



SRC 2020/2021 Annual Report

Joshua Eva, Vice-Chair, dawg@sun.ac.za

Contents

Constitutional Responsibilities	2
Portfolio Overview.....	2
Committees / Task Teams	3
Institutional.....	3
Other Committees / Task Teams.....	4
Year Overview	4
Term 1	4
Annual discussions and Welcoming	4
SRC task teams	5
Policy forum(s)	5
Term 2.....	5
Reality check, the morbid reminder	5
National unrest	6
Recreation and visits.....	6
Welcoming, Covid-19 safety, Alcohol, Culture, and language usage	6
Term 3.....	7
Lockdown, exams and a national unrest (again)	7
Term 4.....	8
Elections.....	8
Budget.....	8
Budget & Reasoning.....	8
Expenditure so far.....	8
Recommendations to improve portfolio	8
Efficient running of (virtual) meetings:.....	8
Productive attendance of (virtual) meetings:.....	9
More defined goals:.....	9
Rolling task teams:	9
SRC:.....	10
Important Contacts.....	10

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Constitutional Responsibilities

As the Prim Committee's Vice-Chair and having been assigned the responsibilities of the committee's Residence Chair, I am mandated to represent the Residence 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 Residence Primarii to benefit overall community-building in our private student structures. This is done both informally on a relational basis with the leaders, as well as at structured developmental interactions such as POP's Camp, a platform for Residence and PSO Primarii and Vice Primarii to engage collaboratively with community-specific and campus-related issues in order to develop leadership abilities.

The key responsibilities of the Residence 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,
- 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 Residence constituency. A trusted and reliable link of information and representation between the Residence 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

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

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 Residence 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 situated in Residence accommodation.

2. 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 a negotiative element to the job description which becomes particularly consequential when the debate is of budgetary or even ideological nature.

The constructive nature of the co-curricular space is detrimental to the success of students and fundamental to the offering of Stellenbosch University and thus my primary responsibility would be to facilitate the symbiotic culture that is required on campus and in residence in order for students to experience growth and development in a space that caters for their safety.

3. 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-

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

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.

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 and Vice-Chair, the PC’s treasurer, the PC’s secretary (Yanga Keva), the external Cluster Convenor and the Tygerberg PC Chair.

Honoraria Task Team - Subcategory of the SRC (task team under SRC structure) in which the discussion follows (re)structuring of all student leadership compensation under the Stellenbosch University structure.

Primm Committee Policy Forum - In this policy forum the prims are given a short overview of what it means to effectively rewrite their house constitutions. These meetings are chaired by the Prim Committee secretary. The Chair and Vice chair in this case serve an enquiring and advisory role to the Secretary, therefore only used for consultation purposes.

Year Overview

Term I

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have left a slow start to the new term of leadership (2020/2021) although this leads to the benefit of reshaping many communities and redefining the ethos and effectiveness of said communities.

Annual discussions and Welcoming

In my case all of the Communities on the PC have taken a slow start to their leadership term (which is more forgiving in nature due to the academic term of 2021 starting significantly later). We have seen thus far the formation and establishment of all the community’s leadership structures (with a few exceptions) and also most of these communities have engaged in their leadership camps thus allowing them to initiate welcoming planning. Unfortunately, welcoming guidelines in respect of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has not yet been released and therefore we could not yet assist the communities with their planning of welcoming.

Recommendation:

Take advantage of the week(s) lead you have been elected before the new prims. If you need a date, confirm a provisional date with CSC, but do not wait for a mandate as you will wait till your first report review. The function of (Vice) Chair is open to you to determine. Especially in the case of this report (Residence chair), Residences have had the benefit of being structurally in place for quite some time, this brings forward significant history in the residences, specifically when considering the practices of the residences. However, many of these do not have reasons besides honouring the past.

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

It is crucial that we honour the past by building the future and not just living in the past, be aware of the members in the community of Stellenbosch and address their needs and development. Between the residence Prim and Residence head, your position is strange, but necessary, as you are one of the individuals with a holistic view of campus and therefore need to bring together communities under a combined vision for Stellenbosch student communities.

SRC task teams

From the task teams, the SRC has successfully budgeted for all its desired projects which members set out for the term, assigned members task teams who wish to do so and conducted in the welcoming of the new vice rector of teaching and learning. The first project in which I served on (the honoraria task team) is still in the process with roughly 50% completion with the expectation to result in more requirements for completion, in short an extension is expected due to the lack in foresight of how big the task is as this appears to be a project that would take up the entire term.

Policy forum(s)

Lastly the Policy forum task team has successfully engaged in its preliminary meetings as a group and expects to receive enquiries from the community leaders in due time as they move closer to their 1st or 2nd house meetings in which they would prefer to vote on their new constitutions.

Recommendations:

Policy forums refer to any instance during which the written processes of an institution are discussed (in plain English). These written processes are important as they insure continuity after you are done. However, many of those before you have not spent as much time during their policy forums, resulting in a underinvested function, which means our constitutions are not respectable or efficient. I want to stress the importance of policies, but in the same breath I want to remind you that the students in university right now will not benefit from your sleepless night on a policy that no one really reads because it wasn't any good. I'd suggest read through your policies and amend mistakes, or delegate it to your secretary, and keep your focus on addressing structural and community specific problems that Stellenbosch is facing.

Term 2

Reality check, the morbid reminder

This term has been plagued by the passing of a fellow SRC member which has reminded us all of the grim reality that life is precious. Followed by the increased awareness of mental health and admitted attendance towards caring for one another and being available for one another during all times, both fruitful and grieving. This allows for us as a community, the student body, to be more real and vulnerable towards our students needs outside of the academic sphere. The hope is that this would allow for the transformation of the culture of the leadership of Stellenbosch University. For the future bodies of students to be more compassionate towards their fellow students, a significant mark in the development of culture amongst students, though be it a bitter event, we cannot avoid the significance of facing life and all of its realities.

Recommendations:

I am certain such reality check will repeat itself in your term and every term from there. Remember that everyone you come across, those you work with and those who you disagree with are just people doing what they believe is right. Your problem is the problem, not the people, many times they support the problem not because they support the idea of it but because they view it wrong. Leadership has

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

become about points of view, especially in a country as diverse as our own – diversity of opinion is valued. But problems still need to be solved, one such problem for example – mental health on campus and the structural treatment thereof, however it is not just on campus where mental health is not appropriately treated, so approach this problem holistically.

National unrest

Furthermore, the SRC faced the nationwide registration crisis this term, this was led by the Financial Inclusion SRC member and the SRC Chairperson, however the majority of SRC including myself was present for discussion on moving forward with the student crisis. The outcome was that we decided to fund students' debt rather than clear debt restrictions. The rationale for this decision was that we deemed it in the student's best interest to register without debt rather than register with accumulating debt. There was controversy amongst some students with regards to the time it took to register students and clear debt, however this could have been deterred with better communication throughout the council and amongst student representatives.

Recommendation:

It is important to constantly communicate appropriately with your constituency. Communication is one of the largest downfalls of leadership especially during a time of crisis. During a crisis information dispersion becomes more rapid and thus communication from leadership requires the same. However, do not comment or give information on problems you cannot solve, share your condolences but do not use a crisis as a marketing opportunity. Once again remember and maintain several channels of communication and the purpose of these channels. You have a large constituency and thus most of your communication will have to be fragmented (not a mass email really, if mass emails are used by the SRC they tend to be delayed).

Recreation and visits

The SRC further went on our annual camp this term along with a visit to the military campus. Overall, a very fruitful meeting during which we got to know each other better and learned to work with one-another's strength and around one-another's weaknesses.

Recommendation:

Go along, it's well-funded and at least relatively enjoyable. However, if you ever find yourself in the position where you do not agree with the amount of funds spent on such amenities – do object from the start and speak to the financial manager of the committee, misuse of funds is one of the biggest issues facing this country and should not be tackled lightly, your money is where your mouth is.

Welcoming, Covid-19 safety, Alcohol, Culture, and language usage

From the Primm Committee this term signified the finalisation of the welcoming program which ended successfully. All meetings took place as scheduled and several initiatives were started to take forward. Importantly communities worked together to spread ideas on how to handle shared issues. Much frustration came from the communities with the lack of seriousness in some students to take seriously the regulations regarding Covid-19 as well as the alcohol policy.

Furthermore, the development of cultures within communities. It is with great regret that some communities have not followed development and transformation efforts to which they have committed in the past. It has thus dawned on me that we need to align efforts of transformation within

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

a community setting as well as a personal setting, for all communities and all individuals. This will involve nothing more or less than self-searching and peer reviewing one-another for practical flaws that impede the collectively and unity of a society that is Stellenbosch University and the future of this country.

Other initiatives were made but not deemed significant for this report. Core issues concerned are policy and constitutional reviews which forms part of the legislative branch of development and transformation, this is an exciting development for this body. What this entails is the development of the body at hand. It is important to note of previous efforts made and to build on foundations already laid down.

A discussion was engaged on with regards to the development of the ResEd program. The program is due for reform in a levelled manner to account for the development of students and to take this development into account when providing training and guidance for a student, thus, to avoid the trainings becoming redundant. What this means is that the ResEd program is being updated, do check in with Quinton Apollis about the development of this. The program is set to develop students from the ground up so that higher level trainings are not redundant, and that lower level or introductory trainings are relevant.

Recommendations:

Be sure to check in constantly with your “problem children” and “star pupils”, these are your outliers. The central +-30 prims will not need your constant attention, but there are those that will avoid improvement that need it and those who want to change but struggle too. It is important for you to be a central figure in this case because they won’t come to you, you must identify them and check in with them. Once again, your position has limited authority so you need to convince them why including you will bring value to their table.

Furthermore, this is not your space to make friends, when events take place that endanger the lives and wellbeing of students or their academics (we are an academic institution) you need to set the example at the top. It is needless to say; your level of integrity should be of the highest order. This doesn’t mean you should shout at people when they did something wrong(it’s never necessary to raise your voice), but you should set the example of what tolerance and tone is given to address certain issues. It is important to not make the meeting about you and your feelings to the problem but about the problem itself.

Term 3

Lockdown, exams and a national unrest (again)

After our previous report not much new has happened. The recurrence of a national lockdown similar to the one in 2020 points out that the unexpected can always happen and that you should expect nothing less from your term.

Covid will be a part of your term whether you like it or not. During this time students were preparing for exams already and we as the prim committee were informed that nothing should change, but it did. Mentioning of a third wave became clear and on campus facilities were closed despite exams continuing. During the exams however further tragedy struck as we went into the national lockdown and exams had to be put on hold. After this even further unrest struck our nation during major protests which resulted in lives lost and widespread food insecurity.

Recommendations:

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

It is important for us as leaders to be aware of the value of accountability. Not just to keep ourselves accountable but to keep others accountable and to invite others to keep us accountable. History has shown us time and time again leaders who are left to their own devices will act in their own best interest. This is why you should use your leverage as a leader to keep the management of this university accountable to their mandate and duty to students and South Africans, to act in the best interest of its students by educating them to become nation builders in our time of need.

Term 4

Elections

Nothing significant happened during the final term in office. This term, although labelled the fourth term was the 3rd academic term of the year. On the SRC we appointed an office manager and elections took place. In my personal capacity this term was laden by academic responsibilities as well as those at home. Within the Prim Committee space guidance was given to Prims who were unsure how to handle the election period and encourage new leaders to stand for positions of leadership. Furthermore, the successful election of my successor took place along with a productive handover

Recommendations:

Aim to conclude all projects before the implementation of this term and focus completely on the continuity of your vision. Invest in the new leaders who will take over and ensure they are adequately equipped to perform to the best of their potential. This is done by explaining the sphere they will be operating in through the explanation of the fundamental responsibilities of their role, the various external influence their role has (on which committees they can serve or where you served) and reflect on your term in detail. This should be done in a way that when you handover they do not start at day 1 from scratch, but that they rather have the synthesised experience that you have collected throughout your term.

A threat to this model would be when a specific leader stands for two periods in a row and then does not reflect on each individual term separately. When reflecting on your terms at the end of your second, the happenings of the second term tend to be more significant in your mind than those at the beginning. To a new leader this is not helpful as they are at the beginning of their term.

Budget

None

Budget & Reasoning

None

Expenditure so far

None

Recommendations to improve portfolio

Efficient running of (virtual) meetings:

Know when to move on from certain individuals in meetings, over engagement is a thing. Especially when it is you. Even though you spend most of the time coming up with agenda points (feel free to attempt to include your committee in sending in agenda points). When deciding on EVERY agenda point, ensure that it is a point that can take input. Even if you are just giving feedback, be sure that this feedback either addresses a previous issue or a future issue, pointless feedback is indeed pointless (I don't care what you did this weekend, leave that for feesgees, not for the meeting).

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Productive attendance of (virtual) meetings:

Another part of portfolio will be the attendance of (many) meetings hosted by others. During these meetings you will be expected to give feedback and input on the behalf of students (all students). This is quite daunting especially if you don't know what is going on in the whole university. Do not stress, focus on the problem at hand and not the impression that you are making, you don't have to be the focus of the meeting, there is an agenda for that. What you could do is focus on having engagements focus on the teams you sit on. For example, be sure to engage with the PC on matters that would concern the student housing committee (any issues with student housing including hubs) as well as the monitors advisory committee and the welcoming committee. These are recurring problems but they are also recurring events and procedures so there is a lot of value in discussing them before you get to the actual meetings.

More defined goals:

Goals and Deadlines. These are not simply for accountability; this is for direction in the executive specifically. Annual discussions are important for houses, similarly a strategic meeting should be the first thing on your mind after the new executive is discussed. This would give direction each term for the team and allow for short term goals as well as one or two long term goals in the team. Focus on choosing attainable specific goals (SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) in the short term which feed into the vision for your term and the committee.

Rolling task teams:

This portfolio could benefit from the establishment of a residence task teams which would involve addressing residence strategy planning – not operational in nature. This task team would be set up by asking incoming Prims to identify with (at least) one motive for the year – this could be done by asking what they want to achieve in their term. Prims who have the same or similar goals will be grouped together in order to have task teams that are passionate about the task team they are on.

Ideally task teams include residence prims to discuss key strategic issues regarding residences such as impediments to: future operations, significance in student development and foundations for flexibility and inclusivity. Although these task teams should effectively be open to all of campus to join. A suggestion would be to send out a malleable survey to collect more ideas (passions) for task teams from both other positional leaders and non-positional. The reason is two-fold, to increase engagement with student issues and to increase engagement with student leadership. See the attached document labelled “rolling task teams” for the details.

This would allow for the residences' inclusion into strategic planning of the community, in consultation with other communities, not in isolation. The biggest threat to the significance of residences is the persistence to plan in isolation. It is in my opinion that the annual discussions are not effective, as it functions more as a report on the happenings and the state of the res and not a discussion on moving forward and how to face or address the future. Although this is important for the university to be aware of what is happening in the community, it is also important to have an intentional conversation on how to move forward and how to keep the community relevant with those who are living inside of it.

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

SRC:

The interaction with the SRC is fundamental to this portfolio, even though it is by far not under your mandate. The only mandate is to represent your committee. However, most of the members of the SRC have active portfolios and even the managers have specific portfolios. Immediately attempt to contract these into your vision as you will be the student “contact” point for most of their portfolios. This means that you have the opportunity to incorporate the SRC and delegate much of the issues that you want to handle yourself to those who have a strict focus on that issue. The alternative is that the SRC members and managers will continuously contact you to forward flyers onto your groups (which will happen regardless) and question what you are doing. It is important to focus on what the student community of Stellenbosch needs from you, your position is strategic and big picture, focus on it without getting caught up in the details, delegate.

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
- Dr Makhetha (Student Affairs Senior Director): choicemakhetha@sun.ac.za
- Dr Celeste Nel (Admission and Placement Director): cswan@sun.ac.za
- Anele Mdepa (Student Governance Manager): anelemdepa@sun.ac.za
- Quinton Apollis (ResEd co-ordinator): qapollis@sun.ac.za

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Students' Representative Council
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za