



Stellenbosch

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Students' Representative Council
Ibhunga elimele abafundi
Studenteraad



SRC TERM I REPORT

SRC SOCIETIES COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON



Students' Representative Council

Third Floor, Neelsie Student Centre

Private Bag XI, Matieland, 7602

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



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Kim Stoffels – SRC Societies Council Chairperson – kimstoffels@sun.ac.za

Foreword



Hello fellow Maties,

I am Kim Stoffels, the Societies Council Chairperson for the 2022/23 term. I look forward to utilising this platform to represent the needs and interests of the societies on campus.

To the Societies Council, thank you for entrusting me with this great responsibility to amplify the concerns of our respective societies, represent the Societies Council and oversee the effective functioning of both the Societies Council Executive and General Societies Council.

To the members of my Societies Council Executive; Amahle Sityata, Thandile Ngxikwe and Ayanda Ndadlana, thank you for your continued support and hard work. Your late nights and early mornings do not go unnoticed. I look forward to continuing this journey with you.

To the student leaders I am fortunate enough to share this platform with; Leo May (Societies Council Vice-Chairperson), Vanessa Dede Annan (TSRC Chairperson) and Queren Kamuanya, thank you for modelling selfless leadership and teaching me to lead with compassion, empathy and integrity. I am because you are.

Constitutional Responsibilities

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

Student Constitution

As per s88(1), the duties of the Societies Council us to represent the interests of all recognised student societies and that of student societies of Stellenbosch University, in that capacity on the SRC all other structures.

Societies Council

As per s15(1)(2), the chairperson of the Societies Council is responsible for representing the interests of all societies and the Societies Council on the SRC. The Chairperson of the Societies' Council is responsible for

- 1) Serving as Chair at meetings of the Societies' Council and Executive Committee.
- 2) Representing the interests of all societies on the Students' Representative Council.
- 3) Ensuring that Societies' Council adopts the Code of Conduct.
- 4) Oversight over the activities of Societies', the Societies' Council, and the Societies' Council Executive Committee.
- 5) Holding the Executive Committee accountable.
- 6) Assigning responsibilities and projects to the Executive Committee.
- 7) External correspondence on behalf of the Council to other Student Leadership Structures.
- 8) Responsible for oversight of the Societies' Council funds.
- 9) Calling the referendum when necessary.

Portfolio Overview

Student Representative Council

The Societies Council us mandated to be the representative body of all student societies. The Societies Council contributes to the general student experience through supporting student societies and encouraging students to participate in activities which will enhance the student experience.

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Stellenbosch University

The Societies Council has a dual mandate, the first being that of representing student societies on campus, the second being that the Societies Council served as a forum of student leaders that attempt to protect and further the interests of all students. This in turn ensures that student societies become an enriching platform for all students.

Committees/Task Teams

I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

Institutional Forum (IF) - Is one of the University's three main statutory bodies - the other two being the Council and the Senate.

The IF must advise the Council on issues affecting the University, including–

- i) the implementation of the Act and the national policy on higher education.
- ii) race and gender equity policies.
- iii) the selection of candidates for senior management positions.
- iv) codes of conduct, mediation, and dispute resolution procedures; and
- v) the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning; and

Term I Overview

Background

The General Societies Council held the Executive election and Caucus to elect new leadership on 3 August 2022. The results of the election were announced on the 4th of August, and I was officially elected as Societies Council Chairperson. The announcement of the incoming SRC was on 15 August 2023. This marked the official start of my term.

Below I will detail a few projects/events that I think is landmark projects or pertinent to my role as Societies Council Chairperson.

[19 AUGUST 2022] Appointing the Societies Council Executive

The first order of business for the Societies Council Chairperson was establishing the rest of the Societies Council Executive. The registrar, Amahle Sityata, had previously been elected by the General Societies Council during the caucus on 3 August 2022. The Vice-Chairperson, Chief Admin Officer, Financial Manager and Secretary portfolios were all still vacant. In accordance with the Societies Council

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Constitution, I was to appoint the remainder of the Societies Council Executive. I held the interviews on 18 August 2022 and successful candidate were informed of their appointment by 19 August 2022. The following persons were appointed as the Societies Council Executive:

Leo May – Vice-chairperson – Societies Council Executive

Thandile Ngxikwe – Chief Admin Officer – Societies Council Executive

Ayanda Ndadlana – Secretary – Societies Council Executive

The Financial Manager Portfolio remained vacant as there was no interest despite being extensively advertised. It is with that, that I took the portfolio as the Interim Financial Manager as I was also the Societies Council Financial Manager in the previous (2021/22) term.

The challenge faced was not the lack of advertising of the positions but rather the lack of knowledge around the Societies Council Executive and their functioning. In my term, I do intend to increase visibility for this reason, but I would also urge my successor to maintain visibility and set a good example of the Societies Council Executive so that the Societies Council can be handed over to eager and competent leadership.

[4 SEPTEMBER 2022] Incoming Societies Council Photoshoot and Executive Handover Function

On the 4th of September the Incoming Societies Council Executive had their official photos taken. The purpose of this was to update all Societies Council and University promotional or informational materials. This is important as it is the photo's used in official Societies Council Communication, SU's Welcoming booklet, sign boards in the Neelsie and the Societies Council website.

On the same day, the outgoing Executive and incoming Executive had a lunch engagement which marked the end of a lacklustre handover process. I, myself, had not had any sort of handover with the outgoing Chairperson, Tamara Wicomb as she could not prioritise the Societies Council in making sure that the incoming leadership was adequately equipped. The lunch was hence a space for the new executive and old executive to socialise and gain knowledge in more relaxed environment. Tamara Wicomb chose not to attend this engagement.

[8 SEPTEMBER 2022] – Setting up Societies Council Executive OneDrive

The Societies Council Chairperson created a OneDrive for the Societies Council Executive. This would be the place to store all documents pertaining to each portfolio such as agenda's, minutes, policies, year plans, budgets, etc.

As someone that served on the previous (2021/22) the only documents that were made available to the incoming Executive was term reports. I knew that the dealings of my portfolio were not adequately covered by just the term reports It was with this that I placed a big emphasis on the OneDrive as it gives all Executive members access to important documents, and it will ultimately aid in the handover process as the new leadership will be able to review and update these documents. All these documents will be in one place.

[29 SEPTEMBER 2022] SRC inauguration

As a member of the incoming SRC, the Societies Council Chairperson attended the SRC inauguration at the Stellenbosch University Museum where I participated in the SRC oath taking.

[3 OCTOBER 2022] Submission of Societies Council Budget

The Societies Council Chairperson submitted the Societies Council Budget to the SRC Executive for review. The Societies Council income is made up Societies Registration Fees and the SRC Subsidy. In the previous term, the Societies Council 2021/22 Chairperson, Tamara Wicomb, had not followed due course to ensure that the Societies Council had received the subsidy. For the 2022/23 term, I had requested a subsidy of R60 000. The SRC Executive preliminarily approved a subsidy of R52 000. The Societies Council still awaits the transfer of the subsidy to the Societies Council cost centre.

[10 OCTOBER 2022] Welcoming programme planning.

This was a meeting hosted by Student Governance with the AAC, SRC, Societies Council as well as Mrs Joy Petersen. This meeting was to discuss the training of the different student communities. The Societies Council Training date was set for 25 January 2023.

[10 OCTOBER 2022] Registration of International Student Societies

The Vice-Chairperson and I met with Mr Jephtha from the international office to discuss the registration of societies started by international or exchange students.

I do see great value in including international students as part of the Societies Council. I do, however, think that this process needs to be more clearly outlined in a separate registration document to be drawn up by the Societies Council Registrar.

[11 OCTOBER 2022] Societies Council Executive and Student Governance Meet and Greet

A meeting was arranged for the newly elected and appointed Societies Council Executive members to meet Student Governance. In this meeting, Student Governance explained their roles and

responsibilities and how it fits into the Societies Council environment. This meeting also allowed the Executive to ask for clarity on pertinent issues such renovating the fourth floor of the Neelsie where Societies offices are located, furnishing the Societies Council office, rerouting of registration fees and clarity on the planning of the Welcoming Fair

[13 OCTOBER 2022] Mediation with Musicultus

The Musicultus Society had approached the Chairperson of Societies Council about an incident of sexual harassment at a society function. The Vice-Chairperson of Societies Council took the lead in the mediation as external discipline constitutionally falls within the scope of the Vice-Chairperson. We had two meetings; one with the Chairperson of Musicultus to gauge what happened and then another with the Executive Committee of Musicultus where we discussed how the incident was in violation of the Student Constitution. The Vice-Chairperson had made several recommendations including referrals to the Equality Unit and Centre for Discipline as well as advising the Musicultus Chairperson to have the individual removed from the Musicultus Executive Committee.

I strongly believe that Societies Council is equipped and able to handle disciplinary matters with mediation and disciplinary recommendations. I do believe that the Vice-Chairperson of Societies Council should be well versed in policy and constitutional literacy.

[19 OCTOBER 2022] Co-curricular Orientation

The Societies Council (chairperson's/representatives) receive recognition on their academic transcripts. The Chairperson and Chief Admin Officer of the Societies Council attended a Module Orientation meeting on MS Teams. The purpose of this meeting was to familiarise us with the SUNLearn platform.

This venture is quite challenging as the Chairperson has to take full responsibility of updating the Societies Council platform on SUNLearn and adding the Societies Council (chairperson's/representatives). To my successor, I urge you to make time and start with co-curricular as soon as you can. Attending all the meetings are crucial as important information is shared in every session. I also urge you to meet privately with Mrs Ruth Andrews who is the Manager of Co-Curricular so that she may advise you one-on-one.

[21 – 23 OCTOBER] Societies Council Executive Camp

The Societies Council Executive embarked on the very first Executive Camp. The camp consisted of individual Chairperson check-ins, a review of the Societies Council vision and mission, introduction to CDATT, Constitutional Literacy, Student Governance Vision and Mission, Year Plan and Calendar discussion, Welcoming Fair, Conflict resolution and Team Building sessions.

I felt as though the incoming Societies Council Executive did not have an adequate handover. I previously served on the Societies Council Executive and utilised the weekend to engage and discuss

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portfolio matters and expectations as extensively as possible. The camp also served as a Team Building opportunity.

My suggestion is to have a handover camp with the outgoing and incoming executive to ensure an extensive and adequate handover as the suggestion of shadowing outgoing members does not suffice.

[18 – 20 NOVEMBER 2022] SRC Camp

As a member of the SRC, the Societies Council Chairperson attended the SRC camp in Saldanha. The challenges faced that the program of the camp was poorly executed. The (3) sessions of the whole camp program that I found most beneficial was a session on briefing the media and two sessions on leadership development. We had not reached a common resolution on the Khampepe Report and no information session was held in regard to Welcoming and Registration.

As an ex-officio member, I cannot say that I had learnt anything beneficial that would aid me in carrying out my duties as both Societies Council Chairperson and SRC member. I do, however, believe that the camp presented a great opportunity to get to know our colleagues outside the confines of our portfolios.

[30 NOVEMBER 2022] General Societies Council Meeting

Constitutionally, the Societies Council is to have one (1) General Council Meeting. This was the first General Council Meeting that I chaired, and it was held virtually on MS Teams as it was at the end of the examination period and students had started leaving Stellenbosch to return home.

In this meeting, the Societies Council Executive introduced themselves, their portfolios and the projects that they have completed thus far. The Societies Council Chairperson explained the financial processes, relayed information regarding office spaces and venue hires on campus and announced the dates for the Societies Council Training and Welcoming Fair.

The General Societies Council voted in the Office Policy, amendments to the Societies Council Constitution and the Alcohol Policy.

My recommendation is that these meetings should be held in-person as far as possible as it will give the Societies Chairperson's/Representatives an opportunity to interact.

[6 DECEMBER 2022] Societies Sign-ups Meeting

The Societies Council Chairperson, Chief Admin Officer and Registrar had a meeting with Student Governance and System Information's to gauge whether it would be possible for sign-ups to be open on

the MySUN portal in time for the Societies Welcoming Fair which is on the 3 February 2023. The following was concluded:

- The way the system works, only registered students are allowed to sign-up for Societies as membership fees are charged to their student accounts.
- Registration closes on the 9th of February 2023 and late registration on the 24th of February. Since the Societies Welcoming Fair is on the 3rd of February it means that the system will be closed.
- Unfortunately, the system will remain closed and only re-open at a later stage.
- Societies are hence to rely on physical sign-ups on the day of the Welcoming Fair.

This has been an issue for several years, and it was one of my key projects to address this issue. This meeting had provided clarity on the matter as to why opening the portals sooner is not possible. In my term I intend on finding alternative solutions to sign-ups. Until then, the societies are to rely on physical (paper) sign-ups and QR codes.

[25 JANUARY 2023] Societies Council Leadership Development Training

Constitutionally, the Societies Council is to provide members of the General Societies Council with training. Although Student Governance oversees this venture, it in its entirety is solely arranged by the Societies Council Executive. This year, the Societies Council Chairperson took lead on the project.

I thought it would be easier to do the programme planning, invites and logistics of the training by myself as all communication and planning could be from one centralised place. This year I invited the following guests to address the Societies Council;

- Anele Mdepa from Student Governance to explain the role of Student Governance, Student Affairs and the support offered to student leaders.
- Ruth Andrews from the Co-curricular programme to explain how the SUNLearn module would work and how the recognition on academic transcripts would be granted.
- Delecia Davids did an interactive leadership workshop with Societies chairperson's/representatives.
- Brandon Como, who is a safety officer explained events and risk managements procedure and how to plan safe events.
- Gavin Nimmo from finance who explained how membership fees and the financial aspects thereof.
- Nicky Adams and Catherine Channing from CECO to give a background on CECO and how they could assist societies in venue hire and events planning.

I would advise finalising the program as soon as possible as it takes quite some time for guests to confirm their availability. I would also advise hosting this hybrid instead of fully online. The Societies Council constitution terms of registration states that societies need two (2) collaborations with other

societies for the year. To incentivise training attending, all societies who attended were exempt from this stipulation.

[3 FEBRUARY 2023] Newcomers Societies Welcoming Fair

The project lead for the Societies Welcoming Fair was the Societies Council Registrar. The Welcoming fair was done in collaboration with Maties Sport. It was held on Coetzenburg rugby field. The Societies Council Executive worked really hard to make the Welcoming Fair a success and have it be as close to pre-COVID as possible. This year, in addition to the Coke truck, we had a DJ hired to play for the day as well as two giant inflatable jumping castles.

The Societies Council Executive will be drawing up a working document detailing all the planning for the Welcoming Fair as well as an account of what went wrong and what could be improved so that this document can be handed down with the change of leadership.

As Chairperson, my tasks and additions to the fair was:

- Hiring a driver to transport materials such as the gazebo from the Societies Council office in the Neelsie, driving to fulfil last minute errands, picking up food orders, picking up and dropping off of Executive members at the beginning and end of fair, etc.
- Hiring an MC to make announcements and keep the crowd of newcomers entertained.
- Hiring a photographer to take pictures of societies and society stalls so that they may have mementos of the day.
- Providing Societies with food. Societies usually set up from 09h00 and only leave the field when the fair concludes at 18h00. The closest food outlets are either the Neelsie or Eikestad Mall. This year I ordered 120 food packages for societies so that the committee members at the stalls had something to eat for the day.
- Processing all payments for the Welcoming Fair from the general Societies Council cost centre.

[9 FEBRUARY 2023] Meeting with MSA society

The Chairperson of Societies Council met with the MSA Chairperson to discuss matters pertaining to the prayer room on the fourth floor of the Neelsie. The MSA Chairperson expressed that they had difficulty with access to the room as their cards needed to be remagnetised every week, additionally the prayer room needs cleaning every week which the University has agreed to however access needed to be granted to clean the room as well as the need for cleaning materials such as soap and hand towels.

The Societies Council Chairperson suggested that provision for hand-soap and paper towels come from the Societies Council cost centre. The Chairperson also contacted Student Governance to enquire about changing the lightbulb outside the prayer room and sorting out the issue with card access.

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Executive Meetings

The Societies Council Executive met and held meetings on the following days:

- 8 September 2022
- 10 October 2022 (Chairperson & Vice-Chairperson only)
- 12 October 2022
- 15 November 2022 (Chairperson & Vice-Chairperson only)
- 18 January 2023 (Chairperson & Registrar only)
- 23 January 2023
- 25 January 2023

Plans for Next Term

I plan on doing the following for the next term as Societies Council Chairperson:

[FEBRUARY] Calendar for General Societies Council

[FEBRUARY/MARCH] Furnishing of Societies Council Executive Office

[FEBRUARY/MARCH] Events Training for Societies with CECO

[MARCH] Senior's Society Fair

[MARCH] Chairperson/Representatives Day

[MARCH/APRIL] Stellenbosch and Tygerberg Societies Council Meet & Greet

[APRIL] Societies Week

