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SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abaNFundu
Studenteraad



SRC 2024 TERM III REPORT

SRC VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Students' Representative Council

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THE 2024 SRC SLOGAN IS “AVAILED IN UNITY”

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SRC Vice-Chairperson

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Foreword

Molweni Maties,

Ndiyathemba ukuba lengxelo ndizakuyinizela apha, inifumana nikwi mpilo ne mo entle. Kuluvuyo nochulumanco kum ukuba ndiselapha nani, kwaye umsebenzi enanindithembe ngawo, kwaye nenisandithembe ngawo ndiwenza ngocoselelo nangokuzinikezela.

Ndiyathemba ukuba izifundo kunye neempilo zenu zisaqhuba kakuhle, kwaye ndiyanikhuthaza ukuba nisebenzise amajelo oncedo akhoyo apha kwiDyunivesithi yethu.

Kuhle ukuxhulumana nani maxesha onke, xa ndibona iNeelsie izele zincoko ngaxesha nisonwabele izidlo zenu. Umfutho eninawo ningabafundi, undenza ndiziqhenye ngaxesha lonke ukuba ndingomnye wenu. Masiqhubeke sisakha iDyunivesithi ephuhlile kwaye ebambelela kuluntu nentsentebenziswano.

Ndibhala le ngxelo ngenjongo zokunazisa ukuba zintoni kanye-kanye endizenza kule-Ofisi enanindithume kuyo.

Ndicela ukunishiya nalo myalezo ngoxa nibuyela kwiKhampasi; yanga ningaqhubeka ukwakha isizwe esihlangene, apho sazi khona ukuba isandla sihlamba esinye.

Ndibamba ngazo zozibini,

Mx. Abongile Quthu

USekela-Sihlalo webhunga elimele abafundi (SRC).

Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the student constitution by constitutional responsibilities are the following:

According to the student constitution my constitutional responsibilities are the following:

- 1) Responsible for supporting the Chairperson in all administrative roles and fulfilling any or all of the duties of the Chairperson should the Chairperson be incapacitated or unavailable.
- 2) Responsible for the internal monitoring and evaluation of the SRC.
- 3) Responsible for the internal monitoring of internal relations and discipline of the SRC.
- 4) Appoints the SRC Managers, with the consent of the SRC.

My responsibilities are however not limited to what is outlined in our student constitution. As an SRC Member I'm binding to all other additional duties such as what is outlined in sections 27 and 32, and that is to always:

- act in the best interests of all Stellenbosch University Students firmly
- uphold the Student Constitution and to protect the rights and freedoms of all Stellenbosch University Students,
- and to act transparent in everything I do on behalf of the SRC.
- represent students on various institutional committees.
- evaluate and give input on institutional policies
- to plan and facilitate projects that will advance a transformative student experience for all.

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- to formulate internal policies to help support and guide the SRC to execute their functions to the best possible standards.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the SRC I also have other constitutional duties imposed on me as per sections 41 and 42 of the Student Constitution. The Executive Committee of the SRC runs the day-to-day business of the house and is ultimately responsible for setting the agenda for SRC Meetings. This committee also decides on the budget of the SRC and must ensure that the SRC executes its functions accordingly.

Finally, the Vice-Chairperson's (VC) main responsibility is to ensure that the house is in order. The VC takes care of all the Internal Matters of the SRC such as monitoring and evaluating the performance of SRC Members and SRC Managers. The VC is also in charge of Internal Discipline.

Portfolio Overview

The Vice-chairperson shares the role of overseeing the SRC with the Chairperson. Key responsibilities of this portfolio include:

- Maintaining the internal relations in the team
- Overseeing and enforcing discipline in the team
- Coordinating the SRC's representation on institutional committees

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- Ensuring there are teambuilding
- Promoting leadership development within the team
- Monitoring and evaluating the team's performance

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

1. DSAF Transformation Forum

the DSAf Transformation Forum, represents various centres and campuses within the Division Student Affairs (DSAf) and includes representatives from the Student Representative Council (SRC), where transformation related matters are discussed, and further possible ways to inform Transformation at Stellenbosch University are discussed.

2. Student Fees Committee

This committee focuses and discusses student fees within our various campuses, and it also oversees if there might be a need or decrease of such fees, by looking at the context of the institutional financial climate. This committee advises as to why such adjustments are necessary, and advises the university's decision makers why they see such adjustments fit or rather necessary.

3. Stellenbosch University Co-Curricular Support Fund (SUCSF) Committee

This committee is widely known as USKOF, and it is administered by the Division Student Affairs and is a student bursary fund for national, international, and online co-curricular events and courses. several

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departments, divisions, and centres of Stellenbosch University (SU) make funds available for supporting the co-curricular development of students. Mostly, these funds are made available and utilised for the following reasons:

Students' attendance of and participation in national and international conferences falling outside the formal academic offering.

- Support for student initiatives on campus additional to the day-to-day activities of student structures for which there are existing budgets; and
- Support for Students' Representative Council's (SRC) initiatives linked to the abovementioned, but also initiatives related to national and international co-curricular activities that are preferably not annual or repetitive events.
- Funds are limited and available money must be managed, utilised, and allocated responsibly so that it can have a greater and better effect on the student community of SU.

Therefore, it has been decided to establish a central fund in which existing SU funds can be pooled.

The outcome of this fund will be that more students are supported, and a greater and better effect is ensured; criteria are set according to which applications are assessed; and the application and utilisation of the funds by students are assessed by reporting and similar ways of feedback. The committee administers those who apply for the support.

Term 3 Overview

The third term has been one of the stressful terms as the academic stress mounts up and we enter into an examination season during the third term. However, regardless of the stress we always show up for the student community.

During the third term, these are the activities and platforms I performed in as the Vice Chairperson of the SRC.

Committee Meetings

As an SRC member who serves on various institutional committees, I ensured to attend all the set meetings for the term to ensure that I represent the student voice at all times and ensure that all the responsibilities that I am entrusted with are fulfilled in those various committees.

Central Disciplinary Committee

Within the CDC, I serve as a panel member for student disciplinary hearing, and within this term I ensured that I attend the stipulated hearings. Matters discussed in these hearings are entirely confidentially, and reports around outcomes are posted in the necessary university platforms, to ensure that students are aware of any contravening to the Student Disciplinary Code. I would like to confirm in this report, that all the hearings were fair, transparent and due process was followed.

DSAF Transformation Forum

Within the period of my term, we as the forum were busy with planning of the DSAF Transformation Summit which is hosted annually. The planning process was well crafted, and the execution of the summit was a success, and I am grateful to have been part of such a process. You may read more about the summit and the work that goes into it on the Division of Student Affairs website.

SUCSF Committee

As the SUCSF Committee, we met for numerous times to discuss the funding of student requests for both national and international events that were in line with their studies and leadership roles within the institution. This committee fairly scrutinized all the submitted requests by the students, and clear feedback in line with guidelines for this funding were fairly used. I am proud of all the students who take initiative to be part of these networking initiatives and platforms.

Internal Affairs

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One of my key roles is to support the Chairperson of the SRC in all her activities, and I am glad to inform the student populace that I continue to take this role seriously and support the SRC Chairperson in her activities.

In terms of office duty, members of the SRC have been attending their assigned office duty and ensure that should student need in person support from the SRC, they receive that.

In terms of the office space, I ensured that members stick to the guidelines of the usage of the office space, and also that members are in line with the Code of Conduct that guides our conduct as a team.

We have been a conflict-free team, and I would like to confirm that there have not been any acts of conflict within the SRC team.

I ensured that SRC members were informed by the Secretary of all the meetings they have to attend, and I would like to confirm that members did attend, and those who rendered apologies, were done so in due time.

We also as a team went to a Mid-Year Camp, and details into the camp may be found on the detailed report attached as an annexure A to this report, which gives a full and detailed overview to the camp and the outcomes thereof.

I also ensured to attend all my meetings of Rectorate with SRC Executive, and we tabled various matters that are of importance in all these meetings.

I have been the SRC Experiential Learning Programme with the SRC Secretary, and we ensured that we give our team to gain wealth of knowledge in all the activities they do within the team and beyond the office.

I facilitated my personal curated sessions for the SRC at the camp, as to ensure that we capacitate our team with the necessary skills to continue leading the structure and the student community.

I continued to ensure that the Boardroom Booking Management is in order, and that it is always managed well, with no clashes of events or untidiness in the space. The boardroom has thus far been managed very well.

We are currently in the process of finalizing the Advisory Programme guidelines, which is an important aspect where incoming team will be able to tap into the experiences of those who have led the structure.

Institutional Events

I have been involved on a number of institutional events as a speaker, reciter and facilitator for a number of events within the institution. In all these events I ensured that I represent my team and the work that we do.

I gave an address that was titled, **“A Student Perspective on Co-Creating DSAf’s vision and work”** where I expressed the importance of integrating the work of the student leaders with that of student affairs and ensure that we always ensure a transformative student experience within our institution.

Plans for Next Term

In my last term in office, these are the plans I have, but not limited to these:

Ensure a smooth and well curated handover process.

Ensure that all the necessary documents are in order as we prepare for handover.

Host an event in the Women’s month.

Continue to ensure that the internal affairs of the SRC are in order.

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Continue to represent in all the various committees that I serve on.

Host a farewell function for the SRC.



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SRC Mid-Year Reflections Camp 2024 Report

10 – 12 May 2024

Prepared by: Abongile Quthu



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Introduction and Overview

This report aims to provide comprehensive details and transparency regarding the SRC Mid-Year Reflections Camp 2024. It serves as a tool for transparent governance and a reminder for the SRC team of its progress and future direction. The report, drafted by Abongile Quthu (SRC Vice President) and reviewed by the SRC Executive Committee, is structured into chapters following the camp's program. It is written in accessible language to ensure clarity for all readers.

The main theme of the SRC Mid-Year Reflections Camp was "Reassessing and Evaluating Our Concept of 'Availed in Unity,'"¹ a slogan guiding our SRC term. The camp focused on reflecting on our actions over the past months, evaluating our strategies and their effectiveness, assessing our current state, and planning for the remainder of our term. Additionally, we explored personal development's role in enhancing leadership skills within the SRC.

Members that were present at the camp²:

1. Phiwokuhle Qabaka
2. Abongile Quthu
3. Mzwakhe Bolotina
4. Ongezwa Qiqqa Tshazi
5. Reagan Johnson

¹ The Camp theme which included the slogan.

² These are not all the SRC members, some missed the camp due to unforeseen circumstances and some due to pre-planned functions. The team met quorum as most members were present.

6. Risuna Risimati
7. Bradley Grovers
8. Solomzi Mphambo
9. Natasha Sibanda
10. Nokwanda Ncwane
11. Courtney De Klerk
12. Andri Malan
13. Mbanu Sibande
14. Andile Ntshidi
15. Theo Plaatjie
16. Bulelwa September

Expenses for Camp

The camp's expenses, totalling approximately to R41 397.22c, were covered using the general cost centre for accommodation and meals, and the Vice Chairperson's cost centre for transportation and snacks (Ongezwa to confirm).

Breakdown of expenses:

- Accommodation and meals totalled to R39 510.
- Refreshments totalled to R1 887.22c

Programme of Action

This section details the various aspects of the programme that were undertaken during the camp into detail:

Team Check-Up Sessions

Throughout the camp, we conducted various team check-in sessions to ensure our collective well-being. These sessions were part of the "Agenda of the Soul,"³ crafted by the SRC Vice President, focusing on self-awareness, self-realization, and self-development. These sessions are highly important within the structure, to ensure that people are able to lead from within, and that in the work environment they are in, they feel seen and appreciated, and this helps increase productivity within the team.

- "How Am I?" Session

Members reflected on their experiences through free writing, discussing their feelings about the space and themselves. Those comfortable sharing their reflections did so, fostering ownership of their emotions and their impact on their work.

- "Presence To Self" Session

This session encouraged members to reflect on their leadership journey by answering questions about their current state, aspirations, and leadership impact.

³ A detailed programme of self-development for leadership.

SRC Matters to Address

In this segment, we looked at key areas within our team that needed our urgent attention to ensure that we do our work to the best of our ability, and in all that we do we continue to remind ourselves as a team on the mandate that grounds us.

- **Documentation of SRC Work**

Mzwakhe Bolotina, SRC Secretary-General, emphasized the importance of documenting our work for accountability and archival purposes. He refreshed the team on proper report writing processes and the accessibility of documented information primarily via the website.

- **Academic Performance of SRC Members**

Phiwokuhle Qabaka, SRC President, highlighted the importance of maintaining strong academic performance as SRC members, serving as role models for the student body.

- **Tygerberg Campus Integration**

Mbano Sibande, TSRC Chairperson, noted progress in the integration between Tygerberg and Stellenbosch campuses, stressing the need for continued efforts to meet student needs.

- **MILAC⁴ Integration**

Theo Plaatjie, MILAC Student Captain, discussed the impact of open communication and suggested revising meeting times to accommodate MILAC members' schedules.

⁴ MILAC refers to Military Academy

- **Reflections on Portfolios**

Portfolio holders discussed the relevance of their roles and the importance of integrating portfolios with relevant institutional structures to ensure effective student representation.

- **Constitutional Review**

Phiwokuhle Qabaka led a discussion on reviewing the student constitution to align it with the Higher Education Act of South Africa and ensure it meets student needs. Key concerns included timelines and specific clauses for revision within the student constitution, and how we may ensure that it democratically represents all the students. This session also looked at the various structures that represent the student community, and how they may be formulated to meet the changing needs of the student community since the last revision.

Reflecting on the SRC Journey of 2023/24

The team evaluated the past six months, identifying challenges such as:

1. **SUNStudent issues** - which caused a lot of stress for our students – leading to the team having to focus more on the SUNStudent issue.
2. **NSFAS Accommodation Cap** - which puts many of the students in the margins, because the amount that NSFAS was proposing to cover is way too less compared to the pricing levels of the Stellenbosch town and some surrounding areas.
3. **Accommodation Crisis** - many students came to Stellenbosch without accommodation, and this meant that alternative means had to be explored.

4. **Student Hunger** - many students came back to campus, and they did not have financial support for them to buy food – and this led to a growing need for food support on campus.

5. **Safety concerns** - safety of the student community has been a big concern, especially for the commuter students.

6. **Shortage of Shuttles** - the students were increasingly complaining about shuttle services.

These issues were not limited to the above listed, but these were our key problems which consumed most of the SRC time. Many other issues were experienced.

Progress made includes:

- Increased shuttles.
- More accredited accommodation spaces.
- Enhanced walk-about service for student safety.

Internally, the team acknowledged inconsistencies in teamwork but also highlighted successful team dynamics, coordination, and task execution.

Mapping the Remainder of the SRC Journey

The team planned for the remaining months, focusing on:

- Continuing to work unitedly.
- Organizing portfolio events, especially for Women's Month.
- Maintaining representation in institutional committees.

- Encouraging more feedback platforms for students.
- Ensuring a strong legacy for the upcoming SRC team.

Handover Strategy

In this segment, the team focused on strategizing the handover process and ensuring that there is a swift handover when the term ends.

Over the years, SRC teams have struggled to successfully handover, and this has led to a gap in the SRC handover process – and how the next team executes their work.

These strategies were proposed:

A Handover Preparation Day: where the current SRC team drafts a detailed SRC Annual Report that covers all the work that was done collectively, how it was executed, and which structures (who)the team worked with in ensuring that the work was successfully executed. This report will help create an organizational overview, of how to collectively work together as a team. In this handover preparation day, the various portfolio holders will also prepare their individual portfolio report which will be handed to the incoming portfolio holders. The handover preparation day helps us ensure that we accountably hold the team in ensuring that all reports are timely completed and are ready to be disseminated to a following team (successors). The current team will be able to account for each and every report that is needed by the upcoming team.

A Handover Day: in this day, the outgoing and incoming SRC will come together to discuss the processes of holding office, the work that has been documented, and also recommend on work that can help grow the SRC – this ensures that there is legacy.

Portfolio holders of the incoming SRC will also be able to individually engage with portfolio holders of their respective portfolio from the outgoing team.

Strategically, this will help the continuation of the SRC work, and understanding of the work that needs to be done from a human intervention & interaction perspective, supported by the necessary documentation.

SRC Finances

The Treasurer-General reported that the SRC finances are in good standing. Emphasis was placed on obtaining quotes in a timely manner, acquiring multiple quotes to assess the best options, and ensuring proper reimbursement processes with receipts.

Institutional Projects

The Institutional Liaison outlined key institutional events for SRC participation, emphasizing the importance of visibility and involvement in platforms. In this segment, the Institutional Liaison took us through the almanac of institutional events that are important for the SRC to attend and how we can best show up into these platforms. The Liaison explained that there are a few events that they are currently planning – including the Rector’s Awards among others – and that the team needs to be of assistance where necessary. The Liaison also highlighted that it is important to attend these events to increase visibility of the SRC team within the institution.

Recommendations

Following the various conversations that the team had at the camp, it was clear that members of the SRC are going through a difficult phase within their leadership journey, because it comes with a lot of predicaments and challenges. We analysed the support atmosphere, and we recognised that there are gaps that need to be addressed in order to ensure the full functionality of the SRC, while at the same time ensuring the wellness of the team.

These were the recommendations tabled:

1. SRC Members should only take up one portfolio due to the magnitude of the work.
It has been evident that members who take more than one portfolio struggle to fully execute the work of both portfolios.
2. The SRC members should be assigned to academic and welfare support mentors, this will allow for members to have institutional individuals that may be able to guide them in the work they do. This will also afford SRC members the opportunity to be able to know where to seek support when necessary.
3. SRC members deal with a lot of mental health issues, and this shows a growing need for mental health support for SRC members, if it is possible, it is advised that the Division for Student Affairs assigns a psychologist to the student leadership aspect, so that the services always remain readily available when necessary. It is also important that these sessions are hosted for individuals and the team respectively.

4. Constant engagements between the student support structures and the student leadership structures are always necessary, and these will help bridge the gap in understanding the student community dynamics and the needs of the students led.
5. Honorariums are also an issue within the SRC; members have been earning less remuneration and recognition to the amount that we put into office, and we believe that it is important that the guidelines need to be revised with urgency.

Conclusion

The SRC Mid-Year Reflections Camp was a great success, fulfilling its intended purpose and demonstrating the team's dedication to its work. This report underscores the SRC's commitment to transparent governance and effective student representation.