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| **Name and Surname:**  | **Brandon Murray**  |
| **Portfolio:**  | **Treasurer**  |
| **Subject:**  | ***First Report***  |
| **Email:**  | ***brandon7@sun.ac.za***  |



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 Constitutional Responsibilities

The Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the SRC and is responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the SRC are used in a transparent, responsible and sustainable manner; and has a role of formulating and implementing policies that ensure transparent, responsible and sustainable use of the SRC’s financial resources.

The Treasurer also has the duty to assist the entire SRC with budget compilations, processing payments according to these budgets and providing financial insight to SRC decision-making.

# Portfolio Overview

1. The SRC

As the SRC’s Treasurer, I form part of our executive body as the Chief Financial Officer of the SRC’s financial resources. This role is very hands on, meaning that I interact with all SRC members on a regular and continuous basis. This is owing to my role requiring that I approve payments based on budgets and monitor all incoming and outgoing transactions, as well as maintaining a continuous record of quotations, authorised payments and pending payments. I am responsible for compiling the budgets for all portfolios with the relevant members in a responsible and transparent manner. Given our SRC context, I made ‘deadlines’ our principal budgeting factor, as we have less operational time than usual. What this meant is that for each budget I required the members to provide me with deadlines where applicable, so that the exec can closely monitor their performance and reallocate funds that are not utlilised accordingly.

1. Stellenbosch University

Regardless of my role as Treasurer, as an SRC member I have the inherent responsibility to the entire student body to represent them by responding to their demands, but I must pray for wisdom to do what is best, as this is leadership. Part of my SRC role is to sit on university committees in order to voice the needs of students, and ensure that the rapidly changing student environment is not excluded in crucial decision-making for future and immediate plans. Often this involves challenging existing decisions, or providing a different, student perspective in meetings. As a member of the executive, I attend monthly Rectorate-SRC meetings whereby we engage on current events and future plans. This is also a great platform to provide student and SRC feedback/concerns. Given the implementation of the two task teams I manage, we are receiving more feedback from non-positional leaders and exposing them to what their SRC does on a daily basis. This helps improve our student image, and creates a stronger sense of unity with the student body.

1. South Africa

The SRC’s role in South Africa has been clearly mandated by the Higher Education Act, as it ensures student representation in all universities. Stellenbosch University is a well-known and highly esteemed university in South Africa. Hence, the decisions we take on this campus are not isolated, but have an effect on our surrounding communities and higher education institutions. As important as it is for an SRC to understand their campus context, we must also be cognisant that we operate in a much broader sphere. An example of this would be how we had a student movement marching against ‘gender based violence’. These movements challenge injustices that are present in our country, and as an SRC we must support and provide students the platforms necessary for their voices to be heard and understood in a way that does not discriminate against or harm another person. Student leaders are needed for internal transformation on all campuses, and it’s only from an inner change that we can see an outflow into our country’s external vision.

# Committees / Task Teams

Institutional

* *Bursaries and Loans committee – We discuss and implement strategies on matters that involve funding such as undergraduate bursaries and loans, postgraduate NRF funding and evaluating the diverse financial needs of students on campus.*
* *Student Fees committee – We evaluate fee structuring as well as collection and spending of these amounts.*
* *Quality Assurance committee – We evaluate current institutional practices and deliberate on how these can be improved by assessing their current results, such as degree modules or programmes.*

Other Committees / Task Teams o *Grace-to-Grace (Student Care) task team manager – I have had the privilege to implement this task team into the SRC, and we are currently focused on gaining student feedback as a means to supply the SRC with more effective ways to address student needs. In times of darkness, there should always be a place for the light to shine.*

* *Clean Campaign task team manager – The Grace-to-Grace task team lead to the*

*initiation of the Clean Campaign task team. We have been creating social media posts to help educate students on how to remain safe and healthy during the pandemic, as well as organising brochures to be printed and posters for when campus reopens to keep students informed of the importance of their health.*

* *Historical Debt task team* – During the registration period this task team deliberates all historical debt cases and evaluates whether students are recommended for funding given our limitations. *I would supply this task team with the SRC’s updated lists every few days and then we would meet to see how we could assist the students, and sometimes we could not unfortunately.*
* *SRC Executive – As Treasurer I form part of the executive of the SRC. We manage the dayto-day operations of the body, as well as represent our fellow team members in meetings with the rectorate.*
* *SRC Executive-Rectorate committee – As the SRC executive, we are responsible for representing students and our fellow SRC members in these meetings. We are also then required to provide feedback to the SRC and students on meeting outcomes where applicable.* o *RegisterAll committee – This committee has also been referred to as the ‘allocation committee’. It focused on the distribution of RegisterAll applications to the relevant parties in order for feedback to be given so that the SRC could make informed decisions on where to allocate RegisterAll funding.*

# Budget Overview

*Owing to this being our SRC’s first official operational term with our portfolios, very little of our budget was spent. However, I facilitated and assisted with the entire budgeting process for each portfolio. From my budget, R550.00 was spent on the redrawing of the MASC logo for our Clean Campaign brochures. The service fee for these brochures, R1250.00, came out of Student Wellness’s budget, and these will be printed in the next academic term along with the rest of our Clean Care packages.*

# Term Overview

This term started on the 13th of January 2020 with an incredibly busy period for all universities: registration.

During this period, I served on the Historical Debt (now known as Student Debt) Task Team as well as the RegisterAll/allocation committee.

Given that we did not have a proper hand-over before this period, as we did not yet have roles allocated, I chose to fulfil the treasures roles in this period, as I knew this is where God was calling me, as He placed the choice on my heart. This means that I had to make RegisterAll application forms and Historical Debt application forms. I then delegated with the rest of the team to ensure that these forms were printed and made available in our offices (3rd floor of Neelsie), as well as given to SASCO as they were compiling separate lists, which was making admin more challenging. I would then sit in the office behind the main computer each day to explain the forms to students and take all applications. I received a substantial amount of help from Thabiso and Leon, who were both Registration Champions serving on the Historical Debt team. Given their assistance, there were times when I needed to leave the office to escort students to Admin A, or the Postgraduate Office in order to better assist them. I would take all the forms home at the end of the day, and group them according to context (debt, registerall etc.) and then I grouped the Registerall forms into undergraduate and postgraduate categories to allow lists to be compiled for Lewis from the postgrad office and Bianca from bursaries and loans. I originally emailed students to confirm their application, however this became time-consuming, and I stopped doing it as there were over 200 hundred students eventually. I would then check the Historical Debt applications to flag students applying to both, as we cannot assist with RegisterAll if they have Historical Debt. These students would still be considered for historical debt assistance, but we would flag them to ensure we knew that should we be able to assist the student, we would need to them take their case one step further by ensuring they receive RegisterAll assistance too. This posed many challenges, as often students that are applying for historical debt assistance will also need first instalment assistance. Once I emailed these lists to B&L and PO, I would then wait to receive the feedback.

Once feedback was received (normally within 1 day from postgrad, and 2-3 from B&L), I would then look at their recommendations and come to a conclusion on behalf of the SRC. If there were cases that were not clear, I would follow up to get more information on the case to make a more informed decision. However, if there were cases whereby there was a conflict of interest because I knew the student, I confirmed with another SRC member if they are to receive funding to remain as objective and as fair as possible (there was only one case of this nature).

 I drew up a Guarantee of Payment Form for student fees, which acted as a contractual agreement that the SRC would cover all portions owing – for the period of one month – of the Student Fees instalment agreement. This was owing to us not having access to our budget at the time, given that portfolios were not allocated. A RegisterAll list would be sent to Anri from Student Fees containing the 3 instalment form signed by students (approved by either Lewis or Bianca, and myself), and she would then allow these students to register. I would recommend the next SRC devise a more efficient plan for this process, as it was incredibly tedious and timeconsuming. Also, students that have received RegisterAll funding previously need to be flagged and no longer assisted if there is no proof of them applying for other financial assistance for the academic year, as this is prohibiting us from assisting more students.

Once appointed into my role of Treasurer by God’s Grace, I implemented the Student Care Task Team, Grace-to-Grace. This initiative is student-driven, and has had consultation with various stakeholders on campus, such as Residence HK’s, PSO committee members, majority of faculties, Maties Sport athletes etc. The goal of this task team is to address the ongoing needs of students that are often overlooked by student leadership given the matters that they are currently facing taking the majority of their attention. The task team has been incredibly successful, as it lead to the initiation of the Clean Campaign Task Team. This task team comprises of members from the TSR, MASC and SRC. We are working on assisting students during this current pandemic, and this has been done by ensuring continuous engagement with students on how they feel, and what they would like to see the university do. We have brochures and packages ready for when campus reopens, and I look forward to seeing what God will do with this team.

As Treasurer I also met with all SRC members and managers (that were willing to meet with me) to assist with budget compiling and consolidation. This also provided me with the opportunity to understand their goals for the portfolio, and this information was used when finalising budgets.

# Plans for Next Academic Term

The next academic term brings a responsibility I have not yet been accustomed to in my role, and this is recording actual spending for each portfolio. Gershwin and Sharine are incredibly helpful in this regard, so I foresee it being a great learning experience. The Grace-to-Grace task team will enter the planning process for our SRC Fund Run, and we will consult with Karen from the Alumni department to see how best we can gain stakeholder engagement for this initiative. The Clean Campaign Task Team will be ensuring that all residences and PSOs have informative posters in visible spaces put up in their venues, to ensure that we help stop the spread of covid-19. This will be a short-term, as recess will end late April. I will of course continue my duties by attending the SRC bi-weekly meetings, and our executive meetings once a week. A goal of mine is to appoint a student to help run the admin of the Grace-to-Grace task team, as I know that given my time commitments I will be unable to do all the work.

# Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

The Treasurer role is challenging, and will push whoever is elected to grow in their capacity with God’s Grace. The SRC treasurer needs a facilitated handover with the previous treasurer, as well as adequate training for the duty. The treasurer will receive a lot of negativity, anger and disrespect from the SRC and students, and this is mainly owing to the magnitude of visible manual work he/she must do, meaning a clear target is created. Treasurer’s need to be informed that they will have a challenging role, and I would advise they read **Romans 8** daily. The treasurer has been very limited in what he/she can do with his/her budget, and this needs to change. I have faced many hurdles with regards to initiating task teams and campaigns from our side, as it is not viewed as part of my role. The treasurer may be the CFO, but he/she still remains a member of the Student Representative Council. A Treasurer should be encouraged to come up with innovative ideas and solutions with students, but he/she must ensure their constitutional duties are fulfilled on an ongoing basis as well.

# Important Contacts

**Student Governance:**

##  Anele Mdepa: anelemdepa@sun.ac.za

* Sharine Dowries: sharine@sun.ac.za **Financial Queries:**
* Gershwin Fritz: gfritz@sun.ac.za **Bursaries and Loans:**

##  Bianca Andrews: bianca5@sun.ac.za

(Bianca assisted with determining whether undergraduate students applying to the RegisterAll fund were recommended or not by assessing their funding for the academic year)

##  Kallie Sauls: kallies@sun.ac.za

(Kallie forms part of the historical debt task team, and is knowledgeable on most student finance matters)

**Postgraduate Office:**

## Nugent Lewis: nugent@sun.ac.za

*(Nugent is a member of the historical debt task team and helps with RegisterAll recommendation in terms of postgraduate students)* **Student Fees:**

Werner Abrahams: wabrahams@sun.ac.za

## Anri Engelbrecht: anriengel@sun.ac.za

*(Anri forms part of the historical debt task team and played a major role in the RegisterAll process by lifting financial blocks for students the SRC had agreed to fund so that they could register)* **Student Affairs:**

Tonia Overmeyer: toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za

## Lizzie Witbooi: lgwitbooi@sun.ac.za

(Involved with food insecurity)

**Alumni Office:**

## Karen Bruns: kbruns@sun.ac.za

(Karen is the senior director of Development and Alumni Relations)