



PLATFORM 2015

Andrew, Mel, Marwa, and Kim have compiled this list of policies that we believe resonate with Boston University students. We hope that our achievements and involvements in the organizations invested in these issues prove to you our sincerity and commitment to these policies. We have individually found ourselves running together under True BU because we believe Student Government can be the empowering tool for students to move forward on these issues. Nothing in this policy we claim to implement on our own; rather, it will be through genuine partnerships and supportive collaboration. We invite you to join True BU in contributing to a legacy of student involvement and TRUE change at Boston University.

MULTICULTURAL MOVEMENT

Increasing Multicultural Sensitivity

President Brown was subpoenaed to a hearing on diversity in higher education by the Boston City Council for his failure to appear at a hearing on employee and student diversity at local colleges. It is clear that this is an issue on our campus and must be continually addressed. **True BU will rally the current efforts by organizations represented in the Center for Gender, Sexuality, and Activism (CGSA) and the Boston University Culture Council to create multicultural education programs with the Office of Orientation and the Office of the Dean of Students.**

Career Support for International Students

20.6 percent of the study body is comprised of international students. Visa requirements, and extensive paperwork all stand in the way of international students acquiring work experience they need to become well-rounded graduates. To counter this TrueBU will work alongside the Center for Career Development to **create programs specifically addressing international students' needs.** In addition, TrueBU will expand resources for international students so that they can easily navigate their complicated tax forms.

SHATTERING STIGMA

Sexual Assault Prevention: Shattering Stigma & BU's 16,000 Strong

Because we are committed to working with student groups, we will partner with members of the Center for Gender, Sexuality, and Activism and Greek Life to lead the dialogue on sexual assault. We want to **expand the reach of “safer space” culture** to large organizations like fraternities and sororities and foster an open dialogue about sexual assault. We will **foster dialogues** between Greek Life and clubs by creating workshops, giving Greek Life to offer advice about creating organizational structure with groups of students. Each month, we will select a new stigma focus, approved by Senate. The workshops would also function to demystify Greek life and build diversified networks within the BU community.

However, we want to do more than just talk about the problem—**we want to bring awareness to action and go further than a pledge.** We will implement a pilot GreenDot training to teach students how to intervene and speak about sexual assault. The CDC-funded trainings demonstrated a 50 percent reduction in sexual violence perpetuation in high schools.

We will continue and expand the 16,000 Strong campaign to incorporate the It Happens Here Project (<http://www.ihhproject.org>), in which sexual assault survivors anonymously submit their stories and to a panel of students reads them and shares them on the website. **Our projects seek to end the stigma against talking about rape culture** and the stigma that manifests itself in victim shaming.

HEIGHTENING HEALTH

Mental Health Support Through the Student Support Network

By collaborating with Behavioral Medicine, we will **reinstate the Student Support Network** and train students how to recognize the warning signs associated with depression and other serious mental health concerns. In addition, TrueBU and Behavioral Medicine will work together to **provide an outlet for students to express themselves** via BU Secret. Postcards will be displayed in public places around campus. Because we understand the gravity of this issue, we have already begun work on this project.

Enhanced Resources for the Center for Gender, Sexuality and Activism (CGSA)

We will allocate a fixed percentage of the Student Government budget to be allotted to this student-funded space. Student Government should support this student space that functions as resource center for the university's most marginalized students, which includes and is not limited to LGBTQ students, people of color, and women. CGSA currently runs on volunteers and is allocated funds as a student club. However, in reality, the space known as the CGSA is a resource center for the LGBTQ community as well as student activism and women.

CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Innovation Grant Program, Green Fund & Arts Commission

Student Government has an estimated \$60,000 in its control, allocated by the undergraduate student fee. Although less than 1% of our tuition goes directly into the hands of the undergraduate students, **we must not forget the monetary influence that we have.** Our grant program will make Student Government funds available to student initiatives on an application basis, subject to approval by a designated committee. We have divided the budget into 5 strategic sections:

- Innovation Grant Program (see details below)
- Internal Affairs of Student Government
- Student Government Co-Sponsored Events
- Student Group Support Funds
- Orientation Funds

We will start implementing the Innovation Grant Program immediately in the fall of 2015, as we have already started discussing details with key administrators and students and will continue to over the summer. The grant program will change the way the current Student Government budget is allocated. There will be a specific permanent fund allocated for student initiatives that will further Boston University's presence in the fields of technology and the arts.

Student Group Support System

True BU will **support and foster student group development and existence** on campus in many forms. When the Student Involvement Board rejects a student group we want to offer our resources to get them off the ground. This includes reserving spaces, opening our office to them, and aiding with publicity. For existing student groups, **we will increase the number of free expression boards for event visibility, and create and publicize readily available meeting spaces.** Spaces such as the conference rooms in the GSU should be available when not in use. While SAO works tirelessly to support student activities, **we know firsthand the obstacles that student groups face.** Any needs that SAO cannot deliver, True BU Student Government will serve as a collective voice to advocate for student groups. This entails pushing for more storage space for theatre groups, increasing the travel fund, and ensuring budgets for smaller or less active groups.

RHA Partnership to Enhance Quality of Life

Student Government will seek to be fully in touch with daily quality of life issues by increasing partnership with RHA in addressing issues such as safety, smoking concerns, and affairs for recycling and heating concerns.

TUITION TRANSPARENCY

Advocacy through the Student Trustee Position

We will begin dialogue with Dean of Students and President Brown concerning the necessity for a **student representative in investment decisions** given the fact that the student body is a large stakeholder. Based off these conversations we will create a criteria for students interested in this position and create an application form for a year-long commitment. With tuition slated to go up a whopping 3.7% and many questioning whether or not college is still 'worth it', we as students must have a say in tuition decisions. In recent correspondence with President Brown, competitive salaries were mentioned as reason for tuition rise, but it seems that these competitive salaries are given to upper tier administrators and not professors.

Tuition Transparency Workshop

By hosting a series of workshops, we will create a bridge between students who are bearing the burden of expanding the university and the administrators who ultimately control the costs. In addition to advertising this to students, we will encourage faculty to voice their opinions on the necessity of an increase in tuition. **We will create a space for students to understand the reasons and interact directly with decision makers.** The rising cost of tuition with little to no explanation has alarmed not just students but also alumni, parents and faculty of the BU community.

STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABILITY

Bike Safety

We congratulate BU Bikes on their advocacy for CycleTrack (a protected bike lane) for all segments of Commonwealth Avenue. The next step is to **build bike culture at BU through facilitating education** for bikers and pedestrians. by funding and advocating for covered bike shelters in West Campus and potential other spots on campus. We will advocate for **more appropriate shelter for bikes**. With limited transportation options on our large campus, it is important that low-cost options are available and safe for students.

Restore the CAS Greenhouse

It is unacceptable that the little known CAS Greenhouse has been defunct due to neglect from the administration to repair broken water pipes. We will **firmly advocate for university funds to be appropriated to the CAS Greenhouse to be restored** in order to restore this amazing resource for the environmental community on our urban campus. The Environmental Student Organization has already picked up this issue but still needs support. We are committed to sustainability on our campus, as well as empowering student groups with Student Government resources. We also have experience— Andrew and Kim were active members of OGC in the glory days of a functioning greenhouse, and know exactly the obstacles they face.

Support Divest BU from Fossil Fuel campaign

We aim to support this group's effort by endorsing their referendum question as well as offer follow up after the 2015 Student Government elections by lobbying administration and the Board of Trustees to **commit to fossil fuel divestment**. Other

institutions across the world are working towards this goal with impressive success. Investment in low-carbon energy amounted to \$257 billion in 2011, and continues to rise. Sustainable industries like solar and wind energy production are becoming increasingly attractive investments. BU's financial growth is not incompatible with reducing its role in climate change. True BU believes that the university's large-scale actions should reflect our educational values.

STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS

Communications Reform

Forming a **strong communications department** will ensure that the Student Government website is always up-to-date and clear about resources. This includes providing contact resources and publishing updates on initiatives and events. True BU Student Government will have a physical presence in GSU every week, provide a State of the University once a semester, and equip Senators for reaching out with a dedicated budget. True BU promises to implement **increased Financial Transparency** through automated alerts of when the budget money has been spent. The Student Government website will be updated weekly with new budget details, proposals, and Senate decisions.

Senator Training

Our experience in the Residence Hall Association has taught us the importance of building up the community feel of an organization. We will equip them with the tools to reach their constituents, as well as **commit to establishing a culture at Senate that is constructive and empowering.**

Vice President of Internal Affairs as Senate Historian

TrueBU will also give the VPIA the responsibility of writing a history of the successes, failures, and challenges to Student Government initiatives and why they are occurring. We should not have to reinvent the wheel every year.