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| **Subject:** | *Annual Report* |
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# Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution, 2018, the Secretary General is at least responsible for:

a) maintaining internal communication within the SRC;

b) managing knowledge and institutional memory within the SRC;

c) ensuring that SRC meetings, and any other meetings or consultations where the SRC desired record keeping, are properly recorded; and

d) updating, safekeeping and making available records, policies and other documents of the SRC.

While this is, technical covered in the description I do still find it important to note that the Secretary General is also the main person responsible for organising meetings for and liaising between the SRC Executive and the Rectorate Management Team specifically related

# Portfolio Overview

The role of the Secretary General while simple on paper is quite complex in practice.

1. Role in the SRC:

The Secretary General is primarily responsible to uphold internal communication within the SRC.

This means that the Secretary General makes all relevant documents available to the SRC, including, but not limited to, the minutes and agendas of SRC meetings, the minutes and agendas of Executive Committee meetings as well as the minutes and agendas of Executive SRC Members and Management meetings.

What is notable about this is that internal communication is most definitely, not limited to these formal circumstances. Because of this extension of definition, additional responsibilities befall the Secretary General such as keeping members and managers of the SRC updated at all times on the various happenings and stances of the SRC.

The Secretary General is also responsible to ensure smooth communication lines within the SRC, using different platforms, including, but not limited to, emails and cell phone communication.

2. Role in the University

The role of the Secretary General in the context of the University stretches as far as maintaining communication lines with the Rector’s Management Team. The Secretary General is responsible to set up the agenda as well as to minute all meetings held between the Rectorate and the SRC Executive. They are also responsible to make these minutes and agendas available to all the people included in the SRC Executive and Management meetings contact list (listed in important contacts).

Further, the Secretary General plays a pivotal role as the direct communicating link between the SRC and the Rectorate Management Team

3. Role in South Africa

SRC’s around the country have a very important role to play in representing students on the different campuses. The Secretary General is an Executive position in all SRC has, plays a very important role a store of and main point of access for SRC Members and managers, Management and students to all information relevant to the SRC. When Secretary Generals from various University’s hold effective communication it helps unify the students of South Africa especially in extraordinary circumstances which as it seems haunts the 2019/2020 SRC Term. This relationship will also be extremely important in terms of the next SRC’s utilisation of their SAUS membership

# Committees / Task Teams

## Institutional

Senate

Institutional Transformation Committee

Registrar’s Business Continuity Sub-committee

Senate Library Committee (Alternate)

Online Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (Alternate)

Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (Alternate)

## Other Committees / Task Teams

SRC Executive Committee

Student Institutional Committee

Anti-GBV Working Group on Mental Health and Alcohol

RegistarAll Food Task Team

# Budget Overview

# Budget Overview

My budget as finalised by 25 May

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Total Allocated** |  **R 6 500,00**  |
| **Expenses** |  **R 6 500,00**  |
| Laptop repairs [SPENT] | R2500 |
| Remainder  | R1000  |
| Minute-editor salary [SPENT] |  R 3 000,00  |

# Term Overview

I began my larger term in office already fulfilling many of the duties assigned to the Secretary General such as record making and keeping and organisation of meetings and formal relations between the SRC, SRC Exec and the various staff members at SU including but not limited to Student Governance, The Rectorate Management Team Various institutional committees and task teams. This, all before I was even elected the role, which would happen in February- mid-registration period .

The beginning of any term- regular or no- will I believe be most strenuous for the positions of Chairperson and secretary as these two actors are in high demand by the staff and SU Constitution to perform at this time. Especially in terms of preparations for the registration period. The registration period was the second busiest time of the year for me. It is only surpassed by the days preceding, and the months succeeding, the national Lockdown. With regard to a specific breakdown of the work did in this term, please see my First Term report available on the SRC Website.

Admittedly, I was quite humble back then and may have understated the important role that the secretary General should play in registration. The secretary general, as I interpret the role, is the SRC’s organiser. Though the chairperson is meant to lead the SRC his specific mandate is left ambiguous, and ambiguity and student governance structures have in my experience not mixed well. Thus, the benefit of the Secretary general essentially the person who is meant to hold the line when the larger body fails to hold to tangible commitments like their representative roles on institutional structures, deadlines and in my case often constitutional responsibilities. During registration I often was left to organise things last minute- though still to best of my ability due to a lack of preparation and willingness to do so from others. Example: the registration champions’ training and management. Much of my year, especially and intentionally my last term was spent trying to maintain a sense of internal accountability for actions and decisions that were unclear, ambiguous or clearly unconstitutional.

I have maintained my constitutional duties in relation to minutes and agendas for SRC meetings, SRC Executive Meetings as well as Rectorate Management meetings. This includes mostly timely access given to relevant parties of minutes, agendas, and notices. There were some incidents less than a handful throughout the year wherein I was unable to meet deadlines of minutes or hand-in quality minutes due either to academic or other SRC responsibilities taking up my time. One of particular dissatisfaction was the incident wherein we had 3 executive SRC meetings at the end of march and during the budgeting process, within the same week, each a day or two between each other and all over 2 and a half hours long. My mistake here was twofold. Firstly, I wrongly minuted a consideration point as a decision, and Secondly, I held the record of the draft for record keeping while distributing the final version initially. This became an issue later when the minutes were up for review and different SRC members had different versions. The process of my minute distribution includes forwarding the document to the SRC1920@Stellenbosch.onmicrosoft.com and indicating in the group chat that they are available. Some members often request personal emails with the document attached. Here is where the distribution flaw arose as different documents were distributed. Amongst the Covid-19 Global Pandemic - which became an apparent threat to student success in the end of the first term of 2020- much was done on my end in terms of organising and coordinating SRC processes, meetings and continuation in a professional accessible and productive manner for the purposes of ensuring student success. Regular SRC Meetings continued on date. I organised the first – to my knowledge- completely Online SRC Meeting open to the public. Our SRC meetings following the first mostly ran smoothly follow MS Teams Updates (the raising hand function). A few Special SRC Meetings also occurred post the official end of the 2nd Academic term of 2020 as important matters arose. Unfortunately attendance of both visitors and SRC Members at these meetings dropped steadily to none, and less than quorum as the larger term ended.

I cannot remember if I was requested or randomly selected to be a representative at the Registrar’s Work-stream for Student Services , but it certainly was a highlight of my term either way. I routinely attending meetings of the Work stream for student services, which initially met every 2/3 days for a period of 2 weeks following the decisions of 16 March and then continued once a week and continues today. In this work stream various Student services structures sit and meet to discuss matters of student services functioning. This work stream reports directly to the ICBC (Institutional Committee for Business Continuity) Information that became known in this work stream was routinely shared with all if not the affected colleagues on the SRC. I also worked with many of my colleagues on this work stream offering SRC aid where we could. I also routinely shone light on issues of student interest in this meeting such as access to CSCD services, Calendar and test date related issues, intense pressure on students during online teaching etc. I worked with Antoinette Van der Merwe and Xola Njengele on getting students access to data and laptops especially those who slipped through the cracks during the first view rounds of call. I used my position to link various student services structures to SRC members who could of relevance such as the contact centre and Robynne Boonzaaier our Social Media Manager and Luigia Nicholas with Antoinette van der Merwe. Other important topics tackled at this work stream include graduation, the year calendar of the university, reports from various service departments related to a variety of fields such as the international office, resident placement, IT, academics, Bursary and Loans etc. To find out more read/request the ICBC Mandate. The contents of the work tackled in this work-stream is quite research heavy and important in terms of its necessity for student consultation and I applaud our chair, Ronel Retief and her team. It was one of the great pleasures of my university career to work alongside Dr Ronel Retief as her commitment to student’s interests was more than present in her actions, it was inspiring.

As an SRC representative on the various committees, I have been a present an engaged for and with the relevant subject matters. This term I attended multiple senate meetings the two most pressing issues being the Rebranding of SU, and the recommendation for the new Vice Rector Learning and teaching to council, wherein the decision will be made.

I approve the Mental Health Policy as is written and was provided to me by the Mental Health and Alcohol Abuse task team.

Since my initial election into the SRC continuing through 2020 I have been working with a student organisation, the transformation office and the src transformation portfolio in organising the Africa Week Project Planned for Heritage Week in the 3rd Term. This project Unfortunately was postponed in this Term due to Covid-19. Through caucuses I chatted with the SRC candidates and pitched the idea and organisers to an incoming SRC Member who acknowledged her interest in potentially pursuing the matter.

Below follows my plans as stated in my previous term reports:

1. I plan to collaborate with the Vice Chair in organising the team building so that it may include professional training on communication and to address internal working issues that pose a threat to effective internal communication and running of the SRC.

Our Team Building was postponed to the next term.

1. I also plan to focus more on promoting intercampus communication as I have noted in the first term while the intent is there among many portfolios the practical action is lacking.

This was actually fairly successful inadvertently as the planning for many intercampus (online) events/ programs etc. began in this term though I hope it follows through in the final term and years to come.

1. I also plan to improve my relationships with Student Governance and the Rectorate of the University. I noticed that my work would be easier and of a higher quality with them on my side. This does not mean that I will not challenge them when I feel that students are not being heard. My first priority is to ensure that student voices are heard and that I will do to the best of my ability.

I am conflicted as to whether or not I have been successful in this plan as I have worked along side many Rectorate Members, SU staff and Student Governance during this time with success, although we have also reached quite a few disagreements on some important issues.

1. I also aim to improve on relationships with other SRC’s around the country especially those university’s in the Western Cape as I believe communication is the key to good governance and we should improve as a team all the time by learning from other institutions.

I have not been successful in this plan this term as my focus has solely been on Stellenbosch Students and ensuring their success under these circumstances.

1. I plan to work with SRC and TSR members on a project currently named CRISIS TRAINING

Mandate:

While this initially was a moderate success as my colleagues worked well to create a purpose document and establish links to the transformation office specifically with regard to this project, as it was, temporarily, put on the backburner as other pressing issues took up my time, most notably my academics. I will, in my personal capacity, continue working on the project after the end of my term in collaboration with the transformation office for implementation starting next year.

1. I plan draw up immaculate documentation for handover that emphasises the important role the secretary and the Executive plays in the success of the SRC.

My current handover plans include video tutorials on specific administration tasks, organising the src records pre and post Covid and participating in handover planning and documentation drafting with student governance. I have made myself very accessible to all the SRC Candidates, both pre and post-election and will continue to do so as they transition into office

1. I plan to excel in terms of organisation and communication skills for the purposes of making sure that the SRC body is successful

I tried to be as straight forward, and informative as possible in terms my communication overall though I am unable to deduce my success at this plan as communication within and from our SRC has been historically troublesome.

# Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

For my portfolio

* Fight for SRC member access to regular executive committee meetings as it may bridge a dangerous divide which has historically been formed between the Executive and the SRC.
* Get a minute taker/editor/ assistant
* Train your minute editor/taker/assistant to your personal needs.

For my successor

* Live the Student Constitution, where it falls to ambiguity, critically decide its utility
* Maintain your professionalism at all times
* Speak up against unconstitutionality and inhumanity
* Set clear boundaries and Do not be afraid to “set a precedence”
* Put the students interests first at all times
* Manage your time well
* Before committing to SRC make sure that your academics are in good shape and that you are able to keep them up to standard through your term.
* Maintain good upkeep of your mental health
* Experience is not as important as dedication. Be dedicated to this job and its description and purpose.
* You do not need to be friends with your colleagues.
* You can be friends with your colleagues and still maintain internal accountability but it requires strong will and sense of self.
* Keep a record of all the work you do.
* Set time aside for your personal life

# Important Contacts*.*

Rectorate – SRC Executive emailing list

**To:**

Mdepa, AA, Mnr: anelemdepa@sun.ac.za

Prof Wim de Villiers (Rector and Vice-Chancellor) vc@sun.ac.za

Prof Stan du Plessis (Chief Operating Officer) stan@sun.ac.za

Prof Arnold Schoonwinkel (Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching): schoonwi@sun.ac.za

Prof Eugene Cloete (Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies): eugenecloete@sun.ac.za

Prof Nico Koopman (Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation & Personnel) nkoopman@sun.ac.za

Prof Hester Klopper (Vice-Rector: Strategy and Internationalisation) hklopper@sun.ac.za

Dr Ronel Retief (Registrar): ronelretief@suna.c.za

Makheta, Choice (Student Affairs): choicemakheta@sun.ac.za

Tonia Overmeyer: toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za

Include the SRC executive as well as the TSR Chairperson, and Military Academy Chairperson

**Cc**:

Dowries, Sharine: sharine@sun.ac.za

Scholtz, Inge-Rae: irhode@sun.ac.za

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Jacobs, Tarien: jacobst@sun.ac.za

Abrahams, WU : wabrahams@sun.ac.za

Hlatswayo, Thulani : thulani@sun.ac.za

Bruintjies, Grace: graceb@sun.ac.za

Alexander, HL, Me: halexander@sun.ac.za

Kok, Wildre: wkok@sun.ac.za

Poole, AJ, Mev: audreyp@sun.ac.za

General Important contacts

Sharine Dowries (Student Governance Administrator): sharine@sun.ac.za

Anele Mdepa (Student Governance Manager): anelemdepa@sun.ac.za

Thulani Hlatswayo (Student Governance): thulani@sun.ac.za

Pule Mochichane (Project Coordinator: Co-Curriculum): pulem@sun.ac.za

Gary Howell (Manager: Letting Office): ghowell@sun.ac.za

Nicky Adams (Promotions Officer: Langenhoeven Student Centre): nadams@sun.ac.za