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| **Portfolio:**  | Chairperson  |
| **Subject:**  | *First and Second Term Report*  |
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#  Constitutional Responsibilities

According to S.22 of the Student Constitution of 2018, the chairperson is the chief executive officer of the SRC, act as spokesperson for the SRC, is ultimately responsible for the finances of the SRC and ensures that the SRC fulfil their mandate.

# Portfolio Overview

In terms of:

SRC

The portfolio of chairperson is responsible to bring a group of diverse leaders together and channel their energy and skills to successfully achieve the mandate of the SRC. Chairperson is responsible to ensure that words becomes actions and support members where possible to ensure execution. The chairperson acts as custodian of the Student Constitution. The chairperson acts as spokesperson for the SRC and the students the SRC represents.

Stellenbosch University

The chairperson is a direct line of contact and information for staff and management in the university. Although the chairperson is the students’ representative, the chairperson is also a representative of the larger Stellenbosch University. The chairperson’s mandate is to ensure that the needs of students are placed first in the university and works in collaboration with different stakeholders such as SU Staff, the municipality, other universities etc.

South Africa

The chairperson’s role in terms of South Africa is to act as custodian of the South African Constitution, on ground level at Stellenbosch University. Together with the SRC as a team, the chairperson must drive a vision & mission that are conscious of South Africa’s diverse cultural heritage and the historical context of Stellenbosch University and work hard to unite to build a multicultural and democratic South Africa. As the Student Constitution of 2018’s preamble states: “We acknowledge our responsibility to participate in the democratic structures recognised by this Constitution. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Higher Education Act, the Statute of Stellenbosch University and University regulations, we accept this as our binding Constitution.”

# Committees / Task Teams

USKOF

## Institutional

Council (2020)

SUNCOM Advisory Committee

Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC)

Student Affairs Business Continuity Sub-Committee

Registrar’s Business Continuity Sub-committee

## Other Committees / Task Teams

SRC Executive Committee

Anti-GBV Working Group on Safety and Security

#RegisterAll International Students Task Team

# Budget Overview

Due to the delays in the internal elections, all SRC members were working without a budget, me included.

# Term Overview

This report was meant to cover only one term but due to unforeseen circumstance, it will cover the first term and the second term. During the first term, all SRC members didn’t have portfolios and portfolio allocation only happened in the second term.

Part 1: SRC Member

I will start with the first term. The campaign period is usually strenuous to many and the same fate befell me. Regardless of how much time and energy it took, I made sure that I attended all of my caucuses so that I would be well acquainted with the needs of my constituency. As soon as I was elected as an SRC member, I made sure that I attended all the meetings. I set on various committees so that I could understand more how things in the SRC worked. Because of lack of portfolios, we divided ourselves into different working groups. I was working with Jeff on the Food Security issue on campus. When we were elected, there were various concerns about the inefficiency of the system. We were able to consolidate the information from the students and relayed it to the right structures. There were issues of rotten food packets, students not getting food at all amongst other issues. We also held meetings with the Social Worker to understand the issues from her side. After that we met Dr Munita who was in charge of the whole food programme. This solved a lot of issues and a lot of students were assisted and till this very day, the SRC is not dealing with a lot of food issues. I also set on the Bursaries and Loans Committee,

with Brandon and with Sifiso at times. When I ran for the SRC, I wasn’t well acquainted on the bursaries and loans system of the University. Attending these meetings was very beneficial. It is your responsibility as an SRC member to understand the issues that the students that you represent go through. I also sat on the USKOF committee, it gives travel bursaries to students.

I got to network with the staff from Student Affairs and it is the relationships that you create that will make your job easy.

Registration Period : As an SRC Member

I started preparing for the registration period during the semester that we were elected. As the only International Student on the SRC, I was aware that majority of the cases that international students were going to face during the registration period were going to be referred to me since the system is completely different. I had meetings with different people from the International Office. I set down with Carmian Snyman who was the manager and Grant Leukes who is in charge of accommodation. There was a big issue of historical debt especially arising from students who were coming from African countries that were experiencing economic challenges. I was able to pitch and negotiate for students to be registered in the next year without paying any fees but by just clearing their debt. Usually they need an average of R70000 before they can be registered. This smoothened the registration period for them in the prior year. During the registration period, I was constantly meeting with Robert Kotze, the Director of the International Office to find ways to assist other students who came with food and financial issues. I met Robert with Sifiso and we were also able to negotiate for students who had debt to get their Visa renewal papers.

Part 2

Chairperson of the SRC (CEO)

I was elected in the beginning of the second term. This resulted in me having a lot of pressure. Firstly we were during the registration period and also everything with our SRC was so behind. I had to sort out the elections for the rest of the portfolios as well as allocating portfolios for the rest of the SRC. The process of filling up the Executive took longer than I anticipated. There were a lot of re-elections and deadlocks and I was only able to conclude the process after a period of 2 weeks. The next duty was to allocate the rest of the portfolios. To make it easy and also to create an enabling environment, we suggested that the rest of the SRC members without portfolios had to choose were they would perform best. We concluded the allocation process successfully.

Registration: As SRC Chair

One of the issues that was closer to my heart was the issue of students who could not register because of Historical debt. Brandon and Jeff were sitting on the Historical Debt Task Team, which was very successful in assisting a lot of students through the #RegisterAll programme. We had some students who could not be assisted by the #RegisterAll because of the huge amount they owed and sometimes students who could not fit the criteria. I engaged with various stakeholders of the university and the day after I was elected, I was invited for a hike with Prof Thuli Madonsela. We discussed the issue and we initiated #Action4Inclusion, which its primary purpose was to register all academically deserving students. By academically deserving, we meant every student who had a place at the university. We drafted the first list of students with assistance from Nugent Lewis, Carmian Snyman and Mr Sauls. We were also in constant communication with the Rectorate, Alumni Office, Bursaries and Loans, and various stakeholders of the university to source funds for these students. Karen Bruns was able to get us R1 million and all the students on the initial list were registered. We encouraged students to continue going to class and leave us to deal with the processes. Prof Thuli was able to get suretyship from Mr Foxton and he agreed to provide suretyship for R2 million. We registered the second group of students and as I was compiling this report, we have been given the green light to register the last students on the list by Dr Ronel, the Registrar. This has been by far, a very successful registration campaign. Now our duty is to assist the social justice chair to raise funds, not just for this year but for the years to come.

Spokesperson of the SRC

As my constitutional mandate includes being the spokesperson of the SRC, I had a lot of people from the media contacting me to get the position and the stance of the SRC on various occurrences. I made sure that I could not give my own views and beliefs but the views of the SRC as a team. It is important to consult when you are in such a position. The Media can make you and it can also break you. It is important to first engage with the various stakeholders that will be of interest in any case that you are required to answer on. I never attempted to answer on the spot from journalists. I would first tell them to email me the questions then I did my homework. I was also required to speak at various events that I was invited to represent the SRC and the student body as a whole. One thing that I advise anyone who will hold this position in the future is never to indulge in national politics but focus on the views of the students. Do not represent your thoughts, but the voices of the students you are representing.

Finances of the SRC

Budgeting is a very strenuous task. The initial problem is that people always want more and as the CEO of the SRC I had to make sure that the resources are allocated in the most responsible way and there is no member who cannot fulfil their mandate because of lack of funds. Brandon put in the hard work by trying to sit down with every member that availed themselves to sort out their budget. He did a great. My job is to just make sure that nobody takes advantage of the system and just advise him on certain parts that I feel like I will be of assistance. PS: As an Economist, I see budgets in a completely different light and I always reminded myself that the SRC is not a profit-making organisation. If you are overseeing finances, it is important to make sure that the resources are allocated in the way that will benefit the student body directly.

Institutional Committee for Business Committee (ICBC)

During our term we were faced with a pandemic that none of us would have anticipated. It was a shock for everyone as everything was put to halt due to COVID-19. This was the most challenging part of me as a leader of campus. I was selected to sit on the ICBC to represent all the students. It is initially overwhelming to be in a room with the Rectorate and all the Senior Directors, Deans and the rest of the Senior Management of the university. It is always worth it to remind yourself that everyone is representing their constituencies and the same applies to you. I had to make sure that all the decisions the university made were in the best interest of all the students. It is important to prepare for these meetings and look at how every decision that will be taken or any agenda point will affect the student body. With assistance from Ingrid, the PK chair, Student Affairs and the Executive, I was able to fight for students to remain behind and also continue staying in their respective residences if they had circumstances which wouldn’t allow them to participate wholly in the online-learning if they had to go home. We are now working hard to find solutions that will be inclusive to all our students when the academic program continues.

# Plans for Next Academic Term

I plan to make sure that things normalise for all students. Due to the current pandemic, it is difficult to predict if students will be on campus in the near future or not. I want to make sure that all students have access to ay learning method that the university will implement.

I am also making plans to provide support to students who registered late. This makes them vulnerable and it is my role to make sure that they will be on the same page with everyone.

I also plan on meeting with all SRC members, to get their plans and be able to make sure that they fulfil their constitutional mandate. I plan to meet with all members individually every three weeks, to get their plans, what they have done and what they are intending to do in the near future and also in the long-run.

# Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

The position of chair is extremely challenging and not easy. It is too much focused on the outside of the SRC as you find yourself in a lot of meetings. It is also important to remember that you need to put your house in order. Academically, it is difficult to strike a balance when you are holding this position. For my successor, I would recommend to make a plan before you get into the registration period. Collaborate with as many people as you can and make sure that you include all political and non-political societies and student leaders who are willing to assist during this period to avoid duplication of efforts. Make use of the outgoing SRC. Take their advice, it makes your job easier. Most of all never forget that you represent students and do everything in their best interests. You will face persecution and challenges from within and without, have a backbone. Always do the right thing.

# Important Contacts*.*

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