

SUBJECT: Advocacy	POLICY NO: GOV-3	LAST REVIEWED: March 2018
APPROVED BY: Council	MANAGED BY: Council	NEXT REVIEW: March 2020

SUMMARY

Policy Statement

As a representative association, BCITSA advocates for its members at all levels of government, and through all facets of BCIT programming. BCITSA understands the expectations that students face while obtaining an education at BCIT on a regular basis, and works to address any immediate issues as they arise, and plan advocacy efforts that will affect future students at BCIT.

BCITSA believes that students should represent the student population. By working from a student-centred framework to include the student voice in all decision-making bodies within BCITSA operations, BCITSA advocates for student self-representation within BCIT.

Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clearly define the ways in which BCITSA advocates for its members.
- Outline the process in which BCITSA interacts with BCIT for all Advocacy-related activities.

Application of This Policy

This policy applies to Executives, Councillors, and all other students of BCIT regardless of status, including prospective students and alumni, as well as all employees of BCITSA.

Related Documents and Legislation

BCIT

- Policy 5101 – Student Regulations
- Policy 5102 – Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic)

BCITSA

- Policy SL-3 – Advocacy Services

Forms Associated With This Policy

N/A

Amendment History

- Created [DATE]
- Amended [DATE]

DEFINITIONS

Advocacy

Advocacy is defined as all activities where BCITSA works on behalf of all students to enhance the quality of student life.

Advocate

The Advocate is an employee of the BCITSA responsible for meeting with students, faculty and staff of BCIT, and other BCITSA employees to help interpret and navigate issues of academic and non-academic conduct at BCIT.

BCIT Education Council

The BCIT Education Council is the body of BCIT responsible for setting educational policy, programs, and priorities at BCIT.

Representation

For the purpose of this policy, Representation is defined as the existing and continued efforts of BCITSA and all of its agents to advocate and lobby for positive change for the students of BCIT. This can include, but is not limited to meeting with BCIT personnel to discuss issues negatively affecting or impacting students, enacting campaigns, and advocating for policy changes at BCIT Education Council and similar bodies.

For greater clarity, this definition of Representation pertains to students as a membership. A definition of Representation for individual students can be found in Policy SL-3 – Advocacy Services. All disputes surrounding the definition or interpretation of Representation shall be decided on by the Executive Director.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

President

The President is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of this policy.

Vice President Student Affairs

The Vice President Student Affairs is the primary Executive under the BCITSA Bylaws who deals with student issues and concerns, as well as with issues of equity and equality as they relate to all students. When applicable, the Vice President Student Affairs shall bring these issues forth to the BCIT Education Council, or any other committee as required by the situation.

Advocates

The Advocates are responsible for understanding to the best of their abilities all relevant BCIT and BCITSA Policies and Procedures, and for assisting the Vice President Student Affairs, as well as other student members of the BCIT Education Council, in the interpretation of the same when requested.

POLICY

1. Advocacy

1.1. Representation

- a.** BCITSA represents the academic and non-academic interests of all BCIT students.
- b.** BCITSA shall work to ensure that all students have the opportunity to fully participate in their learning environments and understand their rights and responsibilities.

1.2. Advocates

- a.** If an Advocate discovers a systemic issue that has affected or is likely to affect multiple students, and it is evident that the issue will persist if not addressed, they shall communicate this issue to the appropriate body of BCIT and/or BCITSA.

1.3. Working with BCIT

- a. Employees and Executives sitting on any BCIT committee, board, or other group, shall ensure that student issues and concerns are brought forward to BCIT in the appropriate forums.
- b. From time to time when the BCIT Education Council extends a guest position to the BCITSA, an Advocate as designated by the Executive Director shall take the position to provide support and context to the student representatives of the BCIT Education Council.

1.4. Right to Dissent from BCIT

- a. BCITSA reserves the right, acting reasonably, to dissent from BCIT, its policies, and officials where it deems that doing so is in the best interest of representing students.
- b. BCITSA and its representatives reserve the right to dissent from BCIT under any of the following conditions:
 - i. Where BCIT officials and/or staff act inconsistently with established practices, policies, and procedures;
 - ii. Where students are treated unfairly; or
 - iii. Where BCITSA receives a mandate from students through established governance practices.
- c. BCITSA and its representatives shall not dissent from BCIT under any of the following conditions:
 - i. Where such dissent would undermine the academic integrity of BCIT.
 - ii. Where such dissent would place the interests of one student and/or group of students in conflict with the interests of all BCIT students.

1.5. BCIT Policies and Procedures

- a. BCITSA agrees to work with students to identify any gaps or language within the BCIT Policies and Procedures that are punitive for students.

- b.** When a situation arises where BCITSA seeks to challenge established BCIT policies or procedures, the appropriate agent of BCITSA, dependant on the context, shall seek a change through the appropriate body of BCIT. This may include, but is not limited to, the BCIT Leadership Team, BCIT Education Council, or any department of BCIT.

PROCEDURE

N/A