



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abafundi
Studenteraad



SRC TERM 3 REPORT

SRC POLICY OFFICER



Students' Representative Council

Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre

Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602

Tel: +27 21 808 2757 | Email: sr@sun.ac.za

Table of Contents

Constitutional Responsibilities.....	3
Portfolio Overview.....	3
Committees/Task Teams	4
Term 3 Overview	5
Plans for next term	8

Policy Officer – banzi@sun.ac.za

Foreword

FELLOW MATIES

My journey is nearing the end and as I reflect on my third term, I've realized that the need for transformation is beyond amending policies. Policy review cycles continue to make the dignity of many students negotiable. I, as the policy officer never see my policy inputs reflecting in final drafts.

As a result, I could not resist but deduce that indeed, transformation in Stellenbosch University is an objective – not a way of life. Consequently, transformation will forever be a concept we hope is a reality if there is no direct institutional involvement in the welcoming period – to intentionally dismantle discriminatory practices.

True transformation is based on dignity – not just representation, inclusion or the review of policies.



Constitutional Responsibilities

As an SRC member, section 27 of the Student Constitution imposes peremptory duties. Consequently, I should act in the best interests of students and actively promote their rights enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Student Constitution. It further requires me to represent students on institutional committees and structures. Section 44 requires me to attend meetings every 2 weeks excluding official examinations and holiday periods. Section 32 of the Student Constitution also requires me to submit a term report at the end of each academic term. As the Policy Officer, I am mandated to evaluate University policy and be circumspect of the inputs of fellow SRC members. Moreover, I am the legal functionary of the SRC and therefore evaluate and maintain policy to capacitate SRC members to perform their duties effectively. Finally I am mandated to safe-keep all student-related constitutions.

Portfolio Overview

The Policy Officer's core function is to ensure that the SRC deals and actively engages on University policy. As codified in the Constitution, this includes:

- (I) Ensuring that any policy formulated within the SRC is formulated and revised in accordance with s27(4).
- (II) Assisting the other SRC members in evaluating and giving input in the formulation of University policy in accordance with s27(3).
- (III) Ensuring that a resolution passed by the Students' Assembly to amend this Constitution is considered by the SRC for assent.
- (IV) Providing opinions to the SRC on the interpretation of this Constitution and other policies of the University, such opinions are not binding.
- (V) The safekeeping of all student-related constitutions.

Moreover, this portfolio makes use of mass meetings, planned conferences, SRC internal meetings, institutional committees and various platforms organized by university structures to materialize its mandate. Public participation remains a key component behind how I run the portfolio.

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

Senate

The senate is accountable to the council for the academic and research functions of the public higher education institution and must perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the council. The functions of the Council is contained in the Statute of the University of Stellenbosch. The Senate is comprised of Deans, Rectorate, Professors, Doctors and various academics of the university. Matters discussed in Senate are confidential.

The CIRCoRe process, however, is not confidential. Useful feedback on this Committee this term was that the CIRCoRe process (the institution's response to recommendations contained in the Khampepe report) was introduced by Dr Azlam Fataar to the committee and further specifications of the process were discussed. The meeting was on 23 February 2023.

My commentary at the Senate meeting on 23 February 2023 on the CIRCoRe process was that how would we deal with overlaps and centralizing the process? Additionally, I enquired whether workshops will be conducted for workstream members? These questions were answered well by the learned Doctor. The Committee extremely values the student voice, I represented students to the best of my ability.

Institutional Transformation Committee

The functionality of this committee is dependent on the Transformation Policy, the SU Vision 2040 and the mandate of the Transformation of the transformation Office.

The Committee mostly discussed the Draft Transformation Policy. The committee resolved that a meeting would be held with the SRC before the end of their term for commentary (Policy Officer) on minutes of a meeting held on 26 May 2023. The committee continuously discussed feedback from different stakeholders regarding the policy. It is in its consultation stages. Additionally, Dr Celeste Nel discussed the Res Placement Draft policy at the ITC meeting on 24 July 2023. Lastly, similarly to what transpired in Senate, Dr Azlam Fataar presented the conceptual framework of the 2 year-long CIRCoRe process.

The committee continues to value the student voice and as a result, the Transformation consulted a lot with me on the conceptual framework of the 2023 Transformation Indaba.

Student Fees Committee

The Student Fees Committee (SFC) is a subcommittee of SU's Finance Committee, with the purpose of providing advice and guidance to the Finance Committee with regards to the levying of student fees, additional study related fees, SU accommodation fees, and student administration fees – in an attempt to ensure that SU does business as an academic institution of excellence.

The SFC functions by formulating and evaluating the financial guidelines to all of the aforementioned – as well as coordinating and monitoring the implementation thereof with regards to the annual fixture of the particular student related fees. All work performed by the SFC is funnelled to the Finance Committee and subject to final approval by the Council of SU.

Both the Student Fees Committee and the SU Finance Committee sat on 27 July 2023. Matters arising was the imminent increase in fees. My position in the increase in fees remains the same as in my term 1 report. I terribly disagree with fee hikes and the fact that SUNCOM prices do not form part of any of these committees – to allow institutional input that will assess the suitability of SU Neelsie prices. The less privileged continue to suffer as fee hikes do not improve the lives of NSFAS students.

Term 3 Overview

During my first term in office I was involved in consultation meetings of 2 policies;

Res Placement Policy

Dr Celeste Nel consulted the ITC for the Draft Res Placement at the ITC meeting on 24 July 2023. The policy is still in its consultation stages and policy inputs will be required after my term ends. My preliminary remark on the policy is that I would like to see more diversity in male residence 1st year intakes. The institution needs to improve on representation in residences.

Transformation Policy

The Institutional Transformation Committee is currently reviewing the Transformation Policy and in an email to Dr Zethu on 27 June 2023 I shared my comments on the policy and they were as follows;

- The Transformation Policy should override any charters we might have in the institution – supererogatory declarations blur the purport of transformation.
- I challenged the ITC to amend 'a university in Africa for Africa' to 'committed to being an African University' if the institution plans on being the best university in Africa by 2040. Moreover, The term 'African University' will create an environment where African students can observe their cultural and spiritual practices around campus - at the current moment, SU and UJ Student Governance divisions are in talks about how students with spiritual gifts can be accommodated

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

or supported by CSCD and Student Governance. The term also makes it clear that SU is an African public university.

- This value (compassion) is rather contentious to me as a student leaders who became aware that students living in private accommodation do not enjoy the same support from campus security and the student accommodation as students living in university residences...
- I suggest that the transformation office oversees and manages welcoming monitors and have a system to deal with exclusionary practices meaningfully as these practices remain unchanged in many residences – commenting on clause 2 of the policy.
- As the SRC policy officer, its painful to admit that not all policy owners want to change a policy before the time prescribed in the policy - most policies remian unchanged – commenting on clause 3.2 of the policy.
- There is definitely unfair treatment of cleaning staff (employed by the university) and they often go to the SRC office with disproportionate remuneration issues. Does this policy apply to them too – commenting on employment equity.
- Once again as the SRC policy officer, this statement is a façade. All my policy inputs when policies are being reviewed are not considered, filtered in or even incorporated in the final version. My commentary is just commentary - this refers to both the Equality Unit and the Disability Unit. My inputs end up in the air - reviewing of policies should be addressed – commenting on equity and 'elimination of policies'.
- Student Parliament has no rules to discipline student leaders who perpetuate these problematic practices - only Student Imbizo can, which is a deadlock situation as in order for Student Imbizo to finalize their recommendation to discipline a student leader, it must be voted for in the Student Assembly and the Assembly has no rules for such- which is an issue. Please refer to the SRC Policy Officer and Another v Speaker Student Parliament 2023 case on the Student Court website for context. I was commenting on institutional culture.
- The university needs to be intentional about dignity and not choose when it is important or not. The university actively acknowledged that the recent SAHRC report was flawed yet still **decided not to take the Report on judicial review and accepted some of the conclusions (12 May 2023)** I was commenting on transformation as described in the policy.
- All module co-ordinators should present to the Transformation Unit how they will be promoting decolonisation and transformation in their program ether through translations, content-specific change aimed towards transformation etc. The unit and the Policy cannot assume that faculties are even committed to transformation. There needs to be an accountability system - not to force transformation but to track it – commenting on discriminatory behaviours.

Feedback from term 2 activities is as follows;

1) RENAMING AND RESTRUCTURING OF SRC OFFICIALS AND PORTFOLIOS

After opening applications twice for a subcommittee, no one applied. The application was only open to law students – the purport of the subcommittee was going to centre around preliminary remarks from my portfolio ahead of the review of the Student Constitution next year. Consequently, the absence of a subcommittee will be remedied by my deliberations in my handover report. Additionally, the renaming of certain SRC officials as contained in my term 2

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

report will be addressed by Student Governance as this mandate has been ineffective since 2021. I say this as this point is contained in 2021-2022 SRC handover reports and Student Governance encouraged this amendment.

2) MEETING WITH ADMISSIONS OFFICE

I had a meeting on 4 May 2023 regarding the safety and protection of students living in private accommodation. The Admissions office and the legal department made it very clear that private accommodation students are not their responsibility in such that – they have a contractual relationship with a 3rd party (landlords). Additionally, it was emphasized that campus security is under no obligation to walk or protect these students in any manner.

Moreover, a week before the meeting, a student filed a SAPS case against a tenant (who was not a student) living in their accommodation space and the admissions office held that they could remedy the situation by putting the student on a waiting list for another residence but refused to involve campus security in such matters. Additionally, the admissions office did not consider removing the landlord on the system as these instances happen a lot at the residence – 4 other students were upset by the living conditions.

In summation, I was informed that private accommodation with problematic landlords are on their own and involvement of the admissions office will be voluntary.

- 3) I had a meeting with Anele Mdepa regarding the overlap in functions of the SRC and Student Governance – and the independence of the SRC herein. I was satisfied that indeed Student Governance is great assistance to SRC functions and act as a paternalistic structure to strengthen our functionality.

On a point of concern, SRC members are not allowed to distribute food

Plans for Next Term

I plan on doing the following;

Hosting a Constitutional Panel Discussion and invite an experienced legal practitioner to share their views on whether the Constitution (1996) is the best facilitator for the transformation?

Completing the Managers Policy

I will remain in consultation with Student Governance and CSC to further ascertain that students with spiritual callings (“ukuthwasa”) are not excluded from the learning process and negotiate with relevant stakeholders to ensure that students who want to burn incense (“impepo”) are not impeded by arbitrary university policy from doing so.

saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

