

FARAI MUBAIWA
PORTFOLIO:
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
Quarterly Report: Term 1

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General

a. Term Reflection

I am very satisfied that the three Critical Engagement Portfolios (Women Empowerment, Gender Identity and Sexuality, and Consciousness) as proposed by Bradley Frolick and myself were accepted and introduced by the SRC 2015/2016. I believe that it is a monumental step for our campus to introduce such progressive portfolios to truly create thought leaders amongst the student body. I was however, disappointed at the lack of understanding of the necessity of these portfolios that the SRC demonstrated at the initial negotiation meetings of these important portfolios. I believe that their initial reactions showed the complacency with a patriarchal and disempowering campus space. However, after frank discussions about every sexism, constant micro-aggressions and rape culture with members of the SRC, I believe that they have greater understanding of the need for the Women Empowerment Portfolio.

Before I was appointed as the Chairperson of the Women Empowerment Portfolio, I had already established outcomes that I wanted the portfolio to achieve. Whether I had been appointed or not, I still would have shared my vision with the appointed person. One must understand that such a portfolio is greater than the individual. It is about more than gender equality. It is about dismantling patriarchy which is harmful to both men and women.

The campus response to the portfolio was very positive. With an overwhelming 36 committee applicants, it is evident that many women on campus believed in the necessity of such a specific portfolio. The term was filled with much excitement. However, the committee and I became very overwhelmed when we dissected campus issues and realized just how much work needed to be done. Our aim is to lay the foundation for future committee members of this portfolio. We realized that the campus space is more violent to women than we thought. Early in the term we had a three hour committee meeting to outline plans for 2016, and more important to plan sessions with HKs and first years in Welcoming. Once we cultivate a feminist culture from first year, we change an oppressive campus space immediately.

The protests of the term also highlighted the need for the portfolio, since in many activist spaces the voices of women were silenced. It motivated the committee even more to see women claim their space in activist spaces. This is something we need to see on campus.

b. Why did I apply?

My campus leadership has ticked all the common student leadership boxes including inter alia First Years Committee Chairperson, Residence Mentor, Student Parliament Speaker, SRC Committee Member, and HK. However, through my 'box ticking' I

realised at an early stage that woman in leadership is a rare phenomenon on this campus. In fact, we have a campus culture that perpetuates male dominance and female subservience. After much discourse with various constituencies on this campus, I realised that many women do not realise that they are disempowered and many men subconsciously disempower women. Gender inequalities are all over our campus. Women on campus experience every day sexism, constant micro-aggressions.

From the lack of female representation of lecturers and professors in Faculties, to the unequal treatment of male and female residences regarding issues such as visiting hours and pubs, to the perceptions of demeanour, the unjust skakel situations, the double standard behaviour of promiscuity, and the utter disgust by males on this campus to a females reproductive cycle; the list is endless. Upon further analysis of our structures, in particular our SRC candidates of 2015/2016, where was the female leadership? Within the PK, male voices are the dominant voices. In the numerous SRC meetings I have attended over the course of my degree, the female voice is only respect as the neutral voice, and when a female has an opinion it is simply brushed off. This is problematic.

It is for this reason that I proposed the Critical Engagement portfolio division to the SRC of 2015/2016. Through my involvement in the Student Parliament, I was in a position to hold the SRCs of 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 accountable. This position gave me direct access to both the SRC and the student body. The constant message from the student body was that the SRC was unable to fulfil its role of representing all students on this campus, and was oblivious to the challenges of the marginalised groups on campus, which in turn created further marginalisation by the rest of the campus body. And from this position, I was able to identify the marginalised groups on campus and realise that the SRC needed more discourse and understanding about these groups.

Women empowerment has never been of importance in Stellenbosch context, let alone our society. We need a dynamic SRC that empowers even the “weakest” and marginalised members of society. Women empowerment is my life. I am a feminist. I understand the complexities of Intersectional Feminism since I do not only have to fight for my standing as a black person, but also as a woman. Black women are often described as the group with the least privileges in society. We do not have racial privilege. We do not have male privilege. And we are constantly regarded as the “angry black woman” when we raise our voices in the name of justice or human rights. For me, women empowerment is not a hobby. Women empowerment is not a choice. Women empowerment is something that I must pursue every day not only for my survival, but for the survival of other women in this patriarchal society.

I am often told by students, whom I had never met before, that I am the “female voice on campus”. This “title” shocked me, as I never truly realised the impact of positively

engaging, learning from others, understanding various opinions and fighting for what is right. I am still truly humbled by that surprising compliment and it encouraged me to engage even more, and be an even greater female leader on campus. I believe that women should be treated as human beings, awarded equal opportunities to succeed and express themselves. I live for women empowerment.

Other Information

a. University Committees that I serve on

I am currently serving on the Equality Forum with Monica du Toit. I find the conversations very important as they deal with daily matters that affect all students, including minorities. It is crucial for all appointed Critical Engagement Portfolio Managers to serve on the Equality Forum, the Transformation Task Team, or any Social Justice Policy Formation Committee. This ensures that the individual has greater understanding of campus matters and how they affect various stakeholders. Your ability to realise your outcomes of your portfolio will be clearer and more tangible and realistic.

b. External Involvement

I was awarded the Abe Bailey Travel Bursary for 2015. This is a prestigious and exciting opportunity. Towards November, I felt very pressured due to my bursary and portfolio obligations. My portfolio required planning for pre-welcoming sessions with the HK and the Welcoming sessions with the first years, and my bursary required preparations in terms of the topic that must be presented for a group discussion. Time management was crucial in this regard. However, being on the trip as the Chairperson of the Women Empowerment Portfolio provided for much discourse and debate. We began Abe with 3 feminists, and ended the trip with at least 14 feminists.

My involvement in Africa Matters and particularly the women's affairs in Africa motivated me to apply for this position even more. The gender inequalities and blatant misogyny in Africa developed my understanding of African feminism, and allowed me to translate that to the Stellenbosch context.

Critical Engagement

a. Description/Vision of the Women Empowerment Portfolio

The portfolio is a manifestation of the vision of the SRC which is to see a "unified campus where innovation, inclusivity and being future focused, ensures student

success". Inclusivity is not only related to race, which is something that many University students do not understand. Gender plays an important role for creating inclusive spaces. All women on this campus should feel represented by the SRC. The fact that there is only one female in the executive is highly concerning and non-inclusive; however, this re-emphasizes the importance of this portfolio to represent women as well as transgenders on campus, since males are inherently always represented. Throughout history it is evident that unity arises when individuals from their respective backgrounds are valued and treated with respect. Thus by treating marginalised groups on campus with respect, and by representing them and creating an environment of understanding, the vision of the SRC can be achieved.

Innovation and student success can only be achieved in an environment that is conducive to the education of every single student. There must thus be a culture of understanding instead of tolerance, and a culture that allows individuals from all walks of life to express themselves, share their stories and grow through connections with others. This portfolio recognises the value of women for the first time on this campus. And by empowering women we encourage a campus that promotes non-discriminatory success. Many students are currently disadvantaged by campus culture and structures, although this is a new portfolio, I am certain that it will play a significant role in the social balance on campus. And will also show other marginalised groups that their voices are heard and their struggles are dealt with accordingly.

My vision for the women empowerment portfolio is:

“To empower women to use their historically disadvantaged voices as tools for freedom and advancement.”

- To inspire thought leadership beyond the gender-related confines of home economics by awakening themes of intersectional feminism, justice and equality.
- To change the misperceptions of feminism.
- Women will lead.
- Conscientize campus and community about women and male privilege.

b. Outcomes of the Portfolio

This portfolio was proposed to the SRC for the sole purpose of addressing gender inequalities. By addressing such inequalities, empowerment is inherent.

I aim to create spaces whereby women who raise their voices or share their opinions are not automatically classified as aggressive. Spaces where men realise their everyday sexism and micro-aggressions. The problem with our campus is that men do not realise their sexism because they were brought up with certain mentalities towards women, or their residences perpetuate sexism in the name of “manhood”. Furthermore, women on this campus do not often realise their disempowerment that

results from upbringing as subservient, or the patriarchally structured female residences, or the lack of opportunities for female prosperity. We must have discourse. Women should recognise their worth, their societal limitations and unite for a collective effort for equality.

Womxn solidarity is also an important outcome that must be achieved. The lack of unity between female residences on campus is deeply saddening. Female residences should be uniting on campus to take a stance against the unspoken rape culture in male residences, to discuss and share experiences of the body and the reproductive cycle, to deconstruct discourse that belittles and sexualises women and to fight for a collective outcome whereby women are empowered and fairly granted opportunities.

We will not base our success as a portfolio on the buy-in of men. This is not HeForShe. We will base our success on the advancement of Womxn and the collective dismantling of a patriarchal society.

c. Committee Details

Chair: Farai Mubaiwa	076 618 5493	faraim@sun.ac.za
Secretary: Rochelle Jacobs	083 391 7165	
Personal Assistant: Amy Meyer	082 997 8698	
Events Planner: Khanyi Rashama	076 590 7168	
HK Liaison: Amanda Chiro	081 818 4774	
HK Liaison: Darrian Hoffeldt	078 289 6013	
Melissa Sparrow	072 026 7253	
Mosa Ramphele	071 372 6386	
Kirthana Pillay	082 849 0198	
Yeukai Runyowa	072 344 8187	

Term/Year Planning

The Fourth term was spent on planning more than hosting events, since it was so late in the year and student involvement would have been minimal. Most of the time was spent planning welcoming week, which is elaborated on in another section. The remainder of our meeting times was used to plan events that we will host or collaborate in 2016. The proposed events/workshops or discussions are as follows:

- Pad Drive
 - We need sustainable means of providing sanitary items for women on campus. The committee agreed unanimously that it was a manifestation of patriarchy for men to have condoms provided for them on campus, and yet women do not have basic sanitary items. Female genitalia require that we menstruate, and the provision of sanitary items should be free by the government and by the private sector.

- Long term Goal: To secure free sanitary items in all public spaces (just like condoms) through the government. South African Activist Pontsho Pilane has already started this campaign on a national scale. The committee will also be involved by joining her in various discussions, protests or events. Students on campus will also be notified of such events to ensure that we all play an active role in securing what should be free.
- Short term Goal: Hosting pad drives like what was done in LLL and NewGen in 2015. Through the PK we will urge residences to allocate part of their budgets to sanitary items that can be placed all over campus. Furthermore, we will negotiate with Healthcare companies throughout the year to secure sanitary items for campus and for surrounding communities.
- Feminism Workshop
 - This will be quite similar to the discussions hosted in Welcoming Week. However, Intersectionality is key. Feminism must be intersectional, or it is “bullshit”. These workshops will be opened to the public in order to empower communities. Under the guidance of Professor Amanda Gouws, and Monica du Toit, the committee will learn to present workshops in various styles. Discussions will focus on intersectional issues, dismantling the patriarchy, misogyny, rape culture and micro-aggressions that Womxn experience.
 - The Welcoming week workshops are an example of the types of approaches that will be used.
 - We will also visit Schools in surrounding communities to host workshops as part of Community Service.
- Vagina Monologues and Intersectional Poetry Sessions
 - The Vagina Monologues is a continuation of a play that was written by Eve Ensler. It is an opportunity for Womxn to openly read monologues about various matters that affect us – matters include sex, love, rape, menstruation, birth, orgasm, female genital mutilation or simply the body. The important theme of these monologues is for the vagina to be seen as a tool of Womxn empowerment. Monologues will range from positive to negative experiences. The aim is not to hate heterosexual relationships, or men, or even to be narrow, or to exclude. The aim is to provide Womxn the platform to share what we have always been oppressed to discuss. These will be sessions of liberation, laughter, sadness, anger, and self-love.
 - The Intersectional Poetry Sessions will be similar to In-Zync poetry, and we will urge various people to partake. However, the poets must be intersectional. We will collaborate with the Consciousness and Gender Identity and Sexuality Portfolios for this event.
- Anti-Rape March
 - This will either take place in the first or second term.
- Women’s Conference

- We aim to have a women's conference towards the third term. The conference will not be limited to Stellenbosch, but will also include UCT, UWC, CPUT and other interested universities.
- We will work closely with FVZS to ensure that the conference is well-executed and sufficiently funded.
- Only African speakers will be allowed to speak at the conference.

Projects Completed

a. Fourth Term

This term focused on the planning above.

b. Pre-Welcoming Period

It was agreed upon by the committee that we needed to change the mentalities of HKs and Mentors towards women empowerment matters. It is problematic that many men's houses still perpetuate rape culture in their traditions and practices. It is also problematic that many women's houses have practices that are oppressive towards women; a result of not questioning or understanding that patriarchy is at work.

Along with the Consciousness, and Gender Identity and Sexuality portfolios we agreed to host pre-welcoming week training with the HKs and mentors from the 13th-21st January 2016. Khadija, Reanne and myself created a single email to distribute to the houses on campus regarding training. The following email (created by Darrian and Amanda) was sent out to the HKs, this is the Women Empowerment excerpt:

“Dear Student Leaders

Owing to the increasing need for transformation as observed over the past year SRC of 2015/2016 have decided to add 3 new portfolios to the traditional Critical Engagement and Transformation. Namely Gender Identity and Sexuality, Consciousness and Women Empowerment.

Note that in the period before welcoming all three portfolios will be hosting sessions with the HKs of each house on campus. These sessions are of utmost importance since they will provide these key stakeholders with sensitivity training and conscientize house leadership to create a truly inclusive environment not only for the first years in the house, but also for the first years of other houses whom they will interact with.

This email serves to inform you about all the new portfolios, starting with Women Empowerment:

The vision and mission of this portfolio is to empower women to use their historically disadvantaged voices as tools for freedom and advancement. By doing so we hope to inspire thought leadership beyond the gender-related confines of home economics by awakening themes of intersectional feminism, justice and equality; to change the

misperceptions of feminism; conscientize campus and community about women's struggles and male privilege. Through these actions women will lead #Mbokodo.

Currently there is a need on campus for a platform for women to be empowered, as it still remains a male dominated patriarchal space where matters like rape culture are brushed aside. As the Women Empowerment portfolio we have specific projects in mind in order for our vision and mission to be obtained. The welcoming period was identified as an important time to run certain activities and workshops in order to introduce the Women Empowerment portfolio to the new-comers. The welcoming period is such a crucial time to achieve this goal as the new-comers come from diverse circumstances and communities. The welcoming period serves as an opportunity to address the new-comers in an environment where they are still open to new ideas and are all together as one group.

Members of the committee have identified the following activities as problematic and perpetuate rape culture on campus. Practices at a Skakel where women have to line up, perpetuate the idea that women's bodies belong to men and men having the choice of choosing the women, is a form of 'rape culture'. Another ideology instilled in men is that they have to be a 'man' and 'score' the girl this too is a perpetuation of 'rape culture'. First year women also have to dance provocatively, to appeal to the man, this makes many women uncomfortable, as it is demeaning and promotes misogyny. Although these activities exacerbate rape culture, and misogyny we feel these practices can be reworked and structured in a manner that appeals to both parties, and remove the patriarchal stature that Skakels exclude.

The committee has also identified 'The Naked Mile' as a demeaning culture practised as women are forced, in a sense, to view men in that manner without the women giving consent and should also be re-evaluated or completely removed if it cannot be practised in a civilised manner. Women Residences also instil certain behaviour that first year women have to comply to in order to appeal to a man such as acting like proper ladies/dames. This is problematic. Women should act like who they are for themselves, and not to please men.

The current model of the welcoming period is not fulfilling its potential to be a period of optimal growth and learning. Many agree that the space only caters to a specific type of 'Matie' and many are left unfulfilled and unchanged by the experience. Things like women lining up for selection at skakels, the way the new-comers are addressed by welcoming leaders and the so-called 'sexy dances' in Vensters are disrespectful to women and perpetuate patriarchy and misogyny where women are degraded in order to appeal to men and their warped ideas of women and how they ought to act. These acts set the tone for how women are to be treated on campus for the year.

The Women Empowerment portfolio aims to assist in making the welcoming period a productive educational space, where all new-comers can truly be changed by the experience for the better. The current model of the welcoming period needs to be adjusted so that it is innovative, future focused and inclusive (P Kloppers, Vision 2030). The following resources will be available to the various student communities in residences and clusters to use during their welcoming period.

•*Facilitated discussions*

•*Activities such as: Crossing the line, Stand & Declare, Alien activity, Gender Alliance workshops, and Poetry workshops.*

These resources are to be used to make skakels and other welcoming events more meaningful and educational to all new-comers. Rather than an event or skakel that only caters to a specific type of new-comer. These activities will be similar to those that will be performed at the training of the student leaders prior to the arrival of the new-comers.

Through these activities we aim to alter the views of women in society, remove patriarchy and misogyny within the system, and strive for the implementation of the ideologies of intersectionality and feminism

It is recommended that you read the following on rape culture on how we are all complicit in it, it is helpful to understand the terminology and how we need to take steps to dismantle patriarchy, misogyny and rape culture.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zaron-burnett/guide-to-rape-culture_b_5440553.html?ir=Australia

The **structure of the sessions** with the HKs was as follows:

- 5 min intro
- 10-15 min discussion in groups to answer the question “Have you ever been treated differently because of your gender”
- 5-10 min explaining the procedure of the Alien Activity
- 10-15 min of the Alien Activity Round 1
- 10-15 min of the Alien Activity Round 2
- 10 min discussion of patriarchy, feminism and intersectional feminism
- Close with a discussion about how we combat patriarchy. Who is responsible?

Since I was still away during this period my committee, under the leadership of Rochelle Jacobs and Amy Meyer, really stepped up to the plate and facilitated excellent sessions with the HK members. Feedback from these sessions will be provided for in the Second Term Report.

c. Welcoming Period

Interactive Women Empowerment Sessions were facilitated by the committee for first years at the various houses on campus. Some sessions were skakel-based, which allowed for engagement between men and Womxn; while other sessions were single-gender sessions which allowed the committee to focus on particular issues such as rape culture, feminism, Womxn support, etc.

To ensure that the HK bought into an empowering session for their first years, Amy, Darrian and Myself created and sent out the following letter:

Good day Prims and Welcoming Leaders,

I hope you are all coping in this examination period.

This past year has been quite a revolutionary year, not only in Stellenbosch but in the rest of the country. We've been confronted with ideologies that go against the norm and this had led to many of us re-structuring our identities and beliefs.

I was recently appointed the Women Empowerment Portfolio Manager of the SRC. One of the reasons I pushed for this portfolio to be separately added to the SRC was because through my years in leadership, it became very evident that the campus environment did not promote women in leadership. Nor is it a space in which women and men respect one another.

My committee and I will be running workshops with first years throughout welcoming week to achieve the vision of our portfolio. The vision is follows:

- *To empower women to use their historically disadvantaged voices as tools for freedom and advancement.*
- *To inspire thought leadership beyond the gender-related confines of home economics by awakening themes of intersectional feminism, justice and equality.*
- *To empower women to lead. #MbokodoLead*
- *To change the misperceptions of feminism and to encourage men to play a role in women empowerment.*
- *Conscientize campus and the community about women, and male privilege.*

Workshops will vary from motivational discussions to skakel-based interaction between men and women's residences/PSOs/Societies to foster the necessary thought processes and engagements regarding Women Empowerment. Various concepts will be explored in these workshops ranging from:

- *Men's Houses*
 - *Safety and respect of women*
 - *Engaging with the concept of 'gentlemanhip' and proving how the role of men should go beyond this*
 - *Making men aware of rape culture and educating them on how to stop practices that intentionally or unintentionally promote rape culture*
 - *Educating men about feminism*
- *Women's Houses*
 - *Aiding women to recognize their rights as both a woman and a human in this patriarchal structure.*
 - *Encouraging women to explore the ideals of feminism*
 - *Creating safe spaces where women can gather to discuss issues that affect us, and to analyse the effect that sexism and daily micro-aggressions have on us.*

*Please select a **workshop** that is suitable for your house. Note that if you already have a skakel planned, it is advisable to select one of these skakel-based workshops that will add value to your skakel as per the SU Leads Discussions. Each workshop should take between 1.5 – 2 hours:*

- *Cross the Privilege Line (Skakel-based)*

This activity requires both men and women to work effectively. All three of the SRC Critical Engagement Portfolios will be presenting this workshop since the analysis of privilege is not only racial but covers the following aspects – religion, gender, class, socio-economic status, sexuality, sexual orientation, level of education, upbringing, mental health.

- *Alien Activity (Skakel-based) as recommended by Professor Amanda Gouws*

This activity requires both men and women to work effectively. The groups will be divided and asked to engage about the living experiences and expectations for both women and men on earth. This activity is highly interactive on both sides, as both sides realize the limitations placed on them by society. This is important for Stellenbosch campus, since our environment perpetuates these living experiences.

- *Poetry Workshop (Skakel-based)*

This activity also requires both men and women to work effectively. In smaller mixed groups the students should discuss their experiences as men or women on this earth, particularly looking at cases whereby they were disadvantaged based on gender. Then in groups they should write a poem about a woman's story and articulate the poem to the rest of the larger group.

- *Motivational Women Empowerment Discussions*

The Women in the Committee and various external speakers will be sharing their stories as women in this patriarchal campus and worldly structure. This will be a personal session. It will also be highly interactive and will empower young first years to assert themselves without shame.

When you are interested in any one of these workshops please do not hesitate to contact us. Please indicate your interest by the 21st November 2015.

The sessions will commence on the 21st January 2016. The slideshow used for each session are attached to this document. I am certain that the first years will learn and unlearn in these workshops.

d. Post-Welcoming Period

We will continue with the projects that we planned for 2016. Our first event will most likely be the Vagina Monologues/Intersectional Poetry.

The committee will submit reports of Welcoming week, which will be available in the second term report. It is important to have this reflection period so that we can advise the next committee on how to approach welcoming week.

e. Ongoing Projects

Information about the ongoing projects will be available in the next term report. However, please refer to the Year Plan to understand the events and activities that the committee will host.

Daily Responsibilities and Tasks

Like the elected members of the SRC, the appointed members also have office duty. Although there was no official roster sent out this term including the managers, I still did my duty by being present in the office for many hours of the day and answering student queries.

Responding to and sending emails is a daily ritual. I receive my emails on my phone which has positives and negatives. I am always able to respond to important emails; however, I still need to learn when to respond and when to leave emails for the next day.

Amy Meyer is my Personal Assistant. Having a PA ensures that I am efficient in my tasks and that the Women's Empowerment portfolio is always open to campus. She is excellent and goes beyond the call of duty. Rochelle Jacobs as the Secretary of the committee is vital to communication. She ensured that all responsibilities were fulfilled by the respective committee members and took leadership when I was not yet on campus. The dynamics of a PA and a secretary work very well since both have very different but very important roles.

Fees Must Fall Involvement

I played a role in Fees Must Fall in my own capacity. With the permission of the SRC, I did organize a bus for Womxn activists who wanted to support the protests at Tygerberg. #MbokodoLead

End Outsourcing

I played a role in End Outsourcing in my own capacity. Due to the Abe Bailey Travel Bursary and the pressure thereof to write first opportunity, my role was limited.

Final Remarks

Our work is cut out for us.