



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abafundi
Studenteraad



SRC TERM I REPORT

SRC Policy Officer



Students' Representative Council

Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre

Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602

Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za



Table of Contents

Constitutional Responsibilities.....	3
Portfolio Overview.....	3
Committees/Task Teams	4
Term I Overview	5

Banzi Bottoman – SRC Policy Officer – banzi@sun.ac.za



Foreword

Fellow maties

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for taking part in the SRC Elections last year and making it possible for me to lead you all in compassion, dedication, intentionality and consistency. Our SRC statement say that we advocate for student servitude and it has been great serving the community through various platforms and conversations.

It is common knowledge that policies continue to impede change, inclusivity and transformation. Progress continues to be gatekept by procedure and lengthy trails of conversations. Public participation is a key component of our democracy. Consequently, I implore the student community to actively participate in SRC meetings to empower and capacitate the student voice.

My journey in the SRC this far has been about analysing policies, finding loopholes and seeking ways to oppose any policies that insult the yearn for an experiential learning experience. It has been mostly about reading because a leader that does not read is a problem. It has all been about familiarising myself with the system.

I am extremely excited for the year and hope to continue being a leader the student community can trust and depend on!

Constitutional Responsibilities

As an SRC member, section 27 of the Student Constitution imposes peremptory duties. Consequently, I should act in the best interests of students and actively promote their rights enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Student Constitution. It further requires me to represent students on institutional committees and structures. Section 44 requires me to attend meetings every 2 weeks excluding official examinations and holiday periods. Section 32 of the Student Constitution also requires me to submit a term report at the end of each academic term.

As the Policy Officer, I am mandated to evaluate University policy and be circumspect of the inputs of fellow SRC members. Moreover, I am the legal functionary of the SRC and therefore evaluate and maintain policy to capacitate SRC members to perform their duties effectively. Finally I am mandated to safe-keep all student-related constitutions.

Portfolio Overview

The Policy Officer's core function is to ensure that the SRC deals and actively engages on University policy. As codified in the Constitution, this includes:

- (I) Ensuring that any policy formulated within the SRC is formulated and revised in accordance with s27(4).
- (II) Assisting the other SRC members in evaluating and giving input in the formulation of University policy in accordance with s27(3).
- (III) Ensuring that a resolution passed by the Students' Assembly to amend this Constitution is considered by the SRC for assent.
- (IV) Providing opinions to the SRC on the interpretation of this Constitution and other policies of the University, such opinions are not binding.
- (V) The safekeeping of all student-related constitutions.

Moreover, this portfolio makes use of mass meetings, planned conferences, SRC internal meetings, institutional committees and various platforms organized by university structures to materialize its

mandate. Public participation remains a key component behind how I run the portfolio – inspired by the Doctors for Life Constitutional Court case.¹

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

Senate

The senate is accountable to the council for the academic and research functions of the public higher education institution and must perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the council. The functions of the Council is contained in the Statute of the University of Stellenbosch. The Senate is comprised of Deans, Rectorate, Professors, Doctors and various academics of the university. The first meeting I attended last year was on the 25th of November 2022 at the Jan Mouton building. Matters discussed in Senate are confidential.

Institutional Transformation Committee

When appointed to the ITC, it was newly established and restructured. This functionality of this committee is dependent on the Transformation Policy.

Our first meeting was on the 13th of October 2022. It was in person at the Admin B Council Chambers and online. It was an introductory meeting; substantive issues were reserved for following ITC meetings.

Thereafter a special ITC meeting was held on the 11th of November to discuss the Khampepe report. As it stands this committee is dealing extensively with the suggestions and outcomes of the Khampepe report. The committee in its entirety is very circumspect of the student voice and takes it very seriously. I feel included in the process. Directors and members are working tirelessly towards transformation and are in constant communication with the student voice. There is a lot of work ahead of us regarding transformation, but the committee is taking active steps to realize the change we hope for as an SRC.

¹ Doctors for Life International v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others (12) BCLR 1399 (CC)

Student Fees Committee

The Student Fees Committee (SFC) is a subcommittee of SU's Finance Committee, with the purpose of providing advice and guidance to the Finance Committee with regards to the levying of student fees, additional study related fees, SU accommodation fees, and student administration fees – in an attempt to ensure that SU does business as an academic institution of excellence.

The SFC functions by formulating and evaluating the financial guidelines to all of the aforementioned – as well as coordinating and monitoring the implementation thereof with regards to the annual fixture of the particular student related fees. All work performed by the SFC is funnelled to the Finance Committee and subject to final approval by the Council of SU.

The first meeting I attended last year was on the 29th of September 2022. The meeting was Hybrid. I clearly opposed most of the proposals but the student voice was clearly ignored because all figures were final and decided. I was against the 8% fee increase – expressly and vehemently.

Term I Overview

During my first term in office there were two policies being reviewed.

Disability Access Policy

This was the first policy my office drafted comments on as requested by the Disability Unit. I read and analysed the policy and drafted a three-page document clearly stating my concerns and practical suggestions to the division. I deem it necessary to include some of these suggestions because I was circumspect of our mission statement which states that the SRC seeks to achieve sustainable impact and experiential transformation through promoting **intentional student servitude** when drafting them. The policy was mostly about universal access.

Amongst others, Clause 4.7 of the policy stated that resources will only be distributed when requested by a particular person. This clause was one of the sections I thought needed extensive reconsideration.

I then suggested that the provision should be scrapped or restructured to adopt a much more cordial and inclusive tone. The clause was relatively contradictory to 'universal access'. I suggested that they replace it with a clause that encompasses humanity and reasonableness. 'A particular person' suggests that the university will only provide resources only when a singular person requests it. That is not universal access. I implored the policy owner to be circumspect of my deliberations - or draft the provision in such a way that it does not suggest that the university will solely depend on people having to report

their situation – this contradicts universal access once again. Yes the university depends on being made aware of the lack of inclusion but I emphasized that would not take this provision well”.

These comments were first sent on the SRC group chat, Tygerberg Student Council the SRC internal channel and discussed in an SRC meeting with students before it was submitted to the policy owner to whom commentary was due.

After the submission of comments, there was a meeting scheduled on the 18th of November 2022 where all divisions and certain leadership structures discussed their comments in detail. We are currently waiting for feedback.

Communications Policy

At the time I came into office this policy was being reviewed and the inputs of the previous SRC were satisfactory. Later in my term we had a teams meeting where a staff member explained the policy to us and we later submitted our inputs to the said functionary.

Other activities

- 1) I attended the 3rd Annual International Conference on Social Justice on the 11th of October and the 4th Annual Social Justice Summit on the 12th of October. I was invited to these events in my capacity as Policy Officer of the SRC. The theme was restitution. Guests included lawyers, academics and government officials. I was part of a session that discussed how restitution should be consolidated with policy reform. The conference affirmed my mission which is that policies should be drafted to conform to contemporary needs and societal shifts and not oppose the very same society that is in need of structural and systematic restitution and social justice in South Africa. We need to obliterate impractical and malicious reliance on policies to perpetuate injustice.
- 2) **Some policies I've read so far continue to sabotage transformation in the institution.**
- 3) I attended the Transformation Indaba on the 19th of October.
- 4) The Tygerberg Student Council Policy Officer brought it to my attention that the SU Student Constitution (2021 Revision) is in contravention of the SU Statute with regards to the discrepancy in its referral to the Tygerberg Students' Representative Council (TSRC).

The SU Statute, which was approved on the 16th of July 2019, refers directly to the TSRC in namely 2 places:

1. In *Chapter 2 Section 29 (2)(c)(ii)* on page 29 of the document (page 46 according to 'Content of Statute') – the TSRC is defined as the Tygerberg SRC.

2. In *Chapter 9 Section 68 (Definitions)* on page 53 of the document – the TSRC is defined as the Tygerberg SRC. The SRC is defined as the Students' Representative Council in the same section and throughout the Minister-approved document.

The SU Student Constitution (2021 Revision) refers to the TSRC as either the Tygerberg Student Council, TSC, TSR or a combination of these 33 times. It then refers to the TSRC correctly only once, and that is on page 24.

The remedy for this enquiry will be discussed under plans for next term.

5) Members of the Tygerberg Student Council brought it to my attention that members on the TSC lose their leadership once they go through readmission and repeat an academic year. This does not relate to Stellenbosch Campus leadership structures at all. This said termination of membership is based on Tygerberg Student Council legislation – section 25(1)(j) of the Tygerberg Student Constitution. My intervention was very lacklustre since this section is based on the Medicine Faculty administration. Most modules are prerequisites and most of them require you to repeat the year regardless.

6) During my first term, alongside with the SRC Treasurer, we amended 5 SRC Financial policies, namely:

- Financial Policy: Approval of expenses
- Financial Policy: Compensating SRC Assistants and Committee Members
- Financial Policy: Accessing of unbudgeted funds
- Financial Policy: Requesting Financial Access from the SRC
- Financial Policy: Altering Portfolio Projects' Budgets

The alterations on these policies were communicated with the SRC for commentary and approval.

7) I serve on the JV/S Constitutional Amendment Committee. The Vice-Chairperson of the Law student faculty committee invited me to participate in my capacity as SRC policy Officer.

8) I consulted with parliament regarding policy reform. Risuna Risimati (Student Parliament Secretary) had a proposal that would make public participation uniform to aid the office of the Policy Officer to submit inputs that do not just include assent of SRC members but also members of parliament – now that the structure and membership of student parliament was recently revised and improved.

9) On the 10th of February 2023, alongside SRC, EFF and Sasco members we took to NSFAS offices in reaction of the R45 000 NSFAS cap on accommodation. We managed to negotiate with the COO of NSFAS and an Executive member heading technology on mitigating our accommodation crisis. These officials negotiated with our management regarding a progressive

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

way-forward. We mitigated our accommodation crisis during registration. Please refer to the Secretary's term report.

Plans for Next Term

The term ahead will be quite eventful.

1) It came to my attention that Parliament has no rules to facilitate a motion of no confidence or an impeachment process. I approached student parliament and student court regarding this legal contention. The resolution, therein, was an urgent application to the court. I intend on following up with parliament to formulate such rules since they do not exist ever since the new Constitution was approved by student court. This is a grave omission for a structure this huge but I am working very closely with parliament and student court to correct this omission.

2) I intend on amending section 28 of the Student Constitution to change the titles 'Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer' to:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary-General
- Treasurer General

The current titles are outdated and inconsistent with other SRC's and contemporary standards.

3) The TSC Policy Officer intends on collaborating with me to re-evaluate the naming of the Tygerberg Student Council to 'TSRC'. I presume, subject to clarity, that the TSC intends on being independent – the intention behind renaming the student body is still not clear but we are still in talks with Tygerberg and Student Affairs regarding the matter.

4) Once again, I have come to the realization that policies continue to sabotage transformation. I intend on writing to the policy owner of the Admissions policy – the problems during registration gave rise to this. I noticed that too much is gatekept and guised with policy.

5) I intend on following up on the review and result of the Stellenbosch University Protest Protocol. Problems during registration also gave rise to my concerns regarding this protocol.

6) I intend on approaching the Finance department to give a detailed explanation regarding the rationale behind Prims earning more than members of a structure mandated by the Constitution. I have been in talks with Student Affairs and since the previous SRC brought this up, I will continue following up. The

intention is to make sure that remuneration SRC members is consistent with its significance and broad mandate.

7) I intend on carrying out all events planned in my year-plan – events will be included in almanac and announced in due time.

8) I plan on having a meeting with Student Governance to clearly discuss their powers in relation to our mandate according to national policy and University Statute. The independence of the SRC continues to be unclear. I would like to have a clear description regarding their oversight and what that means for our independence. The intention, overall, is to ascertain whether Student Governance is a supervisory functionary to circumvent self-help by SRC members or serves as an ultimate decision maker. Although we have a great relationship with the structure, the need to clearly ascertain our independence is necessary – to ensure that our decision making is not two-fold or susceptible to any potential gatekeeping.

We account to students, but students are not aware of our impediments. But no structure can be held entirely accountable if they themselves are not independent. I will continue being in consultation with Student Governance regarding this matter.

9) The Vice-Chairperson and I will be drafting an SRC manager's policy to have a codified description of their duties and functions.

10) I intend on continuing to be a force for the students