



Stellenbosch

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SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abafundi
Studenteraad



SRC TERM 3 REPORT

SRC VICE-CHAIRPERSON



Students' Representative Council

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Foreword



Hello fellow Maties,

I trust you are well, and that you are still flourishing.

The past term has been one challenging one with the increasing administrative mess occurring at the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Thus in this term report you would note the number of interventions we did as an SRC and others SRCs to address concerns and fight back against the injustice brought to students.

Election Season is fast approaching and I would like to implore all of you to partake in these very important elections by making your vote count and also standing for SRC Elections. As much as we are entitled to scream and shout at failing systems, it is important to raise our hands and say we want to be a part of the solution.

All the best with the second semester approaching!

Constitutional Responsibilities

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

- 1) Responsible for supporting the Chairperson in all administrative roles and fulfilling any or all of the duties of the Chairperson should the Chairperson be incapacitated or unavailable.
- 2) Responsible for the internal monitoring and evaluation of the SRC.
- 3) Responsible for the internal monitoring of internal relations and discipline of the SRC.
- 4) Appoints the SRC Managers, with the consent of the SRC.

My responsibilities are however not limited to what is outlined in our student constitution. As an SRC Member I'm binding to all other additional duties such as what is outlined in sections 27 and 32, and that is to always:

- act in the best interests of all Stellenbosch University Students firmly
- uphold the Student Constitution and to protect the rights and freedoms of all Stellenbosch University Students,
- and to act transparent in everything I do on behalf of the SRC.
- represent students on various institutional committees.
- evaluate and give input on institutional policies.
- to plan and facilitate projects that will advance a transformative student experience for all.
- to formulate internal policies to help support and guide the SRC to execute their functionaries to the best possible standards.

As a member of the Executive Committee of the SRC I also have other constitutional duties imposed on me as per sections 41 and 42 of the Student Constitution. The Executive Committee of the SRC runs the day-to-day business of the house and is ultimately responsible for setting the agenda for SRC Meetings. This committee also decides on the budget of the SRC and must ensure that the SRC executes its functionaries accordingly.

Finally, the Vice-Chairperson's (VC) main responsibility is to ensure that the house is in order. The VC takes care of all the Internal Matters of the SRC such as monitoring and evaluating the performance of SRC Members and SRC Managers. The VC is also in charge of Internal Discipline.

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Portfolio Overview

The Vice-chairperson shares the role of overseeing the SRC with the Chairperson. Key responsibilities of this portfolio include:

- Maintaining the internal relations in the team
- Overseeing and enforcing discipline in the team
- Coordinating the SRC's representation on institutional committees
- Ensuring there are teambuilding
- Promoting leadership development within the team
- Monitoring and evaluating the team's performance
- Appoint Managers

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

1) Senate Library Committee

The first meeting of this Committee was on Wednesday 26 April 2023, note that the role of this Committee is to;

advise the Senate on the academic activities of the Library and Information Service, about strategy and policy regarding the provision of library and information material, as well as the appropriate infrastructure for access to and use of the information material, to staff members and students.

In this meeting I raised the concerns of students regarding the library hours but particularly a need for more venues for studying. I firstly took out a survey to students to test the need for an extension of library hours. We had 1537 students completing our survey and about 1129 students wanted a request on extending library hours. This survey was presented at the Senate Library Committee for their consideration.

The Library Services Unit argued that it is already costly for the library to be open an extra hour a day during exam periods, and hence it would be a costly exercise. The resolution was that the Dean of Students will investigate the matter of study spaces and look into how it can be extended and particularly how the J.C. Smuts can be made more inclusive for students.

You can also read more on the response of the SRC and the AAC on the issues later in this report.

2) Naming Committee

The first meeting of this Committee was on Friday 21 April 2023, note that the role of this Committee is to;

review the names of Stellenbosch Universities buildings, residences, and other facilities to ensure that these names are in line with the Institutions Vision and Mission (specifically in terms of its commitment transformation). Furthermore, the Committee is also in charge of facilitating/heading the process of any name changes to buildings, residences, and other facilities.

The committee in its two meetings this term particularly on the official opening of the Krotoa Building. I was tasked to investigate an SRC archive to see how SRC photos and elements can be preserved. This project is ongoing.

3) NSFAS Cap Contingency Committee (New Committee)

This is a new Committee established on an urgent basis by the Rectorate in February 2023. The role and purpose of this Committee is to urgently look at the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) CAP on Residence allowances of R45 000,00 introduced in the beginning of 2023.

So far, the Committee has assisted all the students who applied to the institution for a top-up allowance to help cover the gap in the accommodation allowance. Most of the work of this Committee can be read in my previous report, as the work of this term just concluded the processes.

This committee was closed on 18 May. We did acknowledge the contribution by the institution and that of donors to support our students who faced eviction due to this issue. As much as the committee closed out we advised on possible things the University must look out and prepare for, for next year.

4) Supporting the Student Debt Working Group Committee

Most of the work of this committee is concluded. At the moment there is an amount of R300 000 left, and we are looking at assisting students who are still in need of such type of support.

Term 3 Overview

During my first term in office, I executed the following:

Co-Curricular Renewal Application

I am happy to report after some extensive work by myself and the Student Leadership Officer we were able to compile a mid-term report of the whole SRC and file it at the Co-Curricular Committee in order for the SRC to get its recognition application approved. I am happy to report that the application was approved with some recommendations to consider for the next SRC. These recommendations will be shared with the new SRC during our handover process. Also note that part of the mid-term report we were able to start a handover report of the whole SRC, which will be one of the first ever.

SRC Workshop: Reflections

I planned a reflection session for the SRC. To look at how far we have come as individuals within the space, but also as a team. We also looked at the things that went well and bad during our term this far. We looked at where we can still improve on while we are entering the last stage of our term. We were genuinely able to look at where our strengths lie, our weaknesses, our opportunities and of course our threats. And this in fact gave us the opportunity to see what we can and cannot do for the remainder of our term, but at the same time think about what that would be.

We were hosted by the Fredrich Neumann Foundation in Cape Town. I would advise the next incoming team to do such a session in the beginning of their term, so that they can map out their journey together from the very start.

Site Inspections to Private Accommodation Spaces

I joined the Accommodation Office on site visits to specifically NSFAS accredited private accommodation spaces. I was very disgusted to find out where our students were staying in undignified spaces. I expressed my discomfort and disappointment that these places got accreditation and explicitly asked the Private Accommodation Office to ensure that the students are assisted with much better

living spaces, and the specific spaces be revoked from their accreditation and in fact be blacklisted as no student should be living and studying in such horrific spaces.

Finalisation of SRC Benchmarking Recommendations

As the Vice-Chairperson who oversees internal affairs, I had to join several meetings with university stakeholders this term to ensure that we wrap up the recommendations coming from the previous SRC. The most important points we focused on was the early registration for SRC members, including financial and academic support. A full breakdown of how this will work for the new incoming SRCs will be shared with the new team.

Electoral Commissioners Appointment

This process has been concluded after I have appointed SRC members, Simonet Kapp and Rudi Claassen to shortlist candidates for the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee appointed the candidates as presented by Kapp and Claassen. The Commissioners has started their work and we give our full support in this regard.

We further implore students to partake in the election season by making their vote count, and by also standing for the SRC.

Student Achievement Selection Committee

I sit on this committee in my capacity as the Vice-Chairperson of the SRC. This committee looks at the nominations for Rector's Awards. So far, we only had an introductory meeting, and the work of the committee is set to start in the new term.

NSFAS Direct Payment System

During this term we continuously rejected the newly introduced "direct" payment system by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. We had numerous engagements with the university and NSFAS to express our concerns with the particular system. During an engagement during the semester break we made it quite clear to NSFAS that the SRC does not support this system, and if it comes that this

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system puts students at a disadvantage that we will act swiftly within our bounds to protect our student against this system. I have this accordingly from my Office written to the Office of the Public Protector to protect students from this system, and the matter is currently under investigation.

In the meantime, we have requested that Coinvest staff be placed at the University to assist students with onboarding and any other issues they might have with the system. This request has been approved and it was promised that staff will be sent to the University as soon as the new term starts.

The SRC further alerted students about this, and gave our honest opinion on this matter, we further requested that students attend our mass meeting in the new term to pledge a way forward on this matter.

Budget Usage

Project	Budgeted	Utilized	Available
SRC Dinner/Reflection Workshop in Cape Town	N/A	R7 200,00	N/A SRC General Cost Centre
Transport from Stellenbosch to Cape Town [SRC Workshop in Cape Town]	R20 000 [Team Building]	R1 500	N/A
Flights to Durban and back. [Youth Conference: Discussing the legacy of Madiba and discussing issues related to NSFAS.]	N/A	R10 664,00	N/A

Total budget: R35 000,00

Budget Spent: R13 664,00

Available budget: R21 336,00

Plans for Next Term

I plan on doing the following:

Internal:

- Host a handover process workshop for the SRC.
- Preparing the necessary documents for handover.
- Continue maintaining strict discipline internally via written and verbal communication platforms.
- Monitoring the performances of SRC Representatives accordingly.