



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

Student Government Association

OFFICIAL HEARING DECISION STATEMENT, 2-24-2019

This serves as an official notice of sanction from the Elections Committee.

Following the testimony of the candidates and their respective witnesses, the Elections Committee has found the Empower Ticket in violation of Chapter 704.1 subsection b of the Student Government Association Elections Code.

Based on the testimonies, the Elections Committee has concluded the following: Rachel Byers and Melissa Hevener were invited to speak at the executive board meeting of [redacted student organization] on February 18th. During the course of that meeting, Byers and Hevener disclosed that they were “intended candidates” for the offices of President and Vice President of SGA, respectively, and discussed specific campus initiatives that they wished to see changed in the future.

The complainant persuasively argued that that the presentation of these initiatives, in the context of the meeting, amounted to a pitch of specific campaign platform points. While Byers and Hevener used the word “intended candidates” when referring to themselves to absolve themselves of the consequences of early campaigning, by discussing platform ideas and their prospective offices, it is evident that any person could reasonably conclude they were presenting aspects of their prospective campaign platform. While they stressed that they were not *technically* candidates for office, their actions were tantamount to campaigning for office.

Per Section 704.1.a of the Elections Code, campaigning is defined as “any and all actions intentionally undertaken with the purpose of promoting, publicizing, and securing support for a candidate(s) as defined by the Elections Committee.” The Elections Committee believes that Byers and Hevener attended the [redacted student organization] Executive Board meeting with the intent to promote the platform points of their nascent campaign. As this meeting took place on February 18th, before the communicated start of the campaign period at 12:00 AM on February 25th, they have come under the purview of Section 704.1.b, which states: “Any forms of campaigning done prior to the date specified by the Elections Committee will result in disciplinary action, as defined by the Elections Committee.” per Section 704.1.c, failure by Byers and Hevener to adhere to the Elections Code will result in disciplinary measures on the Empower campaign as a whole.

Due to the nature of these violations, the Elections Committee has determined that the Empower campaign will be suspended from digital campaigning between the hours of 12:00 AM and 10:00 AM on Monday, February 25th. Digital campaigning includes, but is not limited to: the use of social

media, publication of websites and other digital media, and the use of digital group messaging to campaign. In addition, the Empower ticket will be suspended for 24 hours from the physical or virtual dissemination of any and all campaign information, including but not limited to: campaign name, candidate information, platform, ideals, and goals to registered student organization, which includes, but is not limited to: philanthropies, Greek organizations, or social activists group. This will be the Empower campaign's first sanction.

The Elections Committee also strongly encourages both the ACT ticket and Empower ticket to reach out with sincere apologies to the executive board of [redacted student organization] for involving a third-party student organization in their dispute.

As always, failure to adhere to the remedies enumerated herein will result in further discipline by the Elections Committee.