

Theta Apple Pie ventures to get uninvolved students involved

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John Casella, Theta Apple Pie's candidate for executive vice president, created the name because it was eye catching. Since the campaign season kicked off, members of Theta Apple Pie worked hard to stay in the spotlight.

Since launching, each member of the party uploaded two Facebook profile pictures advertising their candidacy for the Undergraduate Student Government. In the first picture, each person held an apple pie with a slice cut out, calling for students to "claim your slice." The second was a photo of each member with a sentence-long quote summarizing why they chose to run.

During spring break, the party also released a four-page document that delved into the nuances of the three elements of its platform: advocacy, participation and transparency.

"We wanted to run because we really wanted to get the uninvolved involved in the decision making in this school," Casella said in an interview. "We wanted to reach out to smaller clubs as well as the typical Baruch student who may not be so high up in the club life, maybe trying to figure out what clubs they want to join."

Besides Casella, Theta Apple Pie's candidates include David Scholes as the candidate for president, Ashley Skaria as the candidate for treasurer and Cecilia Ramos as the candidate for the executive secretary.

Casella is currently a sophomore majoring in operations management. He held the position of treasurer of the Residence Hall Council and finished the T.E.A.M. Baruch training. Scholes is a junior and currently serves as president of



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Theta Apple Pie has 39 candidates for USG, each carrying a message of advocacy, participation and transparency.

the Residence Hall Council. Previously, he was on the swimming team, and he was also a member of the Athletics Council, Gender, Love & Sexuality Spectrum and T.E.A.M. Baruch. Skaria is a sophomore majoring in economics and is currently a member of the Finance & Economics Society, Sigma Alpha Delta and T.E.A.M. Baruch. Lastly, Ramos is a sophomore majoring in political science and a member of Sigma Alpha Delta.

In a previous interview, Scholes explained that Theta Apple Pie formed at the beginning of the Spring semester with him reaching out to people he knew in various clubs and organizations at Baruch. The party then expanded to include club leaders small and large and, eventually, current members of the Undergraduate Student Government. According to Scholes, his

party now has 39 candidates for USG.

During the interview, members of Theta Apple Pie's executive board said that one of the first issues they ran across during their campaign was lack of awareness among students.

"[G]oing out first and being the first ones to campaign, we were really informing people of an election," Scholes said in an interview. "A lot [of] our message, and you'd think first it's, 'Why should you vote for us.' Really, a lot of our message at first was, 'There is an election. Here's what we believe in.'"

Casella added that he had a similar issue before the election season even began.

"[B]efore the campaign season, when you need to get the 20 signatures to gain the eligibility to run, we had to say, 'Hey, could you

sign this sheet, we're going to run for USG' and people were like, 'Oh, what is USG?' They had absolutely no idea what USG really was," Casella said.

When introducing his extended platform, Scholes cited his experience with the past two elections. He felt as if the teams made "empty promises," which he said may have been caused by the lack of need to make a plan that would differentiate it from an opposing team. The document is available on the party's social media sites.

For transparency, the document brought up mandating that a meeting agenda be posted at noon on Tuesday—the day USG meets for its weekly senate meetings—and that the senate meetings are livestreamed on Facebook. To generate more student input, the party wants to reinstate the suggestions

box and require the secretary to read some of the submissions during the meeting. Lastly, it plans to create a committee that would be tasked with ensuring that transparency initiatives are carried out.

The second point of its platform is advocacy. This element is broken down into two main initiatives: making students more aware of what is going on politically on the city and state level, as well as attending rallies relating to the CUNY budget, the DREAM Act and tuition.

The last section of the platform speaks about participation, or creating a closer bond between club leaders and USG. One of the ideas brought up in the platform is creating a Student Outreach Committee, which would match students with clubs and organizations that fulfill their interest and create a weekly schedule of events on campus. Another program, called the Club Representative Program, would match club leaders with representative senator to provide clubs with representatives within USG. It also proposes requiring each senator to attend three club events per semester, aiding clubs with marketing, a resolution for each committee to meet at least twice per semester and creating committees that would publicize USG elections and make sure that USG is following its constitution.

During the interview, members of Theta Apple Pie's e-board emphasized that this election is about having the option to choose the candidates that students think will get the job done.

"I'm just very happy that we're running," Skaria said. "It's good to have competition, because it makes you really think about the issues and what are your concrete plans to really help the Undergraduate Student Government—students."