Minutes  
Students’ Representative Council Meeting

Date: 2021-03-17 | Time: 18:00 | Venue: Microsoft Teams

# Welcoming

Kira welcomed all members present.

# Attendance & Apologies

Absent: Unathi, Rewaldo, Avumile and Leoné.

Apologies received from: Rewaldo and Leoné.

# Setting of the Agenda

Response to what happened this afternoon in the Neelsie, was added to the agenda.

# Portfolio Feedback

Viwe gave feedback on the BeYou Initiative.

* + It was requested that the members send out communication to students who have filled out the form for the initiative, to check their emails. Viwe has send these students emails with regards to a word version of the document that has to be signed and dated. All of the forms must be in before taking it to the registrar. Changes on the system and student card costs can only be processed after the forms was given to the registrar.
  + If anybody would like to have Viwe and Lebo to speak about identity in their communities, email Viwe. They would like to introduce the initiative to the newcomers as well.

# Student needs for registration and for 2021

Post a paragraph in “Die Matie” to share with students what we have done with regards to registration as well as other initiatives. This will help show that the SRC does not intend to be silent.

The student debt working group is not a SRC-led initiative. It was started by staff members of the student bursaries and loans division, who saw the need for financial assistance. Gina and Philip sit on the meetings to share ideas and they cannot share information as it is sensitive and confidential information. At the end a report will be drafted and they will see if they can share a summary of the report. But in the future we can maybe start our own debt clearing initiative, if we want to share those numbers and information.

It was mentioned that now might be a good time to use one of our mass mailers.

Yanga suggested that the SRC gets a platform where they can be transparent about what they have achieved and that will give students confidence that the SRC is helping them, which will prevent protests about misinformed frustration.

# Response to what happened this afternoon in the Neelsie

Students who were part of the protest, were served with a note from the Neelsie. The note said they had 10 minutes to leave the premises and if they fail to adhere they are trespassing University premises.

The demands was that all blocks should be removed. We sent it through to management and they could not do that.

All access related to registration were achieved. Access to sunlearn, eduroam and food security. This was achieved in the meeting which Xola had with management.

Students now have access to sunlearn and therefore to all modules within their degree’s framework. If there is any module they don’t have access to, they can email the address mentioned in the document.

Physical card access was allowed and they can utilise their cards.

With regards to eduroam access, students will get access to eduroam within a few days or get data packages.

In terms of food security, we could not get COB activated for those cards, but those names and student numbers will be send to the already existing food security initiative. Students can send an email to supportus@sun.ac.za to confirm that they are part of the group in the neelsie and then they will arrange food packages for them.

The SRC has tried to allow access to all possible routes. For the SRC this is a success. Some of the SRC members spoke to some of the students who were in the neelsie at that time and told them that they would have all the perks of being registered even if they are not registered at that point of time. By registration time, the debt will be dealt with and they will then be able to registered. From the meeting with the students, it was clear that these students were not interested in the solutions or being given the access. If student blocks was blankly lifted, all funds would have to come from alumni or contingencies, as the student debt working group does not have budgeted funds. However, the threat of students not being able to register, is what allows us to get that funding and to clear students’ debts as we go along. We presented this information to the students but they did not want to engage on the matter nor the issues.

It was discussed as a possibility that the SRC draft up a statement, stating what we did and that we believe the best solution is currently being run and we do no support those students that are currently unlawfully in the neelsie.

For the statement to be released, we need to discuss what the tone of the statement will be. The following points were raised with regards to the statement.

* + The SRC is not against students protesting, in fact we encourage it, however we aren’t given time to do our jobs to meet with management. Students are not happy with clearing debt and then registering. The SRC does not support students prioritising their own personal needs which might be or not be politically motivated. These students are putting their own politically motivated needs before students who aren’t registered and have large debts. In the end of the day that is what we are trying to do, to clear those debts and get them registered. We want to speak to those students who have debt to see if they feel like they are represented by the students who are protesting to not clear the debt but to just lift the block. Because through just lifting the block, the debts are still there, you just get to register.
  + In the statement we have to be careful to not give false hope. The student debt working group isn’t definitely going to clear all the debt of students on the list. They have criteria’s that apply so if you don’t meet the criteria, the debt cannot be cleared.
  + We will also mention that we are in support of the protest action and we emphasize with students but just because they don’t have access, doesn’t mean they have the right to block other student’s access. Just like students have the right to protest, the other students also has the right to freedom to move.
  + The problem is not that we don’t engage with the students on the matter but that they are not willing to listen to the solutions being presented to them. They are focussing on just being registered, while they don’t see that the option being presented will clear their debt and that will mean they can register without any debt carrying over to the next year. These debts are cleared through very generous donations because there is a need to have all students registered by the end of registration.
  + Maybe approach the statement in two parts. One approaching the students who are striking and the other approaching those who were affected by what happened in the neelsie today. They deserve an apology and not us to be offensive.
  + It was mentioned that the media shows that students are protesting and the SRC does not listen, the statement should also mention that this is not true and that the SRC has approached students in the neelsie to get their feedback, as well as to make sure they are safe.
  + SRC members on the venue are currently drafting the statement and any other members that would like to be involve with writing the statement, should message Philip.
  + Statement to be sent out as a mass mailer and on the media platforms.
  + Statement to be sent out tonight at 10pm and mass mailer as soon as possible.

# Closing

Kira thanked everyone for joining and engaging. Then the meeting was adjourned.