



## Students' Representative Council 2014: Construction on campus

After consultation with the Various stake holders affected, by the construction namely: Irene, Huis Visser and Huis Marais residences as well as the new generation and Listen Live and Learn Village, and top management .The Student Representative council would like to address our concern with regards to, not only the acknowledgement of inconvenience, but moreover the contingency plan that will ensure academic success of all students is prioritized.

The Student Representative council wants to stress the communication of the contingency plan. With specific reference made to the alternative placements, academic lecture halls, venues for students to socialise and venues for after hour studying. The acknowledgement of inconvenience in this case is seen as not sufficient in the case of physical and emotional stress caused.

As the Student Representative Council, we strongly feel that the academic success of students needs to be protected and prioritized. Given the academically sensitive time in which the construction is taking place. The SRC would like more clarity regarding the strategies that will be implemented or discussed to guarantee that:

1. The academic success of students be ensured given the environments in which they will be made to function/work with particular focus given to the academic schedule of the first term
2. Some form of compensation will be given to all parties affected by the above mentioned inconvenience.
3. Confirmation that the necessary support, facilities and resources will be made available to all students affected. Thus ensuring that their academics success is prioritized and supported.



The Student Representative council acknowledges the benefits brought about by the construction. It is projected that the number of beds available will more than double. The doubling of beds includes all work to Irene, Huis Visser, Huis marais as well as the Listen, live and Learn Village and the New Generation Residence.

The enrolment figures for 2014 also placed extra pressure on the accommodation demand in 2014. The building was to accommodate the demand and due to unforeseen circumstances was not completed on the projected date. The enrolment figures for 2014 are as follows:

- 1.) The enrolment of first year students was 5166. This represented a total increase of 16.1%, from 4449 in 2013. It exceeds the target set by U.S. Council by only 401.

To date millions of Rand has been paid for additional accommodation, transport, security etc. for those students affected by the construction. However, the problem at hand is the communication of the contingency as well as the provision made to ensure student success during this trying time. The first term is crucial for academic success, as First Assessments for semester subjects as well as Early Assessment occurs. These early assessments and first assessments set the tone for the Academic year. Thus, all measures should be taken to ensure that all affected students are able to achieve their optimum success.

The Student representative Council has represented the Students and regularly met with the relevant parties, to ensure that the students interests where protected as far as possible. The SRc had at all times at least two representatives either; Mj Dippenaar ( Chair), Willie Ross (PK Chair), Courtney Roots ( PK Vice Chair) or JC Rademeyer ( Student Communities ) at either the Contingency plan Committee or Student Housing committee meetings.

Any complaints or comments regarding the construction may be directed to the Student Representative Council Communications Officer, Tosca Ferndale (tosca@sun.ac.za). Furthermore any more information regarding the construction can be gathered from the relevant SRc members. Given the nature of the current situation, we are confident that this request will be handled with urgency. The Student Representative council also trusts that the process will continue to be mindful of students and assist them in achieving student and academic success.



## Students' Representative Council 2014 : Construction on campus Feedback

On the 13th of February at the Executive Committee and Rectors Management Team (RMT) meeting, a letter of Stance regarding the Construction was submitted by the Student Representative Council. Based on this document, the Rectors Management Team submitted feedback as a response to the concerns raised by the stance.

Regarding the academic support to students given the current circumstance, including space to study, the following feedback was provided:

All students have been placed in alternative accommodation. Furthermore costs were incurred to ensure that the alternative accommodation is equipped with sufficient facilities and resources to study. Affording displaced students their own, personal environments and provide a space for optimal studies.

Mentor support is still available as in all residences. In the past, active and efficient mentors have proven to make a difference in the academic success of their mentees.

Alternative study spaces were organized for students who preferred to study away from the construction in 2013. Such alternatives can again be arranged throughout the building process if need be.

At the beginning of the academic year, there was unfortunately not internet access in all rooms. However, the target date for the affected rooms receiving internet access is between the 19 and 22nd February.

An important contribution from the contingency committee was to ensure that the construction is completed swiftly . The committee also ensures the quality of the construction and oversees all interim measures taken to protect, support and accomodate students. Throughout the construction process provision was made for student representation, to ensure that the students were not excluded from the contingency plan.



With regards to the compensation of students affected by the construction, the feedback is as follows:

There are discussions in progress with the various student communities to decide on appropriate mechanisms through which to acknowledge the contributions of the residents and leadership of the affected residences. Through the construction period, the management of these difficult situations and the patience during this period of disruption and discomfort needs to be acknowledged.

In terms of the necessary support and resources being given to each student and prioritizing their academic success, the following feedback was provided:

As already discussed in section one, there is an entire committee headed by the senior director of Student Affairs, and includes the Vice Rector: Teaching and Learning.

The Student Representative Council is working with management to ensure that the above is realized. We thank management and all stakeholders for their co-operation during the construction period, and we will continue to hold them accountable to the above.

If you have any complaints, questions or comments, feel free to contact the SRc and/or make use of the feedback option on the SRc website.

Kind Regards,

Student Representative Council 2014