

Pro-Palestine Events Test New Guidelines

By Alex Ellefson
Editor-in-Chief

The administration left no stone unturned while preparing for two upcoming events organized by the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), even asking the club's members to participate in a Q&A preparation workshop, according to the SJP President.

"They even offered to have someone from the debate team run the Q&A," said SJP President Sundus Seif.

The two SJP events generated significant media interest. A daily news article published last week said that journalist Ben White, who speaks at Brooklyn College this Thursday, had defended former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement that, "Israel must be wiped off the map." White told The

into allegations of discrimination at the event.

The investigation concluded that the four students were unjustly removed by security and recommended that security at future events be controlled by senior college administrators, instead of the student club. The CUNY investigation also advised the college grant equal access to the media and create a universal RSVP system after finding numerous problems with the event planning.

cial Events are expected to be attended by a non-Brooklyn College audience.

By classifying the SJP events in these categories, the administration has the authority to oversee aspects of the events implementation like the RSVP system, security protocols, media access and other responsibilities.

The upcoming SJP events allowed the administration to test how the new handbook works under circumstances that are similar to the BDS controversy.

man Dov Hikind argued that the co-sponsorship meant that the college endorsed a point of view that some students found offensive.

The department said the sponsorship simply signaled that the event was worth attending, but was not an endorsement.

To prevent similar controversies in the future, the handbook defined an organization that lends "its name to an event in order to encourage attendance" as a supporter.

the flyer at least five times before they agreed to allow her club to call the departments co-sponsors if the flyer carried a footnote that read: "Co-sponsor does not imply endorsement of any viewpoints expressed at the event."

Seif said she supported the faculty's right to choose the wording on the flyer.

"The administration is being too strict," she said. "If they just listened to me, none of this would have happened."



Source:brooklynsjp.com

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Kingsman that his words was taken out of context.

The SJP also invited pro-Palestine activist Josh Ruebner to speak in SUBO this Wednesday.

The two events drew criticism from Israel supporters because two of Brooklyn College's departments elected to co-sponsor the events, echoing a similar controversy last semester when the Political Science department co-sponsored an SJP event advocating for boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) of Israel.

The BDS controversy escalated after four Jewish students were ejected from the event, prompting a CUNY investigation

Brooklyn College administrators, faculty and staff worked over the summer to come up with the Event Planning and Implementation Handbook to address the findings of the investigation.

"These policies should have taken a year to write," said CLAS President David Rosenberg, who helped draft the handbook. "We did it in two months."

The administration classified the SJP's upcoming lectures as both Major and Special Events, which are defined in the handbook. Major Events are likely to attract a lot of attention from the media while Special

"This feels like Déjà vu. It's the same people, the same discussion and the same issue [as BDS]," said Rosenberg. "We're going to find out if the policies are really working for high-pressure events."

The first problem to arise, Rosenberg said, was a dispute with the political science and sociology departments over the department's decision to co-sponsor the events.

Much of the last semester's controversy stemmed from the political science department's co-sponsorship of the BDS lecture. Critics like State Assembly-

Because of this, Seif said that Student Affairs refused to let the SJP write that political science and sociology were co-sponsors on flyers advertising the events.

They asked her to adhere to the guidelines and change the wording to "supporters."

However, the departments rejected the changes.

"Our department voted to say co-sponsor," said Political Science Chair Paisley Currah. "The word supporter, to people who speak English, sounds like an endorsement. It doesn't capture our intent."

Seif said that Student Affairs made her change

However, Seif said that the RSVP system set up by the administration prevented a lot of the confusion experienced during the BDS controversy. The CUNY investigation reported that the administration asked the SJP to change their RSVP system several times, which caused some names to be accidentally dropped from the list and led to allegations that people were not allowed into the event because of their religious or political beliefs.

This semester, all student events must use the Eventbrite website to register attendees.

"It helps us a little not to have to worry about admitting people," said Seif.

Communications Director Keisha-gaye Anderson said that the handbook's purpose was to consolidate event planning rules, many of which already existed, into one document.

"It's a very positive development," she said. "It's a very detailed, concise document that anyone can quickly access."

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