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SRC

Students' Representative Council
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Studenteraad



SRC TERM I REPORT

SRC CHAIRPERSON



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Foreword

I believe a crucial characteristic a leader needs to possess is the desire for servitude. My role as a student leader is to create environments that allow all students to feel like they belong in SU. I am a firm believer that a person can only grow and develop through the empowerment of their community. Thus, my goals for my term in office is to improve the relationship between Student Leadership Communities and the SRC, work alongside our managers to create more platforms for marginalized identities to feel seen and heard; support students in ensuring that institutionally their needs are put first.

As a result of the rapid incidents that occurred on campus at the start of our term there was very little room for team bonding and discovery of how we function as a team. Despite this the team worked hard to represent students to our best ability and made the most of our internal affairs. In the coming term I look forward to seeing the personal portfolio goals set by each team member come to fruition and I am most excited to see our students reap the benefits of the seeds we have sown.

You will see that I have divided the report into the general duties I have to fulfill and the monthly breakdown of the meetings and work that are context specific. I hope this will assist prospective Chairpersons and Chairpersons after me to get a full picture of the workload the position requires on top of navigating academics, juggling your personal life, and managing the internal functioning of the SRC. Additionally, this format assists in visualizing how differently saturated the workload can be dependent on the month. December 2022 and January 2023 consisted mostly of registration period preparations and will be addressed in more detail in my Term 2 report.

In our mission statement we mention “student servitude underpinned by mindfulness, transparency, and accountability in the spirit of Ubuntu” Term I was a term that really tested our ability to be mindful and transparent about what we can do for our students and challenging how much scope we have as an SRC in the actively promoting student’s rights.

Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the student constitution by constitutional responsibilities are the following:

Chapter 4: Section 28.1

- a) Serves as the chairperson at meetings of the SRC and SRC Executive Committee.
- b) Acts as spokesperson of the SRC, in consultation with the Communications Officer.
- c) Is responsible for the finances of the SRC alongside the SRC Executive Committee.
- d) Ensures that the SRC fulfils its mandate.
- e) Is responsible for oversight over the activities of the SRC.

Portfolio Overview

SRC:

- The main responsibility of the Chairperson is to put the interests of students first, distinguish between people's self-interests and what benefits the student body and SRC.
- To be the face of the SRC. Representing the students and the institution with dignity, honour, and pride.
- Overseeing that the finances of the SRC are used ethically and responsibly.
- To be the spokesperson of the SRC.
- Making sure that the SRC fulfils its mandate, thus holding members accountable.
- Represent the SRC with the Secretary General in DHEST Ministerial stakeholder engagements, SAUS, etc.

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

- 1) Council
- 2) Institutional Forum
- 3) Council Language Committee
- 4) Strategic Team on Welcoming
- 5) Monitoring Advisory Committee

Term I Overview

General

SRC Meetings

As per Section 28 Point 1a. I serve as the chairperson at meetings of the SRC and SRC Executive Committee. All SRC Meetings were held in residence spaces to encourage students to attend meetings and to increase SRC visibility.

Successes:

- Our presence in residence spaces increased SRC visibility and allowed us to be more intentional about addressing the gap between student leadership communities.
- We successfully addressed and tackled SU issues in a way that allowed for student input and transparency.

Shortcomings:

- Meetings were not always communicated on time and were often communicated on one platform. Thus, student presence would be low.
- Communication on what equipment the residence had to host an SRC meeting often went unchecked. As a result, there would be meetings whereby we did not have equipment to adequately host the meeting online or would not have a microphone or speaker to hear students online.
- The SRC meetings would often be interrupted or cut off by loadshedding. This would result in meeting recordings suddenly being cut or there would be a disruption during the meeting to find a solution to losing students online or lights.
- There were occasions whereby the venue would be double booked and because the space is not an SRC space we would not get preference to the space. This led to meetings running late.

Points of improvement:

- Meeting venues need to be communicated more in advance and the communication between the HC members and the SRC admin could be smoother. There were times where the venue selected did not have a projector or was not a closed venue so students would walk in and out of the venue with no regard for the meeting.
- There needs to be a follow up on the equipment the venue has and adequate preparation for the possibility of loadshedding.

Executive Committee Meetings

Executive meetings were initially held to speak about the management of the SRC however because of the rapid incidents occurring on campus – Executive meetings became centred around crisis management.

Successes:

- Executive meetings have been effective in receiving feedback on the where the teams functionality is at and way to move forward. Additionally, the initial engagements in the Executive team on the incidents that were happening on campus in 2022 were successful in plotting out the general direction and stance the SRC team ought to take on the matter.

Shortcomings:

- The Executive team did not have enough of a conversation on how it would function outside of crisis management. Thus often issue that could have been dealt within the SRC team as a whole would be tabled at executive meetings. This included the planning of the SRC code of conduct of which the main team gave minimal input on, the creation and release of SRC statements.
- An executive team acts as a microcosm of the SRC team. Thus, when there would be fractures within the executive team it also manifested within the main SRC team. Throughout the term as these divisions grew deeper the more complex it became to address the issue and improve upon the team's dynamic.

Points of improvement:

- Decision processes need to be to be decentralized from the executive team. Often decisions would be made solely by the executive when they could have been handed over to the SRC team for in-depth and intentional consideration. These decisions include: the creation and release of SRC statements, the creation of a Code of Conduct, the execution of the SRC camp.
- In the same way that we received training on the role of the SRC and how we function – there ought to have been a training hosted by DSAF on the role and function of the Executive. The team did not have an adequate handover process thus our ideas of our roles as executive members came from different sources and thus there were occasions where we were not always as aligned as a team than we should have been.

Monthly Meeting with Pieter Kloppers (CDC)

These meetings acted as check-ins on the Centre of Student communities.

Much like the M.A.C. (Monitoring Advisory Committee) there would be a debrief on what is occurring in residence spaces that could potential be a topic of discussion on campus. Additionally, these meeting

would give me insight on cases whereby the SRC needed to intervene when students felt they were inadequately assisted.

Successes:

- As SRC Chairperson I could receive further insight on what was occurring within student communities, this allowed me to guide team members on what projects and conversations might be beneficial to host for students.
- These meetings gave me the opportunity to pre-empt what was happening on campus that the SRC may have missed or overlooked. I could then raise these issues both in Executive meetings and internal SRC meetings.

Monthly Meeting with DVC Prof Deresh

These meetings acted as debrief sessions on what was occurring on campus and how the Teaching and Learning Division can assist or where the SRC can assist in. As a result of the rapid incidents that occurred on campus these meetings were had in conjunction with the SRC executive so that they could be debriefed on where the university is on the various matters.

Monthly Meeting with Rector Vim de Villiers

The monthly meetings with the Rector act as a follow up on what is going on main campus that might be overlooked by the Rectorate. This is a new initiative from the Rector to have 1 on 1 meetings with the SRC chairperson. The first meeting was in December during the close of final exams thus the discussion was centred around predicting the shortfalls of the NSFAS cap, the value of affiliating to SAUS and possible issues that may arise during the Welcoming and Registration period.

Strategic Planning Part 1 & 2

Both Strategic (Strat) Plannings were centred around the general management of the SRC. The plannings included the following topics:

- Creation of the SRC mission statement
- Team Building: How we define ourselves as a team
- Discussion on a code of conduct
- Institutional Committee Allocation discussion

The Strat Plannings were organized by me and the vice-chairperson however in future rather invite SRC members interested in this kind of work to join in the planning.

Successes:

- The SRC team got an opportunity to discuss our general mission statement. We decided on: "We as an SRC seek to achieve sustainable impact and experiential transformation through promoting intentional student servitude underpinned by mindfulness, transparency and accountability in the spirit of Ubuntu"
This mission statement was decided through team members describing the values and vision they had for the team. We often came back to the ideas of student servitude, transformation with a progression that can be tracked and a set of values rooted in both the student constitution and a team dynamic rooted in the communal attributes of Ubuntu philosophy.
- Team members got the opportunity to speak about what conditions need to be present in order for them to thrive within the team. This gave us an initial insight into how each team member operates and what conditions could lead to conflict.

Points of improvement:

- Conversations on the ideas and conceptualization of the Registration Period ought to have occurred in the 2nd Strat Planning.
- The use of more guest speakers would have been more strategic as SRC members responded more positively to guest speakers on topics compared to members within the team.
- Set a code of conduct with the presence of all the managers and create a code of conduct that deeply considers how disciplinary processes take place.
- Be intentional about discussing how to make the office an inviting space for the team and SU students. As a result of the NSFAS cap often students would wait in the office for accommodation, but the office was not a conducive or inviting space for students to feel rested and relaxed in.
- Depending on funding, organize venues outside away from the main campus and office. This is the feedback received from the team thus, may differ for incoming teams.

Student Governance Check Ins

Over the term there were two official student governance check-ins. These sessions include a follow up on the wellbeing of the team and following up on any actions taken by the SRC. There was a dinner with student governance after the SU Dreamwalk to address the functioning of the Executive team and it was decided that Student Governance Check-Ins ought to occur more often. Additionally, the executive team is in need of additional support on how to function because of not having a handover and because of poor understanding from each party of what role and jurisdiction that have in the functioning of the SRC

Points of Improvement:

- Members of the SRC did not receive a handover so decisions and actions of the previous SRC were left unanswered. Thus, we often relied on student governance to fill in context. This proved to be a problem because often we would find out information during the check-ins that we should have known about at the start of our term.
- More Check-Ins and support are needed from student governance to ensure members have a good understanding of the roles and how they function. Often members would overstep their roles or misinterpret their constitutional role and it would be more ideal if this is something the

team and student governance can handle together as opposed to waiting for the intervention of Student Parliament.

SRC Manager Check-Ins

Section 28 Point 1e. of the student constitution states that the chairperson:

Is responsible for oversight over the activities of the SRC.

The SRC Manager Check-Ins acted as a fulfilment of these role particularly to brainstorm the initial goals they set for themselves for their term. Additionally, the Check-Ins acted as a good platform to get to know one another and find out more about what support they needed from me as their chairperson.

Successes:

- These check-ins gave me a good foundation of where the managers are planning to go with their portfolios.
- As new members to the team I wanted to make it clear that I am someone they can approach at any time. Previous managers of SRC teams often explained feeling excluded or separate from the SRC team so I tried to be intentional about avoiding that division.

Registration Period Planning

The first meeting consisted of the executive team whereby it was proposed that the same Welcoming/Registration program established by the previous SRC be adopted for the year of 2023 . Each working group was broken down into Working Group A (the SRC Roadshow & Transportation) and Working Group B (Admin A Tents & Student Debt Working Group). SRC members could choose between either Working Group A or B.

I was placed into Working Group B in which I created a proposal for the team to work off of for the roadshow and transportation. The transportation initiative was handled alongside the CSC office. The initiative included transportation for newcomers to be picked up from the Airport and major bus stations.

Points of Improvement:

- This should not have been a discussion and decision made by executive members alone. This ought to have been a conversation with the entire SRC team as a whole opposed to the team being commanded by members of the Executive Committee of what to do and how they ought to function.
- A more collaborative approach to the Welcoming would have led to more communication within the team on how each working group functions. But also, would have allowed from work to be delegated more evenly. Often there would be SRC members who were overworked and saw their

fatigue as a good sign of the work they were putting in. However, this type of work ethic led signs of early burn, outbursts from members and team members feeling under appreciated.

- The ought to be intentional and specific off-days planned for members to ensure the maintenance of the wellbeing of members. An idea for future is that there be volunteers present and then a group of 5 SRC members for each day that rotate daily. On one day the groups get the more strenuous work like the backpackers and then they swap with other members and do work at Admin A. This will assist in ensuring that tasks are not limited to one person.

SAUS (South African Union for Students) - 10-13 November

The following members of the SRC joined the SAUS conference:

Phiwokhule Qabaka – Secretary General

Queen Majikijela – Treasurer

Abongile Quthu – Transformation Officer

Prince Qengqa – Student Wellness and Leadership Development

This SAUS conference sought to address the following topics:

- Student Funding Model
- Analysis of the registration preparedness for 2023 academic year
- NSFAS Funding guidelines 2023
- Policy Review of SAUS, constitution, and SAUS code of conduct
- SAUS Strategic Plan Support

Successes:

- Student Funding Model & NSFAS Funding Guidelines:
 - o Minister Blade Nzimande was present during this session whereby he gave an opening speech and engaged in a QnA. The session was fruitful in that we were able to engage with the minister on NSFAS queries. However, we were met with incomplete answers and more questions from his responses.
 - o We discussed the NSFAS black card initiative and voiced our rejection for this idea. We made it clear to both the minister and the NEC of SAUS that the card system can not be trusted on account of how NSFAS has historically failed to send funds to both institutions and students.

Shortcomings:

- Poor organization of SAUS Conference

- Both NEC members of SAUS and university SRCs arrived late to the conference. Some members did not arrive to conference despite their confirmed RSVP and the agenda often deviated on account of SRC members not respecting the NEC members hosting the discussion.
- On account of the late arrivals when it was time to break into focus groups to tackle specific issues – half the day had gone by so we received very little feedback from the focus groups before we had to leave the venue.
- In the room there was a general lack of respect for the conference. Often conversations would break out into personal attacks and political attacks opposed to intentional interrogation of the role of student leadership and how SAUS can assist SRCs in amplifying their voices and concerns.

Points of improvement:

- The SRC delegation attending ought to be clear about what we want to gain from the conference. Despite having learnt a lot from the conference – a lack of a clear desired outcome for our attendance meant that we had little feedback to give to the team aside from our personal findings.

Two SRC Member Resignations

At the start of our term we had two SRC resignations:

Chris Briel

- Resignation: 21 August 2022

Takadiwa Chipfumbu

- Resignation: 11 October 2022

Points of Improvement:

- The Student Constitution states that the member needs to send through a written resignation to the secretary general (Chapter 4 Part 4.1. 31.1b.). Thus, I created a letter of resignation template to formalize the resignation process. Instead of members writing the Secretary General an email that states that resign, the members had to sign a Letter of Resignation/ declaration of resignation. This method allows for more effective recordkeeping because the documents can be more easily stored and tracked compared to emails.

Extraordinary Meetings

Urination at Helshoogte

There was a urination incident at Helshoogte two months after the Huis Marais incident. This led to outcry across campus because of how close it was to the Huis Marais incident.

Student Leadership Indaba

Mass Meeting & Extraordinary Rectorate Meeting

The mass meeting was called as a reaction to the urination incident at Eendrag. This meeting was held on the library stairs whereby students were given the opportunity to give us points to address in the Rectorate meeting on the following day. The mass meeting was well attended however did not match the numbers from the mass meeting in March. Adjacently because students had already convened earlier during the year on the same matter the conversation often drifted away from the core matter of points to address to the Rectorate. Nevertheless, the meeting was fruitful in that these were the following points that were gathered based on the students' grievances:

Eendrag

Members of SASCO and EFF sought to protest if they failed to gain access to the victim of the urination. As a result, a meeting was held between me, members of the CSC, the house father of Eendrag and one member from SASCO and EFF each to discuss gaining access to the victims in order to offer support. This conversation led to the secretary of the EFF gaining access to one of the two victims as the other victim did not want assistance from student leadership. From there the members of EFF, SASCO and CSC assisted the student with their requests for additional support.

Khampepe Report Session

This session occurred during the SRC Camp whereby members discussed the report and our actions forward as an SRC. The following projects were agreed to be tackled upon by the SRC:

- Language Policy
- Student Leadership Communities Dissonance
- Huis Marais
- Social Exclusion
- Student Engagement
- Student Leadership Accountability

August 2022

29 August SRC Executive Committee Election

These elections involved the voting in of the executive team consisting of the Vice-Chairperson, Secretary General, Treasurer and two additional members. The election took place at Heemstede Residence to encourage students to join the election.

Successes:

- I used an online voting system for members to cast their votes. This made it easy to gauge voting numbers and supply accurate numbers of votes.
- The executive team was successfully elected.

Shortcomings:

- Members often did not vote within the given time frame so the voting processes went on longer than it should have.
- There was a low student turn out rate. The election was open to all students however only a few student leaders were present to see the elections.
- Members on Tygerberg and students online occasionally struggled to hear the speeches, questions and responses in the room. Additionally, the chatbox was very active so it became difficult for me to follow the chatbox whilst also managing the hands in the room.

Points of Improvement:

- The choice to host the election in Heemstede residence came from the desire to encourage student participation and increase SRC visibility. In this context I do not believe either of these goals were achieved as desired. The more informal setting compared to the SRC boardroom resulted in members behaving more informally and not always adhering to election room decorum.
- As chairperson it is my responsibility to organise the election of the executive team. However, despite this fact – it does not mean I had to conduct the election alone. I did enlist the help of SRC member Aphiwe to assist with tracking the voting however it would have been better to enlist the help of neutral parties to assist with keeping track of voting, the chatbox questions and enforcing formal decorum in the election room.

31 August DSAf Management & SRC Meet & Greet

This was an introductory online meeting with DSAf members. The meeting included a brief explanation of the role of DSAf and their positioning within the institution.

Points of Improvement:

- The meeting should have occurred in person

- The SRC executive team and DSAf work closely together hence there ought to have been a team bonding with DSAf or an intentional conversation about how to support executive members and what support looks like.

September 2022

2 September Newly Elected Prim Conference Welcome Dinner

This was an opportunity for myself and the vice-chairperson to introduce ourselves to the members of the Prim Committee.

Successes:

- Our presence at the Dinner set a new tone on the relationship between student communities and the SRC. In the previous year the Prim Committee had very little interaction with the SRC thus, this interaction assisted in building an early relation with the prims and the SRC.
- Our inclusion in the ice-breaker games with the Prim Committee allowed us to get to know a few members of the Prim Committee on a personal level. This aided in building a sense of trust between each other and enforced the idea that we both exist as bodies to support one another.

Points of Improvement:

- The entire SRC Team ought to have been invited to the interaction. It is important that the Prim Committee have an understanding of who is in the SRC and how they can assist them. An engagement with the entire SRC team and Prim Committee would have strengthened a sense of solidarity.

6 September AAC Media Officer Interviews

The chairperson of the AAC invited me to assist in the selection of their Media Officer. This involved an online interview process where panel members and I asked candidates a series of questions after evaluating their applications and CV. After the conclusion of the interviews, we discussed the responses and proceeded to an online vote for the final candidate.

15 September SRC, TSRC, MASC & SU Rectorate Meet & Greet

This was a general meet and greet hosted by the Rectorate in the Library Auditorium

18 September Institutional Committee Elections

The institutional committee positions were decided by election. Much like the general election caucuses SRC Members had to state their case as to why they would be the best representative to sit on a particular committee and members could then ask them questions.

Points of Improvement:

- The voting occurred with no solid foundation of understanding of the institutional committees aside from what was written in the handover material. There ought to be a sit down conversation whereby we adequately strategize on who best can represent the SRC and students in institutional committees.

26 September Student Leadership Indaba

I was invited as chairperson to do a presentation on the experiences of students at Stellenbosch university. My presentation included a performance of Indawo Yami by Zamajobe, a video of student testimonials of what they believe transformation looks like in Stellenbosch and a visual art project by Neo Kodisang. Indawo Yami means My Place hence the piece acted as an introduction to the presentation message which was centred around reevaluating how we create a sense of belonging in SU and the shortcomings of transformation.

29 September SRC Inauguration

The inauguration is when we officially swear ourselves into office. The evening included the SRC taking an oath to serve students and a speech from the outgoing secretary general and myself (speech attached to the appendix). There were speeches made by the rector and DVC of teaching and learning.

30 September ResEd Sessions and Welcoming Program Discussions

These meetings were hosted by Yeki Mosomothane as apart of the planning done by the CSC on the Welcoming programs and ResEd sessions. We discussed the topics presented in the ResEd manuals, what kind of support is needed for Critical engagement HCs and what effect the the release of the Khampepe Report has on how ResEd choices are made.

Successes:

- I emphasized the need for monitors to equally as present in residences as they are during welcoming. I was pleased to see the plans created around how to sustain the monitors presence post-welcoming.

October 2022

6 October Mediation with Student Parliament

This mediation was called by the speaker of student parliament under the pretence of feeling concerned about the direction of the SRC. The venue, date and time was selected by student parliament and my presence was mandated by the speaker.

20 October Transformation Forum

The Transformation Forum was a weeklong conference whereby speakers from across south Africa came together to discuss transformation at Stellenbosch University. I was asked by professor Aslan Fataar to join in a Panel discussion on Student Leadership, SU and Transformation.

Successes:

- I feel I adequately expressed the challenges of being a student leader in SU and the heavy burden placed on student leaders to be the drivers of transformation in the space.

November 2022

18 November – 20 November SRC Camp

The SRC Camp was planned out by myself, Vice-Chairperson William Sezoe, Treasurer Queen Majikijela and Secretary General Phiwokuhle Qabaka.

We divided the workload of the camp planning into different segments which were as follows:

Camp venue: William Sezoe

Program: Phiwokuhle & William Sezoe & Queen Majikijela

Food and Refreshments: Masilo Silokazi

Successes:

- The venue of the camp was at Saldhana hotel near the MASC Campus. This allowed us to interact in person for the first time with MASC members.
- Some interested members of the SRC Team received a tour of the MASC campus which allowed us to get a better understanding of the lived experience of MASC students.
- After the program we had free time to explore Saldhana, the hotel and rest. The evening breaks allowed members to have conversation with each other and enjoy the evening.

Shortcomings:

- The camp was two days long and were half days. The program allowed for little room for

Plans for Next Term

General:

The general duties and meeting remain the same for my second term.

Personal Goals:

Chairperson's Forum

- I would like to create a chairpersons forum whereby chairpersons that make up the SRC can take development courses to improve their leadership as well as have a platform to discuss the experiences of being a chairperson with people who understand its pressures. This idea is rooted in the PDP program that the prim committee must take for transcript recognition. Thus, the plan is to work alongside CSLEEC to create a curriculum to assist in the formalization of the forum.

SRC Relationship with Student Leadership Communities

- As an ex member of the Prim Committee and various SU student leadership spaces I am passionate about bridging the gap between the SRC and Student Leadership Communities. I plan to do this by improving the Student Leadership Indaba engagements and having SRC members present at Prim Committee meetings.

SRC Office

- As a result of the Accommodation Crisis on campus - the SRC Office became a space synonymous with the student trauma of that time. Not only did the space have negative associations for students who had no accommodation but students who saw the chaos in the office also began to associate the office with crisis management. I would like to restore the view of the SRC as being a open and welcoming space for all students. I hope to do this in consultation with our SRC visibility Officer. The goal is to include pride flags, wall decorations, bean bags and more to make the space more inviting and a comfortable space to be in.



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