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| **Portfolio:** | Chairperson |
| **Subject:** | *Third Term Report* |
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Constitutional Responsibilities

According to S.22 of the Student Constitution of 2018, the chairperson is the chief executive officer of the SRC, act as spokesperson for the SRC, is ultimately responsible for the finances of the SRC and ensures that the SRC fulfill their mandate.

Portfolio Overview In terms of:

SRC

The portfolio of chairperson is responsible to bring a group of diverse leaders together and channel their energy and skills to successfully achieve the mandate of the SRC. Chairperson is responsible to ensure that words becomes actions and support members where possible to ensure execution. The chairperson acts as custodian of the Student Constitution. The chairperson acts as spokesperson for the SRC and the students the SRC represents.

Stellenbosch University

The chairperson is a direct line of contact and information for staff and management in the university. Although the chairperson is the students’ representative, the chairperson is also a representative of the larger Stellenbosch University. The chairperson’s mandate is to ensure that the needs of students are placed first in the university and works in collaboration with different stakeholders such as SU Staff, the municipality, other universities etc.

South Africa

The chairperson’s role in terms of South Africa is to act as custodian of the South African Constitution, on ground level at Stellenbosch University. Together with the SRC as a team, the chairperson must drive a vision & mission that are conscious of South Africa’s diverse cultural heritage and the historical context of Stellenbosch University and work hard to unite to build a multicultural and democratic South Africa. As the Student Constitution of 2018’s preamble states: “We acknowledge our responsibility to participate in the democratic structures recognised by this Constitution. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Higher Education Act, the Statute of Stellenbosch University and University regulations, we accept this as our binding Constitution.”

Committees / Task Teams USKOF

Institutional Council (2020)

SUNCOM Advisory Committee

Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC) Student Affairs Business Continuity Sub-Committee

Registrar’s Business Continuity Sub-committee

Other Committees / Task Teams SRC Executive Committee

Anti-GBV Working Group on Safety and Security

#RegisterAll International Students Task Team

Budget Overview

Term Overview

Third term is a difficult term on the job. First of all, there are exams going on. A lot of students need your support and at the same time you find yourself with a lot of academic obligations. The key is to strike a balance between your academic work and your role as a student leader. Failure to do one correctly will result in negative results on the other part. Our 3rd term was unique due to the circumstances brought about by Covid-19. The SRC worked extremely hard to mitigate the challenges brought about to our students by the pandemic. It has been a difficult time for everyone and I could feel the fatigue kicking in. It is important to keep on going and working hard as you have a lot of students that depend on you. I had a lot of meetings in the 3rd term with the management and most of the meetings were to make plans for the safe return of students on our campuses as well as supporting all the students (majority) doing their academics online and staying at their homes. This presented a different set of challenges as we tried to imagine different challenges that the students might be facing as well as consulting with them to get to understand how best we can assist them. Overall, it was a good job and it’s important to note that in as much as we wanted to solve all problems, not everything works out in your favor.

Everyone expected the pandemic to be over by May so most of our plans were centered around having students coming back on campus. The reality posed unique challenges and we had to continue with having our meetings on Microsoft Teams. As the Chairperson, I had to check with the members and make sure that they attended their meetings and also had meetings with them on a 1 on 1 basis to ensure that they had everything at their disposal to fulfill their mandate.

 I continued with having regular meetings with the Rector and Vice Chancellor and this helped a lot during the pandemic. It is important to have a good working relationship with the Rector. This helped a lot with a lot of difficulties that the team would encounter during the pandemic. I would call him directly or send a message and he would respond swiftly and address the issue without having to go through the admin of requesting for a meeting. I sat on a committee to reveal applications for students who wanted to come back on campus because of different difficulties at home. We made sure that we gave our students a fair chance to succeed and almost all students who submitted their applications with valid reasons were admitted back on campus.

Spokesperson of the SRC

As my constitutional mandate includes being the spokesperson of the SRC, I had a lot of people from the media contacting me to get the position and the stance of the SRC on various occurrences. I made sure that I could not give my own views and beliefs but the views of the SRC as a team. It is important to consult when you are in such a position. The Media can make you and it can also break you. It is important to first engage with the various stakeholders that will be of interest in any case that you are required to answer on. I never attempted to answer on the spot from journalists. I would first tell them to email me the questions then I did my homework. I was also required to speak at various events that I was invited to represent the SRC and the student body as a whole. One thing that I advise anyone who will hold this position in the future is never to indulge in national politics but focus on the needs of the students. Do not represent your thoughts, but the voices of the students that you are representing.

Finances of the SRC

Although budgeting was extremely difficult to finalize for us, I made sure that the finances of the SRC weren’t misused. I also made sure that I informed members of the SRC to change the structure of their budgets and adjust to the new reality posed by Covid-19. The treasure is mainly involved on the day to day finances of the SRC and the role of the Chairperson should be to ensure that everything is running smoothly and finances are being used in a responsible manner.

Institutional Committee for Business Committee (ICBC)

During our term we were faced with a pandemic that none of us had anticipated for. It was a shock for everyone as everything was put to halt due to COVID-19. It was a challenging period for all leaders on campus. I was sitting on the ICBC to represent all the students in mitigating the impact of this pandemic. We had a lot of meetings and I’m proud to say that we were able to address a lot of issues that were in the best interest of our students.

Plans for Next Academic Term

My plan is to ensure that we have a smooth election and we pave a way for the incoming SRC to serve in harmony and with ease.. Due to the current pandemic, it is extremely difficult to predict how things will turn out. I want to make sure that all students have all the resources to succeed through online learning and also guarantee safety for those who will be on campus.

I also plan on meeting with all SRC members, to get their plans for their final term and be able to make sure that they fulfill their constitutional mandate. I plan to meet with all members individually every three weeks, to get their plans, what they have done and what they are intending to do in the near future and also in the long-run.

Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

The position of chair is extremely challenging and not easy. It is too much focused on the outside of the SRC as you find yourself in a lot of meetings. It is also important to remember that you need to put your house in order. Academically, it is difficult to strike a balance when you are holding this position. For my successor, I would recommend them to make a plan before you get into office. You should also have a lot of time on your hands because the role is demanding. Collaborate with as many people as you can and make sure that you include all political and non-political societies and student leaders who are willing to assist during this period to avoid duplication of efforts. Make use of the outgoing SRC. Take their advice, it makes your job easier. Most of all never forget that you represent students and do everything in their best interest. You will face challenges from within the team and from students and it is important to have a backbone. Always do the right thing for the students that you serve.

Important Contacts*.*

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