



**March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**President Eric Macadangdang's Remarks on the 2021 SGB Election:**

This past Tuesday, the student body elected 8 new Board Members and a President to serve as their SGB elected representatives for the 2021-2022 school year. I congratulate those who will carry on the essential duties and responsibilities that these positions hold while finding new and creative ways to better advocate for students' needs. Yet, there is an elephant in the room. I would like to take a little time to address the events of the past several days, where we saw an infraction disqualify a number of candidates.

Over the course of the days leading up to our Election Day, our Elections committee received an allegation of an infraction, which set off the judicial procedures outlined within SGB's Election Code. During the duration of Monday into the night, the Elections Committee held its hearing with the relevant parties and evidence was presented, and the committee was able to come to a conclusion on the allegation. The defendant appealed the decision, which prompted the appeal process by SGB's Judicial Committee, as outlined in our Elections Code. Into the middle of Tuesday morning, the appeals process concluded to which the Judicial Committee, having heard both parties again, upheld the Elections Committee decision. These decisions are final.

I encourage everyone to read the [joint statement](#) from our Elections and Judicial Committee Chairs regarding the matter, which is published on our website at [sgb.pitt.edu](http://sgb.pitt.edu).

I, having led the organization for the last 10 months, want to make a few comments. First, in no way, shape, or form do candidates decide the outcome of these judicial proceedings, nor does the Board and me have any influence on the matter. The two committees are created as independent, standing committees of SGB, which sets them apart from the structure and functions of SGB at-large. I know that there are strong opinions on this matter, but we have codified and structured this aspect of our organization to ensure there is no undue influence and that there is fairness and due process.

Second, due to the nature of this situation, SGB will be working closely with parties involved and Student Affairs in the coming days to further evaluate and investigate several issues that were raised. I and others have received messages regarding the timeline of events and other intricacies revolving the nature of the Election. This organization, along with others like it, are not infallible. We are student leaders dedicated to the mission of advocating and representing students at Pitt, no matter their background or affiliation. I want the future to hold productive conversations on how we can improve on the elections and judicial processes that reflect new and current circumstances. We welcome and encourage constructive feedback on these matters.

Finally, I need to address what has become an issue that rises above the policies and procedure of Student Government Board. Over the past several days, members of the

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organization and other students have been receiving messages that are rooted not with the election in mind, but rather the disparagement of peoples' character. Claims not based in truth – whether malicious or not – have manifested into insults and comments that cross a line. When conversations and statements start to instill a sense in someone that their safety or security is at risk, we are completely diverging from free, fair, and open dialogue that is necessary to have a successful election season. We will support measures to ensure that there is accountability for actions that are not in line with the University's mission or policies.

I have been in this organization for several years, and I have heard the views and opinions that some hold about SGB. They are allowed to hold them and discuss them freely. Further, they are encouraged to talk to us about it online or in person so that we can find areas of improvement to better represent you all. But when we make unsubstantiated claims that work to invalidate the reality of the situation or work to degrade someone, we enter into territory that we have seen plague more substantial levels of government in this country for a while now. We as students are better than this. We do not have to follow the path of unproductive rhetoric that makes politics and government toxic and off putting. What we can do is learn the facts, listen to one another, and work to find solutions in the present and future, not resentment rooted in the past.

I remain confident and optimistic about the future of this organization and the ability of our student body to remain committed to the issues that matter. We all deserve a student experience based in equity, inclusion, respect, and fairness, and SGB will now and always believe in that. SGB is a vehicle of change on campus, and it works best when students provide us their thoughts and feedback on how we can help create a more just and welcoming campus. I, as I do every Tuesday night during our [Public Meetings](#), encourage students to contribute to the conversation of what SGB should work on by speaking during our three open floors during Public Meeting, visiting our Board Members or Committee Chairs during virtual [office hours](#), submitting a [Fix It Pitt](#) form, or simply emailing us.

Our SGB members have the incredible opportunity to help affect positive change through this organization, but they are humans who – like everyone us – deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. The increasingly online nature of our world has made it easier for everyone to forget that we are interacting with real people. The words we publish online are then much easier to weaponize and use to degrade others. That has no place in our election, in our organization, or at this University. Full stop.

Over the course of the next several weeks, I will work tirelessly with my Board to ensure that we are setting up the next President and Board Members for success. Through this transition, I hope that everyone can reflect on all that has occurred and what we can do together to build a Pitt community that reflects the best in us, and not the worst.



**Eric Macadangdang**  
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