



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
IBHUNGA ELIMELE ABAFUNDI
STUDENTERAAD



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1918 - 2018

SRC 2021/22 TERMREPORT I VICE-CHAIR PRIM COMMITTEE

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Students' Representative Council
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CHRISTO VAN DER BANK – PC: VICE-CHAIRPERSON – THUNDERBANK@SUN.AC.ZA

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Constitutional Responsibilities

I would like to mention that the current Student Constitution is outdated and doesn't outline my duties accurately. I am, however, aware that a new Constitution is in the final stages of being approved and will adapt my report accordingly. Until the latter, I am the Vice-Chairperson of Prim Committee, and my portfolio is residences. I therefore hold the duty to ensure the successful and effective operation of all residences on campus and strive to enhance the overall student experience.

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Portfolio Overview

The Prim Committee is an *ex-officio* structure. My basic duties are outlined above, and I am encompassed with ensuring that all student communities operate to their full potential. The Prim Committee serves as a platform for any student in a community space to take their query to the House Committee, the House Committee takes it to the Prim who then reports it to the Prim Committee meeting. I then either deal with the query or refer it to a higher structure. My duty is to ensure that all queries in the residence spaces are heard and then resolved as expeditiously as possible. If the matter can't be resolved on Prim Committee level, then the matter will be referred to either the SRC or CSC.

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Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the Institutional Advisory Committee for Internationalisation. Stellenbosch University strives to become an international competitor and this committee is one of the best committees within the University to achieve this goal. The committee receives funding across the globe and is divided into different task teams to ensure its international success. The committee's mandate is to secure as much fruitful partnerships with other Universities across the globe as possible and be part of selected and strategic alliances. Each member of the committee has a different project they run, and the meetings affords each member an opportunity to provide feedback and present a progress update on the project they are tasked with.

During the welcoming period I serve on the RegisterAll task team which ensures that any student with financial needs won't be excluded. The SRC make funds available to help students in need with their first instalment. I had to liaise with the Post Graduate Office and CUBL to see what the financial situation of each student in need is (do a financial neediness check) and then report back to the task team. The purpose of the meetings is to provide feedback on the progress made and then decide which students should receive the financial assistance. This process is still ongoing.

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Term Overview

The first part of the Vice-Chairperson's term is focused on ensuring that the newly elected Prims are equipped with the necessary skills, tools, and resources to effectively run their communities. As such, we have a Prim training camp which includes guest speakers, information sessions and team building activities. The purpose of this camp is to ensure the Prims are well prepared for their term and to create a strong bond between the Prims. The latter part of the term is focused on addressing any issues within the communities and helping the Prims prepare for the welcoming period.

The Vice-Chairperson serves on the Welcoming Committee of the University, together with representatives of CSC, various faculties, and other student leadership structures. This committee is tasked with planning the welcoming period which include faculty programmes, the event at the Danie Craven, the Dreamwalk, etc. The purpose of the meetings is to bring all stakeholders on the same page with regards to the progress that has been made and what is expected of each structure.

I have actively been in discussion with the Alumni Office which seeks to better and expand their relationship with the Alumni of Stellenbosch University. The Alumni Office and the Prim Committee Chair and Vice-Chair are working on a young Alumni programme which seeks to build a better relationship with current students so that they are well informed of the Alumni structures once they leave the University.

I served on the Maties T-Shirt Committee which was tasked with discussing and designing the 2022 Maties T-Shirt. With the University undergoing an entire rebranding project, a bigger emphasis was put on the 2022 Maties T-Shirt in comparison to previous years. The T-Shirt had to be as inclusive as possible and clearly display the values of the University.

In October I made big strides to ensure that all Residence and PSO communities are allowed to have visitors within their communities. The matter was dealt with at Prim Committee level and then referred, by me, to Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, who is the Vice-Chancellor of Learning and Teaching. I have been in continuous discussions with CSC and the Rectorate to ensure that alcohol is allowed back in the communities and consumed on a responsible basis. To my knowledge the Rectorate will approve the alcohol policy sometime in February.

I serve on the MAC Committee which reviews complaints lodged by monitors during the welcoming period. Stellenbosch University strives to welcome all newcomers in the friendliest and most welcoming way possible by ensuring that the values of the University are lived out by the various communities during the welcoming period. The monitors are objective and report on any activity/behaviour which they deem to be potentially unwelcoming or problematic. This is reported to the head monitor who then in turn reports it to the MAC Committee. The MAC Committee then reviews the complaints and decide on the most appropriate action moving forward. It is then expected of the Vice-Chairperson to engage with the Prims of the various communities on these potential issues and provide feedback to the MAC Committee. The Vice-Chairperson is also expected to be visible during welcoming and ensure that the communities are operating smoothly.

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Plans for next term

We have Prim Committee meetings every second Tuesday, and I would like to ensure that there is as much transparency as possible between the Prim Committee and the SRC. The monitor system (during welcoming) will be reviewed in depth and adequate suggestions will be made.

The Prim Committee Executive together with the Academic Affairs Council are working together to do an in-depth analysis on the effectiveness and effects of HEMIS. We are only in the early parts of the discussions, but a big part of next term will be focused on the discussions around HEMIS. We are of the view that, at the very least, half-year HEMIS for first year students should be removed. Coming to University is a huge adjustment no matter your background or upbringing. We have lost numerous first year students to half-year HEMIS purely because they couldn't adapt fast enough to their new environment. We hold the view that students should be afforded a year's opportunity to settle in and get use to their new environment. HEMIS is used as a motivator for students to ensure their academic success, however, the effective of leaving a community due to HEMIS is, in my opinion, far more detrimental to the student.

I will continue to serve the various communities, especially the residence spaces, to the best of my abilities.

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