



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL  
IBHUNGA ELIMELE ABAFUNDI  
STUDENTERAAD



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1918 - 2018

# SRC 2021/22 TERM REPORT 3 CHAIRPERSON

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Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: [sr@sun.ac.za](mailto:sr@sun.ac.za)



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## VIWE KOBOKANA – CHAIRPERSON – VIWEK@SUN.AC.ZA

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## Constitutional Responsibilities

The SU Student Constitution sets out the core functions of the SRC in section 27 and they include –

1. To act in the best interest of the students and to actively promote students' rights under CHAPTER 2.
2. To represent students at –
  - a. The University Council.
  - b. The Senate.
  - c. The Institutional Forum.
  - d. Other committees, structures, and functionaries of the University.
  - e. National and international student structures.
3. To evaluate the University policy and give input in the formulation thereof.
4. To formulate and maintain policy to ensure that the SRC performs its functions and duties effectively.
5. To facilitate projects and initiatives to the benefit of students.
6. To inform students continuously, and obtain feedback, about its activities.

Section 28 goes on to further the responsibilities of the Chairperson specifically as follows:

- a) Serve as the Chairperson at meetings of the SRC and the SRC Executive Committee.
- b) Act as spokesperson for the SRC, in consultation with the Communications Officer.
- c) Is responsible for the finances of the SRC alongside the SRC Executive Committee.
- d) Ensures that the SRC fulfils its mandate.
- e) Is responsible for oversight over the activities of the SRC.

Lastly, as a member of the SRC Executive Committee, the duties and powers outlined in section 41 are also applicable to the Chairperson and they are as follows:

1. The Executive Committee has the duty and power to –
  - a. Set the agenda for SRC meetings.
  - b. Manage the day-to-day matters for the SRC.
    - i. Excluding any power or duty granted to the SRC by this Constitution.
  - c. Fulfil any duty that the SRC delegates to it.
  - d. Fulfil any other function that this Constitution assigns to it.
2. The Executive Committee, subject to s41(3), also has the duty and power to –
  - a. Compile and amend thereafter, the SRC budget.
  - b. Make important decisions in urgent cases where it is not practically feasible to convene the SRC.
    - i. The SRC must be immediately notified of decisions in terms of s41(2)(b); and
    - ii. Such decisions must be tabled at the next possible SRC Meeting for final determination.
  - c. decide on the portfolio allocation of the SRC, excluding the compulsory portfolios.

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- d. Appoints the Election Commissioners in terms of s18(6).
3. Decisions taken by the Executive Committee in terms of s41(2) will be in full effect unless set aside by the SRC at a later meeting through the process outlined in s42(3).

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## Portfolio Overview

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The Chairperson portfolio is responsible for engaging with multiple stakeholders internally and externally.

The portfolio of chairperson is responsible to bring a group of diverse leaders together and channel their energy and skills to successfully achieve the mandates of the SRC. Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that words become 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.

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 in South Africa and around the world.

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## Committees/Task Teams

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### *Institutional Audit Self-Evaluation Committee*

According to the Manual for Institutional Audits 2021 by the Council on Higher Education s2(2.1):

Institutional audits are used to determine the extent of an institution's capability to use integrated quality management systems and processes to improve the quality of its learning and teaching, its research and the institution's integrated engagement with the community. Audits also consider how such quality management systems enhance the likelihood of student success. "Student success" is defined in the *Framework* as follows:

*"or the individual student, the attainment of graduate attributes that are personally, professionally, and socially valuable; and for the institution, students' academic persistence; academic results that focus on equity of success in terms of race, gender, and disability, as well as a focus on minimum time to completion, and students progressing successfully to postgraduate studies, or into employment or economic activity."*

The Self-Evaluation Committee is the committee that will be overseeing SU's institutional audit and ultimately present the report to CHE.

The final draft was completed as consultation with the student leaders ensued. This was the last bit of consultation so once those comments were integrated the document was present to Senate and Council and was approved by both. This concluded the document writing stage of the process. Following this, we are awaiting the visit by the panel that will interview members of the SU committee, including members of the Quality Committee. A website has been set up where more information about the self-evaluation can be sought out.

### *Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC)*

The Rectorate decided to convene an extended version of the University's usual Contingency Committee structure to ensure swift execution of decisions by creating an overarching Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC), the leadership of which was delegated to the Chief Operating Officer, Prof Stan du Plessis. The ICBC was convened to oversee and synthesise input from 11 subcommittees, each focusing on key facets of the University's activities affected by the pandemic.

The last meeting for the ICBC was held in April where it was decided that the committee would be concluded as the National State of Disaster was lifted. It must be noted however that the committee and its subsequent workstreams can be reinstated should there be another crisis that requires it. There was a communique from ICBC with an outline of the important decisions but in summary the development of the vaccine rule was put on hold after input from the Medical Advisory Committee. The various workstreams gave the feedback with the priority being a return to full face-to-face activities for staff and students.



### *Senior Appointments Committee*

The Senior Appointments Committee is a committee established under the approval of SU's Council and has its powers delegated to it by Council. It has the final authority and oversight regarding the appointment of senior staff. The SAC reports its decision to Council via the Registrar's Office.

As the replacement member of the Senior Appointments Committee for the Senior Director of Operations, I was asked to be part of the interviews due to the Council member originally on the committee not being able to attend the meeting. We concluded the interviews, and a preferred candidate was selected.

### *Stellenbosch University Council*

The University's Council governs the University in accordance with the Constitution, the Act, and the Statute and its rules. It has a general oversight responsibility in respect of academic and operational matters. The details of the powers, responsibilities and functions of Council can be found in the SU Statute Ch2(10).

There were two Council meetings this term, including my last Council meeting as our term in office ends before the last meeting of the year. There were communiques sent out by Council with important information from both meetings however I will be reporting on important information to take note of from the SRC's side. At the April meeting Prof Sibusiso Moyo was appointed the new Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies which was a welcomed outcome as she will serve as the first black DVC at SU. I was then voted as the replacement member to the Senior Appointments Committee for the Senior Director: Operations. There was notable engagement from the SRC's side at the June Council meeting, some issues that were raised were for future decisions in various responsibility centres and will be communicated to my successor in handover. The various reports were discussed and requests for changes made in some of the reports at the request of my fellow Council member, Philip Visage and the changes were accepted.

### *Transformation Policy Task Team*

The mandate of the Transformation Policy Task Team is to guide and support the Head of Transformation towards ensuring that the SU Transformation Policy is in line with the SU Vision 2040 and the Strategic Framework. The TPTT would also ensure that the Transformation Policy does not only provide a framework for consistent decision making and action but is also aligned to best practice. The outcomes expected from the task team include the finalisation of the draft policy documents and ensuring that these are broadly consulted on within the institution. The findings made by the task team will be integrated into the policy document as the process unfolds. The task team does not have a mandate to recommend on any institutional policy related matters. The task team will however ensure that the relevant institutional structures do make recommendations for approval once the task team has completed the final draft. The task team is also responsible for defining the phases of the project.

The first draft of the policy has been completed and public consultation has opened. Members of the SU community can submit their comments on the first draft. While this is happening, we will meet in the new term to begin the process to outline the monitoring and evaluation of the policy.



## Term Overview

The work of this term was seemingly overshadowed by the incident that occurred in Huis Marais which ultimately unfolded over the space of a week, ending in a mass mobilisation planned by student leaders. I will therefore begin with those events and work back in this term overview.

The week of the Huis Marais incident caught all of us off guard but required our time and attention in dealing with it. In that week we attended the protest that was planned by SASCO and supported by societies such as the PSF. We then met as an SRC to come up with a plan of action for how we would firstly support the victim, secondly engage with the university to ensure the correct measures are put in place in addressing this case, and lastly to ensure we provide a platform for students to express themselves and their emotions. Exec met with Rectorate to gain clarity on the disciplinary proceedings as well as plan how we could best support students and ended up hosting a Brave Space where students, particularly students of colour could share their lived experiences in a safe space and non-poc students could listen and learn, but also having the space to share if they wanted to. We had a meeting with all student leaders in the ex-officio structures and executed a mass mobilisation which was a call to end systemic oppression at the institution. The week ended with the request to the Rectorate for the exams to be postponed by a week in order to make up for the week of disruptions and distraught, which was accepted. We began working on and are still underway with a working document from comments and suggestions from our fellow student leaders. The document will be handed over to Rectorate at our next SRC EC X Rectorate meeting and we hope it will end with plans to implement the changes that are brought forward in it.

Other than this week the term was filled with my duties of attending institutional committees as outlined in the section above, attending external conferences which I will elaborate on, and supporting the events of the SRC portfolios. I engaged with Anele Mdepa and Tonia Overmeyer along with the Chairperson of the TSRC, Vhuḁi Rhavutsi, on the support that is provided to the SRC and TSRC. This engagement concluded with Vhuḁi and I editing a document from 2018 called the Academic Mentor Framework. The revisions we made to this document outline the support that needs to be provided to our structures by Student Governance and DSAf wholistically. We are awaiting a response from Anele on the outcome of the edits we submitted to him and Musa Mpanza.

The Secretary General and I attended several external engagements including a SAUS dialogue on Gender-based violence in East London and an NSFAS summit in Bloemfontein. The term then concluded with a benchmarking trip to Gauteng where 9 SRC members visited 5 different universities to compare best practices and to see what we can learn from each of the institutions. There will be a report that we release with recommendations to the SRC for internal implementation, to Student Governance and Student Affairs as well as to Rectorate.