

Student Parliament

*Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance*

UNIVERSITEIT iYUNIVESITHI STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY’S STUDENT PARLIAMENT:**

**TREASURERS FORUM**

**HELD ON** Thursday 18 April 2019 **IN THE** SRC Boardroom **AT** 16h00

**ATTENDANCE:**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

K LEBESA Speaker of Student Parliament

N MKHIZE Deputy Speaker Internal (Accountability Chair)

T SELAHLE Deputy Speaker External (Secretary General)

P SHONGWE Student Parliament Treasurer

A DE WAAL Academic Affairs Treasurer

K SHARPLEY Prim committee Treasurer

L STEVENSON Student Representative Council Treasurer

R BOTHA Tygerberg Student Representative Treasurer

**ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:**

N DLAMINI Military Academy Treasurer

M MARE Societies Council Treasurer

D STRYDOM Tygerberg Student Parliament Treasurer

**ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:**

N/A

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**AGENDA:**

1. Welcoming Philasande Shongwe
2. Attendance Thatego Selahle
3. Order of Proceedings Philasande Shongwe
4. Feedback from Treasurer (or their delegate):
5. Student Representative Council
6. Tygerberg Representative Council
7. Tygerberg Student Parliament Excused
8. Prim Committee
9. Societies Council Excused
10. Military Academy Societies Council Excused
11. Academic Affairs Council
12. General points and feedback Philasande Shongwe
13. Next Meeting Thatego Selahle
14. Closing Philasande Shongwe

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**Discussion:**

1. **WELCOMING:**

The Treasurer of Student Parliament begins by thanking all the members for attending the first treasurer’s forum. This is the first in the past couple of years. Each member is asked to introduce themselves and to state their vision for their position for the current year.

* P Shongwe (Treasurer of Student Parliament)

Fulfil his constitutional duties and to ensure that everything runs smoothly with regards to the Treasurers forum in the spirit of transparency.

* L Stevenson (Treasurer of Student Representative Council)

Internal: To perform her constitutional mandate to the best of her ability. To ensure that all funds spent are done so responsible, sustainably and transparently as well as to ensure that proper policy is put in place to ensure that the above mentions happens accordingly.

External: Stellenbosch to be an example to South Africa. We have gone from quite an exclusive culture to one that can be inclusive, so we have a huge role to play in ensuring that Universities are more inclusive and accessible to all.

* A De Waal (Treasurer of Academic Affairs Treasurer)

Get faculties to pay outstanding debts to us from last year- this is the current goal. Hopefully to be accomplished by the end of the month. Fix past problems and just reclaim all their rightful finds.

* R Botha (Treasurer of Tygerberg Student Representative Council)

The TSR has had a surplus for the past two years and we hope to continue this practice. Having someone who always allows the TSR to function effectively financially on its own. In addition, it is his goal to adapt any policy which allows for the above to operate more efficiently.

* K Sharply (Treasurer of Prim Committee)

To get the Prim committee fund off the ground to meet student needs. Needs to be equitable and fair across the board because the community represents a lot of different constituencies. Students shouldn’t have to struggle with accessibility, so we are really looking to expand and address that issue.

* K Lebesa (Speaker of Student Parliament)

To get Student Parliament off the ground again and ensure that students are clued up on their rights and the issues that face their community. An important part of this mandating is just holding leaders accountable and ensuring transparency. It is also a priority to rebrand Student Parliament and reach out more on campus. I also seek to ensure that all bodies work together and do not operate in isolation with each other.

* T Selahle (Deputy Speaker of Student Parliament)

Ensuring that students have access to the information that affects them financially and generally which includes social problems on campus which are brought to Student Parliament. It is also part of this vision to ensure that students have access to the answers to any questions that they may potentially have.

1. **RELEVANT INSTRUCTIONS TO ENSURE ORDERLY PROCEEDINGS TO HOUSE BY TREASURER OF STUDENT PARLIAMENT:**

The House is made aware of the fact that the meeting will proceed in terms of Addendum N of the Student Parliament Constitution. The Speaker of Parliament refrains from having the house from speaking through him.

1. **FEEDBACK FROM TREASURERS:**
2. Student Representative Council

In total, the SRC is allocated R900 000. About R631 977 is allocated to the SRC portfolios and managerial portfolios. General expenses which include general office, expenses of a general nature and registration R189760.

SRC have a policy called the Short -Term Strategic fund where 10% of funds allocated to each portfolio go into this fund and the funds are used to fund strategic initiates on campus. Student organisations can apply for the fund and be funded if it is sustainable. Due to separation of powers, this money should not pass between the SRC and Stud Par and student court. Stud Par is not a sub-committee of the SRC, in addition, no constitutionally recognised bodies from the Student Constitution may be funded from this fund. This is available to any organization recognized within the scope of the SRC excluding the above-mentioned. R63 198 is the current budgeted amount allocated to that fund.

Question: Regarding the Strategic fund, how much money is currently sitting in that fund?

Response: That is still to be confirmed because he ‘strategic’ portfolio had to be reallocated to another person in the SRC which was only decided at the most recent SRC meeting (18 April) and the budget still needs to be drawn up.

The other outstanding budget is that of the ‘special needs’ managerial portfolio and is still being put together.

Total thus far of all expenditure is at R821 737 but two budgets are yet to be confirmed.

All the above leaves just under R80 000 left to be allocated of the initial R900 000.

1. Tygerberg Representative Council

The allocated budget for the TSR for the year is R670 000.About R666 000 is allocated to the different portfolios. They work differently to SRC. Any unused funds accumulate in the TSR cost centre. With regards to the funds concerning communications and sustainability, each member used to have more than one portfolio, but it changed earlier this year in February and portfolio managers have been appointed. The year plans had already been submitted so new budgets had to be approved. Most of them have been approved except for critical engagement because of the amount being substantially more this year than in previous years. Regarding sustainability, the faculty approached the TSR to ask for an increase because there is a need there.

About R56 000 is allocated to Tygerberg Academic Affairs Council. The council wasn’t operating a few years ago so alternative plans had to be made. This amount was adjusted because class representatives are paid on Tygerberg because they are responsible for more tasks that those of Stellenbosch Campus.

Tygerberg Societies Council was also allocated this year for the first time. The amount has also been adjusted to account for the honorariums of the members. About R130 000 is budgeted by the TSR for transportation costs for all students who travel between Tygerberg and other campuses. TRC is currently in talks about allocating the money that has been accumulating in the cost centre to replace the transport budget and then reallocating the budget for transport. Nothing is finalised yet.

1. Prim Committee

The formal Prim Committee budget was established about 2 or 3 years ago and before then the cost centre had been with Student Affairs and is now with the centre for Student Communities. The Prim Committee is allocated about is R120 000 which is about R6 from of every student in the Stellenbosch Campus community. The cost centre is used mostly for the development of the prims on campus. It’s very important because the need for support for the prims has grown. Each Prim has a unique environment that they oversee and manage, and each space is very different. Prims need to be able to adjust accordingly. One of the biggest expenditures is transport for the Tygerberg prims to come through to Stellenbosch campus for meetings is also provided for in the budget.

On Prim Planning Day, the Prim Committee identifies what challenges each community is faced with and more developmental focus is required for this process. The PK fund was brought up last year hasn’t been running for long, but it is primarily focused on addressing student needs. R10 000 of the money is allocated form the cost centre. The rest of it is made from a collection of R750s taken from each student res / PSO community (if they choose to sign up to support the fund). They have the right to abstain if they disagree with the nature of the fund. In the past, this money was allocated for food and refreshments at every PK meeting which is why it has been reallocated to that fund because the money could better used for that purpose. Once people pledge to support the fund, the transfers from the communities go to that fund and are used accordingly. The importance of the PK meetings is to challenge each other at the table.

## Academic Affairs Council

Current problem facing the AAC is that faculties have still not paid them their outstanding fees. Their priority for the month is to ensure that all the different faculties pay. The total income would be R47 000. The AAC is set to have a meeting with the relevant persons to address this issue. The quote will go through to them this coming week (23-26 April). Total expenditure will be about R46 700 leaving the AAC with a slight surplus. It has been proposed to increase the budget a bit more for next year, but if the faculties don’t pay the money, then the Council cannot function.

The ACC is also working on the Academical Development Programme which the ACC does not have to pay for because funding is received from the university.

Question: Is there a document that mandates them to repay?

Response: No there isn’t a particular document but there is an understanding with the faculties.

Question: How did the outstanding R47 000 accrue to this amount and why is there a delay in repayment?

Response: Every single year, a certain amount of money must be paid from every faculty committee to the ACC to give them a portion of their budget to function efficiently. Problem is that each faculty is not aware that this amount has to be allocated to the ABR so its not considered in their budget. This is the current issue experienced by the law faculty because the Dean was not aware. Similarly, most faculties are uncertain about when to pay the funds. It takes time for them to re-draft their budgets and transfer the money to the ACC.

Question: What is being done to recover the outstanding fees?

Response: Meeting have been set up with the faculties in question. As of now, they have asked us to send them a quote which is what we are currently in the process of doing.

# GENERAL POINTS AND FEEDBACK:

Suggestion: Post-Graduate Student Council and all constitutionally recognised bodies with a budget should also be included in the agenda of our next meeting because they have separate budgets.

Response: That is true. The persons in this forum should not necessarily be limited to just the bodies that are listed in the Student Parliament Constitution because the purpose of the forum is to provide financial transparency and accountability and any student leader who represents student finances should also represent them at this forum. Since the Constitution was written up, a lot more developments have been made. They should form part of the forum even if the constitution does not expressly list them as being a part of it. The object of the Constitution is transparency and if more information is available, the better. It is in the interest of students to include them.

Inform other members of the council and stipulate that they fall in line with the constitution. Times change understand the context and the state of the constitution.

Sending through the budgets.

Budgets must be available to everyone in the Treasurers Forum. The treasurers should each send budgets on the Outlook group to encourage transparency, then should we can all learn from each other and ask questions where need be. We will have a better understanding of what to discuss at our meetings. If the students have questions, then everyone will have something material to offer them.

Make budgets available to each person and then all the treasurers should be able to come to the meeting prepared with questions to make the meeting more productive and efficient, instead of just discussing the budget and the problems.

Question: Should questions be posed directly to persons via Whatsapp or via email on the Outlook group?

Response 1: If problems could be resolved via email, then rather use that platform.

Response 2: If that happens it can result in excessive messaging.

Response 3: Its more honest and transparent to ask the question in a group. When making decisions take the objectives of the forum into account. All persons want to be informed of where their funds are going. It’s probably not the best route to message persons directly. Rather post in the group. The groups are an extension of this forum. It promotes transparency.

Question: How far do we want the break down of the budgets to go?

Response 1: It would help to see how much money is allocated to each item so please show it as ‘to the last cent’ as possible.

Response 2: In the spirit of accountability we should include everything because the forum’s purpose is to report and inform. If we can track funds more efficiently it helps keep in with transparency.

Votes for: 7 Votes against: 0 Abstain: 0

The full breakdown of all budgets is to be sent to the Treasurers Forum Group on Outlook.

Purpose of the platform:

Transparency of all the budgets, on the platform of Student Parliament which is directly accessible by students.

Suggestion: Considering the objectives of the platform, it’s important for all bodies to be accountable and transparent so we ask that Student Parliament report to the forum too.

Response: Point accepted. Student Parliament still doesn’t have access to their budget and cost centre and are still undergoing negotiations with Student Governance and there have been no transactions made at present. Student Parliament is still in the process of rebuilding and rebranding parliament. It’s a long and strenuous process to improve the budgets position of Student Parliament and to have funding allocated to Student Parliament from the institution. The office of Student Governance and Student affairs are in talks with CJ, the Chair of the SRC and the Speaker of Student Parliament. Student Court are in a similar position. Student Parliament cannot get a budget from the SRC due to separation of powers etc. Thus far we know that the budget from higher management must be re-drafted and there are a lot of procedures necessary for approval so that successors of Student Parliament can have a budget too. It’s a big problem, but it won’t deter us from meeting our constitutional mandates that don’t require funding.

Increase accountability and transparency on campus.

Suggestion: Come up with a vison for this treasury forum and where we would like to go. Financial resources are an investment in the student community. Responsibly and make a difference on campus because we can account for where it goes, but it could go further if we have impact.

Vote for: 7 Abstain: 0 Against:0

1. **NEXT MEETING:**

The Student Parliament Constitution mandates the forum to meet at least once a semester. It is decided to get clarity on the frequency of the meetings in the current year. The floor is opened for input:

Suggestion 1: It would be more productive to meet more. The more frequent the meetings are, the shorter and more effective the meetings will be. The members should have their first meeting when the new committees are elected. The timing is more important than the frequency. Shortly after appointment, the forum should convene to state what is expected from each body. The forum should meet again about 75% into term (once enough time has been given to obtain any information or to correct errors). The forum must report back twice a year.

Votes for: 1

Suggestion 2: The forum should meet once more before the 2019 May/June exams begin. To meet before the 3rd term is very difficult due to all the handovers and it becomes more complex to arrange such meetings.

Votes for:0

Suggestion 3: Quarterly meetings are proposed. When submitting quarterly reports to Student Governance, then the forum should convene to give quarterly feedback around that time which would be once a term.

Votes for: 1

Suggestion 4: It is proposed to meet at the beginning and the end of each term. This totals 6 different meetings during the term of office. Once elected and again at the beginning and end of each academic term.

Votes for: 5

Response 4 wins by a 50%+1 majority.

**Possible dates:**

First semester:

The first meeting should fall just before exams. No curricular activities may be held 2 weeks prior to the commencement of examinations. This date would be the 7th of May. The members agree that they are aware of this fact and nonetheless agree to convene again on **Thursday 16 May**.

Second semester:

The new term commences on the 22nd of July. To give everyone time to get settled, the next date should fall between the period the **29th of July to the 2nd of August**.

The last meeting for the current team should be just before the change of office in the 3rd term. All members should bring along newly elected treasurers which would concurrently count as their first Treasurers Forum.

1. **CLOSING REMARKS:**

The members are all thanked for availing themselves. A request is made to the members to please provide feedback and an evaluation to the Treasurer of Student Parliament via email.

The Treasurers Forum is adjourned at 17h04.