



**Stellenbosch**

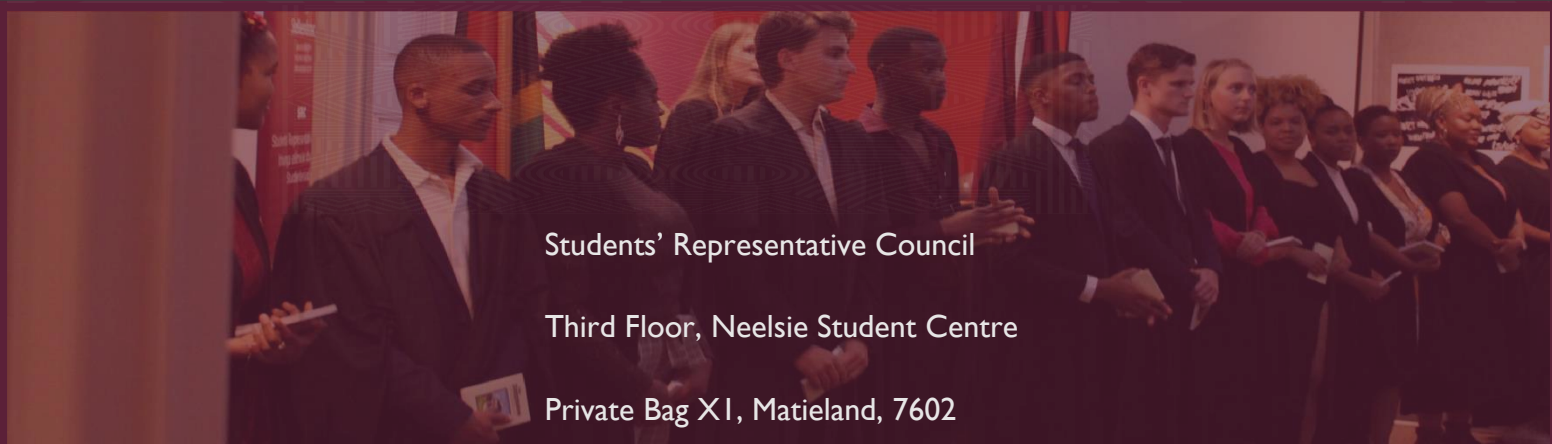
UNIVERSITY  
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**SRC**

Students' Representative Council  
Ibhunga elimele abaFundi  
Studenteraad



## SRC TERM I REPORT



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## SRC SPECIAL NEEDS MANAGER

### Table of Contents

Foreword.....	1
Constitutional Responsibilities.....	2
Portfolio Overview.....	3
Committees/Task Teams .....	4
Task I Overview .....	5-6
Plans for Next Term.....	7

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### Foreword

Good day, fellow Maties!

I sincerely hope that you are all well and ready for the start of yet another busy year.

I would like to start off by thanking you for taking the time to read the Special Needs Portfolio term report. This report will provide you with a summary of what I, the Special Needs Manager of the SRC, have been busy with during my first term in office.

In order to ensure a successful year for the Special Needs Portfolio, meticulous planning, both in administrative and financial terms, is required. As a result, the main priority of my 1<sup>st</sup> term in office has been the preparing of a budget and the forming of a Subcommittee for the Portfolio.

The reestablishment of the Dis Maties Council, based on a proposal that I submitted to my predecessor in March of last year, is one of my main priorities for this year. It is of great importance to me that, after my term in office, there is a permanent structure on campus which will serve to assist the Special Needs Manager and the Disability Unit in serving the community of Maties with special needs, of which I am a proud member.

Early last year, during a residence education session on Special Needs hosted by the SRC, I finally felt comfortable expressing, in a public space, that I have Spectrum Disorder. I have never felt uncomfortable with this part of myself, but was always concerned with how others would react to it. That day I decided that I would commit myself to improving the well-being of others like myself.

As the Manager for Special Needs I am able to, and shall continue, with this commitment. “The greatest honour in life is to help others overcome the challenges which you too have striven to overcome”.

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## Constitutional Responsibilities

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According to the student constitution, my constitutional responsibilities are the following:

- I am required to attend at least one SRC meeting per academic term.
- It is my responsibility to prepare the Special Needs Portfolio budget for my term in office.



## Portfolio Overview

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The following is the function of the Special Needs Manager within the SRC leadership structure and the student body, as per the 'student leadership job description' document of the SRC:

“The main function of this role is to entrench representation and advocate for the issues of students with disabilities within the SRC structure. In addition, it is also about furthering their integration into the SU campus and general society at large. Achieving the above imperative entails working with various structures that seek to represent matters of minority communities on campus, such as the Disability Unit, Equality Unit and Transformation Office.”

In addition to the above, I believe that the acquisition of knowledge and insight regarding the grievances and recommendation of Maties with special needs in terms of facilities and support available is of utmost importance. I shall, therefore, be working closely with the Dis Maties Council and the Disability Unit to plan possible means of improving channels through which grievances and recommendations can be obtained and documented, allowing for effective strategies to be implemented and plans drafted in future.

The following goals have also been outlined as part of the Special Needs Portfolio year plan:

- Ensuring students are provided a platform to engage in self-advocacy
- Facilitating communication and providing input so that students with disabilities are at the centre of decisions that affect them
- Full participation in campus life and academic activities are granted to every disabled student
- Ensuring all aspects of the disabled student are considered when decisions are made
- Promote inclusivity in language, structure, and facilities

## Committees/Task Teams

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### **Special Needs Subcommittee**

During the course of this term, I have established a special needs subcommittee. The purpose of this committee is to assist the Manager for Special Needs with various aspects of the portfolio including administration, financial planning and the management of social media accounts and marketing. To ensure an effective committee and efficient communication, I opted to limit the size of the committee to three people, including myself. The membership of the committee includes the Deputy Speaker of Student Parliament and a member of the Second Year Committee of Harmonie Residence. This allows for access to a larger student base and a greater range of perspectives regarding Special Needs on the various campuses of Stellenbosch University.

### **Roadshow Task Team**

During the period of registration and 1<sup>st</sup> year induction, I served as part of the Roadshow Committee. The members of this committee had the duty of travelling to different residences and PSOs, and presenting the SRC as a student leadership body to the 1<sup>st</sup> year students in a fun and interactive manner.

## Term I Overview

### Dis Maties Council

During the course of 2022, I submitted a proposal to the former SRC Manager for Special Needs regarding the re-establishment of the defunct Dis Maties Council. The purpose of this Society is to assist the SRC Manager for Special Needs, the Disability Unit and other university structures in addressing the grievances, and acting on the suggestions of the student body regarding special needs and the facilities available, or not available, to the students who require the afore-mentioned. The society will allow for greater communication between the student body and relevant university structures. This proposal was first submitted by me in March of 2022 and has involved extensive meetings with stakeholders, specifically the Disability Unit and the former SRC Manager for Special Needs and SRC Vice-Chairperson and Policy Officer. Since my appointment, I have been working closely with interested stakeholders to have the Dis Maties Council approved as a society by the Societies Council. A meeting to discuss preparations regarding the establishment of the society was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023.

### Special Needs Subcommittee

I have appointed students to serve as members of the Special Needs Committee. The purpose of this committee is to assist the Manager for Special Needs with various aspects of the portfolio including administration, financial planning and the management of social media accounts and marketing. To ensure an effective committee and efficient communication, I opted to limit the size of the committee to three people, including myself. The membership of the committee includes the Deputy Speaker of Student Parliament and a member of the Second Year Committee of Harmonie Residence. This allows for access to a larger student base and a greater range of perspectives regarding Special Needs on the various campuses of Stellenbosch University.

### Special Needs Budget

I managed to secure a donation from DTConsult, a leading business restructuring and insolvency firm in South Africa, to the value of R10,000. This amount serves as a supplement to the budget assigned to the Special Needs Portfolio by the SRC during 2022. This amount is represented in the Special Needs Portfolio Budget as submitted to the Treasurer of the SRC on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2023.

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

## Concessions Awareness

As a member of the SRC Roadshow Task Team, I requested permission to reserve a segment of the presentations performed at various PSOs and university residences to enlighten the 1<sup>st</sup> year students on the provision of academic concessions at Stellenbosch University, and the process to be followed to apply for said concessions. I attended presentations at the following PSOs and residences:

1<sup>st</sup> of February:

- Nemesia
- Venustia
- Vesta

2<sup>nd</sup> of February:

- Capri
- Erica
- Lydia
- Nerina
- Olympus
- Pieke

3<sup>rd</sup> of February:

- Equite
- Harmonie
- Silene

7<sup>th</sup> of February:

- Aurora
- Irene
- Metanoia



## Plans for Next Term

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My main objective for my 2<sup>nd</sup> term in office is to continue with the preparations for establishment of the Dis Maties Council and the election of its leadership. Once the society has been established, I shall embark on my main focus of the year which is to begin with the acquisition of recommendations and grievances from the community of Maties with special needs, and the compilation of the afore-mentioned into a single document. This will allow for greater action regarding the improvement of facilities and support offered to Maties with special needs, as well as promote a culture of understanding and compassion on campus. “The only way to affect real change is through knowledge and perseverance.”

Another focus of the Special Needs Portfolio for the year ahead is to host res-ed sessions at the various residences and private student organizations (PSOs) that may be interested. I firmly believe that many of the challenges on campus are bred out of ignorance. The hosting of the afore-mentioned sessions will allow Maties to gain a greater understanding of special needs on campus and society in general.

In line with the above focus, I also intend on hosting an information session for special needs with the SRC. This is a discussion which I feel should be facilitated by the Special Needs Manager on a yearly basis.