



Students' Representative Council  
RE: SAFETY ON CAMPUS

19<sup>th</sup> May 2014

## INTRODUCTION

We, the Students' Representative Council of Stellenbosch, as per our mandate stipulated by the Stellenbosch University Students' Constitution, on behalf of the student body would like to bring the following matter(s) to your office.

In light of the recent events that have taken place on campus, the SRC acknowledges the sense of urgency regarding this matter. We trust that as a relevant stakeholder, you will address this issue with the necessary sensitivity and urgency.

The University, as well as the broader Stellenbosch community, has been plagued by crime and safety measures have not been deployed at an acceptable standard. Apart from constant theft and robbery, the recent attempted kidnapping of Matie student Ilze-Dene Oberholzer has brought into sharp focus the question of violent crime in and around Stellenbosch.

It is evident that the current situation we find ourselves in is as consequence of various stakeholders not fully fulfilling their respective mandates.

We (the SRC) are in no way shying away from our failure to be more pro-active on this issue. In light of this our point of departure is firstly acknowledging and addressing the stated failure but to also work on finding tangible solutions to the issues at hand.



Our efforts include a partnership with the four students who organized the Blind Protest on Friday 16 May 2014 at 13:00 on the Stellenbosch University, Rooiplein. This has resulted in us being able to not only make the following demands but also include recommendations for all relevant stakeholders.

As the SRC we want to address these demands and recommendations to the Management of the University as we believe this is one of the primary links

## **BACKGROUND**

The University has failed to, upon request, provide the Students with the current safety initiatives being implemented (Safety - Prevention, Reaction and Post-Incident measures), or any relevant information as evidence of such initiatives currently in existence. This leads us to make the conclusion, that these measures have not been made provision for, and if so, these measures have up to date not been communicated to the the greater student population or the SRC

We have however in our own capacity established the following:

- The existence of collaboration between the Municipality and the University, through initiatives such as the Monitoring and Advisory Committee on Crime (MACC), and the recent agreement between the University Management and the Municipality regarding joint responsibility and availability of CCTV camera footage , to support each other's incentives against crime.
- The existence of Campus Security (formally known as the USBD) as a 24 Hour responsive service
- The existence of scheduled meetings between the Municipality and University, as well as the University, Vice-Primarii and/or house representatives and the SRC (AKSS), with security focused agendas.
- Bi-annual University Security Forums, chaired by the Vice Rector Teaching and Learning.

- Recent discussions by University management prioritizing the possibility of amending the 2015 academic- year program, to exclude evening tests.
- That the current spike in crime statistics may possibly distort the overall statistic averages, as well as impact the true reflection of current safety statistics on campus, and in the Stellenbosch community.
- The fact that students do not always act responsibly, or in accordance to safety provisions, occasionally putting themselves at risk or increasing their vulnerability.

We are aware that the University acknowledges the current national and, more specifically, regional crime increases, but it has failed to bring this to students' attention, or increase University security measures.

## **DEMANDS**

*In context of this memorandum, "demand" is defined as a substantial improvement on existing safety structures, or measures, implemented by the University, or Municipality.*

We would then like to table the following demands:

### Stellenbosch University

- A safety plan is drafted, considering the lack of said plan provided to the SRC upon request. This plan should in detail highlight all possible safety information a student would require, focusing directly on:
  - a. Campus security services, facilities and resources available.
  - b. Information on the Green route (see point below)
  - c. University mandate and responsibilities, with a safety specific clarification.
  - d. The responsibilities of students

- e. Contact numbers, and other initiatives they can work on to increase their safety
- More ground staff is deployed to high-risk areas, as well as patrolling broader campus. We want to emphasize that in this case budgetary constraints should in no way be an obstacle to requested deployment.
- The re-establishment and localizing of the Green Route and to ensure that it is closely monitored and more efficient. As it started as a student driven initiative, failure to include students in the plan to phase out the route is unacceptable.
- To improve on the awareness of security campaigns organised by Campus Security. These campaigns should include procedures and how students should react and respond in/and to emergency situations. It is evident that many students are not aware of the many services provided by Campus Security.
- Measures by which students, and leadership, can hold Campus Security accountable. We therefore request a clear mandate of what Campus Security is required to provide.
- Improving the existing Maties-Shuttle service, adjusting the flexibility to student demand, specifically during scheduled exams and tests.
- Campus Security officers, present and available at all study facilities on campus including, RGA's, SS, Library and other relevant spaces.
- The expansion of the current Security Forum to provide the space and platform for any concerned students to attend and contribute to strengthening the mandate and achieving all its stated goals
- That the availability of resources be increased. This can take the form of budget increases, training of personnel, and that Campus Security is more present on/and around campus.
- That Campus Security receives a larger part of the budget that will be spent on training and improvement of current infrastructure.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*In the context of this memorandum, “recommendations” are defined as new ideas, and or improvements to existing mechanisms.*

## University

- The subsidizing of pepper spray, Tasers and self-defence classes from Facilities Management and other relevant departments. These are tools that empower students to be and feel safer. Students who cannot afford these tools should not be excluded from the feeling of being safe.
- Social Media is used as a supplementary communication platform for Campus Security, to ensure that Campus Security is kept up to date of relevant student affairs in order to keep track of the movement of students and that students are aware of any issues that may be relevant to their safety
- Redefining the term “Campus”. This will change the mandate of Campus Security and widen its jurisdiction.
- Five Campus Security personal available on the hour, every hour, from 22h00 until 02h00, walking to different locations on campus. Students thus have the option of walking in groups, with the safety of a Campus Security officer in the general direction to their residences or homes.
- Availability of safety programs for at least one representative in respective houses. There is currently no form of safety program that empowers students.
- Safety Hot-spots and nodes are created with panic buttons. These are short (1.5m) poles with blue lights on top, equipped with a panic button that sounds out a very loud siren when pressed. This in turn alerts security officers, as well as acting as a deterrent to criminals. (Example for Panic Buttons at UCT:  
<https://www.uct.ac.za/students/health/campussafety/crimeprevention/>

## Municipality

- More police officers are deployed to problem areas in and around Stellenbosch.
- Provision of a public overview, or hot-spot alert that indicates key areas students should be aware of.
- That the general standard of student safety is raised to an acceptable level by all involved members of the community, and that the Constitutional rights of citizens are safe-guarded.
- Upgrade the town's infrastructure, and safety elements, such as adequate lighting in darker areas.
- More Community Police Forums be established, especially with regard to student applicable associations, such as Residences, or Societies.
- Better distribution of safety plans drawn up by Community Police Forums (CPF) to ensure adequate communication.
- Enforce jurisdiction overlaps areas between campus security, and the police to allow no blind spots overlooked when reacting to incidents.

## Student Body

- That the Student Representative Council portfolio: Safety is improved and its current projects are replaced with more engaging and meaningful projects that are able to produce measurable results in terms of student-safety.
- A Student organized night-watch/ Community patrol is created, where students' have the option to engage in physical patrol of popular campus routes.
- Students using Social Media platforms to alert one another of possible safety hazards. Thus creating a community focused on safety.

- Engaging with existing platforms, thus actively participating in the resolving of campus safety issues
- Participating in campaigns by the Municipality and the University to ensure efficacy and success of said programs.

We trust that this memorandum will receive the necessary attention and that all stated concerns and recommendations are considered with the urgency it demands. We hope that a response is communicated to all relevant stakeholders as soon as possible.

Regards

Students Representative Council 2014

On behalf of all students,

And in partnership with:

Nadia Gava

Alexandra Vorster

Maret Viljoen

Nicola Kaden

