Term 1

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| **Portfolio:** | Secretary |
| **Subject:** | *First and Second Term Report* |
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# Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution, 2018, the Secretary is at least responsible for:

a) maintaining internal communication within the SRC;

b) managing knowledge and institutional memory within the SRC;

c) ensuring that SRC meetings, and any other meetings or consultations where the SRC desired record keeping, are properly recorded; and

d) updating, safekeeping and making available records, policies and other documents of the SRC.

# Portfolio Overview

The role of the Secretary General while simple on paper is quite complex in practice.

1. Role in the SRC:

The Secretary General is primarily responsible to uphold internal communication within the SRC.

This means that the Secretary General makes all relevant documents available to the SRC, including, but not limited to, the minutes and agendas of SRC meetings, the minutes and agendas of Executive Committee meetings as well as the minutes and agendas of Executive SRC Members and Management meetings.

What is notable about this is that internal communication is most definitely, not limited to these formal circumstances. Because of this extension of definition, additional responsibilities befall the Secretary General such as keeping members and managers of the SRC updated at all times on the various happenings and stances of the SRC.

The Secretary General is also responsible to ensure smooth communication lines within the SRC, using different platforms, including, but not limited to, emails and cell phone communication.

2. Role in the University

The role of the Secretary General in the context of the University stretches as far as maintaining communication lines with the Rector’s Management Team. The Secretary General is responsible to set up the agenda as well as to minute all meetings held between the Rectorate and the SRC Executive. They are also responsible to make these minutes and agendas available to all the people included in the SRC Executive and Management meetings contact list (listed in important contacts).

Further, the Secretary General plays a pivotal role as the direct communicating link between the SRC and the Rectorate Management Team

3. Role in South Africa

SRC’s around the country have a very important role to play in representing students on the different campuses. The Secretary General is an Executive position in all SRC’s, plays a very important role a store of and main point of access for SRC Members and managers, Management and students to all information relevant to the SRC. When Secretary Generals from various University’s hold effective communication it helps unify the students of South Africa especially in extraordinary circumstances which as it seems haunts the 2019/2020 SRC Term.

# Committees / Task Teams

## Institutional

Senate

Senate Library Committee

Institutional Transformation Committee

Registrar’s Business Continuity Sub-committee

## Other Committees / Task Teams

SRC Executive Committee

Student Institutional Transformation Committee

Anti-GBV Working Group on Mental Health and Alcohol

RegisterAll Food Task Team

# Budget Overview

I have still not yet received a budget and have thus, been forced to work without a budget.

# Term Overview

While this is not all the work I completed in while in office it serves as tracker for the two terms in regards to big events.

Further, this report is meant to cover the experiences of only one term, due to extraordinary circumstances I will be recounting the experience of both my first and second term in office. These extraordinary circumstances include the delaying of all internal portfolio elections until 11 February, two weeks after the beginning of the second term, due to an investigation into some of my colleagues.

While this delay did halt the process of me receiving my title I had already begun some of the work of the secretary general such as internal communication. This process got increasingly harder as morale decreased within the SRC due to the extraordinary circumstance mentioned above. SRC members would go “AWOL” for days at a time but, personally, I continued to work, and do everything in my power to reach out and inform myself as well as the rest of the SRC with regard to the reasoning behind the behaviour.

In my first term, I created a WhatsApp chat for the entire SRC where we could discuss day-to-day matters at hand, communicate with regard to emergencies, pose questions to one another and inform the entirety of the SRC with news. Before 11 February, decisions were often made through consensus within the SRC via WhatsApp vote after discussion. This group chat, however, always avoided bigger matters that required thorough discussions. In these cases, we would hold SRC think tanks, of which I coordinated, to come to a formal consensus.

Additionally I managed and continue to manage the Office Rotation since our first official week in office. In the beginning, I was extremely displeased by the lack of effort from various members; as members would blatantly not show up for office duty despite numerous emails, calls, messages and conversations. This left the responsibility of assisting students in need to either those members who regularly work in the office namely Chloe Krieger, Fadeelah Williams and Xola Njengele or Sharine Dowries (Student Governance Administrator). Thankfully, since the election processes in late February members have been attending office duty much more regularly due in part to the fact that in the forming of the Code of Conduct I fought hard for further repercussions such as pay docking and disciplinary action to occur when members routinely skip duty without notice.

The Secretary General is responsible for setting up the agenda as well as minute keeping SRC meetings, SRC Executive meetings and SRC Executive and Management meetings. Because we could not hold any formal SRC Meetings without a Chairperson there was no minutes other than the SRC Rectorate and Management Team meetings that needed to be taken until after the 11 February Elections. Thulani Hlatswayo ([*thulani@sun.ac.za*](mailto:thulani@sun.ac.za)) took and shared the minutes of those meetings occurring before then and shared them with the relevant parties. As an SRC member without a title I was still allowed to review Thulani’s minutes an assist where necessary.

Starting December through February Planning for the “ Registration period ” ensued. The Registration period itself should actually in my opinion require its own report but, in summary, my role during that time consisted of creating and coordinating Welcoming Week presentations for each academic faculty which consisting of introductions to the various student structures and services available to students at Stellenbosch University. This project was a generally a success. I managed to present or arrange presentation run by other SRC members in every faculty except for the natural science faculty. In the natural science faculty I did organise for the Natural science faculty’s student committee to share the relevant information from my welcoming presentation in their presentation. I do recommend that my successor follow my lead in this project via planning starting at the end of September. I began planning for this initiative in October as that is the time most faculties finalise their welcoming programmes for the successive year.

I also was in charge of food allocation for the registration period, which ran into various issues. Many of which were linked to the access registration assistants from SASCO and EFFSC should recieve. This issue a rised due to the fact that Terms of reference with regard to the partnership between the SRC and these groups were not set out for this period and therefore there was a lot of room for argument when it came to those members of the groups who the SRC is responsible for feeding. Further Assistants from these groups would often bring students to collect food which also brought issues. The solution I implemented was the creation of a list of names of all registration champions across all groups involved informed by the chairpersons of each group. This list would be checked at the beginning of the lunch hour. A half hour after the time lunch or dinner would be served those people who have not collected or notified the me that they would collect their food would forfeit the right to their food and so food would be handed out to any other students who were in need or registration not on the list.

I also ran into other issues such as the financial burden of the cost of food compared to quantity as well as the point of serving of the food and the periods for which we would provide food relative to the working hours of registration champions. Each of these issues were resolved within the first 3 days of the commencement of the registration period i.e. January 13 2020.

I also took on the responsibility of both the training of the general subsection of registration champions as well as coordinating the placement, rotation and job description of registration champions.

Further as a leader I know that it is important to note your own shortcomings. Unfortunately towards the end of the registration period I was scheduled to take a trip to Johannesburg with Sifiso Zungu for a NSFAS meeting however due to my own human mistake we both missed the flight causing some cost to the SRC. I have made it clear that I am fully ready to accept a cut of cost from my honorarium to cover the cost incurred due to the missed flight.

Since my election as the Secretary General, I have maintained my constitutional duties in relation to minutes and agendas for SRC meetings, SRC Executive Meetings as well as Rectorate Management meetings. This includes the timely access given to relevant parties of minutes agendas and notices.This can be attested by my own records.

I created an email group for the src executive for record keeping, easy formal communication and document storage.

I have had issues access to resources due to budgetary reasons. To this date, the budget for our term has not been finalised and it is of great annoyance to both myself as well as many of my colleagues. It is very restrictive and discouraging especially considering the appointment of my minute editer - Tebogo Mphahlele- who to this date has no confirmation of pay, further due to the resignation of the elected policy officer I had no immediate guidance with regard to contracts for my minute editer.

With regard to my record keeping duties, I was assured by student gorvernance that for the 2nd terms term report our SRC would be allowed to merge the first and second terms reports due to our extraordinary circumstances.

Some of my colleagues have been quite resistant in request for official documentation, a matter I plan to directly address during team building.

Since my initial election into the SRC continuing through 2020 I have been working with a student organisation, the transformation office and the src transformation portfolio in organising the Africa Week Project Planned for Heritage Week in the 3rd Term.

Amongst the Covid-19 Global Pandemic - which became an apparent threat to student success in the end of the first term of 2020- much was done on my end in terms of organising and coordinating SRC processes, meetings and continuation in a professional accessible and productive manner for the purposes of ensuring student success. All of which will be discussed in my 3rd term report as these processes continue through recess and are still currently in process.

As an SRC representative on the various committees, I have been a present an engaged for and with the relevant subject matters. Particularly in the ITC where I have committed to addressing the lack of decision-making power held by the committee in my other respects as an SRC member. This is because it is of vital importance to the continued progressive transformation of Stellenbosch University that this committee’s powers are increased in regards to faculty specific decision-making power.

Since my appointment only 1 senate meeting has occurred of which the focus was University Decisions with regard to the response to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic.

I appreciate the discussions had and intent so far in the Mental Health and Alcohol Anti GBV Task Team, however, it has so far not been very productive when it comes to decisions made that would positively affect students.

The Senate Library Committees first sitting will occur on May 4 2020.

# Plans for next term

I plan to collaborate with the Vice Chair in organising the team building so that it may include professional training on communication and to address internal working issues that pose a threat to effective internal communication and running of the SRC.

I also plan to focus more on promoting intercampus communication as I have noted in the first term while the intent is there among many protfolios the practical action is lacking.

I also plan to improve my relationships with Student Governance and the Rectorate of the University. I noticed that my work would be easier and of a higher quality with them on my side. This does not mean that I will not challenge them when I feel that students are not being heard. My first priority is to ensure that student voices are heard and that I will do to the best of my ability.

I also aim to improve on relationships with other SRC’s around the country especially those university’s in the Western Cape as I believe communication is the key to good governance and we should improve as a team all the time by learning from other institutions.

# Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

For my portfolio

* Link this portfolio directly as a superior officer to communications so as to officially and formally connect the 2 portfolios. Having a chain of command will improve the efficiency of the work done by both of these portfolios.

For my successor

* Maintain your professionalism
* Put the students interests first at all times
* Manage your time well
* Set time aside for your personal life
* Before committing to SRC make sure that your academics are in good shape and that you are able to keep them up to standard through your term.
* Maintain good upkeep of your mental health
* Experience is not as important as dedication. Be dedicated to this job and its description and purpose.
* You do not need to be friends with your colleagues.
* You can be friends with your colleagues and still maintain internal accountability but it requires strong will and sense of self.
* Keep a record of all the work you do.
* Keep record of the minutes of all committees you sit on and recommend that your colleagues do the same.

# Important Contacts*.*

Rectorate – SRC Executive emailing list

**To:**

Mdepa, AA, Mnr: [anelemdepa@sun.ac.za](mailto:anelemdepa@sun.ac.za)

Prof Wim de Villiers (Rector and Vice-Chancellor) [vc@sun.ac.za](mailto:vc@sun.ac.za)

Prof Stan du Plessis (Chief Operating Officer) [stan@sun.ac.za](mailto:stan@sun.ac.za)

Prof Arnold Schoonwinkel (Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching): [schoonwi@sun.ac.za](mailto:schoonwi@sun.ac.za)

Prof Eugene Cloete (Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies): [eugenecloete@sun.ac.za](mailto:eugenecloete@sun.ac.za)

Prof Nico Koopman (Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation & Personnel) [nkoopman@sun.ac.za](mailto:nkoopman@sun.ac.za)

Prof Hester Klopper (Vice-Rector: Strategy and Internationalisation) [hklopper@sun.ac.za](mailto:hklopper@sun.ac.za)

Dr Ronel Retief (Registrar): [ronelretief@suna.c.za](mailto:ronelretief@suna.c.za)

Makheta, Choice (Student Affairs): [choicemakheta@sun.ac.za](mailto:choicemakheta@sun.ac.za)

Tonia Overmeyer: [toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za](mailto:toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za)

Include the SRC executive as well as the TSR Chairperson, and Military Academy Chairperson

**Cc**:

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General Important contacts

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Anele Mdepa (Student Governance Manager): [anelemdepa@sun.ac.za](mailto:anelemdepa@sun.ac.za)

Thulani Hlatswayo (Student Governance): [thulani@sun.ac.za](mailto:thulani@sun.ac.za)

Pule Mochichane (Project Coordinator: Co-Curriculum): [pulem@sun.ac.za](mailto:pulem@sun.ac.za)

Gary Howell (Manager: Letting Office): [ghowell@sun.ac.za](mailto:ghowell@sun.ac.za)

Nicky Adams (Promotions Officer: Langenhoeven Student Centre): [nadams@sun.ac.za](mailto:nadams@sun.ac.za)