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Students' Representative Council
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Studenteraad



SRC TERM 2 REPORT

PRIM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON



Students' Representative Council
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Margra Wevell – Prim Committee Chairperson – marge@sun.ac.za



Foreword

Dear Maties,

As the second term comes to an end, I am thankful for all the progress the Prim Committee has made in our first three terms in office. Watching the Student Communities thrive and strive to achieve their objectives has been an incredibly rewarding experience. We have faced obstacles but have addressed them effectively and are prepared to tackle the final term.

My commitment to you is that I will continue working diligently to support the Student Community space and ensure their needs are well-represented. Thank you to each individual who has contributed to making this possible.

Kind regards,
Margra Wevell

Constitutional Responsibilities

ACCORDING TO THE STUDENT CONSTITUTION:

As per Chapter 9 of the Student Constitution, the Prim Committee is an autonomous student representative body tasked with advocating for the welfare of residents of residences and PSO members at the SRC and within the University management. Its primary responsibility is to ensure that the interests and concerns of these groups are adequately represented and addressed in relevant decision-making processes. The Prim Committee is constitutionally mandated to fulfil specific responsibilities, which include:

1. Actively promote the rights of students contained in CHAPTER 2, specifically the right, under Section 8(1), to an enabling campus environment in which student success and academic excellence are encouraged and pursued.
2. Serving as a forum of house committee leaders that strives to protect and further the interests of all students by advising the SRC via the Prim Committee Chairperson and Vice-chairperson.

ACCORDING TO THE PRIM COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION:

Chapter 2, Section 4 - 6: Founding Principles of the Prim Committee

The Prim Committee's core values of representation, accountability, transformation, and intentionality guide its actions and decision-making processes. The committee's vision is to sustainably foster a collaborative, advisory, and accountable relationship between Communities and advocate for the needs of the students within those communities. Its mission is to ensure that the university's values are reflected within communities and upheld intentionally when representing students, accomplished through collaborative and deliberative engagements.

Chapter 2, Section 7: Nature of the Prim Committee

The Prim Committee is an autonomous student representational body established by the Student Constitution, as explained above. The committee works in partnership with the Centre for Student Communities (CSC) to advocate for community-based needs to the CSC, the Student Representative Council (SRC), and SU Management. Additionally, the committee serves as a reliable relay of information between university structures and the Prims through the presence of the Prim Committee Executive members on various relevant bodies.

The Prim Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson function as ex-officio members of the SRC, forming a chain between the Centre for Student Governance and the CSC. Furthermore, the committee is responsible for ensuring that all Communities represented within the committee operate in alignment with the student constitution and residence rules. Any community deviating from these policies will be held accountable by the Prim Committee.

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Portfolio Overview

The Prim Committee, also known as the PC, is an ex-officio structure of the Student Representative Council (SRC). The PC Constitution outlines the primary duties of the Chairperson. According to the constitution, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Prim Committee must be representatives of either Private Student Organizations (PSOs) or residences. As indicated in the Term 1 report, the Chairperson of the Prim Committee is the designated representative of the Private Student Organisations for the duration of the 2022/2023 term.

Prim Committee Constitutional Duties

As the Chief Executive and Head Leader of the Prim Committee, the Chairperson is responsible for a range of crucial activities to ensure the effective functioning of the Prim Committee. These duties are outlined in Chapter 46(1) of the committee's constitution.

Prim Committee Chairperson



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Committees/Task Teams

As a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC), my active involvement in various committees and working groups are directed towards serving the interests and needs of the student community. Currently, I serve on the following Institutional Committees:

Senate

As per the SU Statute, the Senate is responsible for overseeing the academic and research functions of the University. This includes regulating learning, teaching, research, and academic support functions and recommending academic policies to the Council. The Senate advises the Council on a variety of other academic matters.

On June 2, 2023, the Senate held its quarterly meeting for the academic term. As Senate meetings are confidential, the meeting details cannot be disclosed.

Institutional Forum

As per the SU Statute, the Institutional Forum (IF) advises the Council on various issues, including policies, conduct, and management policies. The IF comprises 23 representatives from multiple sectors, including governance and management, staff, students, and the community.

The IF recently held its quarterly meeting on May 9, 2023, during which Mr Willem Bester was appointed Deputy Chairperson. Congratulations to him on his new role. As these Institutional Forum Meetings are confidential, further details cannot be disclosed.

As a Prim Committee Chairperson, I serve on the following Committees and/or Task Teams:

Student Communities Advisory Committee (SCAC)

The Student Communities Advisory Committee (SCAC), previously known as the "Student Housing Committee," serves as a platform for discussing matters related to student communities. Its primary responsibility is to oversee the physical development of student housing on campus. The Vice Rector of Teaching and Learning chairs the committee. It includes the Directors of Project Management, CSC, and the Placement Office, as well as the Senior Directors of SU International, SunCom, Student Affairs, Student Access and Student Access and the Prim Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Student Imbizo

The Stellenbosch University Student Parliament comprises two bodies, the Students' Assembly and the Student Imbizo. The latter is an independent entity that strives to foster cooperative governance and uphold the University's values among student structures. The Student Imbizo held crucial discussions on 17 April and 17 May 2023. Due to confidentiality, the details of these meetings cannot be revealed at this time. It is reasonable to expect that the Student Imbizo will persist in holding student leaders accountable and safeguarding the well-being of the student community.

Term 3 Overview

Throughout our term in office, the Prim Committee Executive has been steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the efficiency of the Prim Committee. We achieved this by meticulously planning, maintaining proactive communication, and organising well-structured events. During this term, we engaged with the Prims on crucial matters, including addressing the Loadshedding Crisis on campus, emphasising the significance of student leadership training, and addressing the lack of infrastructure providing safety for students.

Student Leadership Training

Dr. Liezl Dick, in collaboration with the Prim Committee Chairperson and Administrative Officer, we identified areas of improvement in student leadership support structures, with a specific focus on the House Committee Development SunLearn Course Page. On 11 April, we distributed a comprehensive feedback form to the Prims and House Committees to gather invaluable insights and suggestions. *As a recommendation for the future Chair and Vice-Chair, I propose involving the CSC to facilitate the collection of feedback from Student Leaders on the training the office provides. Moreover, inviting a CSC Staff member to present the aggregated feedback to the Committee, along with providing clear indications of the aspects to be considered for future improvements, would significantly contribute to the enhancement of our initiatives. Following the feedback collection process and careful analysis of the responses received, the Committee will be well-equipped to address any significant gaps that may arise. In this regard, there will be an opportunity to proactively collaborate with CSC Staff Members to identify potential areas for improvement and work towards providing supplementary training opportunities, whilst holding staff accountable.*

Open Meeting to Prospective Prims

The Prim Committee successfully hosted an open meeting for prospective Prims at the Victoria Hub. This meeting provided these candidates with a unique opportunity to observe an internal Prim Committee meeting. During the meeting, we encouraged the prospective Prims to reflect on their potential leadership roles and offered them insights into the significance of external relations within the Prim Committee context.

House Committee Dance

The House Committee Dance, held on 5 May at the esteemed Stellenbosch Town Hall, exemplified our commitment to fostering a sense of community and collaboration among House Committee members following the Welcoming period. The event garnered a notable attendance of over 300 House Committee members and was an undeniable success, significantly strengthening camaraderie and cohesion within the Stellenbosch University Community Leaders.

PSO StratCon

The PSO StratCon, which took place on 10 May, served as an invaluable platform for engaging in substantive discussions concerning the Handover Process and forthcoming training within the Commuter Student Space. I recommend adopting the same agenda in future iterations, as it enables student leaders to proactively prepare for the handover process and strategise how they can make meaningful contributions to the community in the future. The provision of all future dates during the event further enables Prims to effectively plan their community calendars and adequately prepare prospective candidates for the responsibilities that lie ahead.

Other

A thoughtful initiative was implemented, wherein an internal birthday calendar was presented to the committee. This gesture strengthened the bonds between committee members and underscored the importance of humanity and consideration within our team dynamics.

Looking ahead to Term 4, significant focus was directed towards meticulous planning to ensure the execution of numerous upcoming events. The Prim Committee Elections, Prim Gala, and several important meetings are scheduled for this coming term. Recognising the significance of these events, the Prim Committee was presented with a comprehensive calendar for our final term during our last Prim Committee meeting in May.

Plans for Next Term

The Prim Committee has outlined our plans for the upcoming term, encompassing a range of initiatives aimed at concluding on a resounding high note.

Open Meeting to Prospective Tygerberg Prims

Prospective Tygerberg Prims will be invited to an open meeting to learn more about the Prim Committee's objectives and role in representing student communities. The meeting aims to allow prospective Prims to observe the committee and decide whether they would like to participate and contribute to its mission.

Prim Committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Elections

On 1 August 2023, we endeavour to elect our successors as future ex-officio members of the SRC. The Vice-Chairperson of the Prim Committee has worked closely with the Election Commissioner to ensure our election is facilitated in a manner that is fair and allows equal opportunity to all applicants.

Prospective Prim Development Programme

The Prim Committee Development Programme Convenor will compile and conduct a Prospective Prim Development Programme which aims to invest in the future of our committee. – John van Niekerk (PDP Convenor)

Prim Committee Handover

The Prim Committee Executive Committee has diligently prepared comprehensive reports for a smooth handover to the newly elected and appointed PC Executive team. The handover process will be a well-structured and engaging experience, incorporating the following key elements:

- One-on-One Meetings:** Each member of the outgoing Executive Committee will meet individually with their respective counterparts from the new team. These personalised sessions will allow for a focused exchange of information, addressing any specific concerns and providing valuable insights based on their experience.
- Report Overview and Discussions:** During the handover, the outgoing committee will present an in-depth overview of the prepared reports. These discussions will serve as an opportunity for the incoming team to ask questions, seek clarification, and gain a thorough understanding of the tasks, challenges, and achievements of their predecessors.
- Informal Dinner Handover:** To foster a sense of camaraderie and open communication, an informal dinner gathering will be organised. This relaxed setting will encourage team bonding and provide an informal platform for further discussions, sharing of ideas, and building strong relationships among the old and new members.

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Prim Committee Merchandise

The Prim Committee's Merchandise Sub-Committee is actively engaged in the design process and is determined to deliver the merchandise within the next 6 weeks. The recent development of a new logo was a necessary step, as the previous logo had caused delays in merchandise production. With the updated logo, the Sub-Committee is confident in meeting the set timeline for the merchandise release.

Prim Gala

The Prim Committee Executive has taken on the responsibility of organising the highly anticipated Prim Gala for 2023. This gala serves as a momentous occasion for the Prims to celebrate the fruitful term that has passed and bid farewell to their chapter as Prim.

The committee is enthusiastic about hosting this event, and their aim is to create an unforgettable experience that the Prims will cherish not just throughout the evening but also as a lasting memory.