

The Constitution of Serruria Residence

As adopted in 2017 and further amended on 8 October 2021.



serruria
DAMESKOSHUIS

women of virtue

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CHAPTER 1

FOUNDING PROVISIONS

1 Founding Values

The residence of Serruria is founded and guided by the following values:

- (a) Respect
- (b) Individuality
- (c) Unity
- (d) Empowerment
- (e) Sense of belonging

2 Supremacy of the Constitution

Serruria is a Residence of the University of Stellenbosch. Serruria's Constitution consists of various articles that will guide any action or decision made within or on behalf of Serruria Residence. Any conduct or decision made within or on behalf of Serruria Residence that is not in line with the values and contents of this Constitution is invalid. Serruria's Constitution is therefore binding on all occupants of Serruria Ladies Residence, and the obligations imposed upon residents must be fulfilled. Serruria's Constitution is subsidiary to the University of Stellenbosch's Student Constitution, the Higher Education Act and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

3 Residents

All students who currently live in the residence during the academic year in question (regardless of when the student started residing in the residence during the year), are considered residents of Serruria.

4 Student Alumni

Any registered student who was previously a resident of Serruria, for a minimum of one semester, are considered student alumni.

5 Alumni

Any person who had previously been a resident of Serruria for at least one semester, is considered an alumni.

6 Languages

(1) The official languages of Serruria Ladies Residence are English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

(2) Recognising the historically diminished use and status of indigenous languages of our people, the residence must take practical and positive measure to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.

7 Residence anthem

8 Residence motto

Serruria Residences' motto is women of virtue.

CHAPTER 2

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

9 Executive Committee

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of –

- (a) Primaria
- (b) Vice-Primaria
- (c) Financial Manager
- (d) Residence Head

(2) The committee's duties include -

- (a) applying and enforcing the rules of the residence, both directly and via delegation to the House Committee;
- (b) ensuring that the interests of the university are served;
- (c) managing the residence in an efficient manner.

CHAPTER 3

HOUSE COMMITTEE

10 House Committee

(1) The House Committee consists of Primaria, the Vice-Primaria, the Financial Manager and nine additional members.

11 Vacancies of the House Committee

(1) Where a vacancy arises, the succeeding candidate from the House Committee Elections will fill such vacancy.

- (a) Where no such candidate exists, the house must vote on whether the House Committee is permitted to continue without the required number of members.
- (b) Where the House votes in favor of a newly elected Member, the procedures outlined in Chapter 5 and 6 must be repeated.

12 Additional members

(1) Where a House Committee member is or shall be absent for a substantial period of time, owing to academic responsibilities, ill-health or any other reasonable justification, the Residence Head and House Committee must temporarily elect an additional member to the House Committee.

(2) The Residence Head and House Committee must conduct interviews to appoint a temporary member.

(3) Such additional Member must meet the requirements in Chapter 6.

13 Duties of a house committee member

(1) A House Committee member must meet the objectives of their respective portfolios.

(2) A House Committee member must attend House Committee Meetings.

(a) Where the Primaria has not excused such member, such member is liable to pay a fine.

(3) A House Committee member must hold Section Meetings, file complaints of residents within their section and report any issues at House Committee Meetings.

(4) A House Committee member must participate in a reasonable quantity of events.

(5) A House Committee member must attend all House Meetings.

(6) A House Committee member must follow due process in reporting matters in accordance with predetermined procedure.

(7) A House Committee member must maintain confidentiality of sensitive information.

(8) A House Committee member must be held accountable to the values of Serruria.

(9) A House Committee member must abide by the House Rules of Serruria, and Residence Rules of the University of Stellenbosch.

(10) A House Committee member must be readily available to assist residents during the time slots assigned to them by the Primaria or the Vice-Primaria

14 Termination of House Committee Member's service

(1) A House Committee member's service is terminated –

(a) Upon the conclusion of their term;

(b) Upon a member leaving the residence permanently;

(c) Upon the submission of a written resignation to the Primaria and Residence Head;

(d) Where a member has been stripped from their title.

(2) The House Committee holds the right to strip any member of their title as House Committee member.

(a) This right will arise on the following grounds:

(i) Where a member has consistently failed to comply with the duties of a House Committee member as stipulated in section 7(4).

(ii) Where a member is found guilty of misconduct by the Central Disciplinary Committee.

(b) In order to strip a member of their title:

(i) The Primaria, Vice Primaria or a House Committee Member must bring a motion to strip a Member in a House Committee Meeting.

(ii) A motion may be brought against a House Committee member where two verbal and one written warning have been issued against the member.

(iii) An enquiry must take place.

(iv) The person who initiated the motion must expound on the circumstances and the ground on which such motion is based.

(v) The alleged Member must be given an opportunity to make representations.

(3) The House Committee will vote to strip the member.

(a) A secret vote must be organized.

(b) Where 75% of the House Committee votes in favor of the motion, such member will be stripped of their title.

(c) The Residence Head must be involved in the procedure.

(4) The House holds the right to strip any member of their title as House Committee member if a motion against one or more, or the entire House Committee, is approved by means of a vote by paper ballot by an extraordinary two-thirds majority of the total voting body of the residents at a normal or irregular House Meeting.

(a) Such a voting procedure requires arrangement and oversight by a committee consisting of the Residential Head, Primaria and a

representative who serves the Stellenbosch University Student Parliament or a Stellenbosch University member with relevant law knowledge recommended by the CSC.

(b) If the Primaria is involved as a subject of such a motion, a Vice-Primaria or alternatively, the Resident Head, shall chair the motion proceedings until the voting process.

(c) The House Committee member or members in respect of whom the motion is brought must immediately resign upon approval of the motion.

(d) The motion is handed in to the Primaria at least 24 hours before a House Meeting, or other meeting convened for this purpose, and if such a motion is against the Primaria, it is handed in to the Resident Head and Vice-Primaria.

(e) If a motion is tabled against the entire House Committee, it must be subdivided into parts explaining how each House Committee member relates to the reasoning behind the motion.

Election of an ex officio member of the House Committee

In the event that the service of a member of the House Committee has been terminated, for any of the aforementioned reasons, an ex officio member may be elected to fill the position.

- An ex officio member is able to vote in House Committee meetings, as well as to pass motions and propose emergency meetings.
- The ex officio member will attend House Committee meetings only when their input is required.
- The ex officio member is recognised as a member of the House Committee yet does not have all of the duties that come with being elected to service on the body. Their duties are decided subject to the needs of the House Committee.

- Candidates for the position of ex officio member can be decided by the House Committee itself or by the House dependent on the circumstances which require the election of an ex officio member.
- In the event of there being only one candidate for ex officio membership, the House is required to take a vote of confidence.
- In the event of there being more than one candidate for ex officio membership, the House is required to take a vote to elect the ex officio member. Such voting may require a caucus.

ELECTIONS & VOTING

14 Voting rights

(1) A resident has the right to vote as a member of Serruria when:

- (a) And as long as she resides permanently in the residence during the academic year.
- (b) She has lived in the residence for at least one semester.
- (c) In the case of internal decisions during the first semester, the House Committee may allow voting rights to first years.

15 Nominations

(1) The Primaria, Vice-Primaria and Residence Head are responsible for establishing the nomination process and the relevant dates for the election of the Primaria, Vice-Primaria and House Committee.

(2) Should more than 25 people be nominated, another election will be held to reduce the number of nominees to 20.

16 Election of the *Primaria*

(1) Any resident of Serruria with prior leadership experience in the university will be eligible to stand for Primaria. Such prior leadership includes, but is not limited to, a faculty mentor, a residence mentor, Head Mentor, Vice-Head Mentor, House Committee member, a member of an executive committee of a society.

(2) Voting

- (a) The Primaria must obtain a **simple majority** vote in their favor.
- (b) Where a strike of votes occurs, a new election must be held.
- (c) Where only one candidate stands for Primaria, a vote of confidence must be held.

(3) Should a candidate not be elected to the position of Primaria, they remain eligible to stand for Vice Primaria and House Committee.

17 Election of the Vice *Primaria*

(1) Any resident of Serruria with prior leadership experience in the university will be eligible to stand for Primaria. Such prior leadership includes, but is not limited to, a faculty mentor, a residence mentor, Head Mentor, Vice-Head Mentor, House Committee member, a member of an executive committee of a society, as well as Congress Leaders.

(2) Voting

(a) The Vice Primaria must obtain a simple majority vote in their favor.

(b) Where a strike of votes occurs, a new election must be held.

(c) Where only one candidate stands for Vice Primaria, a vote of confidence must be held.

(3) Should a candidate not be elected to the position of Vice Primaria, they remain eligible to stand for House Committee.

18 Election of the Financial Manager

(1) Any resident of Serruria with business knowledge and accounting skills will be eligible to stand for Financial Manager.

(2) Voting

(a) The Financial Manager must obtain a simple majority vote in their favor.

(b) Where only one candidate stands for Financial Manager, a vote of confidence must be held.

(3) Should a candidate not be elected to the position of Financial Manager, they remain eligible to stand for House Committee.

(4) Should no resident stand for Financial Manager, someone from the elected House Committee must be appointed.

19 Election of the House Committee

(1) Any person who has resided in Serruria for only **one semester** (hereon referred to as “newcomer”) will be eligible to stand for House Committee, provided that –

(a) A maximum of two House Committee Members may be newcomers.

(2) Voting

(a) Voting must take place as closed and secret ballots.

(b) House Committee members will be selected from the candidates who obtained the majority of votes, limited to a maximum of two newcomers.

(c) The number of House Committee positions during a specific term shall determine how many candidates a resident may vote for.

(i) Where a resident exceeds this number, their vote must be discarded.

(ii) Failure to discard such a vote will result in the election being recalled whereafter a second vote must proceed.

CHAPTER 5

MENTORS

20 Mentor description & duties

(1) Mentors are senior students who are appointed in residences and PSO's to assist new students with their adjustment to university life. Each new student should have access to a mentor. The mentor plays an important role during the welcoming period with general assistance regarding university life queries and psychosocial support. Through the mentor, new students have the opportunity to partake in the Wellness programme of the University, which aims to enhance the wellness of students throughout the year.

(2) The duties of the mentors include -

- (a) Assisting newcomers with the adjustment to university life;
- (b) Being readily accessible to newcomers;
- (c) Providing psychosocial support;
- (d) Facilitating the wellness programme of the University;
- (e) Assisting the House Committee during the welcoming period, to a reasonable extent;
- (f) Assisting in house emergencies throughout the year, such as evacuations;
- (g) Managing the placement and orientation of late newcomers.

21 Appointment of Head Mentor

(1) The outgoing Head Mentor and Vice-Head Mentor are responsible for the coordination of the appointment of the consecutive Head Mentor.

(2) The Head Mentor must be appointed by way of a panel consisting of –

- (a) Outgoing Primaria or Vice-Primaria;
- (b) Newly elected Primaria or Vice-Primaria;

- (c) Outgoing House Committee member of Mentors or Mental Wellness;
- (d) Newly-elected House Committee member of Mentors or Mental Wellness;
- (e) Residence Head;
- (f) An external Head Mentor from another community - outgoing Head Mentor has discretion in this regard.

(3) The panel will pose questions to the candidates and score them on their answers. The candidate who attains the highest score must be appointed as Head Mentor.

(4) Where 5/7 panel members are dissatisfied with the outcome, the entire process may be reinstated.

(5) Unsuccessful candidates are permitted to avail themselves for the position of Vice-Head Mentor or Mentor.

(6) The Head Mentor may not be assigned mentees.

22 Appointment of Vice-Head Mentor

(1) The outgoing Head Mentor and Vice-Head Mentor are responsible for the coordination of the appointment of the consecutive Head Mentor.

(2) The Vice-Head Mentor must be appointed by way of a panel consisting of –

- (a) Outgoing Primaria or Vice-Primaria;
- (b) Newly elected Primaria or Vice-Primaria;
- (c) Outgoing House Committee member of Mentors or Mental Wellness;
- (d) Newly-elected House Committee member of Mentors or Mental Wellness;
- (e) Residence Head;
- (f) An external Head Mentor from another community - outgoing Head Mentor has discretion in this regard.

(3) The panel will pose questions to the candidates and score them on their answers. The candidate who attains the highest score must be appointed as Vice-Head Mentor.

(4) Unsuccessful candidates are permitted to avail themselves for the position of Mentor.

23 Appointment of mentors

(1) The newly elected Head Mentor and Vice-Head Mentor are responsible for the coordination of the appointment of the mentors.

(2) Mentors must be appointed by way of a panel consisting of –

- (a) Newly elected Head Mentor;
- (b) Newly elected Vice-Head Mentor;
- (c) Residence Head;
- (d) Outgoing Head Mentor or Vice-Head Mentor;
- (e) External outgoing mentor from another community or a counsellor.

(3) The panel must follow the following process -

- (a) The panel must pose unbiased questions, as derived from the BeWell programme;
- (b) The panel must score candidates on their answers. The candidates who attain the highest scores must be appointed as mentors;
- (c) The number of candidates to be appointed is determined by the size of the incoming newcomer group.

24 Termination

(1) The Head or Vice-Head Mentor must resign if the following is satisfied -

- (a) A motion of no confidence is filed by the mentors, with the House Committee member of Mentors or Mental Wellness;

(i) The motion of no confidence must be supported by two-thirds of the mentors prior to being filed;

(b) A vote of no confidence must be taken collectively by the mentors and House Committee;

(c) The vote of no confidence must be supported by two-thirds majority (of the collective body of mentors and the House Committee).

CHAPTER 6

CONGRESS

25 Congress Leaders

(1) Two congress leaders must be elected for each year group by means of a simple majority vote.

(2) Where a motion is filed to be voted upon in a House Meeting, or irregular House Meeting, such motion must be submitted to the respective congress leaders.

(3) Congress leaders must call a sitting of congress (year groups) and are responsible for the facilitation of discussions in respect of the motion.

(4) Congress leaders must liaise with the House Committee to represent the interests of each congress.

CHAPTER 7

MEETINGS & MOTIONS

26 House Committee meetings

(1) A House Committee meeting is held at least once a week, subject to exceptions.

(2) The Residential Head must be informed of all meetings and can be present at meetings or part thereof should they be so inclined. The Residential Head also has input into all minutes of House Committee meetings.

(3) The Primaria acts as chairperson at all meetings.

(4) The Primaria and/or Residential Head can call irregular House Committee meetings should they deem it necessary.

(5) The Chairperson has a normal as well as deciding vote.

(6) The vice-Primaria or any other member of the House Committee must keep minutes of each meeting, The minutes are regarded as read and agreed upon at the start of each new meeting, unless contested.

(7) When voting on decisions during House Committee meetings –

(a) All House Committee members must place a vote

(b) Simple majority vote is required to implement decisions.

(c) Where votes are tied, the Primaria has the deciding vote

27 House meetings

(1) A General House meeting is held at least once a term.

(2) Attendance by all residents is compulsory, subject to exceptions.

(3) The Primaria is the Chairperson of the House Meeting and must notify the House at least 5 days before the meeting. In the case of the absence of the Primaria, the Vice-Primaria will act in this capacity.

(4) The Primaria may organise an irregular House Meeting in the following instances –

(a) When the House Committee deems it necessary.

(b) On a written request of at least a third of the residents, who have voting rights.

(c) When the Residential Head deems it necessary.

(5) Where an irregular House Meeting is called, the date, time and place of the meeting must be given to the House at least 24 hours before the time.

(6) Permission to be excused from House Meetings can only be given by the Primaria and must be obtained 24 hours prior to the meeting.

(7) An attendance register will be held at every House Meeting and the names of persons with permission to be excused will be noted by the House Committee member of every block. Absence without being formally excused will result in a sanction being imposed.

28 Section meetings

(1) Mandatory section meetings must take place at least once a month on the date and at the time as determined by the responsible House Committee member.

(2) The relevant section leader, as elected by the section by means of a simple majority, is responsible for planning and facilitating section meetings. The relevant House Committee member will assist the section leader in this.

(3) Section meetings will take place in the form of a discussion about a topic as suggested by the section residents. These suggestions must be sent to the relevant section leaders before section meetings take place.

(4) Permission to be absent from section meetings can only be obtained from the relevant House Committee member, at least 24 hours before the meeting.

29 Motions

(1) Every resident has the right to file a motion which must subsequently be voted on in a House Meeting or an irregular House Meeting. A motion may pertain to, but is not limited to, the following matters -

(a) Amendments to the Constitution

(b) Termination of the House Committee in its entirety

(c) Stripping a House Committee member of their title

(2) Motions must be filed with the Primaria at least 3 days before the meeting.

(3) Congress leaders must facilitate discussions pertaining to the motion in question with their respective year groups, before the motion is voted on.

(4) To pass a motion, 2/3 of the House must vote in favour of passing the motion, provided that 2/3 of the House place a vote.

CHAPTER 8

INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES

33 Internal disciplinary process

(1) Where a resident conducts themselves in a manner contrary to Serruria's values, or where a residents' conduct breaches a Residence Rule or any rule relating to residences as stipulated by Stellenbosch University, such resident will receive a verbal warning.

(2) Where a resident conducts themselves in a manner contrary to Serruria's values, or where a residents' conduct breaches a Residence Rule or any rule relating to residences as stipulated by Stellenbosch University, and where such resident has previously received a verbal warning for any transgression, the resident will receive a written warning.

(3) Where a resident has been presented with both a verbal and written warning, and continues to transgress a Residence Rule or any rule relating to residences as stipulated by Stellenbosch University, or conducts themselves in a manner contrary to Serruria's vales, such resident will appear before the Internal Disciplinary Committee.

(a) The Internal Disciplinary Committee consists of the Primaria, Vice-Primaria, Residence Head and one House Committee member.

(b) The Internal Disciplinary Committee will make a value judgment to determine whether such resident will be punished internally, or whether the resident will appear before the Central Disciplinary Committee.

(4) Where a resident receives a verbal or written warning, the Primaria or Vice-Primaria must issue the warning in print. Both parties must certify the warning by means of a signature.

(5) Where a resident receives a verbal or written warning, and deems such warning to be granted unfairly or unjustly, such resident may oppose the warning by directly appearing before the Internal Disciplinary Committee.

(6) Where a resident will receive a verbal warning, written warning or will appear before the Internal Disciplinary Committee, such resident must be notified thereof within a reasonable period of time.

CHAPTER 9

APPLICATION

31 Application

(1) This Constitution is binding on all residents of Serruria.

(2) This Constitution is subsidiary to policy as promulgated by Stellenbosch University, including –

(a) Residence Rules (2012)

(b) Disciplinary Code for Students of SU (2020)

(c) Language Policy (2021)

(d) Safeguard of campus community and student wellbeing in certain emergency situations (2019)

(e) Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment (2021)

CHAPTER 10

AMENDMENTS

32 Constitutional amendments

(1) To pass a motion to validly amend the Constitution, 2/3 of the House must vote in favour of passing the motion, provided that 2/3 of the House place a vote.

(2) Where a motion to amend has been passed, such amendments must be certified by the Primaria and Vice Primaria.

(3) Non-compliance with subsections (1) and (2) will result in a procedural irregularity and will render the amendment invalid.

CHAPTER 11

CERTIFICATION OF AMENDMENTS

AS AMENDED ON 8 OCTOBER 2021

PRIMARIA LEBONE MOILOA

LMoiloa

VICE-PRIMARIA

FLAVIA DAVIDS