



# SRC 2020/2021 Term 2 Report

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## Constitutional Responsibilities

As the SRC Treasurer my constitutional responsibilities can be split between the duties imposed on me as an SRC member, a member of the SRC Executive Committee and my portfolio specific duties.

As an SRC Member, sections 21 and 26 impose the prevalent duties. Accordingly, I must always act in the best interest of students and to actively promote their constitutionally provided rights. Other specific duties include to represent students on institutional committees, to evaluate and give input on institutional policies, to facilitate projects to the benefit of students and finally to formulate policy in order for the SRC to perform their duties effectively. Section 26 further obligates me to submit a termly report of all my activities during the academic term to the Secretary. Finally, according to section 38 I have to attend an SRC meeting every two weeks during the academic term.

As an Executive Committee member, section 35 and 36 imposes additional obligations. This includes setting the agenda for SRC meetings, managing the day-to-day activities of the SRC, compiling the SRC budget and deciding on portfolio allocations. Finally, I am required to attend weekly meetings.

As the Treasurer I am constitutionally mandated to perform certain policy and administrative duties. This includes developing financial policies for the SRC to ensure the transparent and responsible use of the financial resources and acting to ensure that these policies are adhered to. Practically this translates into the responsibility of approving all expenditure to be in line with pre-determined criteria.





## Portfolio Overview

The Treasurer's portfolio duties are not set out in detail within the Student Constitution. As such the exact functioning and duties of the portfolio have developed to fit into the traditional workings of an SRC and the overarching structure enforced by Student Governance. Within this context and my personal experience over the past term, the current portfolio duties can be distinguished into 5 broad categories.

Firstly, this portfolio is responsible for the SRC's budget. Although the power to approve and amend the budget lies within the executive committee's discretion- the Treasurer is delegated to perform the actual compilation. This includes all preceding procedures for the initial compilation and keeping the budget updated as amendments are made.

Secondly, this portfolio must develop policies to ensure that the financial resources are spent in a transparent and responsible manner. This would require drafting policies to regulate the internal financial affairs of the SRC within the broader institutional policy framework. The treasurer must then present these policies for approval at an SRC meeting as well as explain their working.

Thirdly, the Treasurer must assist other portfolio holders with the financial aspects of their portfolio duties. This educational role requires the Treasurer to support other SRC members with financial processing and navigating the labyrinth that is often called the Division Finance. In practice this would include publishing guides, offering training and answering queries. For portfolio holders not managing their own cost centres, the Treasurer will take on the role of managing their expenses on their behalf.

Fourthly, the Treasurer plays an administrative role in approving all expenses made. This is not a discretionary role but one of ensuring all expenses incurred are in fact in compliance with the pre-determined policies and reflects on the approved portfolio budgets.

Finally, this portfolio is ultimately responsible for the financial reporting of the SRC. Although this duty has been duly overlooked in past terms- it is intrinsically part of the Treasurer's duties in ensuring transparent usage of financial resources.





## Committees / Task Teams

Outside of the abovementioned portfolio duties, I served on the following committees:

### Institutional Committees:

#### Senate

The Senate is responsible for the academic and research functions of the Institution and reports to the Council. Its composition is by and large professors of the Institution with some members of the senior management also represented. Its functions can be found in section 19 of the Stellenbosch University Statute and can be summarised as regulating all learning, teaching, research and academic support functions at the Institution. It is further responsible for forwarding recommendations to Council on policies that affect academic matters.

The only Senate meeting of this term took place on 19 March 2021. In this meeting, appointments were made to the institutional committees, Management reports were presented, the new SU brand was presented, and APC recommendations were explained. With regards to institutional committees, two professors were appointed to the Research Committee and Academic Planning Committee, respectively. Two management reports were presented by the Rector and Vice-Rector Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies respectively.

#### Naming Committee

The Naming Committee was established in terms of the Institution's Policy on the naming of Buildings, Venues and other Facilities/Premises in order to propose a new name for the former Wilcocks building to the Rectorate Management Team. This committee was chaired by the Registrar and included 5 staff members, a representative from the alumni relations, an historian and 2 student representatives.

The committee's function has thereby been completed and the committee dissolved thereafter. This committee's internal discussions, procedures and conclusions were deemed to be confidential by the chair and as such no information on that can be shared in this report.

#### Quality Committee (QC)

The QC was established in 1993 to ensure all departments in this institution are following the appropriate procedure for assessing the quality of their 'services.' This committee does not itself assess the quality but assists the departments to set their own criteria and reviews their internal procedures. The QC aims to assess all departments over a 5-year cycle. Departments include all faculties and administrative departments of the Institution. The QC is chaired by the Vice-rector Learning and Teaching and the secretary is the senior adviser of the Academic Planning and Quality Assurance division. The SRC holds 2 seats on this committee.

During the QC meeting for this term, 3 departments were reviewed. The specific departments were the History Department, Agronomy Department and Engineering Faculty.

#### Student Debt Working Group (SDWG)

This working group was established in 2018 with the sole purpose of providing in-debt students financial access to register for their studies. Historically this working group was referred to as the





'historic debt task team' but due to the misperceptions that this working group aims to assist with all historic debt the name was changed. As it now stands the main criteria that the SDWG uses is whether a student intends to register for studies in this year but is barred from doing so by their debt due to the Institution. It is important to understand that this is not an institutional committee with a set budget but merely a working group of staff and students that aim to divert and direct students to appropriate channels and find funding to assist them to clear their debt in order to register. As it stands, the SDWG consists of 3 staff members from the Undergraduate and Postgraduate funding offices as well as a member from Student Accounts. The student section consists of two SRC members.

At the time of this report, the working group has concluded their work. Due to the ad hoc nature, the institution is currently working on institutionalising the duties performed thereby and the SRC members serving thereon are assisting with advice on how such a committee should be structured

### Senate Library Committee

This sub-committee of Senate reports to Senate on the academic activities of the Library and Information Service. Practically this entails developing policies, reviewing existing policies and giving strategic input from an academic perspective on the activities and functioning of the Library and Information Service. The scope of this committee's review and report powers covers all 6 SU libraries as well as the infrastructure utilised to provide access of the information material to students and staff of the Institution. The committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation and postgraduate studies and include other senior staff members such as the Vice-Rector for Learning and Teaching, the Dean of Students, the Senior Director: Library and Information Services and the Chairperson of the department of Information Science. The remainder of the committee consists of 7 members of Senate and 2 SRC members which alternate attending meetings. This Committee currently only meets twice in a calendar year.

One meeting took place which another member, Leone Wilkinson, attended and I will only attend a meeting in August.

### SRC Committees

#### SRC Executive Committee

The SRC Executive Committee is established by section 34 of the Student Constitution and I serve thereon by virtue of being the Treasurer. This committee is given additional powers and duties for the proper administration of the SRC's functions. Such duties are set out in above under constitutional responsibilities. Above and beyond those powers, the executive committee has been delegated additional duties and powers by institutional structures that have not been directly delegated unto them in terms of section 35(1)(c). The powers below do have not have direct constitutional authorisation but have been developed through custom. This includes meetings solely between the RMT (Rectorate Management Team) and the executive committee on a regular basis; meetings solely between the senior management of DSAF (Division for Student Affairs) and the executive committee; appointing SRC Managers; and making important decision, which are not urgent, but whilst the SRC is in recess.

During the past term I attended all of the executive committee meetings. The matters discussed and decisions made in these meetings have been properly minuted and can be found in the meeting minutes distributed to SRC members after the meetings.





### SRC Disciplinary Committee

The SRC Disciplinary Committee is a sub-committee established by the Vice-Chairperson by virtue of their responsibility to manage the internal relations and discipline in the SRC. This committee takes the responsibility to amend the code of conduct that is then presented to the SRC to adopt in terms of section 29 of the Constitution. This committee then utilises the procedures in the adopted code of conduct to discipline SRC members when appropriate. The composition of this committee is established by the code of conduct and includes the Vice-Chairperson as the ex officio chair, 1 additional SRC member elected by the SRC, and 3 other students appointed by the Vice-Chairperson.

This Committee met 1 time during this term and in dealt with possible sanctions against an SRC member.

### RegisterAll Task Team

The RegisterAll Task Team runs the annual SRC project that assists students with registering. This assistance is both informational and financial in nature. The Task Team's functioning is determined each year by the incoming SRC and therefore massive changes have been made from prior years. Key characteristics this year included a complete migration to online processes, extensive advertising to the student body, parallel processes for Tygerberg and Main Campus, and personalised application forms utilising SunSurvey. The implementation required the consultation with and approvals from Student Accounts, Undergraduate Bursaries and Loans, Postgraduate Office, and the Registrar's Office. The other procedures and membership to the task team has extensively been reported on can be requested on request from the Task Team. The general process can however be summarised as following: planning and consultation, advertise, receive requests, send applications and instalment forms, assist with breaking payment into instalments, review applications, submit names to Registrar's office and inform students of outcome.

The SRC's annual registration assistance project incurred R248 523,33. These funds were used to assist 32 students in the following manner:

- 14 Postgraduate students and 18 Undergraduate students
- 14 students with Accommodation and 18 students without

The funds were used from the SRC's Reserve Fund. This decision was made in order for the SRC to utilise their operational funds to the fullest extent since we were at that point in time not yet informed of what our funds would be. This practice is however not sustainable. The SRC is therefore in the process of engaging with stakeholders to find a better model to fund this annual project.

A full report will be released detailing the processes followed and further recommendations.

### Honoraria Review Committee

This committee was established by the Executive Committee of the SRC to investigate the current regulations, levels, and monetary value of honoraria across leadership structures at the Institution. The objective is to present the Executive Committee with a comprehensive report, including proposals, by the end of 2020. This report is then to be proposed to DSAF and a consultative process be commenced to amend the current honoraria rules across the institution.





Since the previous term report, the committee's duties have been concluded. I am however still in the process of writing the report to be presented to DSAF.

### Constitutional Review Committee

This committee was established by the Policy Officer in order to comply with the constitutional requirement to review the Student Constitution in 2021. The committee members were individually selected by the Policy Officer based on policy and constitutional experience. It consists of 4 members plus the Policy Officer acting as the chairperson.

This committee has concluded our duties. All amendments were compiled in a referendum document presented to the SRC, Student Parliament and student populace by virtue of a mass meeting. The SRC subsequently voted in the amendments. All fundamental amendments are now up for a general referendum to be hosted by the election convenor. The committee has handed over all documentation and briefed the convenor on the procedure going forward. Outside of submitting the updated constitution to Council as an agenda point, this committee is done.

### Matie To Matie Committee

This committee was established in terms of the SRC's Requesting SRC Financial Assistance Policy. 5 SRC members serve on this committee, which is headed by the convenor, Gina Sibanda. The committee meets on a weekly basis to review applications and find measures to assist students.

During this term, the committee was established and elected the convenor. We initiated our processes and as we went along, created our criteria. These criteria are then subsequently applied to all requests. The details of applications accepted can be found within the SRC's Midterm Financial report.

### Other Committees

#### Treasurer's Forum

The Student Parliament Constitution obligates their executive treasurer to convene a Treasurer's forum consisting of treasurers across leadership structures as set out in that provision. The SRC is not bound by this task team but I would in any case be willing to voluntarily sit on such a forum. At the time of this report, being 8 months after the SPC's appointment, this forum has to my knowledge not yet been convened. The Executive Treasurer for Student Parliament has however requested me to meet and discuss my budget, presumably based on his powers delegated by this provision, but upon my positive response he has not made any contact again since. As of now I do not see this forum as having any benefits based on the glaring failure to convene it at a stage where I and other Treasurers were still able to make changes to our budgets and programs.





## Term Overview

Outside of the committee's that I served on and the activities listed above- the following is an overview of my activities as an SRC member during the first term. I will divide this overview into 3 parts, being my activities as Treasurer, an Executive Committee member, and as an SRC member in general.

### Treasurer Overview

As treasurer this term, I processed transactions, amended the budget, recorded our financial activities and provided training to members. In addition I drafted and passed 2 more financial policies to further advance the fiscal accountability and capacity of the SRC.

### Executive Committee member overview

My duties on the Executive Committee have sufficiently been dealt with under my committee duties above.

### SRC Member overview

During this term I attended all SRC meetings. Outside of thereof I took part in other SRC members' projects. This included serving as a driver for the SRC's Registration assistance initiative, attending the SRC camp, attending the Financial Wellness talk series and judging at the Molasseser competition. I furthermore acted as a Friend of the Cluster for Victoria cluster as part of the SRC's Friend of the Cluster initiative. During this term there was no events that I attended as part of this designation.

As an additional initiative, I started to investigate the feasibility of revamping the SRC's boardroom. This resulted in a resolution to upgrade the multimedia capacity of the SRC boardroom by the Executive Committee. After site visits and consultations with stakeholders, a plan has been handed in to facilities management which is awaiting approval. On finalisation, this project aims to have the boardroom capable of hosting webinars and online meetings with ease.





## Budget Usage

The full SRC Midterm Financial report has been released and can be requested by any student.

The Treasurer's expenditure consists of R750,00 of the R1 000,00 discretionary funds that was utilised for hosting members of the Student Debt Working Group for a breakfast after conclusion of our duties.





## Plans for next term

As the Treasurer, I do not have conventional projects planned during the year. As such my plans for the next term will mostly constitute continuing with my portfolio duties as set out above in my Portfolio Overview. Outside of this general and ongoing duties, I will continue with the duties required by the different committees on which I serve as set out above.

Specific plans that I do have, include the following:

### Engage with DSAF on the monetary allocations to student structures

In my personal opinion, the current allocation of funds received for distribution by Student Governance is not the optimal allocation. After 2 meetings with DSAF, they have yet to agree to a date for such a meeting although all our concerns have been reduced to writing and appropriately distributed. We are therefore waiting in patience for them to meet us halfway...

### Write a policy in coordination with DSAF on the use of the SRC's Reserve Fund

With the successful push to gain direct access to our Reserve Fund, we need to implement a procedure on how the funds may be utilised. As such I will draft such a policy and present to the SRC for approval.

### Write a report on the RegisterAll project

The exact processes that were followed will be reported on. This will take the form of both feedback to the SRC as well as a guiding document to future SRCs. As such, recommendations and critique on this year's process will be included.

### Work with Student Governance to create a system for Financial documentation to be effectively passed between SRC's

I will work with Student Governance and/or the Centre for Student Leadership, Experiential Education and Citizenship to implement a standing guideline on how financial policies, guides and information can be handed over to subsequent SRCs. This guide will strive to explain the nuances of being an SRC treasurer as well as to what extent prior SRCs' decisions and policies may bind subsequent treasurers. It will furthermore give a roadmap to the initial days after being appointed including both mandatory processes and recommended steps to be taken to ensure an efficient commencement of term.

### Investigate and amend SRC Budget

Certain planned projects are not taking place anymore. Therefore I will attempt to fine comb the current budget and cut projects not taking place freeing up funds for new projects.

## Recommendations to improve portfolio

Although recommendations are normally included in term reports, the nature of this portfolio has led me to decide to not do this. After my term, I will be able to thoroughly investigate all I have done and the changes I have implemented. As such I would rather submit recommendations at once





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during my annual report. Let us then hope that I am therefore not impeached until then before I made some recommendations. But then again, If I am impeached there is most likely no reason to consider my proposed recommendations...

