



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
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SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abaFundi
Studenteraad

SRC TERM 3 REPORT

AAC CHAIRPERSON



Students Representative Council
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Risuna Risimati – AAC Chairperson – risimati@sun.ac.za



Foreword

Dear Maties,

As quickly as the term started, it has come to its end. Reflecting on the tough examination season of our second academic term, I admire the tenacity and resilience of our students. Not only did we grapple with the potential closure of a coveted study hub, but we also moved quickly with a solution and continued to study on. For this, I commend each and every hardworking student.

Term 2 is arguably, one of the tougher terms of the academic year and it has been inspiring to know that both student leaders and students alike have continuously worked hard to ensure its success. Whilst recess may have been shorter for some than for others, it is my hope that we all took the opportunity to rest, refresh and draw up our goals for the last stretch of the year.

It is always an honour to serve the Matie community.

- Risuna Risimati

Constitutional Responsibilities

As per the SU statute

Definitions 68. In this Statute, unless the context indicates otherwise —

"Academic Affairs Council" means a body established by the SRC to promote academic matters on behalf of students;

As per the SRC constitution

CHAPTER 4: THE STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Part 4.1: General

25. Composition of the Students' Representative Council

The Students' Representative Council consists of the following members:

- (1) Nine (9) members are elected by the students in terms of the provisions of CHAPTER 3 of this Constitution.
- (2) The Chairperson of the Academic Affairs Council.

As per the AAC Constitution

Chapter 3: Duties and Functioning of the Academic Affairs Council

(8) Duties and Functions

- 1) The Chairperson of the Academic Affairs Council –
 - (a) Facilitating Academic Affairs Council meetings, in consultation with the SecretaryGeneral;
 - i) All official correspondence to and from the Academic Affairs Council;
 - ii) Passing on the minutes to the Students' Representative Council Chairperson;

- iii) Compiling the annual report of the Academic Affairs Council.
 - (b) Is responsible for representing the Academic Affairs Council, either in their own capacity or by virtue of a representative if the Chairperson is unavailable, on the following committees:
 - iv) Timetable Committee of the Academic Planning Committee;
 - v) Academic Planning Committee of Senate;
 - vi) Committee of Learning and Teaching;
 - vii) Any other institutional committee which stipulates that the Chairperson of the Academic Affairs Council must act as a representative on said committee, and;
- In fulfilling the duties in section 8(1)(b)(i)-(iv), the Chairperson is required to obtain input from the Academic Affairs Council and report back to the Academic Affairs Council.
- (c) Must meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching on a monthly basis.
 - (d) Must oversee the finances of the Academic Affairs Council, in consultation with the Treasurer.
 - (e) Is an *ex-officio* member of the Students' Representative Council and, as such, is responsible for keeping the Students' Representative Council apprised of activities of the Academic Affairs Council.
 - (f) Must write and submit a satisfactory term report.
 - (g) Is responsible for convening special or emergency meetings where necessary.
 - (h) During their term of office, may not be a member of a Faculty Student Committee or of the Tygerberg Academic Affairs Council.
 - (i) Facilitates the discussion and addressing of academic and other matters of communal interest that fall within the sphere of academia at Stellenbosch University and empowers the members of the respective Faculty Student Committees, and the

members of the Tygerberg Academic Affairs Council, to represent and inform students effectively.

Portfolio Overview

General-elect

As per the preamble of the Academic Affairs Council constitution, the Academic Affairs Council of Stellenbosch University commits to actively promoting the rights of students as contained in Chapter 2 of the Student Constitution, to quality education, academic support, and transparent and justifiable assessment procedures. Further, the Academic Affairs Council strives to protect and further the academic interests of all students, by promoting a transformative teaching and learning experience, enabling academic success, and developing graduate attributes, with the aim of establishing a thriving academic project which facilitates student retention. We dedicate ourselves to achieving this mandate, whilst setting an example of Professional conduct in the pursuit of academic excellence for all students.

As per section 8 of the Academic Affairs Council Constitution, the Chairperson of the Academic Affairs Council is responsible for the following administrative arrangements, including,

- (i) Facilitating Academic Affairs Council meetings, in consultation with the Secretary-General;
- (ii) All official correspondence to and from the Academic Affairs Council;
- (iii) Passing on the minutes to the Students' Representative Council Chairperson;
- (iv) Compiling the annual report of the Academic Affairs Council.

SRC executive

The AAC Chairperson is an ex officio member of the SRC and thus, as per section 30 of the Student Constitution, an ex officio member of the SRC –

- (1) May, in addition to their ex officio position, only accept one other portfolio on thwhether that portfolio is compulsory or not.
- (2) May not accept any other portfolios if they serve on the Executive Committee of the SRC.

The Executive meets on a weekly basis and has scheduled meetings with DSAF and Rectorate. Accurate detail hereof can be provided by the SRC Secretary-General, Mr Mzwakhe Bolotina.

Committees/Task Teams

During my third term of office, I sat on the Academic Planning Committee, Committee of Learning and Teaching, Welcoming Planning Committee, Quality Committee, Social and Business Ethics Committee, SU Plagiarism Policy and Procedures Task Team and Council.

I also established a new task team within the Academic Affairs Council—the Grievance Procedure Policy Task Team which was established to consider the lack of uniformity across the grievance procedures of different faculties. At the time of the writing of this term report, a preliminary draft of a guideline to be handed over to the Division for Teaching and Learning has been prepared and consultation with stakeholders is currently underway.

Academic Planning Committee

This committee is a standing committee of Senate that reports to the Executive Committee of Senate (EC(S)) chaired by Professor Deresh Ramjugernath. Its primary concern is recommending decisions around academic planning to the EC(S) and Senate. It primarily focuses on topics such as new research centres, programme changes, and so forth.

Date: **2 May 2024**

- (1) Guidelines for cross-faculty disciplinary offerings promoting interdisciplinary scholarship: Progress of Task Team
- (2) Language Implementation Reports
- (3) Drafting a policy for all non-credit bearing academic offerings and discussion on the format the inventory could be compiled in.
- (4) Recommendation from the EC(S) for the development of a set of progression rules for continued enrollment in master's and doctoral studies.

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- (5) Name change of the Africa Centre for HIV/AIDS Management to the Africa Centre for Inclusive Health Management
- (6) Constitution of the Centre for Disinformation Studies in Africa.
- (7) Dissolution of Centres and Bureaus in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
- (8) Recommendations of the Almanac task team.
- (9) Phasing-in of the Council on Higher Education (CHE)'s Quality Assurance Framework and the CHE's Communiqué of 2024 regarding modes of learning and teaching provision.
- (10) Revised agreement between SU and Dept. Agriculture Western Cape (DAWC) regarding the Higher Education component of the Elsenburg Agriculture Training Institute (EATI)
- (11) Adopting a staggered approach to the programme review, re-design and renewal of existing academic programmes constituting a more 50% change to the existing programme.
- (12) Vacant APC positions in the place of Prof Cara Schwarz.
- (13) Constitution of the Centre for Africa Entrepreneurship.
- (14) Constitution of the Africa Centre for Inclusive Health Management.

Committee of Learning and Teaching

The Committee for Learning and Teaching (CLT) is chaired by Professor Deresh Ramjugernath and forms an integral part of the Learning and Teaching responsibility centre. It comprises all the vice-deans: learning and teaching, of each faculty.

Date: **06 June 2024**

- (1) Review of Teaching and Learning Policy (2018).
- (2) Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2017-2021 (Graduate Attributes).
- (3) Revision of Regulation for internal and external moderation.
- (4) Review of SU ECP Strategy.
- (5) Academic Renewal (Standing item).
- (6) Review of Student Feedback Practice at SU.
- (7) Scheduling of DCA's and re-evaluation of A2/3 scripts.
- (8) The use of a test for academic literacies levels (TALL) for first year students.
- (9) SU Teaching Awards.
- (10) AI and Assessment at SU.
- (11) Revision of the Regulation for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT).
- (12) Student Concessions (limited to concessions recommended by the Disability Unit).
- (13) Teaching Load Calendar Entry.
- (14) Release of early assessment marks
- (15) Review of SU Disability Access Policy

Welcoming Programme Committee

This committee is chaired by Mr. Pieter Kloppers and meets to unpack the Welcoming Template and the logistics thereof, as well as any reflection post de facto.

This committee met on 24 July 2024 but I was unable to attend the meeting due to timetable clashes nor was I able to send a delegate. There was, however, alternative student representation through the TAAC and Prim Committee.

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Quality Committee

The Quality Committee is responsible for reviewing and auditing every department within the institution towards a superlative degree of quality. Ultimately, the Quality Committee may recommend adjustments to each department, and request feedback on these adjustments by a prescribed date.

Date: **24 May 2024**

(1) Peer Review Reports

- a. Department of Food Science
- b. Department of Genetics
- c. Department of Soil Science
- d. Department of Animal Science
- e. Department of Forest and Wood Science

(2) Institutional Audit Improvement Plan

- a. Improvement plan.

Social and Business Ethics Committee and Council

The Council of the Stellenbosch University governs this higher education institution and the institutional statute. The full function and composition of the Council is contained in the Statute of Stellenbosch University. The latter committee looks after the ethical interests of the University to ensure that it does not incur unnecessary ethical liability. Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the matters discussed in these structures, I am unable to provide further details in this report.

Term 3 Overview

AAC Executive

Meetings

Dates: 10 April 2024
24 April 2024
8 May 2024

Finances

The AAC's expenditure for this term was largely allocated to the purchase of merchandise for AAC members to increase their on-campus visibility. It must be noted that the issue of levies to allow for the AAC greater spend on collaborative initiatives is still murky but consultations with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning continue with the expectation that guidelines for the procurement of levies will be established soon.

AAC

Meetings

Dates: 10 April 2024
24 April 2024
8 May 2024

Members

As per section 7(1)-(2) of the Academic Affairs Council constitution, the AAC comprises of 25 members. These members are either Executive members and/or the Chairperson and Vice- Chairperson of the relevant Faculty Student Committee or Tygerberg Academic Affairs Council, unless the structure in question provides otherwise.

The members are as follows:

1. Risuna Risimati
2. Norshya Sonjani
3. Vanessa Baloyi
4. Carina Wen
5. Carolyn Laker
6. Daniel Lennox
7. Leila Engelbrecht
8. Nina Hugo
9. Odin Mostert
10. Sam Morricks
11. Tauriq Willemse

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12. Thabo Moepi
13. Thandoluhle Mhlongo
14. Zoë-Grace Bennett
15. Mishka Naidu
16. Aimeé Vanwolleghe
17. Amory Smith
18. Ntsele Makoala
19. Nosizwe Mpukane
20. Nosizwe Nyanda
21. Dimakatso Mofokeng
22. Xabier Benyani
23. Meagan Classen
24. Michail September
25. Aidan Fletcher

Task Teams

By definition, task teams are group of people joined to accomplish a task or to be engaged in collective action. Within the context of the AAC the task teams are created to unpack and address issues that our communities face, with the intent of finding a solution.

As per section 24 of the Academic Affairs Council constitution, the AAC has created the following 5 task teams to unpack issues within their specific scope on a continuous basis. These task teams are led by members of the Executive and are accountable to the AAC at large,

1. Branding led by Carolyn Laker and Odin Mostert
2. International and Post-Graduate Students by Vanessa Baloyi

3. Academic Accessibility by Sam Morricks
4. HEMIS by Zoë-Grace Bennett
5. Safety by Carina Wen

The functionality of the aforementioned task teams has begun and reflection on progress will be unpacked in the final term report for the 2023/24 leadership term.

Study Spaces Handbook

The Academic Accessibility Task Team compiled a useful handbook for students which outlined all the general and faculty specific study spaces available to students including the opening and closing times and helpful information for students.

AAC Training

Co-curricula

The AAC's co-curricula recognition allowed for AAC members to receive transcript recognition for their leadership term, on the basis that their learning is set into curricula and is substantive. This year has been using its SUNLearn platform to complete competencies as well as training exercise to acquire such transcript recognition.

Many of the competencies will be based around engaging in video, audio, or written material where AAC members will be prompted to provide evidence of their reflection and learning. Apart from this, AAC members are strongly encouraged to attend and engage in discussion and dialogue platforms such as leadership summits, workshops, and panel discussions on campus.

Plans for Next Term

As we begin to wrap our term of office, our main priority is providing support for the different faculty student committees as they run the elections for their successors within their respective faculties.

We aim to ensure that there is a smooth transition of portfolios and that successor faculty student committees are able to move to begin essential processes such as the election of class representatives within their allocated timelines.

We also aim to have the Grievance Procedure Guideline appropriately attached as an addendum to the Teaching and Learning Policy to ensure that there is standardization in the establishment and functioning of grievance procedures on campus.

Lastly, we aim to continue to consult with management as it pertains to the use of study spaces on campus and how students can be better institutionally supported during examination season in the second semester of the year.