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SRC

Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abaNtuli
Studenteraad



SRC TERM I REPORT

SRC INNOVATION OFFICER



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Simonet Kapp – SRC Innovation Officer – simonet@sun.ac.za

Commented [SW1]: Add your details here. This space is where you can share some words you'd like to share with the Student Body. You can see a draft example of mine here, basically sharing my journey on the SRC this far.

Foreword



Dear Maties Community,

Serving on the SRC is undoubtedly the biggest privilege I have been provided with during my academic career at Stellenbosch University. Taking up this responsibility is a great honour. I am thankful for your support and trust in me. I am dedicated to servant leadership, transformational change, and transparency.

It is common knowledge that South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates, currently at an all-time high of 34%. The Innovation Portfolio of the SRC focuses on actively supporting student-founded businesses on campus. My focus will be on sustainable businesses that empower black, queer, female, disabled, and disadvantaged communities.

The Innovation Portfolio focuses on advancing entrepreneurial endeavours and employability. This will be done through entrepreneurial roundtables and workshops. My goals can only be achieved with the continued support of our students.

Although challenges will always exist, I want to assure you that I will be deliberate in my leadership and will always show up, stand up, and speak up — for you, your needs, and your best interests.

Yours in service

Simonet Kapp

Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the student constitution the SRC Innovation Office has the following constitutional responsibilities:

The Innovation portfolio thus far has no constitutionally prescribed responsibilities. However, I am obliged to comply with the duties allocated to me by the general SRC which are:

As the portfolio officer for Innovation:

- a) Supporting student entrepreneurship
- b) Facilitating innovation in SRC projects
- c) Liaising with SU LaunchLab/Innovus
- d) Providing student input to SU structures planning entrepreneurship projects

As an elected SRC member, my constitutional responsibilities can be divided between the duties imposed on me as an SRC member, duties directly assigned to me by the Executive committee and my portfolio specific duties. As an SRC Member, sections 27 and 32 impose the prevalent duties. Accordingly, I must always act in the best interest of students and actively promote their constitutionally provided rights. Section 32 further obligates me to submit a termly report of all my activities during the academic term. Finally, according to section 44 I must attend an SRC meeting every week during the academic term.

Portfolio Overview

- 1) The Innovation portfolio of the SRC focusses on actively supporting student entrepreneurship on campus. The portfolio facilitates innovation in SRC projects. It also liaises with SU LaunchLab/Innovus. It ensures that student input to SU structures planning entrepreneurship projects is heard.
- 2) For 2023 my mission is working towards achieving sustainable projects and helping students produce at their premium best. In depth, the innovation portfolio broadens, promotes, and supports a culture of innovation & entrepreneurship as it drives creative thinking and advances efforts to extra economic and social value from knowledge. As a proponent for student innovation, it seeks to work with the Launch Lab to promote and facilitate entrepreneurial ideas from students which are aimed at socio-ecological challenges in their respective contexts.

- 3) The Innovation portfolio's 2023 mission is to focus on sustainable student founded businesses that empowers black, female, queer, disabled and disadvantaged communities with the aim, that that which they yield is ploughed back into the community.

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams: I have yet to be assigned to any committees/institutional structures, since I joined the SRC at a later stage, after other elected/exec members were appointed to represent the SRC on different structures.

Term I Overview

Registration	<p>Registration of current and first year students have been my main priority since being back in office (20 January 2023) where I joined the Registration Champion group. I was also the official liaison to assist with online registration in the office. Where students faced challenges with registration due to debt, being an international student who cannot make use of the usual online registration or whatever challenge it might be, I guided them and contacted the appropriate channels to ensure that these students are registered in time for the academic year. All attempts I made to register students have been successful.</p> <p>Majority of the issues faced are as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International students cannot register by using the usual online, mysun e-register platform. - Students with existing debt cannot register. - The platform is often not compatible with certain mobile devices (often only works on computers/laptops) to which not everyone has access to but is freely available to access in the SRC office. - Majority of the registration issues arises from Step 2, where the system requires residential details, which it often does not recognise, and one cannot continue to the next step. - Having a massive influx of students (sometimes 50+) was difficult to navigate as there are only 10 computers in the SRC office. - With continuous loadshedding several computers didn't operate as it is supposed to which also caused a delay in registration.
Accommodation	<p>I also assisted with accommodation, by taking down details of students in need of accommodation. They were then either added to the backpacker's emergency accommodation list, which was prioritised, the SRC waiting list which was created in collaboration with the accommodation office and the general waiting list that one can apply on on mysun, depending on the need of the student.</p>

	<p>I have also assisted in continuously updating the NSFAS accredited accommodation list in order to ensure that the details captured on the spreadsheet was accurate. I also aided students in contacting various agents to secure private accommodation.</p> <p>Challenges I have experienced with the current accommodation issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSFAS accredited accommodation landlords continue to ask for deposits & contract fees from students, although these students are already under severe strain due to the cap and secondly, because they cannot afford it. - Students are threatening to deregister because they cannot secure accommodation and if they do, it falls outside the NSFAS cap. - Majority of newcomers who we have assisted lost their placement due to not being able to put down the deposit amount as required by the university – although the terms and conditions of the accommodation contract states that if they do not have the ability to pay the fee, they should just inform the university and it will be waived. - The backpackers accommodation capacity is too little for the influx of students who require it.
Roadshow	<p>The SRC was divided into two groups during the registration period, (the Registration Champions) whereas the Roadshow was aimed at increasing the visibility of the SRC on campus, introducing the SRC to the newcomers (both in PSO's and Residences) and informing them what the SRC stands for and what our mission & vision for the year is, as well as what the various portfolios are.</p> <p>Students received a digital booklet with all the necessary details of the SRC and our contact details.</p> <p>Overall, the presentation was very successful and interactive – students enjoyed the interactive factual game of what the SRC is, after which several were seemingly interested in serving on leadership structures during their academic career at Stellenbosch University.</p>
(Historical) Debt	<p>I assisted several students who cannot register and who have existing debt to gain access to the historical debt form.</p> <p>Challenges I have dealt with in terms of debt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students cannot prove to bursary providers that they are registered students at Stellenbosch University, because the debt prevents them from doing so and this negatively affects their ability to apply for bursaries due to pre-existing debts. - Several students were not aware that they were no longer funded by

	<p>NSFAS and the debt piled up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students cannot apply for employment opportunities if they have debt, due to the fact that they cannot get access to their academic transcripts.
Self-defence workshop hosted by the SRC Safety & Security Manager.	<p>The SRC Safety and Security Manager hosted several self-defence workshops – when possible, I attended a few of them in order to contribute to the SRC's visibility on campus.</p> <p>Students were informed about general safety on campus, the security walk with service, shuttle services, emergency toll free numbers, what campus security is, how to reach them and how to make use of their services.</p> <p>These events were highly successful in that students enjoyed the participatory and practical element thereof.</p>
Innovus & LaunchLab	<p>I will collaborate with Innovus & SU Launch Lab with the aim of cultivating entrepreneurial ideas from students aimed at promoting sustainable businesses that empowers black, queer, female, disabled and disadvantaged communities with the vision that that which they yield is ploughed back into the community, whether it be a percentage of profits or skills.</p>
Readmissions & Appeals	<p>I have dealt with several queries relating to readmission and the completion of the entire process before the end of the 2022 year up until now, as well as the appeal process and the finality of the results. I have a solid understanding of what the process entails and how to assist students in going about their applications and the necessary documentation they need to include in their applications in order to strengthen their case.</p>
Temporary access to Sunlearn	<p>I have also assisted students who are faced with existing debt and therefore prevented from registering getting access to the necessary forms they need to complete in order to get temporary access to SUNlearn so that they can continue their studies with disruption.</p>
Data analysis:	<p>In collaboration with the SRC Data & Research Manager, I am for transparency sake collecting data for an analytical analysis of the following issues the SRC dealt with during the registration period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How many students that we had on our accommodation/backpackers waiting list were placed in residence. - How many students that applied for readmittance were successful. - How many students that completed the historical debt form was assisted and the total amount of debt that was provided for - Please note these are all just possible ideas and will only be captured and released after the registration period.

<p>Food parcels & access to food</p>	<p>Several students did not have enough resources/funds to maintain themselves while awaiting their NSFAS eligibility status. It is also uncertain when allowances will eventually pay out – with that comes the challenge that several students did not have the means to provide themselves with nutritious meals. The SRC was fortunate enough to rely on the helping hands of PSO's and Residences who had a surplus of meals during the welcoming period – which allowed us to ensure that those students who were in the office (including backpackers) could get something to eat.</p> <p>Challenges with meals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSFAS students who make use of private accommodation and those who haven't secured accommodation yet cannot make use of COB. This means that these students have to wait until their allowances pay out (which is uncertain). - NSFAS students who have to appeal are even under bigger strain as their status are uncertain. - Some students who tried other channels were informed that they had to motivate their reasons why, which will then be reviewed – which also didn't alleviate the situation.
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I faced various challenges as the newly elected Innovation Officer. The innovation portfolio as a self-standing portfolio is very new – it also doesn't help that the previous manager (SRC 2021) dropped the portfolio after two terms, above and beyond the fact that the person from whom I had to take over (SRC 2022), had also resigned as an SRC member, leaving me with no plans, guidance or assistance. There has been no official hand over. I have been requesting meeting on discussing the Innovation portfolio since last year (2022) but with exams and now, the registration period, arranging a meeting is on hold. Another difficulty I am faced with, is that the recent resignation of the previous Innovation Officer left me with no unaccomplished plans or future ideas, he might have had planned or in mind for the portfolio. This left me with a very short period of initiating and brainstorming ideas for the portfolio.

Plans for Next Term

<p>Digital booklet: How to start a business & where to find the resources/ investors - motivational talk from entrepreneur & investor Daniel Strauss* in collaboration with the Golden Key Society.</p>	<p>Prospective date: April 2023</p> <p>This event is focused on finding resources and investors to fund your business and to ensure the longevity of it. It will also speak to challenges business owners regularly face especially in the South African context.</p>
<p>Student business digital compilation</p>	<p>A digital booklet that contains Stellenbosch University student founded business, their details, what they do, what they stand for and how students can get in</p>

contact with these student businesses.

This can be published on all SRC social media platforms.

Plans for the rest of the year:

<p>Digital Booklet: Business/career mindset together with a roundtable talk with businessman & motivational speaker Erik Kruger*.</p>	<p>Prospective date: May 2023</p> <p>This roundtable event will be focused on maintaining a career mindset despite the challenges South African business owners face, even more so, South African student businesses.</p>
<p>Digital Booklet: How to switch from idea to reality – how to draw up a business plan.</p>	<p>Prospective date: July 2023</p> <p>It is important to find speakers that students find relatable in age & circumstance which will allow students to feel empowered and that possibility can arise from what seems to be impossible.</p>
<p>Employability & bursaries</p>	<p>Part of the Innovation portfolio is not only just entrepreneurial endeavours, but also how to improve employability.</p> <p>I want to collaborate with (Stellenbosch-csm@simplicity.com & careerservices@sun.ac.za) by hosting a career campaign – that includes a LinkedIn Workshop, a CV & cover letter writing session, as well as how to prepare for an interview session.</p> <p>I also want to do an information session on where to find bursaries – how to look for a job (websites where one can look and how it works).</p> <p>Information session on: How to improve your employability & short courses accessible to SU students.</p>

*this is subject to the availability of the motivational speakers in question.