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| **Subject:**  | *First and Second Term Report*  |
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#  Constitutional Responsibilities

As the Prim Committee’s Vice-Chair and having been assigned the responsibilities of the committee’s PSO Chair, I am mandated to represent the 11 PSO (Private Student Organisation) communities on the PC’s Executive Committee, the SRC and other bodies and/or teams I form part of in this capacity. In the spirit of the previous term’s PC Residence and PSO chairs to operate as co-chairs, both myself and the PC Chair take equal responsibility for our respective constituencies as well as the PC as a whole.

A primary, mandatory goal of my position is the personal and leadership development of PSO Primarii to benefit overall community-building in our private student structures. This is done both informally on a relational basis with PSO leaders, as well as at structured developmental Strategic Conferences (Stratcons) which offers a platform for PSO Primarii and Vice Primarii to engage collaboratively with community-specific and campus-related issues in order to develop leadership abilities and promote the PSO project. The PSO Chair works alongside the PSO Office at SSG to develop and orchestrate three annual Stratcons, each tailored appropriately to the needs of the communities.

The key responsibilities of the PSO Chair include the following:

* Planning and attending biweekly PC Meetings,
* Offering support at biweekly Prim Development Programme (PDP) sessions,
* Participation in various committees including the MAK, SHK, Welcoming Program Committee, and SRC,
* Biweekly meetings with the PSO Office,
* Orchestration of three Strategic Conferences,

* Regular meetings with SSG directors,
* PC Executive committee participation, and
* Planning of various developmental opportunities for Primarii.

The role of an ex-officio SRC member in this context is fulfilled through active participation in the body and accurate representation of the PSO constituency. A trusted and reliable link of information and representation between the PSO structures and the SRC are formed through my role’s position on the SRC.

I have thus far fulfilled my mandate regarding SRC meeting attendance.

# Portfolio Overview

1. The SRC

The SRC being the highest structure of student representation in the university, is comprised of members that thus represent their constituencies in such a structure. With this comes the responsibility of true and accurate constituent representation, valuable thought leadership, and an honest humility to gauge between the two. Practically, I achieve this through sound communication and trust between my affiliates on the SRC and the PSO Primarii whom I represent on the body. This allows for a clearer expression of student needs that can reach the agenda of the SRC, and a consequentially clearer response to the student body or, at the very least, the privately accommodated student body.

1. Stellenbosch University

My position affords me opportunity to represent my constituency on various management structures and committees, which is a crucial aspect of the position. It is often that a case needs to be made to university management for a particular desire of my constituency, which introduces an negotiative element to the job description which becomes particularly consequential when the debate is of budgetary or even ideological nature. The materiality of this becomes increasingly evident when noting that PSO students form 75% of the student body.

The success of the PSO project is detrimental in supporting Stellenbosch University’s vision in community building and a transformative student experience. Without thriving PSO communities, a burden falls on residences, residence placement, the University’s value system and Student Affairs at large. My role thus accepts a responsibility to promote thriving PSO community spaces and structures as far as I am capable.

1. South Africa

The foundational mandate of a positional student leader representing communities is that of community building. The legacy of our country, the preamble of its constitution, and the inclusion of student leadership, namely the SRC, in the DHET’s requirements of South African universities, all promote an idea that student leadership should be an honourable pursuit that aims to promote a thriving community experience in education for all. This describes the ethos for which I define my portfolio in the context of South Africa.

# Committees / Task Teams

## Institutional

**Student Housing Committee (SHK)** – Chiefly oversees physical developmental affairs of student housing on campus. It is chaired by the Vice-Rector of Teaching and Learning and is further comprised of the PK Chair and Vice-Chair, the Directors of Project Management, CSC, *Toelating en Koshuisplasing*, as well as the Senior Directors of SU International, SunKom, Student Affairs and Student Access.

**Monitors Advies Komitee (MAK)** – Receives and acts upon information provided by the monitors program during the welcoming period in order to compile an annual Monitor’s Report to report on and align communities’ welcoming practices. The committee was comprised of the PK Chair and Vice-Chair, Pieter Kloppers (Director of CSC), Monica du Toit (Res-ed Coordinator: Victoria Cluster), JC Rademeyer, Kristan Sharpley, Martin Viljoen, Jonathan Arries, and was chaired by Prof DX Simon.

**Institutional Forum (IF)** - The Institutional Forum (IF) is one of the University's three main statutory bodies - the other two being the Council and the Senate. The functions and powers of the IF are laid down in section 31 of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) as follows:

"(a) the IF must advise the Council on issues affecting the University, including–

1. the implementation of the Act and the national policy on higher education;
2. race and gender equity policies;
3. the selection of candidates for senior management positions;
4. codes of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution procedures; and
5. the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning; and

(b) the IF must perform such other functions as determined by the Council." **Registration Work Group** – Amalgamates registration stakeholders in order to align registration related strategies. Chaired by the Registrar.

**Welcoming Program Committee** – Amalgamates the annual Welcoming Program’s stakeholders across the University’s structures.

## Other Committees / Task Teams

**PC Executive** – Oversees the strategic planning of the Prim Committee and is comprised of the PC Chair (Ingrid Heydenrych) and Vice-Chair, the PC’s treasurer (Zander Prinsloo), the PC’s secretary (Neil de Kock), the external Cluster Convenor (Philip Steenkamp), and the Tygerberg PC Chair (Slindekahle Msane).

**PSO-Societies Task Team** – Chaired by myself and the Societies Council Chair, Yanga Keva, to promote improved and sustainable collaboration between societies and PSOs.

# Budget Overview

No budget allocated or used.

# Term Overview

1. SRC

Regarding my constitutional mandate as per the Student Constitution, I have fulfilled my attendance requirements of both SRC and Student Parliament meetings, sittings and caucuses, and have actively engaged with the agendas in order to fully serve my constituency.

The first term with the Prim Committee, apart from meeting planning and interactions with the Executive Committee, required my attendance and contribution the Annual Discussions of various communities including PSOs, residences and Clusters. These allowed for a more coherent understanding of community leaders’ visions and plans for their respective terms as well as for an opportunity ask questions and offer direction where appropriate.

This term also necessitated my working with Ingrid Heydenrych and Pieter Kloppers to plan the annual POPs Camp – a weekend-long facilitated training, brainstorming and networking opportunity for Prims, Onder-Prims and Cluster Convenors at the start of their terms. University staff and experienced student leaders were incorporated to facilitate the sessions. As the camp took place at the height of the Anti-GBV movement in 2019, necessary adjustments to the programme were made to offer further support to student leaders to take stock of their situations, engage fruitfully and share ideas and experiences.

In both the first and second terms I have offered my support during PDP sessions where I have stepped in as a Prim Mentor, in others’ absentia, to offer direct guidance and support to Prims as per the leadership development programme of the PDP.

Working with the PSO Office at SSG has allowed for my input in a managerial capacity with the PSOs. My first responsibility was to help plan and facilitate the first annual Stratcon. This entailed a weekend away at Langebaan Country Estate where accommodation and meals were provided. The Stratcon was attended by 20 PSO Prims and Onder-Prims, and 5 SSG staff members including myself, both PSO coordinators and 2 PSO assistants. The Stratcon was themed ‘PSO Excellence’ and amongst team building activities, comprised of 5 one-hour-long sessions facilitated by 5 day-guests. These sessions tackled the topics of welcoming culture, senior student and alumni engagement, communication, overall member offering, and critical engagement. The weekend was executed successfully with positive feedback from attendees.

The second term involved extensive commitment to the success of the welcoming period. A short Welcoming Stratcon was held on campus between the PSO Office and Prims to voice concerns, ask questions, relay information and align strategies among the communities regarding the welcoming period. Thereafter we assembled the PSO Hub alongside 11 Bosman as an ad-hoc, centralised PSO location during welcoming intended as a source of information and enquiry and landmark for PSO students. Here we managed PSO allocations and offered support to confused students. This was the first year where walk-overs were no longer facilitated as per the placement policy.

During the welcoming period I facilitated a leadership and team-building session with Aurora’s HK, where through a game and team interaction we explored the components of successful team culture: creating safety, sharing vulnerability and establishing purpose. Each of these elements were explored interactively and sought to develop new insight amongst the team. The session was received very positively. For the remainder of the welcoming period I offered my full support to the PSO Prims individually.

The remainder of the second term involved planning and executing a Second Welcoming for students who registered after Welcoming or could not attend for any reason. This took place on a Saturday morning where newcomers were introduced to the PSO structure and team, their HKs and HK houses, and shown around campus.

In order to ensure continuity in the visions of the various PSO’s leadership bodies, each of the HKs were invited to develop short-, medium-, and long-term goals in a strategic planning session facilitated by one of the PSO assistants, Minette Sieberhagen. This allowed us to gauge the respective positions of the various communities strategically and offer appropriate support for the remainder of their terms, as well as allow them attach a structure to their intended legacies.

2. Committees and Task Teams

**Student Housing Committee (SHK)** – This committee has had two meetings thus far. Issues include PSO accessibility, upgrading of Residence Head accommodation at Lobelia and Harmonie, Goldfields project, Victoria Cluster Hub project, Helshoogte project, Huis Ten Bosch, budgetary matters and other planned upgrades.

**Monitors Advies Komitee (MAK)** – This committee had several meetings during Welcoming and dealt largely with alleged unwelcoming practices in residence communities. We are currently finalising the 2020 Monitors’ Report.

**Institutional Forum (IF)** – Since my election to represent the SRC on the IF, no sitting has taken place.

**Registration Work Group** – This committee met regularly during pre-welcoming to align information and strategies amongst stakeholders. Myself and Ingrid were able to represent and voice student concerns during the process, primarily surrounding food and accommodation security.

**Welcoming Program Committee** – There has been one meeting thus far. Myself and Ingrid have sourced welcoming feedback information from the Prims to handover to the committee in planning the 2021 Welcoming Program.

**PC Executive** – We have had regular meetings discussing campus matters and PK agenda points, as well as informal team-building and bonding sessions.

**PSO-Societies Task Team** – Yanga and myself initiated a task team, chaired by Ms Kristan Sharpley, mandated to explore a better working relationship between PSOs and Societies to better enhance the student experience at Stellenbosch University. In the last term the task team has issued a comprehensive report and strategy to achieve its mandate. The first directive of the task team was to hold a symposium between Society Chairs and PSO HKs to engage on challenges that both entities face regarding a more symbiotic relationship, which I and a designated steering committee successfully held this term. The feedback will now be used to inform the next steps of the task team.

3. Other

In the first term, I met with a Stellenbosch ward councillor and we explored possible links of communication between PSO students in his ward and the municipality in order to improve municipal services in his ward, which is primarily occupied by PSO students.

For the last two terms myself and Yeki Mosomothane, in the interest of promoting Men’s mental health, have been in the process of planning a facilitated conversation between members of campus communities. We attended a similarly framed project at UCT at the end of last year and have been working to appropriately synthesise an effective plan for our campus.

# Plans for Next Academic Term

In the upcoming term I plan to:

* Approach the placement office to accommodate PSO choices into the application system for prospective students,
* Work with the Alumni Office to improve the IT infrastructure of PSO alumni databases,
* Continue overseeing the execution of the PSO-Societies task team report,
* Plan and execute the following Stratcon for PSO Prims,
* Maintain a healthy and supportive relationship with my Prims,
* Convert the men’s mental health project into its final phase, and
* Continue to fulfil my constitutional mandate to the best of my ability.

# Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

In the spirit of community building, and echoing the sentiments proposed in the first section of this document relating to the importance of thriving PSO communities, I will continue to focus on developing communities that are unique and above all identify with a purpose. I fear that in the interest of collaboration, individual community identities have been overlooked in the PSO context. Frankly, if we have ten identical PSOs – we might as well have one. A sincere recommendation to Student Affairs would be to hire more PSO Coordinators to each coordinate fewer communities, or to restructure the PSO project to assign individual community guardians to each PSO to offer direct, tailored assistance and create an honest and evident sense of community.

# Important Contacts

* Pieter Kloppers (SSG Director): pwc@sun.ac.za
* Gareth Cornelissen (SSG Deputy Director): gmc@sun.ac.za
* Yeki Mosomothane (SSG: Multicultural Coordinator): yekim@sun.ac.za
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