



# SRC 2020/2021 Term 2 Report

Xola Njengele, Chairperson, xn@sun.ac.za

## Contents

Constitutional Responsibilities.....	1
Portfolio Overview.....	2
Committees / Task Teams.....	2
Term Overview.....	3
Budget.....	5
Budget & Reasoning.....	5
Expenditure so far.....	6
Plans for next term.....	6
Important Contacts.....	7
Annexure A.....	8
Annexure B.....	13

## Constitutional Responsibilities

As per Section 22 of the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution 2018, the Chairperson –

- (a) is the chief executive officer of the SRC;
- (b) acts as spokesperson for the SRC;
- (c) is ultimately responsible for the finances of the SRC; and
- (d) ensures that the SRC fulfil their mandate.

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

## 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

- **Council** – see Annexure A
- **Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC)** – On 15 Feb 2021, ICBC decided to invite the SRC Chairperson to join the committee for the remainder

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

of the SRC term. This was to ensure that the student voice was fully presented when decisions had to be taken by the committee. This has had a positive impact on the functionality of the SRC because it has allowed the structure to be fully involved in decision pertaining to Covid-19, especially in making a valuable input in favour of students at all times.

- **Honorary Degrees Committee** – Have not sat yet.
- **Language Policy Revision Work Group** – see the developments at <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/Language.aspx>
- **Anti-GBV Steering Committee** – To date this committee has sat to discuss the terms of reference of the steering committee to set out the scope and limitations of the committee. The selection of the Chairperson of the committee was also engaged on however there was no conclusion to this and as such the position still remains vacant. The proposed mode of functioning for the committee has been determined to be through working groups. Not much concrete work has been done thus far by the committee however this may be resultant from there being a need to solidify the foundation of the committee to ensure that it is effective and efficient.

## Term Overview

### RegisterAll

Please see Treasurer's Term 2 report for in-depth breakdown.

### Bereavement

The tragic passing of our friend and colleague Nomzamo Buthelezi (Societies Council Chairperson & SRC Policy Officer) left an unmendable hole in our team. A befitting memorial service was hosted for Nomzamo which the Buthelezi family could also attend. Delegates from the SRC, SC and SASCO also attended the funeral, which was held in Nquthu, KwaZulu-Natal.

The portfolio of Policy Officer was taken up by Philip Visage (SRC Treasurer) and Sinegugu April took the *ex-officio* position on the SRC when she took over as Acting Chairperson of the Societies Council.

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

The wellbeing of the team was prioritised through setting up a debrief session with a psychologist through the CSCD. Furthermore, through the SRC Student Wellness portfolio a teambuilding engagement session was held at Strand Beach for the purpose of boosting the team's morale. All these measures have assisted in ensuring that the wellbeing of the SRC remains a priority and that the members are fully equipped to fulfil their mandates for the rest of the SRC term.

## **South African Union of Students (SAUS)**

### NEC Meetings

The NEC meetings attended thus far have been dealing with the financial issues faced by students nationally. Presentations from NSFAS, USAF, DHET & SASSAP are a norm at these engagements, which are often heavily scrutinized and criticized by those in attendance. With particular focus on the presentations made by NSFAS and DHET, they both lacked direction in the sense that they could directly address the issues at hand. The beginning of the academic year was met with the national shutdown as a result of the continuous financial issues students faced. At one of the NEC meetings held this year a list of demands was comprised and sent to relevant stakeholders (i.e. NSFAS & DHET) for response. However as alluded to above the responses given were insufficient and unfortunately lacked the practicality SRC leaders emphasized on.

In the Stellenbosch University context, when looking at the demands eventually majority of the demands were seen to through internal structures with efforts made by the SRC in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders. The shutdown came to an end on 31 March 2021 (see Annexure B) however it's important to clarify that as the SU SRC, we were in support of the shutdown however did not participate as it would have been counter productive in our space; that is considering the bursaries issued to students who had debt, to allow them to register and other measures which were in place.

## **SRC Functionality**

The second term for the SRC was filled with issues in pertaining to the registration period. Important to note, all SRC members were fully equipped with dealing with issues arising from the registration period as they all underwent training through the Registration Campaign workshop organised by Student Governance in collaboration with the relevant offices during

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

registration (e.g. Residence Placements, Client Services etc). Presentations were made by all the relevant offices on how they were going to function accounting for the pandemic and to also allow the SRC to align itself appropriately so as to effectively assist students.

Throughout the registration period it became apparent that duties of certain portfolios overlapped with others which then necessitated great levels of collaboration; which were executed successfully. The period did come with heightened stress levels as the issues (such as debt, residence & registration fees) students were facing placed many of them in limbo. As much as it could the SRC held its own debrief sessions daily, which allowed the members to continuously do better in assisting students and fulfilling their own portfolio specific goals. Although the second SRC term ended with great levels of sadness, overall the functionality of the structure was stable.

## Budget

### Budget & Reasoning

Chairperson			R19 200,00
<u>Discretionary Fund- Chair</u>			<u>R1 000,00</u>
Discretionary Funds	1	R1 000,00	R1 000,00
<u>Member Expenses</u>			<u>R13 200,00</u>
External Meetings	10	R400,00	R4 000,00
Emergency Meetings Tygerberg	3	R400,00	R1 200,00
Personal Secretary	28	R200,00	R5 600,00
Emergency Meetings Military Academy	3	R800,00	R2 400,00
<u>Strategic Meetings</u>			<u>R5 000,00</u>
Off-Campus engagement	1	R2 500,00	R2 500,00
Stellenbosch Engagement	1	R2 500,00	R2 500,00

The Chairperson's budget is comprised mostly of expenses in relation to meetings so as to meet with stakeholders in other campuses (Tygerberg & Military Academy) as well as those who are off campus (mainly SAUS). The amounts for meeting in Tygerberg and the Military Academy are based off the tariffs from Vehicle Pool; for three meeting which are split over the academic terms. Budgeting for these meetings is in place so as to ensure that the support that the two campuses require from the SRC are met as well as any emergency engagement sessions that may be required. The amount for off-campus and Stellenbosch engagement is set off previous figures under the Chairperson's budget. The off-campus figure may however increase in future resulting from travels outside the Western Cape.

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

## Expenditure so far

<b>Chairperson</b>			<b>R36 730,61</b>
<u>Discretionary Fund- Chair</u>			<u>R1 000,00</u>
Discretionary Funds	R1 000,00		R1 000,00
<u>Member Expenses</u>			<u>R6 200,00</u>
Personal Secretary	R5 600,00	R3 000,00	R2 600,00
Emergency Meetings Tygerberg	R1 200,00		R1 200,00
Emergency Meetings Military Academy	R2 400,00		R2 400,00
<u>Strategic Meetings</u>			<u>R29 530,61</u>

Friday, 14 May 2021

Page 2 of 14

	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent	Amount available
Off-Campus engagement	R48 500,00	R18 969,39	R29 530,61

Thus far, the expenses incurred under the Chairperson’s budget are for: Personal Secretary & Strategic Meetings. The Personal Secretary cost (R3000) is to cover the remuneration as agreed to with the individual who carries out the tasks of personal secretary to the SRC Chairperson, which covers 15 weeks. The Strategic Meetings cost (R18969.39) covers the costs to the *Student Health & Welfare of Differently Abled Students Program of SAUS* in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal (feedback in Chairperson’s Term I report) for two people (Chairperson & Special Needs) for costs such as flights, accommodation, and shuttles.

## Plans for next term

- Continue monitoring wellbeing of SRC members so as to ensure they continue performing at their utmost best.
- Support to the Societies Council.
- Support to the Policy Officer
- Asses the state of the SRC along with the Vice Chairperson
- Present the Student Constitution amendments to Council.

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students’ Representative Council  
 Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
 Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
 Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

## Important Contacts

Ms Kira Alberts – [kca@sun.ac.za](mailto:kca@sun.ac.za) (SRC Vice Chairperson)

Dr Choice Makhetha – [choicemakhetha@sun.ac.za](mailto:choicemakhetha@sun.ac.za) (Senior Director: DSAf)

Ms Tonia Overmeyer – [toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za](mailto:toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za) (Dean of Students)

Mr Anele Mdepa – [anelemdepa@sun.ac.za](mailto:anelemdepa@sun.ac.za) (Student Governance: Manager)

Ms Sharine Dowries – [sharine@sun.ac.za](mailto:sharine@sun.ac.za) (Student Governance: Administrator)

Mr Thulani Hlatshwayo – [thulani@sun.ac.za](mailto:thulani@sun.ac.za) (Student Governance: Coordinator)

Ms Ayanda Ntuli – [ayandantuli@sun.ac.za](mailto:ayandantuli@sun.ac.za) (DSAf: Communications)

Prof Deresh Ramjugernath – [dereshr@sun.ac.za](mailto:dereshr@sun.ac.za) (DVC: Learning & Teaching)

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: [sr@sun.ac.za](mailto:sr@sun.ac.za)

## Annexure A



Graphics accompanying this item on the SU homepage: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=8158>

## Communication from Council (meeting of 13 April 2021)

The Council of Stellenbosch University (SU) held its first of four scheduled meetings for the year on Tuesday 13 April 2021. As in December 2020, we again met in hybrid mode, with some members gathering on campus (observing all COVID-19 protocols) and others participating online.

SU did extremely well in trying circumstances last year, having completed **the 2020 academic year** successfully despite a rapid switch to online mode when contact tuition was suspended nationwide in March. In the end, no fewer than 9 079 **qualifications** were awarded to students from all backgrounds, including 270 doctoral degrees – among the highest of all universities in South Africa.

These accomplishments, along with many others highlighted in the reports tabled at the meeting, led Council to unanimously adopt **two motions** – one of confidence in management; and another of appreciation for all staff members. Council confirms that maintaining academic excellence remains the best strategy to ensure SU's sustainability (full text below).

We were also pleased to adopt a **new logo** for the University, which favourably positions SU in the local, regional and global higher education landscape as an institution with world-class academic standing, aspiring to be Africa's leading research-intensive university by 2040. Council congratulated the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy and Internationalisation, Prof Hester Klopper, on spearheading this important project the past three years.

In addition, we approved the constitution of a new **School for Climate Studies** at SU, which paves the way for the imminent establishment of what promises to be a groundbreaking transdisciplinary initiative in the battle against climate change. It will consolidate and integrate current thinking on climate in Africa, and facilitate the continent-wide transfer of know-how and emerging technologies to help build resilience to climate change.

Council is **confident** that SU is well placed to again meet its overarching goals this year: succeeding with the academic project, and remaining sustainable as a leading higher education institution, while prioritising the well-being of our students and staff. As we move deeper into the second year of COVID-19, our University's focus is no longer only on mitigating the pandemic, but also on continuing to build a future beyond it.

Please read on for more on these issues as well as other discussion points and decisions at our meeting.

Kind regards, and stay safe

**George Steyn**  
**Chair: SU Council**

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

Students' Representative Council  
Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre  
Private Bag X1, Matieland, 7602  
Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: [sr@sun.ac.za](mailto:sr@sun.ac.za)

## Motions of confidence and appreciation

The following motions were adopted unanimously:

### Re. management

“That the SU Council adopt a motion of confidence in management and express their support for the manner in which management, guided by the vision and values of the University, managed the institution with **integrity** in challenging circumstances to maintain and expand academic performance. Over the past few years, SU has performed exceptionally well in the academic field, demonstrating extraordinary agility and adaptability. Council confirms that maintaining academic excellence remains the best strategy to ensure SU’s sustainability.

We also wish the Rector a speedy recovery, and hope he returns to work soon.”

(Prof De Villiers attended the meeting online from home, where he was recuperating after testing positive for COVID-19 on 7 April 2021. [Click here](#) for a previous news item about this.)

### Re. staff

“That the SU Council adopt a motion of appreciation for, and congratulations to, all staff of the institution, who not only sustained their high performance, but excelled in the challenging circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.”

## Academic year concluded successfully

Since the last Council meeting, the 2020 academic year was concluded successfully with two series of graduation ceremonies ([December 2020](#) and [March/April 2021](#)).

In total, SU awarded 9 079 qualifications, as well as five honorary doctorates (to [Ms Louisa Mojela](#), [Prof Daya Reddy](#), [Ms Nasima Badsha](#) and [Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim](#), and posthumously to [Ms Rachel Kachaje](#)).

Council extended its congratulations to all and expressed great pride in the academic excellence of the University and its significant contribution to the development of our country, our continent and the rest of the world.

## Registration and enrolments for 2021

Council was briefed on the 2021 registration process, which was successfully completed by the end of March, despite challenges with funding from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). SU’s Student Debt Task Team annually works towards removing financial blockages that could prevent students from registering. This year, bursaries were secured for more than 500 students to cover their outstanding student fees.

According to the latest figures, **20 867 undergraduates** enrolled this year, **up 4%** from last year. Council welcomed this vote of confidence in the University’s academic offering.

## Applications for 2022 open on SUNStudent

Council noted with appreciation that SUNStudent phase 1 had gone live, with applications with a view to 2022 having opened on **6 April**. And the numbers look promising: Within the first week, nearly 16 000 prospective students signed up, and close to 7 000 completed applications were submitted.

SUNStudent is SU’s new student information system that is gradually replacing the current outdated system. It not only boasts modern interfaces, providing a better overall user experience, but also promises to be capable of responding to new and rapidly changing requirements..

## New logo for SU

A journey that started more than three years ago culminated in Council approving a new visual identity for the University, including a new logo, on Tuesday.

The new logo **represents SU's vision**, which is to be "Africa's leading research-intensive university, globally recognised as excellent, inclusive and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society".

The commemoration of the University's centenary in 2018 provided us with the opportunity to plan for the future SU we wish to create. We did that with Vision 2040, and the new logo succeeds in visually encapsulating where we are now and where we are headed.

Following the adoption of Vision 2040, an institution-wide visual touchpoint audit was conducted, which revealed that more than 170 logos were being used in the SU brand stable. Clearly, our brand was being diluted, which led to the decision to move towards a single visual identity.

In total, **3 100 stakeholders participated** and contributed to the process of developing and co-creating SU's new logo – including students, staff and alumni, all ten faculties, the Visual Redress Committee, Institutional Transformation Committee and the Students' Representative Council. Before taking its decision on Tuesday, Council noted that both the Institutional Forum and Senate, two of our statutory bodies, supported the logo option presented to Council.

Once the new visual identity system has officially been launched later in 2021, the roll-out and implementation process will commence. Until then, the current SU (centenary) logo remains in place.

[Click here](#) for more information, including answers to frequently asked questions.

## Research, innovation and postgraduate studies

Prof Eugene Cloete, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, used his annual reporting opportunity to provide Council with an overview of highlights in his responsibility centre (RC) since his appointment nine years ago. ([Click here](#) for his management report, and [here](#) for a pdf of his PowerPoint presentation.)

The following highlights – presented under SU's core strategic themes – are based on data from 2012 to 2020, unless specified otherwise:

### A thriving Stellenbosch University

SU's **third-stream income** (from research contracts) has nearly doubled in the past nine years, from about R500 million to almost R1 billion per year, of which 70% is international funding. This contributes to the institutional goal of creating a financially sustainable organisation and shows that the University is globally recognised. Even in 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic a significant number of research contracts were signed.

### A transformative student experience

For any research-intensive university, **awarding doctoral** degrees is crucial. SU's numbers have increased from 150 in 2012 to 270 in 2020.

### Purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks

Connection and interaction with business, industry and government is important to leverage our strengths. A significant number of new **research institutes and research centres** have been created across all SU faculties over the past nine years.

### Networked and collaborative teaching and learning

SU's **School for Data Science and Computational Thinking**, established in 2019, is making good progress towards its vision of being a world-class institution in its field, both

in and for Africa.

### Research for impact

The latest report of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on research outputs (in 2019) indicates that SU produced 1,72 **publication outputs** per capita, which places the University second nationwide. SU's number of publication outputs increased by more than 75% since 2012.

For the past five years, SU has remained among the **top universities as ranked** by the DHET, as well as the top South African universities on all main international rankings (THE, QS, Leiden, etc.).

Over the period 2009–2020, SU produced the most **patent applications** in terms of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) in South Africa, outperforming other universities, research councils as well as private companies.

### Employer of choice

The number of **sponsored research chairs** at SU has nearly tripled the past nine years, from 18 in 2012 to 52 in 2020.

**Postdoctoral fellows** have more than doubled, from 157 in 2012 to 350 in 2020. Postdocs continue to make a significant contribution to the University's academic performance.

SU researchers with a **National Research Foundation (NRF) rating** have also increased substantially, now standing at more than double the number of nine years ago. The University currently has 490 rated researchers.

## Language Committee feedback

Council noted reports from its Language Committee and was also briefed on progress with the **revision of SU's Language Policy (2016)**. The latter is taking place this year, as the policy is scheduled to lapse at the end of 2021, five years after its date of implementation (which was at the start of 2017). Council approved the timeline of the review at its previous meeting in December 2020.

According to feedback from the Language Policy Revision Task Team, the revision is **on track**. The first of two public consultation processes concluded on 12 April, as scheduled. (The first draft of the proposed revised policy was made available for public input on 20 March.)

The task team will now carefully consider all the submissions received, prepare a report, and release a second draft for public consultation in July. The process will conclude in December, when a final version is to be tabled at the relevant institutional committees for discussion and recommendation, and submitted to Council for approval, with the concurrence of Senate and after consultation with the Institutional Forum.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## Communication structure

The Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Strategy and Internationalisation, Prof Hester Klopper, briefed Council on measures that were being taken to enhance strategic and proactive communication telling the University's story. Council noted with appreciation the creation of a structure in her office for streamlining communication about high-priority matters.

## Reducing SU's carbon footprint

Council approved an internal loan to Facilities Management to finance a **central** heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (**HVAC**) **plant** for the Faculty of Engineering's complex on SU's Stellenbosch campus. The plant will reduce SU's carbon footprint as well as the University's tax obligations under the new carbon tax. It will also achieve considerable energy savings, making up the cost of the loan over the medium term.

Systemic sustainability is one of the critical attributes of SU's vision and strategy. This includes the long-term cost-effective provision of **sustainable energy**. The aim is to reduce the University's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to net zero by 2030 by replacing our current fossil-fuel energy with renewable energy, including solar power.

In his management report ([click here](#)), the Rector reported that the new **photovoltaic installation** on the roof of the Neelsie student centre would make a considerable contribution in this regard. The installation was completed earlier this year. The system will substantially reduce the University's electricity bill and cut our carbon footprint by 6 000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over the next 20 years.

## Budget model

Council approved an update to the University's budget model in respect of savings on the Human Resources component of the main budget. Council also confirmed the application of limits on reserves in main-budget balance cost centres, as provided for by the existing budget model.

## SU Short-term Rental Policy

Council adopted a policy regulating all short-term rentals of SU facilities, such as theatres, halls, sports facilities and lecture venues. These rentals will no longer be decentralised. The policy covers **all SU facilities** and applies to all staff members, students as well as external parties involved in the short-term rental of SU facilities. The Central Events and Conferencing Office (**CECO**) at **SUNCOM** has been tasked with implementing the policy.

## Personalia

**Prof Deresh Ramjugernath**, SU's new Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Learning and Teaching, attended Council for the first time, having taken office in January.

In terms of the University's new Statute, which took effect in 2019, Council comprises 25 members, one of whom the Rector annually appoints on a rotational basis from the ranks of the DVCs.

**Prof Eugene Cloete** attended Council for the first time in this capacity.

Council also congratulated Prof Cloete on his election as chairperson of the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) community of practice (CoP) for entrepreneurial universities.

In addition, Council congratulated **Prof Amanda Gouws**, a Senate-elected Council member, on having been requested to serve as an advisor for the World Bank's *Country Gender Assessment*. Prof Gouws holds the SARChI chair in gender politics in SU's Department of Political Science.

The term of **Mr Anthony Dietrich**, a Council member appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, expired on 22 March. In terms of the SU Statute, the Minister may appoint five members. Two of these positions are now vacant. Council awaits feedback from the Minister regarding new appointees.

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the SU Council is scheduled for **21 June 2021**.

## Annexure B

### SOUTH AFRICAN UNION OF STUDENTS

#### **SAUS BRINGS AN END TO THE NATIONALSHUTDOWN OF UNIVERSITIES WITH EFFECT FROM THE 31<sup>ST</sup> OF MARCH 2021.**

Following the #NationalShutdown of all public universities which began on the 15 March 2021, the South African Union of Students (SAUS) has had a number of stakeholder engagements to advance the demands of students which were tabled to the Minister.

After numerous failed attempts at resolving the issues at hand, SAUS sought other means of engagements to mediate with the challenges in the Higher Education sector. This included directly engaging with the Public Protector, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training as alternative intervention mechanisms which have played a meaningful role to advance the demands of students and find sustainable solutions to the systemic challenges in the sector.

Following the mandate from SRCs to expedite engagements with the Minister, SAUS met with Minister Nzimande on Monday (29<sup>th</sup> March 2021) and reported back to SRC's accordingly on Tuesday (30 March 2021). The meeting reflected on the last two weeks; the interventions and developments which have been made across the sector against the backdrop of the 15 demands tabled to the Minister.

The shutdown which started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 and the various engagements with stakeholders to advance the 15 students demands have thus led to the following outcomes amongst other things:

1. Subsequent to the call for a national shutdown, the Minister reallocated ±R7 billion back to NSFAS following earlier budget cuts. As a result, FTENs are now able to register.



2. a significant number of universities have started to unblock students with debts to enable smooth registration.
3. 22 out of the 26 universities agreed to suspend academic exclusions for the 2020 cohort of affected students.
4. 643 000 students who were on the verge of financial exclusion managed to register in the last two weeks through online registration.
5. All NSFAS funded students are now being allowed to register without having to pay the Minimum Initial Payment (MIP) or registration fees.
6. SAUS was able to raise a R5 million donation from one CETA to fund needy students who are studying towards Built Environment and Critical Skills qualifications.
7. The problem of the R13 billion student debt has been successfully placed on the national agenda again, and a process has been established to categorise the debt properly so that proposals for a solution can now be tabled to parliament.
8. The governing party has been forced to place the matter of higher education funding on their agenda of the last NEC meeting. The forgotten free education discussion is back on the table.
9. The police officers responsible for the murder of Mthokozisi Nthumba were arrested and the court process is underway.
10. Total of 19 universities out of 26 are now giving students their NSFAS meal and accommodation allowances.
11. Laptops from NSFAS will be distributed in the next three weeks. SAUS will be part of the distribution team to ensure all deserving students received their devices on time.
12. A Rapid Response Ministerial Task Team has been immediately put in place comprising DHET & SAUS to deal with specific issues and resolve matters such as academic records, PGCE funding, outstanding registration queries and accreditation of student accommodation etc.
13. A meeting between DHET, USAF, SAUS, NSFAS & NRF has been secured for the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 to finalize & resolve outstanding funding challenges and registration matters.
14. The Public Protector has committed to investigate the victimization, suspensions, expulsions and unlawful arrests of students in the Post-

Education and Training (PSET) sector. SAUS will be submitting a report to that effect of a number of student cases.

15. The Parliament Portfolio Committee on Higher Education confirmed that the free education discussion, Heher Commission report and student debt matters will be tabled as priority areas for discussions.
16. For the first time no student leader was suspended by universities for participating in the SAUS national shutdown & for the first time no property was damaged.
17. Registration has been extended by two weeks, discussions are underway for further extension to accommodate all unregistered students.
18. A total of 17 universities are already providing students with academic records, a process has been put in place between DHET, SAUS and USAF to ensure that the other 9 universities do the same.
19. DHET funding guidelines have been published, students are now receiving their NSFAS funding decisions & the appeals process has been opened.
20. As of today the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021, a total of 19 universities are now allowing their students back in residences, we are expecting the other 7 universities to allow all students back on campus in the coming weeks.
21. SAUS also welcomes the R30 million intervention from the Premier of Eastern Cape Mr Mabuyane to fund needy students at WSU, Fort Hare, Rhodes and NMU. We encourage other Premiers to do the same.
22. SAUS welcomes SRCs from 14 universities who took millions of Rands from their SRC budget to fund needy students. Other SRCs fundraised from the private sector to create an SRC bursary fund for student registration.

Following the above interventions, SAUS met with SRCs on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 and the meeting resolved unanimously to bring the #NationalShutdown to an end and immediately begin the process of encouraging all students who have been affected by the online process to go back to campuses. The decision is informed by the SAUS meeting with the Minister on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 whose outcomes were accepted by SRC members.

The South African Union of Students appreciates the support from university SRCs in responding to the SAUS call for a national shutdown. The fact that 18 universities joined on the first day of the shutdown means it was successful. We acknowledge that immediate demands are met, medium demands are being attended to, and long-term demands are back on the national space with processes put in place for a sustainable solution.

The South African Union of Students has reaffirmed itself as a formidable organization and a true voice of students that is able to ventilate the grievances of students and champion their interests. SAUS implemented a national shutdown successfully despite the fact that most of the activities are happening remotely. Whilst the shutdown has ended, our mandate from our constituency is to continue pursuing outstanding matters through alternative mechanisms. We want to assure our students that within no time we will be visiting those institutions that are facing more problems to ensure that no student is left behind.

Our interest is to see all students registering, getting shelter, receiving food, and learning materials. As mandated by university SRCs we will be utilizing the processes and mechanisms that have been put in place by the Minister to ensure that we adequately address all outstanding matters. SAUS wishes you well for the 2021 academic year.

Issued by

The South African Union of Students For

Enquiries Contact

Secretary General

Lwandile Mtsolo

[saus.secretariat@gmail.com](mailto:saus.secretariat@gmail.com)

+27734405586

National Spokesperson

Thabo Shingange

+27716646858

*saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together*

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)