominantly first-year residence hall. This alleged action was in direct violation of the approved distribution plan submitted to the Elections Committee and constituted a possible violation of the Student Code of Conduct. After careful review and consideration of the allegation and relevant evidence on March 1st, the Elections Committee voted and unanimously found the Vision slate **guilty** of the alleged actions.

The decision was unanimously **upheld** after an appeal was submitted by the Vision Slate to the Judicial Committee on March 1st, 2021.

In an attempt to clarify confusion and increase transparency, the Elections and Judicial Committees assert the following:

1. The hearing was concluded with a unanimous decision by the Elections Committee and reaffirmed unanimously by the Judicial Committee upon appeal.
2. The Student Government Board at large has no involvement with the infraction process, and all decisions made were done so independently by the Committees. The classification of the Elections and Judicial Committees as Standing Committees affords them a degree of freedom from direct oversight from the Board. Chairs are neither compelled nor encouraged to engage with the Board or President in regards to these decisions.
3. The Elections and Judicial Committees recognize the possession of shot glasses by underage persons is not illegal, however, Student Government Board candidates

distributing shot glasses that contain a direct reference to binge drinking to underage students in dry, on-campus Residence Halls as part of an official campaign for a position in the Student Government Board was deemed unacceptable due to concerns regarding the safety of underage students.

4. The Student Government Board voted on and passed a [bill](#) updating the 2020-2021 Elections code, thereby granting the Elections Committee authority to determine any changes concerning Election Procedures to properly reflect the University's Operating Posture. Per Article 4 Section 5 Election Procedure, Item 1, "The Elections Committee has the power to determine any changes [regarding] ... Activities allowed during targeted campaigning." Targeted campaigning began Wednesday, February 24th, 2021. Therefore, any changes in the planned actions of Vision Slate required approval of the Elections Committee, which Vision Slate did not acquire. A request for distribution of shot glasses to first-year students in on-campus residence halls was not submitted to nor approved by the Elections Committee prior to the allegations received February 28th, nor by Residence Directors of the relevant residence halls.

5. The previous infraction committed by the Vision Slate as well as actions that Vision Slate admitted to, including continuing the actions after being notified that these actions may constitute an elections infraction, led to the decision of the Judicial and Elections Committees that Vision Slate was actively attempting to subvert the Elections Committee's role in ensuring a free and fair election. In light of this consideration, it was deemed appropriate by the Elections Committee and reaffirmed by the Judicial Committee that the harshest sanctions must be imposed to protect the SGB Elections process.

6. According to [B.B. 2021-2](#) Article 5 Section 3 Item 3, the Elections Committee is empowered to impose sanctions of, "Complete disqualification of a candidate; making them ineligible for Student Government Board elected office for the upcoming term."

The Student Government Board Elections Committee does not approve nor condone the distribution of alcohol paraphernalia to underage students or on campus property, underage drinking, binge-drinking, or any violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Judicial Chair Stephen Jacobus

Elections Chair Olivia Bartholomew