



Stellenbosch

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SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abafundi
Studenteraad



SRC TERM I REPORT

SRC Women and Queer Empowerment Manager



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Foreword

Hello fellow Maties,

I would firstly like to express to all of you how excited I am to have been appointed your WAQE Manager for the upcoming year.

I began in the SRC last year as the event co-ordinator which was essentially my introduction to the SRC and what WAQE was capable. After spending a year watching the impact WAQE had on the lives of so many women and queer bodies I decided that managing the portfolio and ensuring its continued success was the next step for me.

I chose this portfolio because as a queer woman, especially one of color, I understand firsthand the struggles our community faces on a daily basis on campus and in our general social environments. Being a first year not more than three years ago, I understood how much it would have meant to me to be welcomed into an environment where I would not be discriminated against and where I would be safe, heard and represented for the entire being that I am: queer and femme and everything in between.

My desire is to be exactly that person I sought in first year. A leader who prioritised women and queer presence in the student community as well as in the institution itself. I desire to be the leader who makes each and every one of you feel advocated for, represented and protected.

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the student constitution by constitutional responsibilities are the following:

- 1) The portfolio has a responsibility to students who fall within the women and queer communities to create a safe environment in which they can express themselves.
- 2) The portfolio has the responsibility to liaise with the university to ensure that their protocols and structures comply with the expectations and needs of the WAQE communities.
- 3) WAQE has a responsibility to hold the university and its underlying departments and structures to represent and advocate for the safety and inclusion of the WAQE communities.
- 4) Attend regular SRC meetings.
- 5) Attend office duty as requested by the SRC Vice-Chairperson.
- 6) Fulfil the mandate promised by the mission statement.

Portfolio Overview

- 1) The WAQE portfolio essentially encompasses two separate portfolios: Women Empowerment and Queer Empowerment. The decision to create this portfolio stemmed from the following reasons:
 - It is common knowledge that members of the Stellenbosch Queer community feel as though they have a lack of representation on campus in terms of events and institutional decisions made by the university.
 - Societies and spaces that did represent Queer bodies on campus expressed that they felt burdened by critical change and transformation expectations without any institutional backing, WAQE stands to bridge that gap.
- 2) These examples show the overview and reasoning for the Queer empowerment portfolio, but it is important to note that women and queer bodies experience different trials and setbacks.
 - Women on campus have experienced GBV and toxic masculinity at the hands of Stellenbosch culture for many years now. The WAQE portfolio stands to create events to raise awareness on this toxic culture and develop critical engagements to combat its existence.

- Specifically, we look at men's residences and the culture that they breed within their walls. We would like to address the way male residences perpetuate an unsafe environment for all femme bodies on campus.
- 3) WAQE therefore also consists of sub-committee of non-SRC members, known as co-ordinators and general members who ensure that all these portfolio visions are overseen.
 - 4) This year the theme for WAQE will be **"Breaking the Binary"**. Which will mean many of our events will be aimed at breaking down binary structures and policies within the university. Specifically, residences being unable to cater for non-binary students or PSO activities being based off of gender.

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

- 1) At the moment I sit on the WAQE sub-committee as the WAQE Manager.
- 2) I have also been invited to the anti-GBV monitoring committee with the equality unit.
 - The committee had been established to encapsulate a more broadened scope than its predecessor, the Rape Culture Monitoring Committee (RCMC), as a commitment to address gender-based violence, utilising an integrated framework to ensure a sustainable institutional approach.
 - The purpose of the committee is to meet with the Chairpersons of Committees from all environments in the university, on a quarterly basis, for reporting, discussion of initiatives taking place, share ideas and information, and provide support as a way of monitoring progress.
 - Progress will be monitored against the goals described in the GBV strategic plan (*currently under review*), a mechanism which will systemically integrate our response to clearly address GBV by delineating processes and procedures, as well as proposed approaches for awareness, education, and advocacy.
 - The reporting function of the Anti-GBV Monitoring Committee includes meeting with the DVC of Learning and Teaching, the DVC HR, and Transformation and Social Impact, to report on progress and refine plans further.
 - The committee itself will meet once a term.
- 3) This year WAQE will also seek to establish a WAQE forum made up of House Committee members from residences and PSO's who are responsible for Women Empowerment and/or Queer Empowerment.

Term I Overview

For this term WAQE has a multitude of events planned.

- 1) Our first project which has already begun implementation is our Ally for All guidebook.
 - We created this guidebook to be handed out to all student communities and bodies regarding and possibly aide them when planning their critical engagements.
 - The guidebook was compiled by looking at issues that affected the WAQE community in the previous year, specifically rape culture and toxic masculinity, reproductive health rights and their accessibility and the presence of non-binary students.
- 2) Our second event would be our opening picnic which is now becoming an annual collaboration with Huis ten Bosch residence. This year the event will be held at the end of the first week of classes. We have decided that the theme for this picnic will be Breaking the Binary, which our theme for the 22/23 year.
- 3) We will also be continuing our regular podcast sessions which will happen bi-monthly from March.
- 4) Our next event will be a panel discussion which will hopefully feature Prof. D Francis who is a lecturer in Sociology at Stellenbosch University. The discussion is meant to be an academic background on the sociology of gender and why it is a social construct. The panel will also be titled Breaking the Binary as the main aim of the event is to showcase why gender-nonconforming or non-binary students needs to be better represented within and by the institution.
- 5) We are also intending on having an event in April regarding period sustainability or reproductive health and safety. This will hopefully be in conjunction with campus health and other interest holders.
- 6) For this term I also plan to change the WAQE logo, not drastically, but to remove the “x” in womxn as I feel as it creates an exclusive implication that women who are not cisgender female are not true women.

Plans for Next Term

- 1) For the following term we will kick off with events for Mental Health Awareness Month which will include a social media campaign and a sip and paint event either at the Botanical Gardens or Jan Marais park.
- 2) The term will also be exceptionally busy as it will include international Pride month and Pride week in which we are hoping to have weekly Pride festivities and a Pride week in which daily activities are included which will end with a Pride Walk.
- 3) We have already been in talks with the Stellenbosch Municipality regarding a sponsored Pride Walk.