



TARA STIEGLITZ AND CYRIL BALITBIT

LIVE FREE OR DIE BOARD Richardson (left) claimed Samuel committed a conflict of interest under SU Bylaw 100.

Samuel disciplined by DIE board

Hearing held over the production of unauthorized materials by the Students' Union VP (Academic) following a complaint lodged by former SU councillor

RYAN HEISE
Deputy News Editor

Following a pair of censures from the Executive Committee and Students' Council, Students' Union Vice-President (Academic) Bobby Samuel faced a ruling from the Discipline, Interpretation, and Enforcement (DIE) Board early Monday morning.

DIE Board, the SU's tribunal responsible for dealing with possible violations of the Union's bylaws, heard the case Friday afternoon after Brock Richardson, an Arts councillor in 2006/07, filed a complaint against Samuel. The claim alleged that Samuel violated Bylaw 100, section 18.1 by using SU resources and his position to create and distribute documents that could be misconstrued as pre-campaigning material. Section 18.1 states that "no person shall use a Students' Union position that he/she holds to further personal business interests."

During the hearing, Richardson claimed that "personal business interest" should be interpreted as any "tangible gain," which would include pre-campaigning for a possible presidential race on Samuel's part. However, Samuel maintained that the pamphlet wasn't meant as a means to personal gain.

Ultimately, the DIE Board tribunal found Samuel in violation of section 18.1, stating in its ruling that "the actions taken by Mr Samuel were a use of his position to obtain a non-

trivial monetary gain beyond what a reasonable student would expect from the proper exercise of one's duties."

While Richardson was hoping to see Samuel removed from office, the ruling resulted in a much less severe punishment. DIE Board ruled that the remaining flyers Samuel had produced must be destroyed and that his wages be garnished \$120 to pay for the design time used on the pamphlet. He was also issued a \$250 fine, and will need to get the approval of another member of the Executive before meeting with student groups for the rest of his term in office.

DIE Board also placed an injunction on Samuel against "using the design of the pamphlet, including the slogan and textual contents, or any portion or derivative thereof, for the purpose of any future political campaign."

Following the ruling on Monday, Richardson said that he was pleased Samuel was found in violation of the bylaw.

"After the censure by the Exec and the censure by Council, he was still saying, 'I did nothing wrong in terms of rules; I didn't break any rules.' And this clearly demonstrates that he did break some rules. So I'll take that as a victory."

Richardson said he wasn't surprised with DIE Board's decision not to withdraw Samuel from office, but added that he found it odd that the Board would find Samuel in violation

but allow him to remain in office. He said that because there's no recorded precedent for DIE Board removing a member of the SU from office, he believes that they were hesitant to take such action, even after ruling that he had "grossly abused [his] position and the privileges of that position."

Samuel called the ruling "harsh yet just" after it was handed down on Monday, stating he was ready to move on from the ordeal.

"I honestly can't disagree with it. I screwed up, I messed up, and obviously our processes have come to bite me in the ass, but that's a sign that our processes work."

"I want to close a chapter on this," he added. "I'd like to continue to work to reduce textbook costs, to improve teaching, to do all the things I was elected to do, and I'm hopeful that the Executive Committee, student councillors, and students will all be willing to work with me."

SU President Michael Janz said he thinks "most people just want to move on and do their jobs," and that he didn't think it would come up again in Council.

Richardson said he has no plans to appeal the decision and push for a harsher punishment, noting that the SU's disciplinary system has done its job.

"I think it's good for the organization because if what he did wasn't in violation of a bylaw, then it would mean our bylaws are in a sorry state."

Postsecondary awareness campaign kicks off as provincial elections loom

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

With the provincial election only weeks away, student and faculty representatives gathered Monday in SUB to launch *Imagine Alberta*, an issue-based campaign designed to raise public awareness of higher education.

Jonathan Hill from the Alberta College and Technical Institutes Students Executive Council (ACTISEC) explained that the non-partisan campaign has one core message: to make postsecondary education a main issue in the upcoming 3 March election.

"In Alberta, we face many issues, all of which we believe can be remedied with greater investment in postsecondary education," he said.

Hill listed affordability, accessibility, and quality as serious issues still greatly affecting the postsecondary system in Alberta. A strong postsecondary education system, he said, is

the key to the province staying competitive in the future.

"In order to reach this global pedestal, there are many things that have to happen," Hill stressed.

By putting postsecondary education on "everyone's agenda," he said the provincial government will be more inclined to invest in its citizens as a resource.

"Imagine an Alberta that is setting a global standard for what a knowledge-based economy really is."

John Nicholls, executive director of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), said that during the 2004 elections, a similar campaign called *Wise Up* was particularly effective at raising public awareness about postsecondary education issues with voters and politicians.

"*Imagine Alberta* aims to build on that success," he said.

Nicholls further pointed out that proponents of postsecondary

education are "only too well aware" of the competing claims on public attention such as health care, housing, and the environment.

In order to address these issues, he said, the next generation of Albertans have to have the tools that higher education provides. While postsecondary education may not be on everyone's radar at the moment, Nicholls stressed that only an increase investment in postsecondary education will tackle competing problems.

In order to achieve future expansion of the system, Nicholls said more top-level, full-time faculty are needed to address class-size issues, and the backlog of deferred maintenance on the fiscal infrastructure at universities, colleges, and technical institutions also has to be "urgently" addressed.

"We need to ensure that all this is high on the provincial agenda—whatever political party is in power," he said.

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