**Minutes**

**Students’ Representative Council Meeting**

13 February 2019, 18:00 @ SRC boardroom

# Prologue

A regular Students’ Representative Council (SRC) meeting of Stellenbosch University was held on 13 February 2019 in terms of section 38 and section 39 of the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution which mandates the SRC to meet at least at least once every two weeks. The following are the minutes thereof.

# Welcoming

C. van Wyk opens the meeting at 18:06 and welcomes everyone. States if a conclusion is not reached on the matter another meeting will occur and requests everyone to abide by the rules of engagement.

# Attendance

**Present**

SRC Members:

Jane Fourie

Alex van Greuning

Carli van Wyk

Leighton September

Lauren Stevenson

Marine Bothma

Mthunzi Matshabane

Tariq Khan

Melt Hugo

Emma Swartz

Thembeka Myeko

SRC Managers:

Minenthle Nxumalo

Blaine Josephs

Takudzwa Masunda

**Absent**

John Kachoko

Eduard Beukman

**Proxy**

Eduard Beukman: Paula Joubert

# Approval of previous minutes

M. Hugo and A. van Greuning approve minutes of the previous meeting

# Setting of the agenda

There have been changes to the agenda and the minutes will be a reflection thereof.

## Shuttle feedback

C. van Wyk explains that when the current SRC stepped into office, the rectorate informed the SRC of the implementation of a fee on the night shuttle service in the first meeting between the SRC and the Rectorate of the University. The SRC’s concern, is that the missing middle will be unable to pay the fee, however management assured the SRC that vulnerable, international and needy students will be catered for by the University’s Transport Department. This means that students with an annual income of up to R600 000 will be covered for by the university.

The proposed date for the implementation of the fee on the night shuttle service was on 11 February 2019, however, after the SRC entered negotiations with the university, it was agreed upon that the implementation will only start on 1 March 2019. This will allow students to apply for the bursaries and will allow time for logistical issues to be sorted out. The SRC’s stance, on the basis of equity, is that vulnerable students should not pay for this service.

C. van Wyk once again reminds everyone about the rules of engagement and to respect the speaker that is on the floor to ensure constructive engagement.

**Student feedback**

***Most people using the shuttle cannot afford to pay for it. The fee is therefore not feasible and states that evidence of how students are misusing the shuttle should be provided. The student also states that most external bursaries do not provide funding for transport and then concludes that the implementation of a fee on the shuttle service should be rejected.***

C. van Wyk shares stats of last year’s users of the shuttle service, which indicates that it is not the majority of the student body. However the SRC realizes that the students that do use the shuttle are in need of the service and should therefore be catered for by the university. The university wants the user to pay because for the past few years it has been included in the tuition fees of all students because it was a pilot project. According to national legislation, the university is not allowed to make all students pay if the majority of the student body is not making use of the service being charged for. In the case of the University of Cape Town (UCT), the majority of the registered students make use of the *Jammie Shuttle* hence that fee is included in their overall tuition fees, which is notably higher than the tuition fees at Stellenbosch University.

**Student is confused by the SRC members’ stance on the night shuttle as one member says they are against and another member says something else. You are getting paid for this so you need to represent students. Warns chair not to be condescending as this is a serious matter regarding students’ livelihood.**

**Student states that a vulnerable student can’t be determined by using a means test leading to said student asking what will be used to determine who can be considered as a vulnerable student.**

C. van Wyk responds by stating that the SRC recognizes there are problems with the means test, and it is for this reason that the SRC has arranged with management that each student applying for a transport bursary should be dealt with through a case by case system. The reasons the SRC was given for the misuse of the night shuttle service by students, which was provided by the Transport Department, was according to the SRC, not a good enough reason to implement a fee to the service. The SRC therefore commits itself to continue challenging management to find out more reasons.

**Student states that the chair needs to stop calling students vulnerable and needy as it is condescending and dehumanizing.**

**Student expresses how the issue of the night shuttle service still being discussed saddens her, especially after the previous SRC promised they would go to management and reject this. Last year the SRC said they would get back to the students so she is unsure as to who the SRC is representing. If you look at who is using the shuttle, those people do not have cars. Scheduling the meeting at this time is inconvenient as those who need to attend this meeting are unable too.**

**Student asks that SRC reconsider their request for students to provide their name when asking question in light of SRC announcement that the meeting will be recorded.**

C. van Wyk responds by saying that it is optional by the student and that the names would be used for minuting purposes only**.**

**Student expresses unhappiness in reference to social media posts of SRC which tends to state “waiting on management” implying that the SRC are representatives of management, and not students. No students using the shuttle should pay for it. It would be a failure of the SRC if students would be required to pay a fee. This fee has never been applied by previous SRC’s so this would reflect their first failure. Previous SRC terms made the effort and did research to present to Prof Stan du Plessis and now the new SRC is ruining everything.**

**Student expresses that it is clear there is a consensus that students do not want this fee to be implemented. SRC needs to go back to the drawing board and fix this mess.**

**Speaker of Student Parliament states that students who make use of the shuttles are in need of financial assistance. The fee imposed on the shuttle would increase the financial burden on students. Speaker asked the SRC whether there were alternative solutions discussed when the SRC was in discussion with management about the shuttle service?**

A. van Greuning explained that the SRC waited on management because the SRC is not management and did not implement this fee. Reason provided by management was that the fee is imposed due to misuse of service and he makes it known that the SRC did challenge this reason on the basis that one of the values of the university is equity. In response to this statement a student expressed her anger as she believes that the SRC is not representing the student body and wants to know why this decision was officially communicated on the SRC social media platforms.

**Student proposes that the SRC go back to management and inform them that the student body rejects this decision and that they have 3 days to respond to this matter. The SRC then needs to retract all statements made.**

C.van Wyk asks if students present believe that other students who can afford to pay for the shuttle should pay for it. Student responds by saying that privileged students do not make use of the service, it is the vulnerable students.

**Student gives insight to the stats used by C. van Wyk, as the student points out that the SRC need to question the nature of research and who is conducting it. Some students might not take the shuttle on a regular basis, do they get included in this stats? Some students may have money but it does not mean they are privileged. Even if students do have money, they need to use it for more important things then a shuttle fee. The student concludes by asking if the SRC is challenging the tariff.**

**Student raises the point that the university just wants to make money from the shuttle service as the reason of misuse is not valid. Students will not pay this fee, the SRC needs to challenge the implementation of this fee on the basis that the university can afford the shuttle service.**

**Student states that their biggest problem is that the SRC is not rejecting this tariff as a whole. Some bursaries are solely academic bursaries which does not cover additional costs. The student feels that the SRC has accepted this decision and are simply trying to figure out how to feed it to the student body.**

**A Student raises the point that he assumes the SRC meets prior to the general meeting. As a collective he believes they have not met, as feedback is not being provided with one voice. He continues by asking if the SRC accepts or rejects the proposed R9 fee? He states that he speaks under correction when he says that the current SRC did not get the shuttle service as an issue when stepping into term but the shuttle has been a problem for the past 10 years. It is as simple as a handover report, there are SRC members who have been present in shuttle meetings from past years. Chair has also stated she rejects means test but then says it will be handled case to case. Continues to ask another question: will the means test be applied from case to case, and if so why would a flawed system be applied?**

M. Botha states that students were under the impression that the shuttle service was free but it is not the case, as the fee was included in all student fees but only 1000-2000 students made use of this service. According to South Africa’s Consumer Act, institutions are not allowed to make everyone pay for a service that the majority does not use.

M. Botha explains that previously up until this year the shuttle service was a pilot service, this means if the shuttle fees continues to be included in all student accounts then it would be illegal. Student states that he has never seen the shuttle service reflect onto his student account so it is a false fact raised by the SRC member. The SRC then continues to explain that it was included in the overall cost of tuition.

C. Van Wyk thanks Maxwell for the proposal. She continues by suggesting a referendum in which all students can vote if they would like shuttle fee to be included in their overall tuition fees. The SRC represent 32 000 students on campus, the referendum will be either that the student accepts or rejects the proposed method.

Student response is that this is a public institution, the state has an obligation to students and state provides money to subsidize for students. The university is receiving money to provide these kinds of services. The student continues to ask what the university is doing with the money they receive from government.

Asking uniformed student body would not lead to an informed decision being made regarding a matter that effects the minority.

Student points out the problem of a survey being sent out, how many students that will vote on this matter actually know about the service especially if the SRC raised that a between 1000 and 2000 students make use of this service. Would a vote be the best response to the service?

Student suggests in light of the previous students’ point, that only the students who make use of the shuttle should be allowed to vote.

C. van Wyk states that a survey has to be sent out to all students as they represent all students. Legally it is not possible for all students to pay for this service. People who cannot pay the fee will not pay for the fee, those who can will.

**A student makes the point that decisions in this institution needs to be made based on equity. This means making a decision that is the best, not a decision for the majority.**

**Student speaks about research ethics. Research is conducted on those being affected.**

**Student stresses that a discussion has been taking place but no consensus has been reached. In light of ethics, human dignity is being violated as students are being referred to as vulnerable. The student raises the concern that he met with the SRC the previous day, and the SRC still does not have any more information than it had the last time. The student asks if the university is aware of the effect the implementation of this fee will have on the so called “missing middle”?**

**The student continues and states that he wants to make it very clear that if the SRC is unable to handle this issue, then the body should allow the student population to put it into their own hands. The SRC is falling to chair this meeting resulting in students chairing this meeting themselves.**

C.van Wyk states she will take one last point and then the SRC will convene.

**Student states that the SRC is not allowed to convene in private, it has to be stated prior to the meeting**.

C. van Wyk responds by stating SRC will convene in front of everyone.

Student expresses a resolution needs to be reached tonight as students affected by the shuttle service is in attendance.

C. van Wyk thanks students for their input and asks that the SRC be allowed to convene. States that many factors were raised today that were not taken into consideration. An emergency meeting will take place tomorrow with management as they are not satisfied. Closes the point by saying that the SRC realizes they cannot accept this as consultation needs to take place before a decision can take place.

**Student raises that there is a misconception of who the SRC is representing. Requests that conceptualization needs to occur as this university is different from other institutions in this country. SRC does not have the right to accept decisions as it is disrespectful and stresses that they are aware and know what they agree to when speaking with management.**

C. van Wyk states that they will take all the concerns raised by students to management tomorrow as the students reject this fee.

**Student expresses that as students they cannot trust the SRC, the SRC needs to reject this proposal as well when presenting this matter to the management. The student continues by saying “you need to tell us what we want to hear since we have given you a mandate. We will not leave here until we hear what we want to hear”**

C. van Wyk stresses that a mandate has been given and will be presented to management.

C.van Wyk continues by saying that the shuttle point has been exhausted for the night, since the meeting is going in circles. Asks students to respect one another as well as the SRC.

 The next step is to sit with management and inform them that the student body rejects this fee.

**A Student once again raised the point that the SRC cannot be trusted and seeks that students be present at this meeting for the sake of transparency and accountability.**

C. van Wyk responds by saying that these meetings are unfortunately closed.

**Student states the he will be chairing this meeting from this point forward and if the SRC Chair is unable to provide students with the shuttle , then the students need to take the issue into their own hands because a mass meeting will not give students the shuttle.**

C. van Wyk stresses that a mass meeting allows for more consultation with students.

Student stresses mass meetings are useless, SRC needs to go to management state that SRC along with the students reject the fee. Posts need to be retracted and shuttle service will be free.

C. van Wyk responds to all the points raised and confirms that the SRC is rejecting the fee implementation with all the students and they will be taking this to the emergency meeting with management based on the concerns raised by students in the meeting.

L. September states that he has heard all the concerns and has written all the questions down. A statement can be drafted which can be sent out to the student body as well as management. He requests for a general consensus from the house. It will be presented to management and then they will get back to the student body.

**Students request that previous statements are retraced and the new statement gets posted on all platforms**.

C. van Wyk states they have committed to this as they have exhausted this point and it is being closed now.

**Student suggests that students be given a timeline for when all of this will be done.**

**Student points out that the Higher Education Act speaks to the convention of the SRC which led to the development of the Student Constitution. SRC is not comprised of three members but a body of elected members and mangers. Continues to ask why the rest of the SRC is silent on this matter? SRC need to vote and collaborate on a decision. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary General cannot make a unilateral decision for the SRC.**

**Student mentions that other SRC members have raised their hands indicating that they have other ideas. There was also an agreement that the statement gets drafted now due to the urgency. The statement needs to be drafted in the presence of our students and the meeting will not continue without that statement**

C. van Wyk answers by stating that the reason why the three members in question spoke was because they were discussing when statement would be released. Requests a vote from SRC and mangers included if the statement will be drafted immediately, or after the meeting has concluded.

**Students are here and we cannot decide on behalf of our students. Students elect SRC, SRC represent students not management. If the students speaks the SRC need to listen, they cannot make a decision on behalf of the students.**

T. Khan greets everyone and values the input raised. He explains that the SRC can draft the statement now but it would not be grounded on anything, the second statement is what the SRC will do and the SRC can be held accountable for. Time is required to strategize the best way to handle the matter. He says that he is someone who values student input and continues by asking whether the or not the SRC should be allowed to execute leadership and represent students by drafting the statement?

**C. van Wyk announces that the SRC will be voting as they represent students, a vote will take place now as to whether they will draft a press release now or not**. Student expresses anger as the mandate has been made clear that a statement be drafted now.

Student says that a quorum is not needed right now as it is a discussion point. C. van Wyk responds that they want to draft it but they are unable to if everyone is yelling. Constitutionally a vote has to take place.

**Students want to know how much time they need to give the SRC to draft the statement**.

C. van Wyk asks students if they would like to move forward and allows J. Fourie to explain the process. J. Fourie states that she understands the concerns raised and a statement will be drafted as they have committed to it and they want the students to trust them. The SRC wants to know if they have to draft it now or if time will be allowed to draft a proper statement?

Student states that in terms of the Student Constitution, the document where the powers of the flows from, the SG is responsible for internal communication, the Communication Officer is responsible for external communication and the Chairperson is the spokesperson. Communication officer has been silent in this conversational. Will the SG be tasked with drafting the statement as he is limited to internal communication or will the Communication Officer be involved in the drafting?

C. van Wyk states that the press release will be released to the entire student body. They did not say the SG will draft this statement. What needs to be decided is whether the statement be drafted now or not, once that is done they can give a time it will be released. Other SRC members have raised their hands so they do have other ideas.

**Vote drafting the statement now or in an hour will be open ballot.** C. van Wyk states that for pragmatic purposes only SRC members will be allowed to vote.

T. Khan says that before we vote, we need to decide on the merit of this as we are the decision makers. Voting is a serious decision, we need to evaluate the pros and cons. I would like that we draft the statement in an hour. **Student states that Communication Officer needs to do what is in his mandate, as the officer is trying to prevent a democratic process from occurring. Officer is incorrect and if a decision is made that the statement is released tonight then it needs to be done.**

**C. van Wyk requests that the vote take place now. Option 1: statement be drafted now or option 2: statement be drafted in an hour.**

Option 1 is voted in.

M. Matshabane suggests that a break be granted for the statement to be drafted.

Meeting is reconvened at 21:37 as the press release is read out by T. Khan to the student body present.

# Closing

Meeting is adjourned at 21:41. The statement will be posted on Facebook tonight and an email will be sent out the following day. Feedback will be provided to students accordingly. The other point on the agenda that was not discussed will be moved to the next SRC meeting.