



STUDENTERAAD

**STUDENTS'
REPRESENTATIVE
COUNCIL**

Term report for the following reports:

Postgraduate and International Students

Tinotendaishe D Muzofa

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List of Acronmys

AAC	Academic Affairs Council
CSCD	Centre for Student Counselling and Development
CSSC	Centre for Student Structures and Communities
FVZS	Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute
IIDC	Intended Internally Determined Contributions
LISP	Language Implementation and Support Plan
LLL	Listen Live and Learn
MAD2	Making a Decision to Make a Difference
MASC	Military Academy Students' Council
PC	Primaria Committee
PSO	Private Students' Organisation
RK	Robert Kotze (Director of the PGIO)
SC	Societies Council
SRC	Students' Representative Council
SU	Stellenbosch University
TSR	Tygerberg Students' Representative Council

I. Term 1 Report

A. *Brief Overview.*

Post Graduate representation has been rather limited, where postgrad's concerns aren't seen or evaluated in the same light of the undergraduate students. The problem with this is that the post graduates are often isolated to their academic responsibilities and needs to be a broader post graduate community that allows post graduates be part of the Maties university experience (inclusivity). As a world class university ranked in the top 250 it is with no doubt that our post graduates have contributed immensely to this success via their quality and outstanding research. On the other hand Stellenbosch University has become a leading destination for international students from various countries who want to pursue their studies or research in Africa. University of Stellenbosch continues to face stern competition from various institutions such as UCT and Wits in attracting foreign students and it is vital that the SRC plays a role in ensuring that our postgraduates and international students have a student representative they can go to if they feel they have a problem (Future-focused).

A consultation period was carried out in identifying the needs of International students. Specifically, with regard to finances. Addendum A shows the document sent out to all international student's representatives during the preliminary stages of consultation.

A year planning strategy of increasing the student representation for post graduate and international student also drafted including numerous ideas which are yet to be deemed feasible and the process is currently ongoing.

B. *Challenges Faced.*

From the consultation period with international student the following challenges were identified by students. There after a delegation met with with the director of the PGIO and the following responses and suggestions were made for each challenge raised by the international students.

1. **Registration fees:** Paying of tuition fees on/before registration.

The students requested the university to consider payment structure like SA students as there are enough mechanisms in place to secure payment as students cannot register for next academic year or access to marks denied or not able to receive graduation documents

Additional options: Treat only students from Africa like SA students; Keep option only for degree-seeking non-SA students.

Response from Robert Kotze: The reason for the up front payment is to manage debt of non-SA students as it debt collection outside of South Africa is difficult. Non-payment by non-SA students may increase bad debt to the detriment of the financial situation at SU affecting all students.

2. **Housing:** Ensure that international students receive placement according to approved placement policy, especially also with regard to placement in senior residences.

Discuss with Residence Placement Office to ensure application of policy and request statistics (RK and PGIO housing office)

Ensure options in LLL houses and Huis MacDonald (RK and PGIO housing office)

Continue with policy to provide 6 months housing in Academia/Concordia – students sign contract for 6 months and can then move out to private housing.

Students requested that the PGIO secures housing for especially students from Africa close to campus. RK indicated that it will mean that PGIO needs to pay for the housing and then sublet. Financial risk is too high as PGIO did go this route previously. PGIO carries risk already with renting Concordia and Academia up front. PGIO “buys” the rooms and need to get full occupancy to break even.

3. **Internet:** Voice of international students to add to that of all students for free internet or better management of internet quota. Matter for broader fees debate.

4. **Medical Aid:** This is an additional item for international students and a requirement from Dept Home Affairs and to comply with study permit conditions. PGIO to annually/regularly update Campus Health about the medical aid for international students so that the service here is fully informed.

5. **Increase of tuition:** This item is part of the current broader unrest and protests. From the international students it is to be noted that the increase has a huge effect on their overall costs, especially for the self-sponsored students. There are sponsors, like the Lesotho Government, who are start questioning the costs. It is to be noted that housing in Stellenbosch is expensive, especially housing close to campus as most of the students from Africa do not have vehicles as there is no public transport from the outskirts of Stellenbosch.

6. **Risks for international students participating in protests, especially if they are arrested by SAPD.**

Response from Robert Kotze: The PGIO does not have any previous experience with this aspect, especially related to deportation or the effect on the renewal of a study permit as students need to submit a police clearance.

Question: is contradicting a court interdict and being arrested a civil matter or criminal matter? Does it lead to a criminal record?

PGIO will enquire with immigration experts and agents.

7. **International Registration Fee (IRF):**

Robert Kotze explained the concept behind the IRF, how the funds flow, the distinction between the higher and lower IRF (see presentation).

Robert Kotze agreed to ensure that non-SADC African self-sponsored students can apply to qualify for the lower IRF like SADC students.

II. Year Plan and Strategy

A. Increase Representation for Post Graduate Student

The senior residences house a significant number of post graduate students however there is no leadership structure in place to represent the needs of the post graduate students. The proposal for the coming year is an establishment of a post graduate board that will constitute of all the Prims of Senior residences. The board will be governed by a constitution to be drafted as well as will received funding from the house fees paid. The board will adopt a governance structure similar to the PK however it will not fall under the governance of the PK but will be an independent student leadership structure focussed at addressing issues specific to post graduate students. The post graduate board is to be launched in March 2016 at the first ever Post Graduate

Student welcoming event which will form part of the duty of the Post Graduate Board to plan such an event annually.

B. Post Graduate Welcoming

Significant focus is directed towards creating a welcoming environment at Stellenbosch University however this focus has been limited to welcoming undergraduate students only. Limited resources are allocated to welcoming post graduate students and this will be address in the year 2016. A welcoming conference for Postgraduate students is envisioned in March 2016. The organisers of the event will be the following stakeholders.

- Post Graduate Students Board
- Post Graduate and International Office
- SRC PGIO Liason

The outcomes, program and details of the conference will be drafted after a meeting with the relevant stakeholders.

C. International Students Leadership Exchange

A significant number of International exchange student have raised complaints pertaining to limited integration with local / degree seeking students. This integration has thus been limited to social events of different forms. However, it has been observed that problem solving or serving on the same team results in authentic integration amongst the team members.

In light of the above mentioned the portfolio proposes an International Student Leadership Exchange. The exchange will be characterised by exchange students availing themselves through application to serve on HK's of Residences. The terms of engagement will be determined by each individual residence. However, the exchange student will be required to submit a report of their experience and leadership style experienced in that particular house.

The following outcomes are envisioned from the International Student Leadership Exchange

- New Ideas being incorporated to the residences.
- Fostered Integration between Exchange students and degrees seeking students.
- Communication channels between residences, the PGIO and the SRC.
- Report on external student's experience in residence.

III. Projects Completed

There were no projects carried out in the first term due to time constraints however the portfolio managed to address the issue of e-registration international students. Starting 2016 International student will be able to e-register the same way local student can e-register. The details as to the protocol to be followed are still being discussed but the viability has been confirmed.

A committee for PGIO is currently being formed. With application closed currently and the selection process ongoing.



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Students' Representative Council (SRC)

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INPUT – TUITION FEES

Dear President/Chairperson/Representative of International Student Society

This letter serves to invite you and your constituency to participate in the ongoing discussion on student fees increase at Stellenbosch University and specifically how it affects the constituency you represent. In light of the above mentioned there have been numerous complaints pertaining to International Students having to pay full tuition fees as a prerequisite to registration. This has been deemed problematic as it imposes an immense financial burden on International students at the beginning of each year and has also resulted in certain students being denied the opportunity to register.

The SRC cordially invites you and affected parties to a meeting aimed at drafting up recommendation and suggestions on the subject matter on Tuesday the 20th of Oct at 1pm in the SRC Boardroom. Thereafter a delegation from the attendees will have a meeting later in the day with the Director of the PGIO and all relevant stakeholders to agree on a plan of action.

We would encourage you to solicit as much input from your constituency prior to the meeting so as to have a fruitful meeting were also students were consulted.

Kind regards

T D Muzofa

SRC | PGIO