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SRC 2021/22 TERMREPORT I WOMXN AND QUEER EMPOWERMENT

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Constitutional Responsibilities

Womxn and Queer empowerment does not have specific constitutional responsibilities outside of those stated in the SU Student Constitution for the SRC in its entirety. Chapter 2 s4(2) makes it clear that all student structures, as mentioned in s3 of the SU Student Constitution, must take steps to ensure the protection and promotion of rights contained in Chapter 2. These range from equality (s5), human dignity (s6), confidentiality of student records (s7), freedom of religion belief and opinion (s9), and freedom of expression (s10). These all directly link to the vision, mission and mandate of the Womxn and Queer empowerment portfolio.

My duties as a Manager is set out in Chapter 4 s36 of the SU Student Constitution. S36(1) highlights that managers are in charge of portfolios mainly consisting of an organisational and administrative function. S36(4) states that managers are accountable to a specific SRC member and the whole SRC.

Portfolio Overview

The Womxn and Queer Empowerment (“WAQE”) portfolio’s main aim is to actively diminish institutional patriarchy, end rape culture, queerphobia, and gender-based violence. It is further to initiate and develop projects to encourage the upliftment of womxn, empower queer persons, and provide safe and equitable spaces for womxn and queer communities.

The WAQE portfolio intend to do so through encouragement, education, support, transparency, and accountability. This will be achieved by transformative engagement with students, student-leaders, staff, and the broader community of Stellenbosch. We will be creating safe-spaces to tackle the issues of GBV, femicide, and queer-phobia plaguing our society. Networking session will be implemented to encourage the idea of ‘community’, empowering leadership development and engagement between womxn and queer bodies of all parts of the SU communities. The foundation of the portfolio then being the promotion human dignity and respect for all. WAQE aims to create a community at SU, whereby all womxn and queer bodies feel safe, protected, heard, and included.



Committees/Task Teams

SRC committee:

- *WAQE Team – the subcommittee of the WAQE Portfolio*

Term Overview

1. Given the short time frame between my appointment and the start of the 2021 final examination, events were impractical.
2. The start of my term saw me try to focus much of my attention into sourcing information from my predecessors. I reached out to both Grace Mngadi, and Ayesha Abou-zeid. Both of whom, provided me with the key information of not only what is expected from me as the WAQE Manager, but also providing me with all the relevant policies and documents- which they engaged with in their respective terms. Both leaders advised me to focus a lot of my attention on the ground-work and engaging with students and their respective communities. I then made it my mission to build a clear and sound working-relationship with the Prim Committee and specifically its Chairperson, Toni Solomon. This being due to the fact that both Grace and Ayesha advised me to make sure the Prims themselves were directly made aware of WAQEs events, projects and plans. This allows for a better chance at reaching the students within their communities.
3. With the information I obtained for my predecessors, it was also apparent for me to obtain a strong subcommittee to not only assist with the portfolio but also promote the mandate of my portfolio and uplift womxn and queer bodies by providing them with such a leadership platform. The WAQE subcommittee thus formed and consist of 8 members. The members are comprised from various communities and backgrounds - from both main campus and Tygerberg campus. To have a member from Tygerberg campus was of extreme importance to me, so that we had WAQE members on the ground on both campuses, in order to help foster good relationships and fulfil our mandates to the whole SU community.
4. During the December period the Equality Unit also reached out the SRC to collaborate and assist on their “365 Days of Activism” project. The initiative focuses on aspects of GBV linked to the perspective of queer and destabilised persons. I liaised with Dr Jill Ryan to provide my knowledge and act in an advisory role for the execution and advertising for the initiative from a student and student-leadership perspective. I also played a role in providing the SRC with the posters, links and materials which were needed to be advertised on our platforms.



5. One of the WAQE Subcommittees major projects for our leadership term, is the launch of WAQE's podcast. In the term I did a large amount of research, on which platforms to use and which will be the most cost-effective means of creating and distributing the podcast. The team reached out to Spotify (streaming platform), whereby we were advised to make use of the Anchor podcasting creator and distributor. The platform is free, yet very effective and easy to use. In the first term, our team created the podcast titled, "Stay WAQE". This will be used as a tool to engage with students and foster collaborations with university structures and external collaborators. The cover-art has been created and the first episode already recorded- this is set to be released at the end of February 2022.
6. Another of our projects, "ALLY for ALL", was started. WAQE compiled a "guidebook" which touched on topics such as Allyship, Gender-Based Violence, Intersectionality, Race and Racism, and a number of topics which relates to issues of intersectionality. The guidebook serves as the educational side of the project. Through our relations formed with the Prim committee, the guidebook was sent electronically to the committee to be distributed to the Prims who would further send it to their respective communities. It was decided to be done solely electronically in order to uphold the SRC mission towards more sustainable leadership.
7. WAQE collaborated with UNASA who hosted sexual-health talks with newcomers during the first week of orientation. WAQE provided them with the information from the queer-perspective, helping to encourage and uplift the sexual-health and wellbeing of queer persons on campus. WAQE also availed our critical engagement member to assist with the presentations.
8. During Pre-welcoming the SRC reached out to WAQE to obtain a speaker, and host for a needed sensitivity training. Our team's critical engagement member Kguahelo Nqobile hosted the session. It was seen to be both impactful and beneficial as we approached welcoming where we would be assisting newcomers.
9. Prior to and during welcoming- I acted as one of the admin-heads of the SRC Transport Initiative. This Initiative helps to transport students from various terminals in Cape Town to Stellenbosch. I liaised with the drivers to set up their agreements and so obtaining the necessary information they needed to provide in order to be eligible for the initiative. During the first week of welcoming, I assisted Zander Niemand with the daily schedules, calendar plans, and google forms which were needed in order to help with the pick-up and drop-off. I further handled emails and calls from parents, students, and drivers.



Budget Usage

<i>Project</i>	<i>Amount budgeted</i>	<i>Amount utilised</i>	<i>Amount available</i>
<i>Podcast</i>	<i>R1200</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R1200</i>
<i>Critical engagements</i>	<i>R3800</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R3800</i>
<i>Networking Sessions</i>	<i>R5200</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R5200</i>
<i>Pride Week</i>	<i>R4800</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R4800</i>
<i>Womxn's week</i>	<i>R3300</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R3300</i>
<i>Committee costs</i>	<i>R3200</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R3200</i>
<i>GBV Costs</i>	<i>R5200</i>	<i>R0</i>	<i>R5200</i>

Budget and Reasonings:

- *Given the fact that the managers appointments took place approximately two weeks prior to the 2021 end of year final exams. It was of my discretion to rather save our budgeted funds and use them at a time in which events would be more feasible and have a greater attendance and impact.*
- *The tasks conducted by the WAQE portfolio, within that short timeframe before exams were things which required no funding.*



Plans for next term

1. Officially launching the 'Stay WAQE' podcast
2. Meeting with all communities, which house females and femme-bodies, to draw up an investigation into the needs and expectation of the spaces from the WAQE Portfolio.
3. Hosting our GBV critical-engagement debate.
4. Liaising with the Equality Unit to build a better relationship with the WAQE portfolio.
5. Liaising and collaborating with QueerUS for planned events so as to promote Cape Town Pride.



Recommendations to improve portfolio

1. I would recommend reaching out to the Equality Unit prior to creating any guides or documents, to make sure all information given out is correct, practical and efficient.
2. The trailer for the 'Stay WAQE' podcast, along with the first episode, should be made a month before the release date to avoid any pushbacks or delays from distributors.