



SRC 2020/2021 Annual Report

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Constitutional Responsibilities

The Senior Prim Committee (SPC) has a constitutional mandate to actively promote the rights of students contained in CHAPTER 2 of the Student Constitution, and specifically the right, under section 8 (1), to an enabling campus environment in which student success and academic excellence are encouraged and pursued.

The SPC's duties and powers are:

(1) The Senior Prim Committee represents the interests of the residents of senior residences, in that capacity, at the SRC and the University management.

(2) The Senior Prim Committee has the powers necessary for the performance of its duties.

The SPC this term exercised its mandate of representing senior students in various committee meetings and engagements which shall be elaborated on in the section dealing with committees and task teams.

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Portfolio Overview

The Senior Prim Committee consists of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and the Prim, or their nominee, of each senior residence, as well as any other members that are provided for in the constitution of the Senior Prim Committee. Other members provided for in the SPC are the Senior Living Spaces (SLS) cluster convenors and a new pilot structure for students residing outside of residence – Rubix.net.

Committees / Task Teams

- a) SPC Constitutional Task Team was set-up and led by the Vice-Chair of the SPC that will;
 1. Review constitutions that exist in senior residences and recommend improvements.
 2. Establishing a process to draw up constitutions for a number of senior residences that don't have any.
 3. Starting the constitutional amendment process for the SPC's own constitution which is unnecessarily cumbersome and complicated.

- b) Senior Living Spaces Driving School steering committee
 1. The steering committee includes the Chairperson of the SPC, a cluster convenor of SLS and the Executive leader of Rubix.net
 2. The aim is to develop and launch the SLS Driving School 2021 initiative.

- c) Maties Drive / Bridge the Gap Annual Fund Committee
 1. The SLS Driving School has now been incorporated into the Alumni Office's annual fundraising drive which includes other initiatives like Move4Food. This committee includes Alumni office Senior Director and a number of key staff as well the SPC Chair and Rubix.net Executive Leader.

- d) LSAL: Leadership Summit for Aspiring Leaders 2021
 1. Anri Magerman (Staff), Ayanda Ntuli (Communications co-coordinator for DSAF), Kristen Arends (Chair for TSR), Leon Wilkinson (Chair: Prim Committee), Luigia Nicholas (SRC: Special Needs Manager & LSAL tracking mentor - Student), Kira Alberts (SRC: Vice-chair), Thulani Hlatswayo (Student Governance), Nopi Mubaiwa (LSAL tracking mentor - Student), Quinton Apollis (SSC), Masixole Ndamandama (Chair for Senior Prim Committee), Zimbili Sibiya (Student in Forestry), Nosi Matiwane (FVZSI Programme Administrator), Carla de Beer (FVZSI Programme Administrator), Heidi October (Head: FVZSI), Spurgeon-Haddon Wilson (Programme Manager: FVZSI)
 2. LSAL will be a platform for leaders to mentor aspiring leaders. LSAL will be more focused on growing the leadership pipeline and creating a platform that would develop the leadership skills of aspiring student leaders.

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Year Overview

Term 1

The first term of the SPC 2020/21 included scheduling the first sitting once all students leadership elections were finalized in senior residences. This was achieved with the exception of the LLL program which appoints interns later in the year once their recruitment process is finalized.

A meeting was scheduled with the Centre of Student Communities to introduce our committee members with the entirety of the team at the CSC, brief them on our plans for our term and outline our expectations from the centre.

A brief session was organized to lay out what are the weaknesses in senior residences from outgoing Prims and to find out what incoming Prims expected from the work of the committee. This initiated the process of the planning for the term and what needed to be achieved. Most the issues brought up were institutional, training related and information on the role of senior residences as it is so vague with no guiding documents for incoming leadership which creates an atmosphere of confusion and blurring on lines with senior leadership and Res Heads.

It was decided that welcoming needs to be more collaborative between residences and have compulsory component that tackles recurring res-based issues. Greater collaboration between the SLS Cluster will help make sure that there is synergy.

Term 2

The second term of the SPC 2020/1 was more eventful as we were able to stage a training seminar for all student leaders in senior residences. In hind sight this could have and should have occurred earlier however with no roadmap in this portfolio, everything is experiential and in constant development. The senior space has gotten a bad reputation in the past for not being engaging and it's vision from the Centre of Student Communities is that it is geared at getting students ready for the "world of work". This vision is obviously not entirely accurate for the contemporary senior residence space as many students enter senior residence straight from the undergrad and are under the age of 23 – these students tend to be clustered at the Village, LLL and Huis Russel Botman. The rest of the residences – Lobelia, Huis de Villiers, Huis MacDonald and Concordia tend to be more senior students with a mix of final year undergrad and postgraduate students.

Leaders in each spheres have different challenges however the common trend is that where there has been no development in governance and student voices, there is unhappiness. Most of these issues require a culture shift and the point of departure is constitutional processes and the implementation there of – clearly defined roles, powers and governance process, for as long as students are not aware of these at the start of their leadership journey, there are bound to struggle to fulfil their leadership goals.

The SPC Training was aimed at building leadership soft skills and aptitude for senior leaders as well as greater cohesion between senior residence spaces. The late conceptualization of the project stems from the realization of the committee that the Centre of Student Communities has no tangible plans for the committee apart from cluster activities. This is evidenced by:

- No leadership training (or budget) for the senior residences specifically to deal with the challenges specific to the space
- No accredited or existing developmental programme for HKs in senior residences
- No leadership development budget set aside for senior residences
- No staff member who is in charge of liaison with the committee unlike the PK that deals directly with Director of the centre

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In effort to start tackling these systemic problems, the strategy of the committee is two-fold. One being proactive and engaging staff members that are willing to craft solutions with the SPC and secondly, addressing these challenges at an institutional level in the hopes to create a task team to thoroughly assess the challenges.

The first of the initiatives that will be piloted by the SPC is the Senior Prim Development Programme and the SPC Training will strive to launch the new vision of the senior leaders by requiring ownership of the space both from CSC and SPC's respective leaders.

The previous term of the SPC didn't address these issues at all and thus as the leader accountable for the committee some of the issues are being discovered as the term progresses.

In collaboration with the Wellness portfolio, we also did a financial literacy seminar series which was well received.

Other issues the spaces has been tackling is discipline – who is charge of these process and what are HKs roles – once again highlighting the need for clear constitutions. Curfew and the inaccessibility of residences for visitors remains an issue as senior students tend to live in isolated sections with already few interactions. This issue is harder to deal with due to the institutional stance on visitors.

Term 3

The constitutional review committee continues to do its work. The scope was originally to big so the focus shifted to residence house committees thus far. The work started with an engagement phase with the residences of; Concordia, Lobelia, Huis de Villiers and Huis MacDonald. The SPC mandate went as far as to equip the House Committees (HC) with knowledge of how constitutions work, their necessity and the overall student constitution framework of the university. The work to draw up constitutions is now being driven by the HCs themselves with a follow up report due at the end of term.

The SLS Driving School will launch for applications at the start of the second semester. This project aims to sponsor driving lessons for 20 senior students through the pooling of funds from the SPC, SLS and Rubix.net. Weekly meeting have been held by the committee to discuss the application process, eligibility and selection criteria. The applications are now open and close on 17 August thereby allowing interviews to start to select the target beneficiaries. Driving lessons are scheduled to start in September and run through October 2021.

The Bridge the Gap Annual Fund Committee has started the fundraising of "Maties Drives" a spin-off of the SLS Driving School which aims to sponsor even more students to obtain their driving license from next year. Meeting thus far have included how to align the Alumni office's work within the senior space and including their offering in early HK training to inform student leaders. A critique that was brought up is often students don't know the value of work and programmes run by the alumni office and ambassadors who are non-positional leaders are perhaps needed to help spread the word.

The discussion in the LSAL committee has been the plan for the conference – what LSAL is trying to achieve, contemporary and meaningful topics for new leaders on campus and good facilitators. LSAL will not be a replacement for SU Leads. The objective of the student conference is to help with leadership and leadership perceptions. Run by CSLEEC, it will look at your strengths and see where you can contribute as a future positional or non-positional leader and even foster active student citizenry participation on campus. Most of the weekly talks have centred around the need to identify what will be the focus of the summit. In 2020 it was about stepping up and seeing what you could contribute. Talks are ongoing with the marketing team hoping to consolidate the work in early semester 2.

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A summit was also organized in conjunction with Action 4 Inclusion - Social Justice Chair – Prof Thuli Madonsela, Senior Living Spaces and the Transformation committee of the SRC to Helderberg Mountain Nature Reserve in May. The event was a success as it attracted students to hike just before the exam season and raised funds for the important initiative.

Term 4

The last term of the 2020/21 Senior Prim Committee focussed on closing of our major projects and making sure that our elections are held in line with the SPC Constitution.

SPC Elections were held on the 26th of August 2021 where Eugene Nell was elected as the Chairperson and Ibrahim Sururu was elected as the Vice-Chairperson for 2021/22 term. The committee's outgoing chairperson will work with these seasoned leaders in a handover process – discussing ongoing projects that could be continued and the new term's priorities.

The SLS Driving School is at the implementation phase. The selected students will start taking their classes on the 27th September 2021 – 31 October. 20 students will benefit from the programme. The Bridge the Gap Annual Fund Committee has started the fundraising of “Maties Drives” a spin-off of the SLS Driving School which aims to sponsor even more students to obtain their driving license from next year. Currently we are working with the journalism department's Prof Rabie on an article with Matie Media to highlight the student's journey to getting a driving license. This is to create awareness of the SLS Driving School as it transitions to Maties Drives next year, a huge milestone for the committee in terms of broadening access and minimising funding constraints.

Year

Developing a relationship with CSC has been the hardest part of this job as the SPC has mainly interacted with Student Governance for most of its two-year existence. As I held meeting after meeting after meeting with various structures including Centre Student Leadership, Experiential Education and Citizenship (CSEELC) it became apparent that I'd have to make inroads at CSC. After introducing all the Primis to CSC at the beginning of my term and laying out our vision, I'd hoped we'd be invited to the table to partner and interact more – especially as residences fall part of this division at the university, however that wasn't the case to be. Throughout my SRC term it became apparent that the Prim Committee (PC) had access to platforms and information that wasn't filtering through to SPC. This was explained as the PC has a direct link and access to CSC's Director which the SPC did not have and instead had to rely on a Group Residence Education Coordinator for information. My recommendation for the new term of the SPC is as follows:

- 1) Establish and insist on a regular meetings with the Director of CSC and perhaps the Group Red-Ed Coordinator for all information. This is to strengthen the communication links with the CSC.
- 2) Review all sub-committees that the PC (e.g. Res-Head appointment committees) sits on in the CSC and find out which ones directly corelate with work the SPC is doing and establish a presence there.
- 3) Build on and finalise the Senior Leadership Development Programme and formalize the training for seniors – both need accreditation from CSEELC. Make sure that trainings target soft skills, leadership development, student affairs organisational structures and governance.
- 4) Fix the funding of the SPC. This year we had no money for training as this was never budgeted for and the SRC had to fund this. The Vice Chairperson doesn't get a honorarium – this needs fixing from the Director of CSC or Senior Director of the Division for Student Affairs. The SRC may need to step in here as requests for a full honorarium for the VC was denied by the Deputy Director of CSC. Funding aid of the SPC's work has mainly come from the SRC which is actually part of Student Governance and not part of the Centre of Student Communities.

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Thus far they have been accommodating however how long this relationship last depends on future SRC's. SRC's of the future would be well within their rights to the cut funding of the SPC as the committee is not Student Governance's responsibility but rather CSC's.

- 5) Lastly the constitutional project needs to be completed, as complex as it can be, stakeholders need to be identified early on to strengthen the SPC constitution and then senior residences.

Budget

Budget & Reasoning

Original Budget

SLS Dinner	10 000
SLS Driving School	10 000
Honorariums	12 000
Branding	4 000

Revised Budget

SLS Driving School	25 000
Training	3000
Honorariums	12 000

Expenditure so far

Training 3000

A4I Hike 5200

Recommendations to improve portfolio

Stronger links, mandate, training and Res Education is needed from the Centre of Student Communities. Right now a lack of vision, ownership and institutional plan by the Centre of Student Communities (CSC) hinders the potential of the Senior Prim Committee. Communication is rare from CSC to the SPC even though that is responsible body of SPC, it seems there is an inertia to acknowledge and accept this. A meeting at the beginning of our term was held with stakeholders from the CSC to address this issues however the issues still persist.

A number of core and necessary development programmes are absent from the CSC that are geared at leadership development and formalization of the senior residence leadership spaces.

- 1) A leadership development plan for senior leaders doesn't exist in the co-curricular handbook however we've had strong engagements on piloting one this year with Multicultural Education Coordinator.
- 2) A Senior Prim leadership development plan should also be introduced to address a lot of issues that Prims/House Leaders have about their role and the role of the res head. A review of our constitution should also be finalized.
- 3) The next leader of this portfolio has to schedule biweekly meetings with the Director of CSC from the beginning of their term to make sure there is better and constant communication. There are also a number of sub-committees that the CSC operates where important residence information is discussed – the next SPC leader needs to find out about all of these and which ones are important to have representatives in.

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- 4) There should be at least one compulsory RedEd Programme in senior residences as a condition if accepting your stay. Themes that could be explored are GBV, Life after Study etc.
- 5) A weakness identified by SLS Cluster Convenors last year was the slow elections of senior residences which hampered the progress of new leadership terms. This has largely been resolved this year, with only the LLL interns being appointed out of the September yearly elections cycle. No guidance for instance has been communicated through us about when the CSC wants leaders elected by for 2022, a major issue is the lack of communication. Perhaps a round table with the Senior Director of Student Governance would be a good place to start for the next incoming committee.

Student Governance has played a greater collaborative role with the SPC to assist with administrative duties and ongoing direction with campus developments in the upcoming academic year.

Important Contacts

Noel Bekkers noelbek@sun.ac.za ResED Group Coordinator – Senior Living Spaces

Enos Lekala enos@sun.ac.za LLL Coordinator and Huis Russel Botman Res Head

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