

STUDENTERAAD
STUDENTS'
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COUNCIL

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Constitutional Responsibilities

The Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the SRC and is responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the SRC are used in a transparent, responsible and sustainable manner; and has a role of formulating and implementing policies that ensure transparent, responsible and sustainable use of the SRC's financial resources.

The Treasurer also has the duty to assist the entire SRC with budget compilations, processing payments according to these budgets and providing financial insight to SRC decision-making.

Portfolio Overview

1.) The SRC

As the SRC's Treasurer, I form part of our executive body as the Chief Financial Officer of the SRC's financial resources. This role is very hands on, meaning that I interact with all SRC members on a regular and continuous basis. This is owing to my role requiring that I approve payments based on budgets and monitor all incoming and outgoing transactions, as well as maintaining a continuous record of quotations, authorised payments and pending payments. I am responsible for compiling the budgets for all portfolios with the relevant members in a responsible and transparent manner. Given our SRC context, I made 'deadlines' our principal budgeting factor, as we have less operational time than usual. What this meant is: for each budget I required the members to provide the executive with deadlines for budgeted tasks where applicable, so that as the exec we can closely monitor their performance and reallocate funds that are not utilised accordingly.





2.) Stellenbosch University

Regardless of my role as Treasurer, as an SRC member I have the inherent responsibility to the entire student body to represent them by responding to their demands, but I must pray for wisdom to do what is best and according to God's plan, as this is leadership. Part of my SRC role is to sit on university committees in order to voice the needs of students as well as keep up to date on information that should be communicated to the student population, and ensure that the rapidly changing student environment is not excluded in crucial decision-making for future and immediate plans for Stellenbosch University. Often this involves challenging existing or new decisions, or providing a different, beneficial student perspective in meetings. As a member of the SRC Executive, I attend monthly Rectorate-SRC meetings whereby we engage on current events, processes and concerns as well as future plans for portfolios and relevant institutional processes.

3.) South Africa

The SRC's role in South Africa has been clearly mandated by the Higher Education Act, as it ensures student representation in all universities. Stellenbosch University is a well-known and highly esteemed university in South Africa and on a global scale. Hence, the decisions we take on this campus are not isolated, but have an effect on our surrounding communities and higher education institutions, meaning as an SRC we must always act in a way that contributes to the values and laws set out in the Constitution of South Africa. As important as it is for an SRC to understand their campus context, we must also be cognisant that we operate in a much broader sphere





of constant innovations, social trends, physical forces (climate change) and diverse demographics. Covid-19 proved to be a challenge for not only our country, but the world. As the SRC, it is crucial to always be on the forefront of student needs and proactively respond in a way that is just.

Committees / Task Teams

Institutional

- **Bursaries and Loans committee** – We discuss and implement strategies on matters that involve funding such as undergraduate bursaries and loans, postgraduate NRF funding and evaluating the diverse financial needs of students on campus.
- **Student Fees committee** – We evaluate fee structuring as well as collection and spending of these amounts.
- **Quality Assurance committee** – We evaluate current institutional practices and deliberate on how these can be improved by assessing their current results and future sustainability, such as degree modules or programmes.

Other Committees / Task Teams

- **Grace-to-Grace** – This student initiative no longer forms part of the SRC, but is still an ongoing student initiative. The G2G team worked with the Clean Campaign task team to communicate with students during the lockdown to adequately determine the needs and concerns of students. As a key part of the Clean Campaign, this initiative will now maintain the focus of student upliftment by sharing the truth and beauty of God's Grace by encouraging students to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ.





- **Clean Campaign manager** – *Since the first term when this initiative was implemented, we have been working tirelessly to provide students that remained on campus during the lockdown with PPE and the empowerment of knowing that they are not powerless in this situation.*
- **Historical Debt task team** – *During the registration period this task team deliberates all historical debt cases and evaluates whether students are recommended for funding given our limitations. I would supply this task team with the SRC's updated lists every few days and then we would meet to see how we could assist the students, and sometimes we could not unfortunately.*
- **SRC Executive** – *As Treasurer I form part of the executive of the SRC. We manage the day-to-day operations of the body, as well as represent our fellow team members in meetings with the rectorate.*
- **SRC Executive-Rectorate committee** – *As the SRC executive, we are responsible for representing students and our fellow SRC members in these meetings. We are also then required to provide feedback to the SRC and students on meeting outcomes where applicable.*
- **RegisterAll committee** – *This committee has also been referred to as the 'allocation committee'. It focused on the distribution of RegisterAll applications to the relevant parties in order for feedback to be given so that the SRC could make informed decisions on where to allocate RegisterAll funding.*

Budget Overview

The Treasurer budget had no spending this term. Given the shift to online learning for all undergraduate students for the remainder of the 2020 academic year, my allocation for financial literacy training will need to be adapted to fit the context of the new online learning environment in a cost-effective way that is easily accessible to the target group, which is undergraduate bursary recipients.





Term Overview

The term commenced online, on the 20th of April, owing to the effects of the national lockdown. This shift to online learning was challenging for all students, as there is no set model of what a student's home situation will be like. As mentioned in my last overview with regards to the CleanCampaign, this initiative continued with the processes for organising packages containing a brochure, hand sanitizer and now face mask (given the regulations set by the President). The CleanCampaign team grew much larger by God's Grace, with leaders from Nerina, Equite and Lydia joining. The team thus consists of the following: SRC Student Wellness Officer, SRC Branding and Marketing Manager, SRC Safety and Security Manager, SRC Special Needs Officer, SRC Treasurer, TSR Student Wellness Officer, three MASC Representatives, Vice-Executive leader Nerina, Vice-Primaria Equite and the Vice-Primaria Lydia. With this team, we have reached the final stages of procuring one thousand five hundred face masks for the students that are still remaining on the respective campuses who are not receiving PPE from the University owing to them not falling within the groups that have been invited back to campus yet. Managing this initiative has brought many challenges, but God grows us in all challenges. We engaged with the Rectorate in the SRC RMT meeting on the 22nd of April to discuss our vision for the Campaign and to discuss collaboration between students and the institution in order to combat covid-19 as a team, not separate entities. Despite our constant engagements, the CleanCampaign was seemingly left behind, but not to everyone.

As a member of any leadership structure, organisation, business or even in relationships, it's important to realise that the investment we spend in something does not mean it will be given the same attention from other parties. Always rely on God, not people. Despite the barriers presented at each step of this process, we will continue to work toward promoting the CleanCampaign. The vision for this Campaign has always been to create a sense of student empowerment, unity. A platform where students will realise that they are not abandoned and powerless in these changing circumstances. That we as students can protect each other; we can protect our nation. We are not simply trying to give a face mask, we are giving hope. When God gives you a light, never hide it under the table of doubt. What He starts,





He will finish. While our institution has successfully procured their own face masks for students returning, the CleanCampaign is still in the process of getting our face masks approved after 12 weeks (23% of a 52 week year) so as to allow us to finally protect the vulnerable students of our Matie family both physically and mentally through this initiative.

As Treasurer, it was also my responsibility to ensure the financial sustainability of the SRC. Given the shift to online learning, this meant that most budgeted events would be unable to take place the way initially planned. Thus, there was a clear need for a revised financial guideline to be drafted so as to allow members to receive the proper support they need to be able to achieve and fulfil their portfolio mandates. Thus, additions and edits were made to the 2018/2019 financial guideline so as to allow members of the SRC to know the processes of how to reallocate funds that were initially budgeted for, but are now unable to take place. All members of the SRC were given the opportunity to comment and make suggestions on these amendments. The final draft of this new guideline will be forwarded to the whole SRC for the commencement of the upcoming term, as I have been evaluating the effects of this new online environment on budgets and year plans before making the final edits. What “reallocation” means in this context specifically is: The ability for a member to move funds from “pre-covid event A” (Neelsie gathering) to “covid event B” (online prize giveaway competition). As such, members are not restricted from amending budgets, but there are strict rules pertaining to requesting additional funding, as it must be clear that what has been budgeted for will be utilised, and the suggested increase (to what has already been budgeted for) will contribute positively to our students by fulfilling the vision of the SRC and the relevant portfolio/council’s mandate.

I have been working with members from the Alumni Relations department to organise a fun run in September on Stellenbosch Campus which aims to accommodate students, alumni and locals. These preparations started early in the term, but due to the uncertainty of when students would be returning to campus, a halt was placed on this process until further information was available. Moving forward, we will be continuing this planning in the third term with the SRC Sports Manager joining these discussions.





As Treasurer, there are two pending cases with the disciplinary committee regarding my decisions and conduct during this term as Treasurer of the SRC. These cases will be addressed and resolved within the upcoming term. *Romans 8:28*

As per my role as an SRC member in committee meetings (Bursaries and Loans, Student Fees, Quality Assurance), I attended these committee meetings throughout the term despite the dramatic shift to the new platform being purely on Microsoft Teams. Many of the topics discussed require a much broader perspective from my side to accurately represent the developing concerns of students, and thus I have engaged with other members on the SRC and within the student population before these meetings to ensure I am up to date and have sufficient knowledge.

Plans for Next Academic Term

As a member of the SRC, I will continue my duties by (virtually) attending the SRC bi-weekly meetings, and our executive meetings once a week as well as the Executive RMT meetings to the best of my ability. This will also include committee meetings, general discussion meetings, fun run meetings and our Clean Campaign planning meetings. The next academic term will hopefully see the fruits of the sowing that has taken place in the CleanCampaign. The desired goal will be to have one thousand, five hundred (1500) Maties equipped with not only PPE, but a spirit of power and love, so that together we can empower and uplift each other during these challenging times. One of my main goals as Treasurer is to broaden the scope of what this portfolio can do for students that have received bursaries. The need has been identified and raised by students that there is no clear guidance provided on how best to manage the funds they receive from bursaries, and this leads to many students overspending in the short-term and suffering in the long-term. Thus, I aim to initiate a process that will form into a structured training seminar for bursary recipients which will hopefully be continued by future Treasurers so as to cater for all Maties eventually by providing





reasonable, relevant and reliable financial guidance. As the SRC we have identified relevant (Student) Constitutional amendments that need to be made, and based on my experience, I hope to work with our team to formulate more effective guidelines surrounding the budgeting process of the SRC. Given that the coming term will involve new semester modules, and year modules will begin to increase in difficulty, I foresee that substantial time will be required in my academics. I am trusting God that I will be able to utilise the time management strategies that He has taught me within this SRC season to have a prosperous final SRC term by His Grace and for His Glory.

Recommendations for Portfolio Improvement

This term of being on the SRC has blessed me greatly. Based on the experience of my second term as Treasurer, I believe that there is dramatic, positive and immediate change needed in the governance of the SRC in order to benefit this portfolio. From my experience, there is no clear platform to raise grievances or concerns relating to the operational continuity of the SRC in a way that is fruitful and effective. Despite the disciplinary committee available to the SRC, this structure is not equipped to deal with all instances the SRC can face internally, as we have seen during this term. Since the Treasurer is held accountable for all financial transactions of the SRC where applicable, this means that he/she can be subject to forced decisions that contravene his/her constitutional role -to ensure the fair, transparent and sustainable use of the SRC resources- simply because the decision had a positive vote. There is currently no way to handle such a concern within the governance structure.

All members on the SRC Executive have been receiving personal assistants to fulfil their constitutional roles, except the Treasurer. It should be considered that the Treasurer deals with virtually all portfolio financial transactions and topics relating to the twenty three (23) SRC portfolios. This does not mean that the Treasurer does not receive assistance, as Student Governance has been incredibly helpful this term in guiding me through all processes of the institution, helping process payments and





checking financial information on the system. However, for one member to manage 23 portfolios means that one member must be flexible and available for all the other 22 portfolio holders timetables on a continual basis, as the SRC structure does not consider recess or public holidays as reasonable grounds for private time currently. An example: As Treasurer you will have your own academic timetable based on your degree choice. The other 22 portfolio holders will, possibly, not all have the same timetable. This means that members will require the Treasurer's attention when they may be finished/have a break from their assessments, but this can be the time when the Treasurer is heading into his/her assessments. This will then lead to team conflict which can easily be avoided by implementing structure to the internal governance of the SRC. For example, to improve the efficiency of the Treasurer's available time, members cannot expect to have budget adjustments done during the assessment periods, nor can payment requests/reimbursements be requested during the assessment period, and hence all requests of the above nature must be done at least two weeks before the assessment period officially begins. It is one thing for a Treasurer to request this from members, it is another for there to be proper procedure to protect the Treasurer during situations like this. As Treasurer, SRC member or student, Psalm 121 will give strength during conflict, decisions and as a grounding factor to remember where good comes from.

Important Contacts

Student Governance:

- Anele Mdepa: anelemdepa@sun.ac.za
- Sharine Dowries: sharine@sun.ac.za

Financial Queries:

- Gershwin Fritz: gfritz@sun.ac.za





Bursaries and Loans:

- Kallie Sauls: kallies@sun.ac.za

(Kallie forms part of the historical debt task team, and is knowledgeable on most student finance matters)

Postgraduate Office:

Nugent Lewis: nugent@sun.ac.za

(Nugent is a member of the historical debt task team and helps with RegisterAll recommendation in terms of postgraduate students)

Student Fees:

Anri Engelbrecht: anriengel@sun.ac.za

(Anri forms part of the historical debt task team and played a major role in the RegisterAll process by lifting financial blocks for students the SRC had agreed to fund so that they could register)

Student Affairs:

Tonia Overmeyer: toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za

