

The following statement regarding the NUSGA Presidential Election is designed to offer 100% clarification on the email sent to the student body Thursday afternoon. While I certainly had hoped that no further attention would be needed to address this topic, it is now necessary to do so following some misleading information provided by other sources.

According to the NUSGA Election By-Laws, it is the role of the NUSGA Election Committee (comprised of Election Chair Jon Borek, Communications Director Selena Cerra, and Vice President Dennis Segrue), with the collaboration of Director of Campus Activities Mati Ortiz, to investigate potential Election Publicity Guidelines violations and take the proper course of action afterwards. Thus, after investigation and extensive discussion, the Election Committee had reached a consensus that Sofia Castro violated Publicity Guidelines #9 and #11. Guideline #9 states, "Campaign t-shirts...may only be given to members of the candidate's campaign team and cannot be given away to other students or non-students." Thus, Guideline #9 was breached through the photo of a faculty member taken on March 23rd wearing a Castro campaign shirt. **The alleged photo of members of the NU Men's Basketball team wearing Castro's campaign shirts had absolutely no bearing on this decision.** Similarly, Guideline #11 states, "CAs may not be a member of a candidate's campaign team, or publicly endorse any candidate." Thus, Guideline #11 was breached through the email sent to all CAs, and only CAs, on March 16th, requesting that they "share your (Secretary Castro's) endorsement...with your friends, with your residents."

After extensive deliberation, the Election Committee determined that the campaign tactics of Secretary Castro did not warrant disqualification. **Such a heavy punishment would be reserved for more egregious campaign violations, such as voter fraud, slander, stuffing ballots, or similar acts that have a large-scale negative impact on the university.** However, the NUSGA Election By-Laws give the Election Committee the ability to take other appropriate courses of action. This is why we chose to send an email to the entire student body that explained that Election Guidelines were broken by Secretary Castro, in order to be completely transparent about what had occurred, and also allow students to make informed voting decisions. In addition, we decided to allow Former Class of 2018 President Richard Luczak to re-enter the election for the sake of fairness. In theory, the campaign tactics of Secretary Castro might have provided an unfair advantage in her attempt to advance past the Election Primaries, so we felt that re-opening the election was the best course of action. Above all else, our goal throughout this entire process was to provide the fairest election for all parties involved.

Overall, Secretary Castro's campaign violations were enough to warrant some action being taken, which is why the email was sent out, and the election was re-opened. However, it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that disqualification would only be used for really terrible violations, such as stuffing ballots, due to the severity of that punishment. Disqualification would not be justifiable for giving a faculty member a campaign shirt, nor for sending an email out to the CAs requesting that they share an endorsement.

Lastly, just to clarify another misleading headline that had been published on social media: **Secretary Castro did not tamper with election ballots in any way, shape, or form.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this. It is my hope that this will clear up any uncertainty regarding this year's Presidential Election once and for all. Please bear in mind that people make mistakes, no one is perfect, and that none of the candidates behaved with malicious intent during their campaigns.

-Election Chair Jon Borek