



SRC 2020/2021 Annual Report

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Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution, 2018, a manager is responsible for:

- Running portfolios that entail mainly organizational or administrative functions.

Portfolio Overview

The role of the SU International manager is to organize and administrate functions concerning the international students registered at Stellenbosch University.

The primary objective is to unite international students as a whole.

Therefore, narrowing down the divide between Euro-American and African students. With both international groups placed under the same administration (International Office), there still doesn't seem to be a coherent unity between the two subgroups, at least on the campuses.

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SU Internationalisation portfolio works towards ultimately and holistically representing international students who often feel neglected on the campuses as well as the institution as a whole. In addition to this, relevant/efficient representation of these students, proves to be of immense help when they are found in times of crisis.

Committees / Task Teams

- African Student Board
- Institutional Advisory Committee on Internationalization
- KUKO Executive Committee

Year Overview

Term I

As swiftly as the term had gone, the true essence of why I had applied to be the Internationalisation manager had not yet been truly activated due to the status of the globe in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, due to the academic year only starting in mid-March, this had resulted in me having to either move events the events I had planned to do in term 1 to be potentially done in term 2.

Never forgetting and keeping in mind adjustments in relation to the aforementioned plans whilst adhering to COVID-19 friendly adjustments, as the events were presumptive in that they were meant to be in person integrative events which I hoped would achieve and bridge outcomes drawn up in my Year Plan.

Besides the several meetings I had attended within the IACI on how we will ultimately tackle this unprecedented new way of higher education and how that will affect the international students who are either still in their respective home countries or have made south Africa a home, this had presented as a challenge for not just myself but for the students that may experience particular challenges, whether it being finances, documentation, travel bans etc.

One of the points that was subsequently discussed at the 03/11/20 IACI meeting was:

International Student Fees 2021

The Student Fees Committee (SFC) approved the average proposed increase of 6.2%. Changes were made to the next items after the SFC consulted with the faculty managers.

1. International Registration Fee (IRF):

a.) Basic structure

Residential programmes:

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Basic IRF for students beyond SADC: R9,530

Students from SADC: R4,500

Non-residential programmes:

R3,170/R1,500 (amount will be adjusted programmatically 33%)

The IRF structure would be used to generate income for international student recruitment initiatives to cover costs involving generating indirect applications, i.e. students through recruitment intermediaries (recruitment agents or other third parties like a government agency). The higher IRF would be charged for the duration of a degree programme, after which time it would revert to the basic IRF.

b.) Additional IRF structure:

Students from rest of Africa

- Direct enrolment: Basic IRF: R9,350
- Indirect enrolment: 3x IRF: R28,590

Students from rest of the world

- Direct enrolment: Basic IRF: R9,350
- Indirect enrolment: 8x IRF: R77,240

2. International Tuition Fee (ITF)

For 2021, an increase of 12,5% was approved. For subsequent years, the increases for the ITF would be aligned with regular tuition increases.

a.) SADC students: No ITF

Africa beyond SADC: Bachelors R28,500

PGDip, Honours: R28,500

Master's, PhD: No ITF

Rest of the World: Bachelors R57,000

PGDip, Honours, Master's R57,000

(NOTE: Subsequently during the start of the 2021 registrations, the ITF for Master's Rest of the World was changed to R28,500.

One of the projects set out for term 1 was to officially re-establish the African Student Board for 2020/2021. The board acts as a platform to represent African International students in higher education throughout most of the countries university institutions. The ASB assists with any and all challenges that our African Students may be confronted with. Previously the ASB was dedicated to creating opportunities where African students could meet up and foster relationships. This objective would still exist under the new ASB management which I am a part of.

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The ASB would be headed up by all African Student Societies chairperson`s, therefore allowing for better representation on the board and facilitating relevant and efficient confrontation of common challenges experienced by the community, whilst maintaining a direct, hands on approach.

Along with the International Office Coordinator for student success, Angelo Jephtha, a subsequent meeting was scheduled to happen within the 2nd term with the respective African Student Leaders to collectively partner up as the SRC and ASB which would thereby cultivate a ripe channel for transparent effective communication.

Meetings with the IACI had not necessarily shown direct ‘fruits of the labour’, and were not necessarily expected to manifest in such a short term. However, the objective remained the same, prioritising inclusion of international in solution procurement during the highly restrictive COVID-19 period.

On issues concerning matters of visa expiration and issuing of permits for international students residing in South Africa, these solutions are still in process, and I have and will continue to represent our students’ best interest- both on campus and abroad as best as I can within my scope.

Term 2

Due to the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 term 2 was dedicated to the administrative needs and experiences of international students. The events planned to facilitate international student integration on campus for the 2nd term were switched out for more meaningful administration support, with efforts focused on the effects of the travel ban on students abroad, visa expiration issues, issuing of permits for international students and the issues facing international students still on campus e.g. accommodation; food security.

Events that assist with social integration for international students are of great importance, and actually form the main stay/objective of this portfolio. However, I had had to re-invent the portfolio a bit, especially due to the fact that the country still fell under Level 4 Covid-19 restrictions. Therefore, resulting in most of the events that were planned out for the term (potentially even the year) being no longer feasible i.e Open Day Fair. A substitute was had with the International Office, this being the Welcome & Orientation Hybrid programme

At some point, I had found that my duties had gone above and beyond its initial scope. This had proven overwhelming at times because of the sensitive nature of the assistance that I had to provide, however assistance and guidance from the SRC Chairperson had really helped me understand my role within the SRC and that is to ultimately assist students, particularly International Students, at that.

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Subcommittee applications were opened within this term and would subsequently be finalised and fully running/functional in the upcoming term.

The Matie-Buddy program, in collaboration with the International Office, was undergoing a face-lift and was a passion project that I had committed several hours to.

Collaborations with the Tygerberg IO, had only then recently began, and discussions of better communicative resources and events to create unity of Tygerberg International students and those on main campus had begun.

Otherwise, the 2nd term proved eventful and successful in my opinion, due to the completion of the prospects that I had placed for myself the preceding term and I had felt that the ‘fun-part’ (a.k.a events) could happen as we had moved into Level 1 at the end of the 2nd term.

Term 3

1.) An IACI meeting was held on the 6/05/21 and these were some important notes:

a.) DHET policy clearly stated the requirement of appropriate support services for international students.

There is no differentiation between the subsidy for domestic and international students. This implies that all students – international and domestic – need to be reported for subsidy purposes.

SADC students are charged the same tuition fees as domestic students. It is possible to charge higher fees for students beyond the SADC region.

DHET policy also permits a levy to be charged on top of standard tuition fees. Throughout the process regarding international students, clear information should be provided.

b.) Immigration update received from Home Affairs

Extension for the renewal of study permits had been granted until the end of July 2021. All expired permits would remain valid until the end of July 2021.

Delays were due to limited staff at Home Affairs and the SAPD for the required police clearances.

The Chair, Prof Hester C Klopper, noted that USAf had established a working group regarding immigration matters and that SU specific challenges, in this regard, should be flagged there also.

2.) The Stellenbosch University International Subcommittee was finalised as per my previous reports plan. They were put to work almost immediately and were subsequently allocated their sub portfolios and had made head way.

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The portfolios that I had deemed necessary within the SUI portfolio were/are the following:

Secretary

Financial Supervisor

Project Manager X2

General Member

Social Manager

I had to postpone 2 events unfortunately due to the change in the level adjustment announcement which thereby created a halt in the examination season that had begun in the institution and subsequently put a halt to all plans for the SRC in general.

Planning for each of the events/sub portfolios were completed within this term too, and finalisation of finances and appropriate dates etc would be discussed in the upcoming meeting within the next term.

3.) Re-establishment of the African Student Board for 2020/2021 was one of the main stays within my portfolio goals. In preceding years, the board acted as a platform to represent African International students and to assist with any challenges that our African Students may be confronted with. Its dedication was that of creating opportunities for African students, within South African Higher Education Institutions, to network and foster relationships.

I, along with the International Office representative Angelo Jephtha, had set up a meeting to discuss what headway has been made in this regard. Unfortunately, the respective African Student Leaders of their respective African Societies, were not too responsive, thus resulting in little to no communication from those parties.

We thereby continued to meet within ourselves and set up goals and action plans that would still assist the international students that we overview.

However, upcoming meetings dates, to recalibrate and have an action plan on reaching out once more to the relevant African Student Leaders would be done in the upcoming term.

Term 4

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This term was quite tumultuous as it was short in nature, however, the things I wanted to accomplish this term was completed.

1.) I had no choice but to come up with alternatives to the original year plans for the students I served as lockdown levels and third waves were strife at the time of the term. Thankfully vaccinations were finally open for the relevant age group and levels were subsequently lowered. Unfortunately, this was at the end of the term.

All the events are still scheduled to occur and have been meticulously planned out to the last detail. We are just waiting for the green light and go ahead from the relevant parties as well as the appropriate Lockdown levels to concur with said plans. We also have Covid Friendly and level adjusted plans at all levels, which I can further explain through documentation created by myself and the sub-committee. Otherwise, we conjured up alternatives that were still related to the function in itself and still relevant to our technologically lenient times.

Below are the following adjustments made:

a.) External Mixer – Pen Pal Program in conjunction with UCT SRC International.

This was/is meant to formulate a reaching out from our institutions SRCs International in order to assist networking that would be beneficial for the students and us in the future.

b.) Internal Mixer – N/A

Unfortunately, the online turnout was minimal. Deeming it not reaching its potential and purpose.

c. MasterChef – SUI Cookbook Brochure

This is a digital brochure that has all the places to go see, eat and have leisure on a student budget in Stellenbosch, that international students may be curious about, and this would form as a reference for them. Additionally, there are a few recipes that are South African in nature and affordable.

d.) Treasure Hunt – SUIMaties Tick Sheet

This is an SUI specific “to-do” list, where the students would have to go to, do or enjoy a particular thing on the list, take a photograph as proof and once the tick sheet is complete they would get a small prize of some sort. You only get to complete the list once and the final date to participate would be in February 2022 as some students only came later into the year.

Furthermore, a google out was sent out as a form of feedback on how this particular demographic would like to be represented and the challenges or events they would deem necessary and relevant to them. The feedback list will then be reviewed by either myself or the incoming SUI manager and taken into dep consideration to be fulfilled within means and reason.

2.) An IACI was had on the 19/08/21 and the following points were discussed:

a.) There will be an increase of student fees for international students in 2022.

The following adjustments in the fees structure for international students was recommended to the Student Fees Committee. The recommendation provided for a general 3,66% increase for 2022.

An addendum of the specific breakdown of the fees between different SADC countries etc, was given to the members of the IACI, which I can send on request.

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Year

Overall, my term of 2020/2021 was truly tumultuous and challenging at times, as this was the first time truly that the portfolio was somewhat functional as there was no true guidance from preceding managers as their reports were either not available, missing or not helpful at all.

Therefore, having to start from scratch and not knowing where or who to go to, proved a challenge at first. Thereafter, when realising that it was a blessing to have free will over the portfolio, moves were being made, but unfortunately the timing of that and the waxing and waning of the country's lockdown levels were just another added challenge.

After reviewing my predecessors report, I had decided to give the portfolio's overview a revamp. According to the constitution, I have met the mandated responsibilities. Despite this, I believe that more needs to be done for the international students.

I believe that the administrative factors of my portfolio and representative factors, where necessary, went well. Something I wish I known beforehand is how much red tape one needs to go over to get things approved and how sometimes collaborating with other portfolios within the SRC structure can reach more people even local students who can assist in making experiences and conversations with the international students more grounded and wholesome.

I believe that something that was to my advantage when taking on this portfolio, was my previous leadership history as well as the fact that I, myself, are an international student and know exactly what is lacking or what is functioning well.

Because of this, I plan to utilise this 'advantage' and plan on re-applying for SUI manager again in order to fulfil what was originally planned this year and to also take into account the specific worries and relevant concerns that my peers have. I believe that in conjunction with the IO and TIO a significant change can be made, and because of the many meetings and engagements I've had with the staff in charge of International student academic and general success, we can really put to work the plans we have curated.

Furthermore, I believe that internationalisation has been more vocal than previous years, but we are still not loud enough and should be put in the forefront. I will continue to attempt to do this with the support of the relevant institutional structures.

Overall, the portfolios running this year was good, but it could have been excellent and has the potential to be in the future.

Budget

Budget & Reasoning

1. Funds Budgeted For - R43 661.00

Discretionary Funds - R1 000,00

a.) External Mixer = R9 861.00

- *Transport* - R4 361.00
- *Game Equipment* - R500.00
- *Food* - R3 000.00
- *Beverages* - R2 000.00

b.) Internal Mixer = R4 500.00

- *Food* - R3 500.00
- *Beverages* - R1 000.00

c.) Masterchef International = R11 100.00

- *Food* - R2 500.00
- *Kitchen Hire* - R300.00
- *Ingredients* - R4 000.00
- *Judges* - R400.00
- *Venue* - R400.00
- *Sound hire* - R2 000.00
- *Beverages* - R1 500.00

d.) Open Day/Fair = R11 700.00

- *Food* - R5 000.00
- *Marketing* - R150.00
- *Décor* - R1 000.00
- *Sound Hire* - R2 000.00
- *Venue* - R1 550.00
- *Beverages* - R2 000.00

e.) Treasure Hunt/Amazing Race = R5 500.00

- *Sound hire* - R2 000.00
- *Prizes* - R1 500.00
- *Equipment* - R500.00
- *Beverages* - R1 500.00

Expenditure so far

My original amount requested for the SUI portfolio was a total sum of R43,661.00. General cost breakdown/reasoning is stated above.

A final amount of R14,961.00 was eventually reallocated on the 09/08/21 after overview of the SRCs overall budget.

I didn't get to utilise almost the full R14,961.00 due to circumstances not requiring the financial assistance

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For this particular year, not being able to utilise the allocated funds was justified as the opportunity for interactive meetings between the students that I serve would not be permissible or timing being inappropriate due to the waxing and waning lockdown levels and ‘advise’ from the SRC’s governing ICBC. I believe that this was in the best interest of the students as there was also a significant surge of positive cases within the student community placing everyone at a high risk, if in person events were to be had.

Recommendations to improve portfolio

Maintaining a healthy working relationship with the international office and aligning one’s year plans with their foundational prospects of international students’ success. Moreover, clearly differentiating when stepping/crossing over one’s scope and being able to reel it back would be of great assistance. As some, if not most events, are quite similar with those that are organized by the International office.

Additionally, learning to ask and/or reach out for assistance from your fellow SRC colleagues.

Important Contacts

- **Angelo Jephtha** – *Coordinator: International Student Life and Success*
Tel: 0218089029 Email: acj@sun.ac.za
- **Robert Kotze** – *Senior Director for SU International*
Tel: 0218084615 Email: rk@sun.ac.za
- **Jaconde Nsumbu** – *Preceding Manager (‘19/’20)*
Tel: 0711940411 Email: 20361785un.ac.za

SUI Subcommittee:

- **Katelynn Snyman** – *Secretary*
Tel: 0786742072 Email: 22569111@sun.ac.za
- **Joshua Casey** – *Financial Supervisor*
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- **Kamryn Smith** – *Project Manager: External Mixer*
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- **Alexander Hochleutner** – *Project Manager: MasterChef*
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- **Lilita Shugu** – *General Member: Internal Mixer*
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- **Malakhiwe Mahlulo** – *Social Media Manager*
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